Rina Eide Løvaasen

For the For-itself To Be One With the In-itself Would Necessitate An Identification of Fullness, of Bang, and Non-being—
An Identification Impossible Because Self-contradictory. The Only Way By Which the For-itself Could Become In-itself Would Be To Cease Being For-itself, and This We Have Seen Can Happen Only In Death.

Oil on canvas. 120 x 150 cm
Foreword

Kah Bee Chow
Bror Sander Berg Størseth
Zardasht Faraj
Johanna Fjaestad
Malin Franzén
Nina Jensen
Max Ockborn
Anika Schwarzlose
Danilo Stankovic
Kianoosh Vahabi
Kirsti Willemse
Jan Salomonsson (Swedish-English)
Lena Olsson (Danish-English, Swedish-English)
Mike Garner (Swedish-English)
Jan Manley (Norwegian-English)
Sarat Maharaj
Dr Matts Leiderstam
Haegue Yang
Joachim Koester
Maria Hedlund
P-O Persson
Viktor Kopp
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Mats Eriksson
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Apolonija Šušteršič
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The academic year of 2011-12 was a fruitful and productive one for the Malmö Art Academy. For the first time in the school’s history, all of the teaching positions were filled, meaning that all four of the school’s teaching programs were able to provide maximal instruction time. Along with the external mentors Andreas Eriksson, Olav Christopher Jenssen, Joao Penalva, and Nina Roos, our teachers and Professors Margot Edström, Maj Hasager, Maria Helland, Joachim Koester, Viktor Kopp, Mats Leiderstam, Sarat Maharaj, Per Olof Persson, and Haegue Yang have offered a diverse selection of classes as well as providing first-rate individual tuition. Their efforts have played an essential role in assisting the interesting young artists that graduate from our programs to maintain such high standards of work.

During this academic year, Julie Ault and Simon Sheikh finished their dissertations Remembering and Forgetting in the Archive: Institutioning “Group Material” (1979-1996) and Exhibition-making and Political Imaginaries, respectively. Their work has provided important contributions to the field of artistic research in Sweden, which is still in a nascent stage. Their dissertations are available for order from the Malmö Art Academy registrar’s office.

The doctoral program and the approach to artistic work that it embodies are important to us. There is a gradual progression through the various levels of our programs, which is revealed especially clearly in the essays and visual documentations of our graduating students’ works in this yearbook, as artistic thought is made ever more manifest through both visual and written means of communication.

The program Critical and Pedagogical Studies, which grew out of the school’s previous program Critical Studies, is a tangible example of how tightly interlaced thought and experiment are in our work methods. The program, which collaborates closely with our Masters program in Fine Arts, has accomplished exactly what we intended it to: further improving the dynamics of the schools pedagogical profile.

External participants during the examinations were Mats Stjernstedt, artistic director of Kunstnerenes Hus in Oslo, for the BFA program, and Dr. Brigitte Franzen, director of Forum Ludwig in Aachen, for the MFA program. Opponents and grading committee for Julie Ault were Dr. Chantal Pontbriand, Dr. Sabine Folie, and professors Stuart Sim and Mats Leiderstam. Performing the same roles for Simon Sheikh were professor Sarah Jane Norman, professors John Huynh and Mats Leiderstam, and Dr. Helmut Draxler. We are very appreciative of, and grateful for, their valuable efforts in providing quality assurance for our educational programs.

Like last year, we have enjoyed the privilege of having Maj Hasager on board as editor for the yearbook.

And of course the school wouldn’t function for long, or particularly well, without our wonderful...
team of administrators and technicians, which is supervised by director Silvana Hed. Madeleine Bergquist, Eva-Lena Landgren, Sophie Ljungblom, Charlotte Marklund, Kristian Kimbré, Håkan Nyqvist, Joakim Sima, and Charlotte Österberg have all done a great job. We would especially like to acknowledge all of the work that went into the school’s new website, which was created by Margot Edström, Joakim Sima, Madeleine Bergquist, and Kristian Nordström Kimbré.

Gertrud Sandqvist  
Professor and Dean of Malmö Art Academy
I am sitting in a train travelling from Copenhagen to Malmö with a suitcase full of bubble-wrapped artworks. My body is staging a revolt. How I have permitted myself to be permeable. The pits of my stomach churn, and I want to throw up. I love you so much already. Self sufficiency structural terrorism jelly. I am a solitary creature. Be brick not blown. I chide myself. I need no allies. “Apparently she was some sort of phenomenon in college and won a place in graduate study at Cambridge . . . but in any event there she studied . . . under a mad crackpot . . . who believed that everything was words. really. If your car would not start, it was apparently to be understood as a language problem. If you were unable to love, you were lost in language. Being constipated equaled being clogged with linguistic sediment.”

David Foster Wallace, The Broom of the System

The “mad crackpot” alluded to here, Philosophical Investigations-era Wittgenstein (arguably) doctored for humorous impact - left me mildly amused at first, presenting a kind of pebble to roll around in my head. But as I rolled and re-rolled, the pebble gradually gained mass, until it became insurmountable, like a boulder in my path. What begins for me as a perceived issue of deliberate misapplication - a clear-cut language problem, multiplies inexorably under scrutiny. Take the proposition: “If you were unable to love, you were lost in language.” What exactly is the implied absurdity? Where is it located? Some overlapping speculations, forgive my imprecision:

a) is it the incommensurability of the “day-to-day trenches of adult life” framed as linguistic construct, something like: discourse is not diagnosis

b) something like: diagnosis is redundant, parallel to “positive thinking” prescribed to deal with all vicissitudes of life

c) something like: casting an improbably wide net to capture a wriggling shrimp, using a blanket to contain personal torment. An issue of reductiveness; use of the general to address the particular.

d) something like: love is anything but a stable discourse. Some might say that to be lost in language is a prerequisite for love, or it is a non-negotiable condition of love.

e) something like: love is too exhausted a terrain to address? 1 one can only be facetious at best.

f) I return to a) something like say the perceived gap between language and the actual experiencing of love, something to do with what our understanding of experience is: artist Kate Love
writes about the prevalent either-or models of understanding experience: “where the sensual, affecting, bodily and cognitive moment that is experience is seen as either outside of or as entirely collapsed to language”. Is the experience of love something which persists to be understood as something outside of language? In which case, the inability to love, posited as a linguistic-navigational failure comes across as a ludicrous theory: inadequacy. In-adequacy. In-accuracy. For Love, inside/outside does not suffice: “It seems as if in the first instance, the pressures to develop a more critically contingent analysis drove the conventional understanding of experience (which had somehow now become synonymous with universalism) in two conflicting ways. Either experience was conflated with authentic knowledge which, as I have already noted, tended to position the relation as outside of and “other” to language, or in response to the improbability of such a model, the argument was made that experience must therefore be always already in language, for it to be understood as experience at all. The problem with both of these models, and in particular the latter, was that the import of how it is to actually experience the world, and the art that is in it, was all too easily reduced in critical analysis to entirely an issue of linguistic and textual interpretation.”

Exposure

I will return to this but for now I would like to write about the late stand-up comedian, Mitch Hedberg (1968-2005). Typically, Hedberg’s jokes reveal a preoccupation with syntax (but all jokes do?) drawn from astute observations of the banal, delivered with a kind of stoner’s drawl. An example: “I used to do drugs. I still do, but I used to, too.” It is difficult to do justice to a Hedberg joke by writing it on a page, removed from the context of his very specific delivery. His material in a way, is concerned with technicalities, rules, how this machine operates and how it slips apart. Comparable to a surgeon disarming a patient, a scientist dismantling a formula – they reveal the precise particularities of a certain logic, a specific situation – whether it be a turn of phrase, advertising on a yoghurt lid or the peculiar shape of Pringle chips. His punch-lines have a sense of flatness, he employs theatrics but rarely hysterics – there is timing, pause and emphasis – there is his voice, a speech setting up an expectation of slowness his jokes disrupt. His deadpan humour is underscored by his famously unstable physical stage presence – Hedberg is not firm on his feet, he rocks back and forth “like an insect”, his hands shake his mic compulsively like a steadying device against his nerves (variance of prop/crutch). In one act, Hedberg stands with his hands behind his back like a high-school student forced to do a speech in front of class, other times slighter clues in his posture and gestures betray his discomfort on stage, or the way he recoils after a joke not well-received, issuing an immediate apology to his audience for the ‘failure’. Operating somewhere between strategy and necessity, his visible nervousness as a ‘performer’ draws a layer of emotional resonance that complicates, and completes the Mitch Hedberg routine. What is it to make this difficulty or anxiety transparent to an audience? Am I merely fetishizing a kind of imagined authenticity, this unintended (or affected?) display of human fragility? Hedberg acknowledges his own hyper-awareness of the
strangeness of the stand-up comic’s position in one of his jokes:

“Like when you’re high and a joke doesn’t work, it’s extra scary. It’s like, what the hell happened here? I am retreating within myself. Why have all the people gathered and why am I elevated? Why am I not facing the same way as everybody else? What is this electric stick in my hand? … It seems like you guys were chasing me, closing in and said, fuck it, let’s sit down.”

Like prey encircled by tigers, he throws off a shaky staccato rhythm, almost an element of effeminacy. In complete contrast with Mies, for example, he had them leave the welded and soldered joints untidy, asymmetrically, contextual, contingent; its irregularities are not repressed by relished. In a way, a building is never exempt from declar- ing itself – exposure may be understood to be a perseverance towards limits.

In a way, a building is never exempt from declar- ing itself – exposure may be understood to be an inevitable condition of build- ing, of making. Art historian Anna C. Chave discusses the way the Minimalist canon was written as an insinuation on ‘sheer materiality’ stripped of the personal, expressive values depreciated by the dominant Marxist-informed critical paradigm of the time (1960s). Chave observes that rather than unseating the authority of the artist or destabilizing the posi- tion of artist as Transcendental ego, “the erasure of biographical information relative to male and female artists – say for instance, privileging the perception of Robert Morris as sole progenitor of his 1973 sculpture Columns while downplay- ing the obvious influence of his former partner Simone Forti’s Platforms (1964). Severance of the personal applied here to craft a specific narrative. For ‘the’ female contemporaries, … erasure was almost a given. The deployment of personal material by or about a female artist would have an additional, often inadvertent effect, however, insofar as it was and is liable to being taken as corroborating invidious stereotypes of the narrowly confessional and autobiographical impul- sus underlying women’s creative processes…”

Contrast (for convenience’s sake) Mies’ glassy transparent Farnsworth House (1951) with Lewerentz’ dark, bricked St Peter’s Church (1963): if Mies sought to make interior/exterior shelter/nature seamless, the structure floating and weightless, it would appear that Lewerentz sought instead to make a seemingly impenetrable tomb-like structure, deeply anchored to the ground, like a sunken heath.

For years, (robert) Morris (a.k.a. ‘Body Bob’) deployed even his stripped body in the process of making. Art historian Simone Forti’s 1961. Severance of the personal applied here to craft a specific narrative. For ‘the’ female contemporaries, … erasure was almost a given. The deployment of personal material by or about a female artist would have an additional, often inadvertent effect, however, insofar as it was and is liable to being taken as corroborating invidious stereotypes of the narrowly confessional and autobiographical impulses underlying women’s creative processes… For years, (robert) Morris (a.k.a. ‘Body Bob’) deployed even his stripped body in the process of making, of which it is a central male figures, highlighting the uneven use of biographical information relative to male and female artists – say for instance, privileging the perception of Robert Morris as sole progenitor of his 1973 sculpture Columns while downplaying the obvious influence of his former partner Simone Forti’s Platforms (1964). Severance of the personal applied here to craft a specific narrative. For ‘the’ female contemporaries, … erasure was almost a given. The deployment of personal material by or about a female artist would have an additional, often inadvertent effect, however, insofar as it was and is liable to being taken as corroborating invidious stereotypes of the narrowly confessional and autobiographical impulses underlying women’s creative processes…
I would say even now, a female artist’s biographical ‘self-exposure’ always risks being perceived as an ascension to self-exploitation, or as a concession to limited versions of femininity. For myself, a frequent ‘self-exposer’ in contexts where that self-exposure is preconditioned as exotic, this perspective offered by artist Haegue Yang was especially useful to consider:

“Maybe this self-exposure is a synonym for presenting yourself within society as being exotic, both have something of the subversive response: ‘I’ll give you what you want’, and they are not about art specific principles. Critical work means for me working with courage. All difficulties do not necessarily demand courage, but ideas or the strength to persevere. Self-exposure however requires courage, to present yourself as exotic requires a great deal of courage, because it does not deal with the literal articulation of a specific identity. Faced with the question ‘who am I’, I behave totally irresponsibly. Why am I obliged to know more about myself than others? I don’t feel much obligation to the old school of identity positioning but I’m very self-conscious of post-colonial matters. I often respond to my own ethical conflict with an identification of absence. This courageous self-exposure could be a method of mediation; there is nothing there, and even if there is, it’s not an already known and expected identity, but a dark and strange one.”

Tacit permission given to behave irresponsibly is always welcome; I mean this in the sense of acting dutifully towards your full breadth of artistic license, to not sink into a safe complacency and steer clear of trouble, of difficulty. The pitfalls: that self-exposure can of course be a method of mediation required for the construction of architecture: “there are peoples with or without, writing…” Writing, Lévi-Strauss proposes, is the administrative, organizational tool of mass exploitation required for the construction of architecture: “The only phenomenon with which writing has always been concomitant is the creation of cities and empires, that is to say, the integration of numbers of individuals into a political system, and their grading into castes and classes. Such, at any rate, is the typical pattern of development to be observed from Egypt to China, at the time when writing first emerged; it seems to have favoured the exploitation of human beings rather than their enlightenment. This exploitation, which made it possible to assemble thousands of individuals into a political system, and their grading into castes and classes. Such, at any rate, is the typical pattern of development to be observed from Egypt to China, at the time when writing first emerged; it seems to have favoured the exploitation of human beings rather than their enlightenment. This exploitation, which made it possible to assemble thousands of individuals into a political system, and their grading into castes and classes…”

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A rock is difficult to penetrate but a rock can be crushed and broken with sufficient force. You can massage it with your love, it takes on the sheen but can it feel? If one could drink from a straw the inside of a rock, like a coconut, what would it taste like? How do you ingest this abrasive juice into your system? Would you resist or would you endure? Would it turn up in your turd, floating up like jewels, and damage the plumbing in consequence? Some say that resistance is futile or resistance is facile but resistance is all I have. What am I resisting?

“The strongest guard is placed at the gateway to nothing… Maybe because the condition of emptiness is too shameful to be divulged.”

I have always taken comfort in what Agnes Martin writes of solitude:

“We have been very strenuously conditioned against solitude. To be alone is considered to be a grievous and dangerous condition. So I beg you to recall in detail any times when you were alone and discover your exact response at those times. I suggest to artists that you take every opportunity of being alone, that you give up having pets and unnecessary companions. You will find the fear that we have been taught...
of lacking love because it declares it.”27

“the words of love… always already suspected evaporating.

myself upright, a stoic conviction to keep from unsteady on my feet and I need a mic to keep that could also be applied in reverse: that I am the dangers. I see every danger.

I want to write about love but I don’t know are so arbitrary, contingent and fragile. or financial, professional, critical or otherwise; to conform to: the appeal of an art practice Martin’s prescription offers a way of living to reach for limits30, to enter into the territory of suicidal daring, I think of Simone weil’s adopted path of female sainthood; the horse whole, what does it demand of the body? what is it to take a horse to move beyond language. And what of the experience itself? What is it to take a horse – that is all I do.) The hierarchization is written in language but the compulsion, or motivation to do, to see love in the world – a mere chance can strip us of everything – except the power to say ‘I’. That is what we have to give—only the destruction of the ‘I’.”31

Weil’s advocacy of decreation is read as evidence of her dysfunction, her-hatred-of-body, etc.”32 It is possible to read Weil’s self-imposed “extreme affliction” as an individualism honed towards a radical self-sufficiency; a kind of pre-emptive pathology of self-sacrifice can be mobilized.”33 This particular sanctioned suicide is paradoxically, where the woman’s free will might be located, where an assertion of agency of the constituted sexed subject may occur: to “kill yourself on your husband’s pyre now, and you may kill your female body in the entire cycle of birth.”

In Weil, and in the sari-performing widow, we have, perhaps not without coincidence, two models of the good woman: the good wife, the female saint.34 Weil is described as ultimately, having died “of love” – I wonder if the extremity of this love, is a virtue, a curse – the exclusive domain of the female, the persistence towards limits through the giving over of oneself – that also becomes an exhaustion of self in a way. It can’t be true, but it exists as tendency, as a circulating narrative that carries a kind of potency, at the very least. To take a horse whole, you may well die – one cannot afford to romanticize this undertaking – but in order for “the subjective anchors… to fall out of oneself,”’one cannot not risk consequence or rather one cannot not risk vulnerability, permeability.”35

Love situates us on the precipice of the un-thinkable, or love endlessly redeﬁnes the limit of the ‘thinkable’ – Jean-Luc Nancy would say “thinking is love”, he writes. “Love re-presents I to itself broken…. It presents this to it: he, this subject, was touched, broken into, in his subjectivity, and he is from then on, for the time of love, opened by this slice, broken and fractured, even if only slightly… The love break simply means this: that I can no longer, whatever presence to myself I may maintain or that sustains me, pro-pose myself to myself (nor im-pose myself on an- other) without remains, with- out something of me remaining, outside of me…”

Kah Bee Chow / Master of Fine Arts 2

Kah Bee Chow

Effeminacy

Detail
1. Jean-Luc Nancy begins his essay Shattered Love with the following ( DISCLAIMER): “Has not everything been said on the subject of love? Every excess and every exactitude? Has not the impossibility of speaking about love been as visibly recognized as has been the experience of love itself as the true source of the possibility of speaking in general? We know the words of love to be inexpressible, but as to speaking about love, could we perhaps be exhausted?” Nancy, p. 82.

2. Kate Love discusses these two models of understanding experience in the context of aesthetic experience, what it might mean to experience a work of art – I am applying her considerations here to the experience of love, somewhat carelessly but also perhaps because they are, for me, in equal measure, the kinds of experience which hold potential to destabilize this perceived dichotomy. p. 168.

3. I have only accessed Hedberg via Youtube videos which perhaps lend themselves to a particular kind of viewing, obsessive, repeated, out-of-context, susceptible to wildly inaccurate reception, or maybe only in my case. It is also relevant to mention how Hedberg’s offstage biography, for instance, his premature death from an alleged drug overdose, invisibly registers in his retrospective viewing; and my reading/experiencing of his routine. 5. Hedberg. 4. Hedberg.

4. Hedberg’s delivery contrasts with his predecessor, with seeming indifference he maintains a pitch perfect level of flatness which perhaps lends themselves to a particular kind of viewing, obsessive, repeated, out-of-context, susceptible to wildly inaccurate reception, or maybe only in my case. It is also relevant to mention how Hedberg’s offstage biography, for instance, his premature death from an alleged drug overdose, invisibly registers in his retrospective viewing; and my reading/experiencing of his routine. 5. Hedberg. 4. Hedberg.

5. Hedberg’s delivery contrasts with his predecessor, with seeming indifference he maintains a pitch perfect level of flatness which perhaps lends themselves to a particular kind of viewing, obsessive, repeated, out-of-context, susceptible to wildly inaccurate reception, or maybe only in my case. It is also relevant to mention how Hedberg’s offstage biography, for instance, his premature death from an alleged drug overdose, invisibly registers in his retrospective viewing; and my reading/experiencing of his routine. 5. Hedberg. 4. Hedberg.

6. There are far too many examples of Lawrence’s fastidiousness to list in their entirety. His stringent criteria for the use of brick: “First, Lawrence pro- poses to use it for all purposes: wall, floor, vault, roof light, altar, pulpit, seat. Secondly, he will only use the bricks with a flat side: bricks. Thirdly, no brick is to be used. The only way these conditions can be met is by a very free proportioning in the ratio of mortar to brick; to achieve such jointing (often very large) a very dry mortar mix which included ground slate is employed. The overall effect is one of a surface in which the bricks appear to be embedded in a ma- trix of mortar rather than laid up in bonded masonry work of conventional joints. This effect brings with it memories of ancient brickwork, Byzantine and Persian, as well as the indigenous vernacular of farm buildings.” Wilson, p.68.

7. Wilson, p58-60. Interestingly, the origins of the term “Brutalism”, may be traced to an article, Lawrencez collaborator Gunnar Asplund. “In 1956, the Swedish journal Rygg-Maatser (Build the next few years) had published a special issue on the work of Gunnar Asplund with an English summary that used the term “Neo-Brutalism”. (Eco) de Marie wrote to Architectural Review summarizing a letter from Asplund’s son, Hans, explaining how the term had arisen in Sweden.” Vidler, p.109.

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9. Jones, pp. 160-161. 10. Also from the same essay regarding the Swedish architectural manifests, “accepters of archi- tects wanted to build for the working class in the industrialised A-Europe. Changed family relations and shorter working hours opened the way to more rational residential solutions, with light, clean and spacious houses, and without superfluous, rowdy, feminine decorativeism.” Sandqvist.

The way the ‘feminine’ repeatedly posited as contradictory to the spirit of modernist architecture is demonstrated in this ‘real-life’ example: Frances Stark writes of modernist architect R.M. Schindler’s self-designed residence in L.A., occupied by him and his wife after the relationship disintegrated: “They divided the house and lived there, separately, together. His wife began to hang wallpaper and install carpeting, decorating her part of the house exactly the way she wanted, and here I might add that pink was her favorite color. Her husband would draft her letters which went something along the lines of: ‘I am sure you are familiar with the reasoning for my choice of materials and that what you have done is completely incongruent with my design and destroys the integrity of the structure,’ so something along those lines, ‘signed R.M. Schindler. Architect.’ So much for compromise.” Stark, p. 34. 11. I refer here to the 1933 Junichiro Tanizaki classic on Japanese aesthetics. Even though Mies’ work is most frequently compared to Japanese architecture between the two, Lawrencez shares an affinity especially with the sensibility espouses by Tanizaki (for me). In the book, Katsura: Picturing Modernism in Japanese Architecture, Yasufumi Nakamori writes extensively about the way architect Kenzo Tange ‘s aggressive cropping and editing of Isshimoto Yasuhiro’s photographs of the Katsura Imperial Villa served his agenda for postwar modern architecture in the 1960 landmark publication, Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture. For example, Tange “wanted to enhance the geometry of the structure to suggest a resonance between Katsura and modern, for example Masao Maeda’s architecture.” (47). Tange, of course, did not single-handedly contrive this resonance. German architect Bruno Taut visited Katsura in the 1930s, introducing the influence to his peers such as Gropius and Le Corbusier. It is, I am interested in comparing Tange’s cropped and uncropped photographs by Yasuhiro, because I find almost without fail, that a Tange-cropped photograph of Katsura will draw comparison with Mies, and an uncropped photograph with Lawrencez instead. I don’t exactly know why, but it has to do with Tange’s emphasis on the regularity, his framing of lines and restricted tonality.

12. Wilson, p.60. 13. Wilson writes of how the St Peter’s church emphasizes the essential nature and quality of the material: “Just so in Klippan: brick was never more brick, steel more steel, glass more glass, wood more wood.” p. 77. 14. I suspect at times that I am merely dabbling in this territory: “ersatz culture’s failed recuperations of antiquity,” Jenna Hirsh asks in her look into Jean-Luc Godard’s main preoccupation in Le Mepris (1963), Hirsh, 280. In a recent studio visit, I had spoken of the Hagia Sofia (562) in Istanbul and the sculptor Manfred Perinze as points of reference and sources of inspiration in my work – the visiting professor had remarked that of the two, the Hagia Sofia was the worthy aspiration, that the Byzantine monument should be the scale of ambition I set myself. I was reminded of this sentence from a text by Trist Havelkripke’s text, “I am chasing the absolute Zenith.” – what a brave declaration I thought, why choice anything less.

15. “Lovers form the extreme though not external limit of community, (…) Lovers expose, at the limit, the exposition of singular beings to one another and the pulse of this exposition, the compara- nce, the passage and the divide of sharing ‘As Nancy argues, a couple cannot exist in isolation, away from the ‘with’ of community. Despite the seemingly closed intimacy of lovers, they remain inescapably exposed to community…” Thus when lovers touch, they do so always upon the limit of and in relation to the community of which they remain irrevocably a part.” McMahon, p. 198.

16. Chave, pp.154-155. 17. I refer to the inclusion for instance, a video of my mother arranging flowers in the dining room of our Malaysian household in my graduating exhibi- tion in Sweden – where the quality of flow of business may precede or exceed the kind of banal domestic ‘feminine’ activity being showcased.

18. Yang, p. 66. 19. I think the idea of self-exposure might feel syn- onymous with the confessional impulse of internet culture; there are shared similar threads, which is also a motivation to consider what is in mind in the logic of unending broadcast, what this mode of delivery offers, is it unthinkingly automatic, is it brave, is it default, does it say anything?” Ra- becca Taistre wrote a few years ago on the then internet blogging phenomenon Emily Gould, of the frustration that “the meager spots for women
and, on the other, lines are hyper-directed according to the middle of things – they have aimless beginnings, and are forced to a consideration of the mechanisms of control and, simultaneously, waywardness – and thus to consideration of morality, rationality, order, civilization, cities and architecture. At the same time, the banality of these particular animals... constrains these large commentaries... and reduces them to the local problems of how to find your way through the jungle, or how to lay out a city street. These more local issues become, in both accounts, issues of how to follow, draw, interpret, account for, lines... the line is simultaneously the knowledge of how to aim or... how to judge."

21. Lévi-Strauss describes the members of the Namibwara tribe who retreated after witnessing their chief's performed 'writing' of wavy lines, or rather 'bikwara tribe who retreated after witnessing their chief's performed 'writing' of wavy lines, or rather... "there is no space from which the sexed subaltern can speak." p. 307.

22. I have deliberately taken this translation of an ancient saying by Greek statesman Pericles, which appears in Hannah Arendt's essay "The Crisis in Culture", out of context for specific misuse. Arendt writes,... "the lack of virility, the voice of effeminacy, which we would associate with too great a love of beauty or aestheticism, is mentioned here as a specific danger of philosophy." Arendt acknowledges the translation to be "hackneyed", the use of "effeminacy" is perhaps better qualified as a kind of weakness contrasted with "the knowledge of how to aim or... how to judge." p. 234.

23. My main reference here is the 1981 BBC drama series Brideshead Revisited.

24. It must be noted here that Steven Wright has said that there are many jokes and quotes attributed to him on the internet which are absolutely not authored by him, and this could easily be one such case – the prosaic punniness makes it liable to suspicion. It however fitted my purpose.

25. Fitzgerald, p. 108.

26. Martin applied this in practice: "Discommitted with the pressured life of the successful New York artist. Martin determined to give up painting and its worldly rewards. She left the city in 1963, initially for eighteen months of wandering (by truck) through the wilderness of the Northern Landscape... and then for a turn at creating geometries in another dimension: building, entirely by herself, as she tells it, a home and other structures with abobe brick and logs atop a mesa in an exceedingly remote area of New Mexico... her life... was most basic of modern conveniences (telephone, electricity, indoor plumbing)... the world, through a phenomenon of finally rebounding like a ball... only the cycle contains the truth... A squirrel... turning in its cage and the rotation of the celestial sphere – extreme misery and extreme grandeur." p. 179.

27. How many artists share in this idealism of shoving off the superficial, distilling a practice? If art, for me, is a way of approaching the question of how to live – to load it with such burden perhaps takes its toll: disillusionment is inevitable, retreat and withdrawal: strategies of survival.

28. Nancy, p. 27.

29. "Love enforces a context of perception that wreaks the reasonable and puts us in a place in which we are beyond the rationality of solidarity to cause and effect. In love we as they say, "lost to ourselves" and such an affect is a mold of how art can transform us." I am distorting Doug Ashford's sentiment here – but love, as he describes it, is precisely the kind of instance that makes the unthinkably conceivable. It is a double-edged sword that is potentially transformative and potentially destructive at the same time. Ashford.

30. "Stars and blossoming fruit-trees; utter permanence and extreme fragility give an equal sense of eternity... The vulnerability of precious things is beautiful because vulnerability is a mark of existence... The destruction of Troy; The fall of the petals from fruit trees in blossom. To know that what is most precious is not restored in existence – that is beautiful. Why? It projects the soul beyond time." Well p. 298.

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33. One could apply the same argument to the way Weil writes of work, as embodiment, as violence to the forces of the ideal... at least one of the consequences of mixing up geometric lines (straight lines) with urbanistic/architectural lines (paths, plans/elevations) with mules and donkey lines (paths and lines of descent) and, finally, with the lines of writing, was that this "mix-up" (the chiasma represented by the genetic "mix-up" of the mula) have no single origin – cannot be classified as a species) and the donkey, insofar as they both advance perturbad "technologies" for representing line in space (as city or architecture), participate in the an exact measure of the everyday. In this scheme "linearity" – an ideal system based on the same "passage to the limit" as pure geometry – must be perpetually won away, through philosophical mains (Cartesian intellectual, for exampl... from animality, irrationality, impurity and disease and death. This animal waywardness in relation to the ideal in architecture... the conflict and coupling of regulation and disorder is the kind of tension I am interested in attempting to channel and push forth further in the work.

34. But ultimately Spivak rejects this, she writes: "there is no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak." p. 307.

35. Spivak p. 302.

36. Ibid, p. 303


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“it is said that all sciences can trace their roots to Aristotle: but the science of cosmic aesthetics started with Sarutobi Sasuke, a famous ninja (a samurai who mastered many fantastic arts, including that of making himself invisible, chiefly to spy upon an enemy). the first step for a ninja is learning how to shorten distances by shrinking the earth, that is, to transcend the law of gravity.”

Even after two millennia and a decade, we understand electronics as something mysterious and brilliant. This mysterious ‘dark energy’ or ‘dark matter’, described as something both divine and ghostly, has a long history dating back to the ancient Greeks, with its peak during the 19th and 20th century. The story of the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales of Miletus suggests that it was through ‘rubbing’ fur against fur that electricity was first discovered. The fur was susceptible to one type of objects, in particular metallic objects, and this was an attempt to supersede simple natural phenomena from earlier mythological origins that had been firmly established as truths. Further on, there have been stories of the ‘Baghdad battery’, which consisted of a number of jars filled with vinegar connected in series by wires. And so on the story continues from Nikola Tesla’s many experiments, including wireless power and Tesla coils, up until today’s research on superconductors with zero resistance, such as superconductivity through germanium.

Electricity has clearly changed its status from ‘black magic’ to an everyday phenomenon that has proved to have a dependency-creating effect on the Western way of life. Panta rhei – everything flows – deriving from Heraclitus’ saying “Evee-newer water flows on those who step into the same rivers”, is an expression that for me describes the progress and nature of science.

The artist as amateur inventor and social entrepreneur

“In a complicated situation, where decisions have to be made about software and hardware, the artist is the best collaborator. During the sixteenth century and earlier artists were always called for when complicated discussions had to be made in shipbuilding and cathedral building.”

The word ‘amateur’, which in French means ‘one who loves’, derives from the Latin word ‘amare’ (verb) or ‘amator’ (noun). An amateur is someone who does something because they love to do it: “a person who engages in art, science, study, or athletic activity as a pastime rather than a profession.” The opposite of an amateur is a professional: someone who does something with the intention of profiting from it.

BROR SANDER BERG STØRSETH

There is no rewind button on the BETAMAX of life
In today’s electro-modernist landscape, the development of electric models and modules, such as radio, toys, musical instruments, computer and general utilities, has grown to be one of the world’s biggest and most important industries. The development has been extremely expansive, stretching from Alexander Graham Bell’s invention of the telephone to today’s quantum physics, the search for dark matter, fusion, superconductivity and a possible proof of the Higgs boson particle. The list is long, but not nearly as long as the list of wasted inventions and apparatuses, such as the Edison Kinetophone, the Vitaphone, Photofilm, the Magic Lantern, Fantascope, the Akair 8800, the Apricot, the North Star Horizon, etc. It’s as Bruce Sterling says, “we live in the Golden Age of dead Media.” Where the expert stands for a somewhat abstract development, the amateur may function as a key to the progress of said development.

With the commercialized development towards the ultimate, perfect product there is inevitably also a downside. Along with an extension there is always, according to Marshall McLuhan, an amputation of the product or invention. In the 2009 film Objectified, we are given a glimpse into the design industry’s eternal quest for the ultimate, timeless object. The ultimate object will, according to the German industrial designer Dieter Rams, be based on quality, user-friendliness, functionality and style ‘purity’. It seems like it’s the objects that are solely based on function and purity, where everything has been hidden beneath the object’s surface, that end up being ‘timeless’ and ‘eternal’ style icons. These objects never go out of fashion because they represent some form of honesty; as they never attempt to be anything more than what they appear to be. However, this would be impossible in art, because most artistic productions are based on a sense of fictional reality or something ‘genuine’, a withholding of information in a space where discussion is constantly in progress. So why is there always a positive attitude about the artist as amateur producer or amateur within science if the artist is not necessarily speaking about a ‘truth’?

The artist’s advantage as a producer, developer and inventor may be due to certain strategies the artist is able to bring into play:
1. Driven by sheer curiosity, the artist/amateur is extremely dedicated to his or her work. This creates a loop where curiosity generates results and the results, in turn, generate not only new curiosity, but also knowledge. Of course, this also applies for the specialist, but the specialist is still bound by a hierarchical economic system.
2. The artist/amateur is not bound to commercial viability, nor does he or she actively need to deal with publication issues, politics, recognition or internal hierarchies in the same way the specialist does.
3. The artist/amateur is willing to take chances on the basis of ‘minimal’ knowledge and simple assumptions about a given subject. The specialist and the amateur are, of course, both driven by curiosity. However, some form of profit will always influence the goal of a specialist, because the given research is initiated and operated by a private investor and/or the State. There are of course exceptions to every rule, but in the context of today’s post-Fordist society, profit is an important driving force for progression. I envision that the amateur (here I mean any kind of amateur, not only those operating within an art context) can and will offer new insight to a scientific, political, philosophical or economical model.
In this case, a good example would be Charles Darwin, who originally was an amateur in geology and zoology, and his radical publication *On the Origin of Species*. The publication turned upside down the religion-based science that prevailed at the time, and brought about a split between religion and scientific realism within the scientific community.

In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Karl Marx writes that “Consumption is simultaneously also production, just as in nature the production of a plant involves the consumption of elemental forces and chemical materials.”

When speaking of the artist as an amateur within various disciplines, it is natural to look at the development the artist makes from his or her starting point in the art field to the creation of a commercial product or fashion. An example might be the artist and musician Brian Cranberry’s *Monome* or Marcel Duchamp’s *Rotoreliefs*. In 1935, Duchamp exhibited six selected *Rotoreliefs* during the 35th Concours Lepine at the Salon des Inventions at Porte de Versailles. The *Rotoreliefs* were a complete commercial disaster. Much of the reason for this was that the public at that time were more or less outside of the global telecommunication system. As part of the project, the Americans launched a satellite in orbit over India, as a preparation for potential future telecommunication between the inhabitants of India. Television thus became an important medium in *The Anand Project*. The project’s concept was that one artist and a group of specialists in infrastructure, agriculture, film, medicine, etc., would film and distribute information that they thought would be useful for the social progress of India. The shot material mainly dealt with methods for improving milk production, breeding cattle and various construction techniques. The role of the artist became completely secondary, but as the introductory quote mentions, the artist became a key figure in complicated discussions. In 1975 the project began to broadcast to over five million Indians, with a total of 1200 hours of educational programming. India became the first country in the world to use telecommunicating education on a larger scale. This fueled the utopian idea of a truly democraticized cultural exchange. It is important to point out that Whitman became a key figure in *The Anand Project*, as he urged the natives and the team to take notes on their own practice and share this information along the way of production. This became a kind of self-education, and is, for me, an example of how the artist can function as an amateur and as leverage in global or internal projects.

In 1970, Whitman developed the project *Children and Communication* in collaboration with E.A.T. The project consisted of two spaces, one in up-town and one in downtown Manhattan. The spaces were linked together by 14 telephone lines, all connected to fax machines, printers, telegraph and telephones. As a form of early Internet or email, the spaces were constructed so that children could communicate over distance without any direct physical contact. What was interesting about this was the children’s self-confidence in communicating with other, unknown children. The reason for this self-confidence was probably the time the children had for reflection before responding or sending a message back to the other space. This created a distance between the sender and the receiver that eliminated all sorts of embarrassment. Once more Whitman became the amateur who collaborated with the expertise (communication specialists), testing the process on the ‘public’, that in this case was more than 500 children over a period of four months. Even today can the creation of such a concept serve as a catalyst for future progress in social and technological development.

From these types of projects one can see a logical line of technological development from pagers to mobile phones to, finally, the Internet. Of course this is not the only project where an artist has ‘guided the way’ towards the utopian communication channel of our time (the Internet). Works such as Juan Downey’s *Video Trans America* is based on the sharing of video across borders (showing many similarities to E.A.T.’s *Anand Project*), where Downey’s aim was a transnational Latin American identity, based on communication through video presentations of culture, space, architecture and poetry. This reflected a direction for the communicative innovation that was advancing during the 70s. If one goes further back into history, it is relevant to look at the early Russian avant-garde and the Constructivists, such as Vladimir Tatlin’s *Monument to the Third International*, Varvara Stepanova’s many patterns and textile contributions to the fashion world, and not to mention Ernesto Thayatal’s very simplistic, linear Futuristic overall garment, the GeZ. This was a beginning of artistic entrepreneurship and collaboration with science, fashion and the State, supporting a sincere idea that art could and should help to shape society, as well as push it forward into the modern age.

The ‘wild’ archive of modern times

In 1727, in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin and the Leather Apron Club (also known as the Junto) established the first circulating-library. The Leather Apron Club was originally created as a platform where members (who at first were Franklin’s closest friends) had the opportunity to discuss various issues concerning morality, politics, philosophy and business. The club further developed a library system where books could circulate among its members. This was mainly due to the economic barrier it was to establish one’s personal library. Naturally this is far from the world’s first library, as it is said that the first was situated in Iraq around 2600 BC.

If one is unwilling to accept the columns of figures as a library, as this can be seen a form of book-keeping, I would claim that the Incas invented the earliest form of library with their ‘quipu’. The quipu consisted of textile rope with subsequent smaller textile ropes hanging from the main rope. A knot on one of the secondary ropes stood for various numbers. One knot meant the number 1, five knots meant the number 5. By placing knots above one another it was possible to form larger series of numbers; meaning that for example 2 knots, followed by 0 knots, followed by 6 knots would mean the number 206. This made it possible to record dates, purchases, sales, etc.

Well, enough about the Incas’ library and back to Franklin and his Leather Apron Club. In 1731 the club also founded LCP (the Library Company of Philadelphia), where the model of circulating books was made available to the public.

Bror Sander Berg Størseth / Master of Fine Arts 2

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By paying an initial sum of 50 shillings a year, to help maintain the library and the purchase of new books, members could borrow one book to take home, read, and return it in order to borrow a new one. This was the beginning of something that would become part of the backbone of the library model we know today. It is interesting to see the Leather Apron Club’s strategy in relation to E.A.T.’s ideas of union collaboration across disciplinary fields. The Junto, or Leather Apron Club, was the online community AAAArG, where the community’s ideas of unison collaboration across disciplinary fields was the backbone of the library model we know today. It is interesting to see how the method was transferred to the archive, where works in context and dialogue with other works supplement one another to form a wider and more complex language. Some kind of ‘truth’ or dialogue arises between the objects or the works. This exists greater and wider discussion between politics, science, literature, medicine, philosophy, language and general research. Perhaps not so strange, as many of these theories are, however, based on mathematical models. Much of the art being produced today contains information that does not necessarily expand or really take us anywhere. This seems to be a kind of art ‘fashion’ or reproduction of earlier –isms, resulting from over-directness of the actual artwork. It is problematic because art will always have some kind of underlying ‘expansion’, as it is rooted in subjective background and level of knowledge. Take for example works by Sol LeWitt, where all the instructions for ‘producing’ the physical work are fully available. These works are direct in nature, but still involves a certain mystery. In the essay Naïve Set Theory, Anthony Huberman writes about a strategy involving seven points on how to develop and understand a discovery of the X. The strategy is aimed at art production, but it is also easy to see how this method can be useful in other disciplines, such as science, literature, medicine, philosophy, language and general research. Perhaps not so strange, as Huberman presents the points as follows: “1. A total absence of information about a given subject usually solicits no curiosity: without an awareness of its existence, we can’t possibly care about it. 2. When we come to realize the existence of something we never knew was there before, our curiosity is sparked. What is it? How does it work? What should we call it? Why is it there? But we remain in the early stages of our ability to recognize and read it. 3. We attempt to accumulate information and, while additional research provides many answers, it also raises additional questions, fueling more curiosity still. 4. At a certain point – at the top of the bell curve – we come to a place where effective discussion and debate is possible, but much still remains speculation. It is a moment of intense scrutiny and educated hypothesizing when questions, answers, contradictions, controversy, desire, violence, disappointment, and determination make up a complex system. 5. Little by little, though, speculation gives way to consensus. The power structures that make up the socio-political fabric begin enforcing their choices. The many questions gather around common answers, and information becomes more and more organized, making the transition into the understood. 6. Sinking into the understood, our given subject provokes less and less curiosity. 7. Eventually, we have a dictionary definition.”

The seven points are based on the Bell Curve’s progression viewed in relation to a discovery. Later in the text, Huberman introduces a graph containing four main strategies that artists use to withhold information in order to indefinitely maintain the peak of the Bell Curve.

Too much information: –> Not enough information: –> Private information: –> Dispersed information, for a jump back to Too Much Information, creating a constant loop going in both directions. An example he points to is Bruce Nauman’s 1994 work Jump, in which Nauman does exactly this jump. And that’s it. No more, no less. The information stagnates, because it has nowhere to go or to expand, as a result of too much accessibility. Too much information is here, according to
to Huberman, the ultimate goal to 'stop' information from leaking. It seems like the benefits of withholding information quite drastically exceed its disadvantages. There are a number of examples where people have used these strategies. Shamans, scientists, doctors, alchemists, and even the Roman Empire, all had the same goal: to maintain the Bell Curve's highest peak of interest. This seems to be a method for expanding one's own interest and creating a false mysticism or 'trust'. The alchemists believed that everything that had a comprehensible visual appearance, or could be directly read or interpreted, should be kept under suspicion. The truth in understanding objects, ideas and spaces had to be kept secret, sealed in codes of illustrations and illusions, like stacks of symbols upon symbols, a hermetic art. Hiding the 'truth' made it possible to build a utopian space based on hypotheses or lies. The Roman Empire had a different approach to withholding or concealing the cruel and 'bad' reality: bread and circuses for the people. Scientists withheld radical information in order to protect their social status within the scientific community. Perhaps Huberman's graph can function as a kind of key to understand or read the nature of a work. Boris Groys writes in *The Weak Universalism* from 2010:

"One repeatedly hears and reads that we need change, that our goal — also in art — should be to change the status quo. But change is our status quo. Permanent change is our only reality: And in the prison of permanent change, to change the status quo would be to change the change — to escape the change. In fact, every utopia is nothing other than an escape from this change." 32

In the essay *The Electronic Age: The Age of Implosion*, McLuhan suggests that an implosion will come as a result of communication expansion.35 The world is fusing together, as the gaps between continents and state borders are gradually becoming smaller or at least less apparent. In the end this could lead to an implosion where culture and capital fuse into one culture and one capital. One of McLuhan’s most important points in *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* is the extension and amputation of mankind and culture as a result of new inventions. As an example, McLuhan uses the automobile. It’s easy to understand what kind of impact the automobile has had on the social development and decline of modern society. In relation to social class, the automobile still functions as a status symbol, but many of its environmental disadvantages are being 'manipulated', such as the industry’s development of ‘environment-friendly’ electricity-based vehicle. In my eyes, this is a sign that withholding information is a kind of planning for the future? Viewing this in relation to Nam June Paik’s text *Art and Satellite*, the satellite and its global availability appears to be an accelerator towards utopian change. I believe this to be rooted in McLuhan’s idea of the Global Village, but also in a selective sharing of information across borders where a state has the ability to withhold or disclose information (whatever is in the best interest of said state). This ‘mysticism’ also applies to art and can help to prolong the peak of the Bell Curve:

**Communication ‘magic’ and a development towards the ultimate ‘ninja’**

“Electricity has wrapped the planet in a single cohesive field or membrane that is organic rather than mechanical in nature. The population of the world has imploded, as have the models of perception and learning. All men are now involved in one another physically and psychically as happens when they occupy a very small village.” 34

In the essay *The Electronic Age: The Age of Implosion*, McLuhan suggests that an implosion will come as a result of communication expansion.35 The world is fusing together, as the gaps between continents and state borders are gradually becoming smaller or at least less apparent. In the end this could lead to an implosion where culture and capital fuse into one culture and one capital. One of McLuhan’s most important points in *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* is the extension and amputation of mankind and culture as a result of new inventions. As an example, McLuhan uses the automobile. It’s easy to understand what kind of impact the automobile has had on the social development and decline of modern society. In relation to social class, the automobile still functions as a status symbol, but many of its environmental disadvantages are being ‘manipulated’, such as the industry’s development of ‘environment-friendly’ electricity-based vehicle. In my eyes, this is a sign...
of being in complete denial, as nickel cadmium is an important component in the vehicle’s battery packs. I believe this optimistic belief in the car as an extension of mankind is situated somewhere between a technological barrier and the politics of our non-renewable fossil-fueled economic model.

“We hear people talk about technology as something very threatening, but we are technology, the universe is technology... it’s simply a matter of our understanding these things... That nature has these beautiful exchanges... and what’s happened was this shortsighted – really scared – fear of man about whether he’s going to survive.”

In addition to Nikola Tesla’s, Alexander Graham Bell’s and the Spaniuk’s (the fellow traveller) contributions to the ‘diminishing’ of the world, it is natural to look at the Internet: the ‘space’ where social relation and cultural capital is far more important than income and physical possession. The invention of the Internet, with all its communication power, has transformed McLuhan’s “global village” into a global ‘cottage’. Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Spotify, Google, Pinterest, etc., has definitely expanded the space for sharing information, discussions, politics, business, payment of bills and political disobedience, producing an almost narcotic-like dependency effect. However, I do recognize that the Internet is bound by certain economic rules, as it has quite clearly developed form its early utopian idea of free mass sharing into a tool for market control and hidden questionnaires. Companies such as Google and Apple particularly exercise this. Google for example selects your search results based on your previous search history. This means that you do not necessarily get the search results that provide the most ‘relevant’ information, but rather a ‘melting pot’ of what Google thinks you are interested in. Sure, this can be seen as a positive thing, but in my eyes the amputation is far greater because it removes a kind of ‘randomness from the search, a randomness which could lead to new discoveries and points of view.’ This power is exploited and sold to various companies that, in turn, use this information for the sale of products and services. The ‘cloud’ has gone from being a social meadow to being a social shopping mall packed with ‘invisible’ advertisement, which is a clear amputation of what is in principle a utopian extension of a global network. Will the amputation of the Internet gradually lead to a transformation of today’s technology, or are we heading towards a cultural implosion where reality has been reduced to a ‘pata-space of experiences? Returning to E.A.T.’s idea of mass educating the population of India, one could say that the Internet, being the space where absolutely everything can be learned, traded, bought, sold or exchanged, has definitely taken over this role.

NOTES:

4. The ‘battery’ is said to be discovered in the village of Khnucy Rabiaou’s near Baghdad, Iraq in 1936. The jars are dated to 250BC.
5. See my work Ponto Rhei. Germanium (32 in the periodic table) is the purest chemical substance that has ever been discovered. It is produced through the s-process in asymptotic giant branch stars. A small amount of the substance can, however, be found on earth in copper and coal seams. Germanium has been used in electronics, for example as resistors or diodes in early radios. Silicon crystals later replaced this, because it provides a number of economic benefits, such as being most widely distributed in sand. For a long time, germanium seemed to be a ‘dying’ element in science, being unable to provide us with any ‘special’ advantages. Despite of this, the U.S. invested and stored large amounts of the substance in barrels. In recent times it has been discovered that Germanium is extremely light-sensitive and can therefore be used in the quest for dark matter and the development of light-sensitive telescopes for further exploration of outer space. It has also been discovered that the substance can be the key to superconductors capable of operating at room temperature. This could accommodate the development of friction-free vehicles or supercomputers with zero resistance in the flow between electrons in its components. Opening up the possibility for performing heavy algorithmic calculations at a very high speed, this implies a possible development towards artificial intelligence. My work examines the giant success Silicon Valley experienced by leaving germanium-based electronics in favor of silicon. The re-discovery of germanium in science shows us that development often has to take one step back in order to take two steps forward. Germanium is perhaps our time’s Carrnot, the alchemists’ deep-red mythical material used in the production of the Philosopher’s stone.
9. A very elusive hypothetical particle predicted to be an important element in the standard model of particle physics.
11. Science has evolved to the point where the consumer no longer has the opportunity to understand how a product or theory is constructed. This results from the extreme expertise within the field. The amateurs nonetheless continue to self-educate themselves, possibly causing some unexpected reasoning.
13. From The documentary; objectified (2009) by Gary Hustwit
15. Monome is an electronic hardware platform or canvas, consisting of 64, 128 or 256 light buttons organized as a grid. The grid was developed through open source, where the Monome had no function until software was written based on the needs of an artist or musician. Initially created as a platform for simplifying live music production in performance, the Monome changed from being a unique object to being a limited ‘product’ available for use and further development among other artists.
16. Duchamp produced a total of 500 Rotorreliefs as a possible solution to the issues with movement in painting. The Rotorreliefs were placed on a gramophone, turning at a certain speed to give an impression of depth.
18. Ibid., p.154.
19. Ibid., p.131.
20. In the summer of 2011 I read an article about accessible sound, almost like spotlights or stage lightning. Realizing that this would be the perfect presentation of my work A messy vitality, that consists of field recordings from exploding electro particles in the stratosphere, I contacted the company Holosonics located in Watertown, Massachusetts, USA. This would be the perfect presentation, as the speaker would give a clear audibility only within a given area, where the sound would be perceived as if it was materializing in the head of the recipient. The technology is based on a non-linear relation between high and low frequency waves, which has its origin in underwater sonar systems. In 1998, Joseph Pompei came up with a mathematical model for transmitting sound frequencies through air that would only materialize if met by resistance, like for example the resistance of a human ear. After repeated email conversation with Holosonics where my project, as well as issues of volume, distance and design, was presented, we came to an agreement where Holosonics accounted for the technology in the speaker and I presented the framework around the speaker.


25. My work Never ending loop is based on discussing and learning through various websites and forums on science and amateur science. Inventions were developed from a set of principles taken from various theories produced by amateurs, professionals and myself. In an attempt to self-educate myself, I developed a loop antenna, with the aim of tapping into an unknown source, an unknown library of continuous alien information. These re-inventions were based on ‘magic’, facts, and apparent sham, as well as trial by error. This produced a feeling of being in a space enabling contact with unknown sources of energy and space, almost like being in Tesla’s laboratory.


28. The system of objects links objects to psychological desire.


31. My work Hymn To The Idea of Night presented the framework around the speaker. Never ending loop of volume, distance and design, was presented, with Holosonics where my project, as well as issues this strategy by withholding information of a given object. The work consists of three wooden frames with glass covered in black heat-sensitive paint. Behind each glass hides a silk-screen print of geranium. When the glass is heated, the black paint gradually becomes transparent, revealing the silk-screen. When the light is turned off, the picture of geranium slowly fades away, back into its black ‘nothingness’.


35. Ibid.


Thoughts about Painting

One day a little seed, a grain, a particle, perhaps an atom, stole inside me, dissolved, and became a thought. A thought that etched itself into my organs, my brain, somewhere among the nerve cells.

The little seed that came out of nowhere lives and moves rhythmically in my body, floating, perforating and is constantly searching. Quietly it reaches out with its roots, tenderly changing its shape, and faithfully carving its patterns. Painting is an endless striving and a constant insisting, a will on its way out into the unknown, the unseen, the unheard, and the un-experienced. Intent on having the right to live its own life.

Painting is like a time machine, an instrument that calls back time with a note that pierces the silence, a channel which my soul follows and listens to.

In my golden labyrinth

There was a wall of sorrow between me and you. While you were away casting life forms in precious metals, the golden gate called to you. It was your home and everything there yearned for you. One day in your brain something went wrong with you. You invited yourself into my room, although the door stood in your way. From the ceiling hung a dream, to someday become a man like you. I chose to lean against the wall, down to the floor you led me.

Toward a corner you directed me. Your shadow hunted me, with the whip you spread fear. Imprisoned in a room, a window and a door were painted for you.

railway embankments and landing strips.

Words that travel on foot, through desert seas and icebergs, seaward towards the horizon, beyond the clouds and even higher, even further in, even further out.

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painting
Your voice awakens me, makes me remember the name you gave me. Everything I found when you disappeared and left me. In plain view of Rosengård, behind the concrete a few metres underground, the last address became a home for you. Will come soon and follow you. Will just do everything first, the way you taught me. Miss you, it torments me, but rest in peace. I love you.

Ice and clay

Will not capitulate.

Turn my back and congratulate; spit out the snuff and gesticulate. No more sabotage, I state. Your country is my country now, mate. Our love can elucidate. About us we can debate. When we’re alone and want to proliferate it is time to demonstrate.

No machine can transform the apprehension we ingurgitate.

We want to eat more, the farms with more pigs populate. And when people my playground invade. Call me “fucking monkey” and give me a hand grenade. Then you’ll see me. Terror is yours.

Breathe in and breathe out. Come to Skåne and play on the beach, take a fistful of sand and then go to Dalby quarry. There are good people there to keep you company all night.

Painting as mathematics

Just like mathematics is dependent on language, it is in language, with language, I must draw. The deeper I feel and pronounce the words, the more distinctly can I draw. Without language it becomes nothing, but nothing also becomes something, an abstract thing. Nature and animals say nothing but at the same time that is everything.

The cut-glass chandelier

It hangs from its hook in the ceiling and is drawn downwards by its own weight. In its canopy three cables are hidden: one red, one yellow, one blue. From the canopy hangs the neck which branches into four little shoulders, which in turn become the cylindrical arms that hold the light bulbs. A cross cuts symmetrically through the head and supports a large gold ring; thereafter follow five floating rings, smaller and smaller, beneath each other. Linked together with golden chains. Hundreds of crystal drops hang from them and strive downwards, like rain drops. I see the geometry.

How many chandeliers does one have the time to paint?

Painting, because it is a ritual, as in a religion of its own. Or a game of chess.

Who cares? What am I supposed to explain? I’m playing chess, leave me alone. What shall I do with the king that the pawns defend?

Black or white?

What shall I do with the king that the pawns defend?

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Black or white?
and previous identifications are critically discussed. Here, 24 different species are described, giving information on the taxonomic, and phytogeographic position. Most of them belong to the spontaneous elements present in the Mediterranean forests, maquis and grasses of Southern Italy, such as Arbutus unedo, Laurus nobilis, Nerium oleander, Quercus ilex, Quercus robur gr., Cornus mas, Myrtus communis, Phyllitis scolopendrium, Viola reichenbachiana, Chrysanthemum coronarium, Anthemis cotula, or widely cultivated, such as Cupressus sempervirens, Cydonia oblonga, Pinus pinea, Punica granatum, Papaver somniferum, rosa centifolia, Phoenix dactylifera. A symbolistic purpose of the pictures is also clearly evident. 3

Zardasht Faraj

Vertical aspiration
Fresco painting on KHM gallery pillar, Sand, lime, fish-glue and pigments
0,25 × 3 m
Vertical aspiration
Detail


like coming out of a dream and waking up in another world.

Something happened when I came into that room in the museum and caught sight of the paintings. A powerful experience which meant that I woke up, understood, and felt the craftsmanship. It was so alive, it carried me back two thousand years and tied me to the present. Everything suddenly became so real and I began to recognise nature. I heard the birds and the trees spoke to me.

Livia, who was she? Was she a god, a mother, or a mistress? Was she the power and the military? Or was she perhaps alone in her villa? Did she just sit there and watch the birds eating berries and the plants being pollinated by insects? Where the pigments have embedded themselves in the starlit Paris blue sky above all the green. There in her living room, did she sleep well at night?

Fresco
I became interested in the craftsmanship of fresco, which is painting by hand directly onto wet plaster. Sand, lime, water, dirt, and pigment. The clay is bound and turns into stone.

In my graduation exhibition, where line drawings of different geometrical chequered patterns had been installed in the spotlights that lit the gallery walls, I worked with the technique. On one of the gallery’s plaster walls I drew a simple pattern and mixed the mortar with black paint, and painted the mortar directly onto the wall. Did the same on one of the gallery’s supporting pillars, but in pink.

And in one of the gallery’s larger rooms I exhibited line drawings from my diary, which lay on a series of books of stories from One Thousand and One Nights. On top of this, glass panes that were twisted on top of one another, creating a spiral that produced a pattern. A spotlight was directed from above onto the work, and that in its turn produced a shadow on the floor and a reflection on the wall.

In another room I exhibited a work in tiles and mosaic which I produced at the Vilnius Academy of Art, where I studied the techniques of fresco, mosaic, and stucco. The image in the work is a paraphrase of one of my own oil paintings.

The work in the gallery gave me the strength I needed to go through a difficult separation, and awakened an interest in time, space, and mathematics in relation to painting.

Villa di Livia
is the fresco that more than two thousand years ago was dedicated to the goddess Livia Drusilla by her husband, Rome’s first emperor, Julius Caesar Augustus. For more than a half century, Livia Drusilla was the most visible and powerful woman in classical Rome. The fresco was painted in the living room of the villa and depicted the garden that surrounded the villa; one could see, among all the green and Paris blue, hand-painted canaries, doves, grand firs, and pomegranate trees.

Livia’s flora
The frescoes of Livia’s villa at Prima Porta, Rome, are the most famous representations of Roman gardens. The painted flora is analyzed from the scientific viewpoint and
Johanna Fjaestad
An attempt to discover a painterly vocabulary

Being sparkles with energy, the presence of objects imposes itself on us, with the aid of the gaze we extend ourselves to be in amongst them. We have befriended Maurice Merleau-Ponty – he thinks there is a system of exchanges between the world around us and the body in which the sees and the seen are capable of reversing their roles as object and subject. The body acts as a kind of mirror, with a mirror’s relationship to the world. Through a mirror we both see and are seen at the same time. We can feel the other’s body in our body, in the same way, we can feel the space and objects in our body. Merleau-Ponty writes: “man is a mirror for man”.

I interpret this as being about the way we react physically to different colours, to surfaces, to the size of things, to the canvas of a painting, to the way the presence of a painting affects us. We could say that we see tactilely. That the body has its own sight, which is perhaps more a kind of “feeling” and that paintings and objects have their own Being and “see” us just as we see them. In this way, paint spread out on a flat surface takes on a life of its own. The charge contained in Being is transferred from the artist’s gaze to the canvas. Seen like this through Merleau-Ponty’s perspective the magic of painting is brought out into the light. It becomes self-sufficient and a part of the secret of Being, which must become visible in some way in order to enter into the work of art. But, at the same time, there is a distance. This involves a double movement that both encloses and distances. The gaze allows us to partake in reality, but it is a tool with limitations: the way that the gaze is rooted in ourselves as focal point, the way we never get rid of the body. Merleau-Ponty gives as an example the way that in reality things are never really behind each other, it is only from our perspective that they seem to be. In space, in Being, there is actually no ‘behind’. Therein lies the distance, for despite our gaze, we are trapped behind it and our subjectivity. However much the world looks back at us, and however much the subjective and objective exchange places – as focal points we can never enter fully into Being. I think there is something sad in this intrinsic distance, including in the way that Merleau-Ponty enthusiastically tries to push us into Being, into existence, without fully succeeding, the distance will always be there.

4. ibid, p. 47.
I think of this as the inconstancy of Being, the unattainable; the subject turns away from us, the picture slips out of our grasp. In the same way that we are shut inside ourselves, and yet are constantly grasping at our surroundings. No man is an island. Small islands that move around in a shared context, but which can never fully meet. We reach out to things, but can never fully attain them. The gate reaches out into Being, the painting is painted with the aid of the gaze. We reach out to the painting. For there is something there. The wordlessness of painting.

Painting is wordless, this is a quality that I appreciate, but there is still something in it that feels akin to the linguistic. Something fell into place when I read Janet Karden’s critique of David Salle’s paintings. She writes (with reference to Salle’s painting): “The silences and pseudoconstructions, sudden vulgaries, and high-art quotations in Salle’s work are related to the editions and discontinuities of linguistic structures.” And: “In a Salle painting, there is always this palation of images: they expand and fall apart. Forcing one to abandon a failed premise; or, our verbal habits being what they are, they may offer our consciousness a half formed phrase that rises like the titles of Salle’s paintings, out of a ‘clouded pool of personal symbols.’ It is perhaps to be found here, in our verbal practice. The attraction and the feeling of having found a piece of the puzzle in the possibility of comparing paintings to half- formed phrases or statements, of seeing them as synonyms, of interpreting “pauses” as full stops or commas. Paintings in adjectives, verbs, nouns. In the marks of the paint there are shifts of tempo – the fast, the slow, hesitation, immediacy. The light and the fleeting, the controlled and stuff – setting these different expressions against each other as a kind of sentence construction. As words in a poem, even if it has no linear reading. The encounter between them creates a collision, or leads us on into the next mark in a chain of possible associations. Associations

Galen A. Johnson writes about the notion of invisibility in Merleau-Ponty’s book The Visible and the Invisible, about things that are present even if not seen. Likewise that can be implied by a single red dot, apart from it being a red dot, by throwing up associations with roof tiles, bishops’ robes, and flags of the revolution. Ponty compares the dot to “a fossil drawn up from the depths of imaginary worlds” which leads us toward invisible possibilities and latencies. Similarly, I think we all have a library of associations created by the lives we have lived and by our collective consciousness. This library of associations is, of course, a complex thing, which I think contains everything that has been stored in our brains up to that point. I was attracted by the idea of how something, a red dot, for example, can trigger impulses and elicit a swarm of associations from high and low. There is something, undoubtedly fundamental, in our behaviour that makes us read things together and to create meanings when we, for example, see two paintings side by side. Or a space completely filled with paintings – a pattern of meanings emerges out of random information. With painting this phenomenon is for me part of the wordless. There is something very subtle and exciting about being able to say things without directly saying them. Striking a balance between meaning and non-meaning.

Time

Time. Merleau-Ponty writes about his concept of “vertical time”, which arises when we lose ourselves in the moment and the flow of time stops. He lists joy, euphoria, fascination, infatuation and artistic creation. It is not a question of forwards or backwards, but of the world’s collected magnetism. Being as a series of explosions of the world into ever new and renewed forms. Merleau-Ponty says: “The history of cultural expression is intensifying, deepening astonishment (wonder) in the face of this ‘there is’.” Thus, this “there is”, the Being, as a series of continual, ephoric explosions, a coalescing, an intensity, a charging up. Attempts to trap these explosions, an ecstatic moment, in painting, Merleau-Ponty writes: “Painting has the ability to produce and reproduce the same moment again and again until the end of time.” Somewhere here perhaps lies the feeling of presence and the functioning as a time capsule that can be found in painting. Both as a frozen moment – a long-drawn-out present moment, and a slightly sentimental reference to past moments, through the time it actually took to make it – everything is present in the end result. At one point in his Eye and Mind Merleau-Ponty writes about a simultaneously ongoing sequence of events that both holds together and separates, and where even what lies ahead of or behind in time exists simultaneously. Being, as a place where fragments of the past, experiences of the present, and thoughts about the future coexist. It is the gaze that stands for the simultaneously ongoing events and consequently in those events there exists both that which lies ahead and that which lies behind in time. Through the way that the gaze makes it so that we can also see things that we cannot touch, and consequently take us “all the way to the sun and the stars” and it can also get us to “see” things that are not present at all, places and people far away, through lending its function to memory and the power of the imagination. It is the non-linear aspect that I am angling for. The Being of painting as non-linear.

The Postmodern

Fragmented time, Merleau-Ponty’s explosions – Being and vertical time feel Deleuzean rhizomatic and postmodern. Folke Edwards scrutinizes postmodernism in his book Från Modernism till Postmodernism, and we can tell that he is disturbed by the developments he is seeing and wants to get back to the ideals of modernism. He maintains that “with postmodernism faith in Reason, Natural Science, Technology as humanity’s principal guides and Prosperity as the principal goal have been seriously undermined,” and goes on to say that “the early 20th-century dream of purity (=purism) has consequently been replaced by the late 20th-century’s focus on the ugly, the hybrid (=the other) and chaos.” The fundamentalism and intolerance of the early 20th century have been replaced by the scepticism and tolerance of the late 20th century. Can we see scepticism as a means of getting away from the dishonesty that often accompanies high ideals, and tolerance as a way of wanting to be more open, and in which everything, even the ugly, has its place? When faith in the ideals declines, we often find disillusion. There is something disillusioned and sad about postmodernism – the price of the freedom one gets when scales of values collapse. It becomes difficult to believe in...
anything, there is an after-feeling, a post-state, without landmarks nothing matters any more. Brutal forces, which perhaps have been there all the time, emerge into the light. But there is also something positive about the levelling out of value scales and dualisms of good and evil, truth and lies, good and bad, ugly and beautiful. In this levelling out a space opens up to move about in freely, with much less to aim at or rely on, but with fewer walls and barriers. Edwards takes up the idea that postmodernism involved an artistic levelling out, an evening out of differences through the boundary-crossing and hybridization that it employed. Among the children of this levelling out we could see Kippenberger, David Salle and the more contemporary Wilhelm Sasnal. They pluck things out of aspects of art history and from the profusion of the media so as to re-evaluate ideas, to pull things apart, to discard and recombine them without apparently making any distinction between high and low.

I take a lot of my material from the Internet or magazines and newspapers and mix them with my own photos or things that I find in books. But I suspect that this is in no way particularly discrimination-free, but rather there is a red connecting thread, so that not every type of source material will do and so that I do not treat all materials alike.

The important thing about the idea of postmodernism, for me, is a feeling that existence is not complete. There is no longer any one explanatory model or “truth”. It is no good ignoring all the parallel developments. The world (along with all manner of other things) is there, a click or a press of a button away. The inequality of distribution is exposed, geographical distances have shrunk. At least, in the way that information and contact are there if we choose to acquaint ourselves with them. There is a choice, and in that choice there is also a responsibility.

Hardt and Negri’s book Empire17 seems relevant for explaining something about our disillusioned age with its dystopian interpretations of the machinery of neoliberalism as an all-embracing reality – an Empire. An empire that is dictated by the forces that, every second, cause enormous sums to move around in the speculative dimension, with no other purpose than profit itself, and where the economic web has become so technically complex that the newspapers and media can never give us a complete insight into what is actually behind it all. In the book Hardt and Negri’s Empire has taken over the world. We are its creations through the way that we grew up in it and with its aid. And there is no “outside”.

The contradiction in simultaneously having a private life that may well be harmonious and loving creates a two-way (or multi-way) split that means that life can no longer be “whole”. We live in a world of parallel events, where there are holes in the picture and everything happens at the same time.

In my non-indiscriminate searching of source material, I have, despite the selection criteria, wanted to be open to subjects from different contexts and have avoided working according to a particular theme. My intention was that the different subjects were to be conglomerated on top of one another without any mutual ordering according to an idea about parallel sequences of events. At the back of my mind I have occasionally had the beginning of Inger Christensen’s poem Alfabet (Alphabet)18, itself a conglomerate:

… doves exist, dreamers, and dolls; killers exist, and doves, and doves; haze, dioxin, and days, days, days.
exist, days and death; and poems exist; poems, days, death…

The poem mixes a literal wonder at everything that exists with a feeling of silent unease – among all that is beautiful is the uncanny. A world in which death and dioxins exist at the same time as dreams and poems.

Paint

In addition to the minor incompatibilities of subject matter, I have sought out tensions with the aid of paint and the way that it is applied to the canvas. The fragile, almost abstract side by side with the weight given by heavy paint. The thin paint and the thick paint share the same surface, this, too, a parallel sequence of events, albeit on the same picture surface. I have sought out the tension that arises when how and what meet – when the manner of painting matches the subject and creates a third. This “third” can, I think, be summed up as the whole point of using paint as a medium. When the paint is not just the means used for the illustration of the subject and when the subject is not just an excuse for using paint. The subject can, I would say, be exchanged for context, but in my current situation, I have started off largely from figurative “motifs”. Barry Schwabsky19 puts it a little differently, but with something of the same gist – when writing about when the painter succeeds in conflating the verb and the noun. The verb as in the execution, the making of the painting, which is the artist’s (perhaps) principal relationship with the work, the act of painting, and the noun as in the finished work that the spectator sees, the finished painting. Leoparden går i bilden 20, in the dissolved paint an animal can be seen and in the animal dissolved paint can be seen. The brushstrokes are clear. The medium present. The animal is paint, and to paint and, at the same time, on its way out of one half of the picture into the next layer of paint. It is, of course, hard and, I would say, a fundamental challenge to find that third thing, or as Schwabsky sees it, the bringing together of verb and noun. One tool is intuition. Which for me is about feeling your way forwards and trusting that this works. Sometimes this means waiting and putting something aside, in order to later “know” what needs to be done. This too, something wordless, and something that happens without first being formulated. A contact with Being in the sense of Merleau-Ponty?

What I want to get nearer to

I want to get nearer to a way of painting that is founded on associations, which plays with loose connections and sends out ambiguous signals. Where visible patterns in the paint, repetitions of subject, reflections and inversions, turn into subtle shifts of meaning and conjure up something that is askew – a gap in the ordinary. The subjects that I use are recognisable as general archetypes, a frog, a demonstration march, a stone thrower, but they have something aberrant in their impulses, in the treatment of the picture and the paint. The roses are brown and have a weight that ordinary roseleaves do not have, the road is toxic green and has the feeling of being a negative compared to its diptych companion. The fish have a shape that feels familiar, but which, because of its abstraction, cannot be given an exhaustive reading. The everyday and the dreamlike merge into one another and try to exist simultaneously, in parallel. I look for tensions in the way of applying the paint, the thick and heavy as opposed to the thin and ethereal – that, too, a language. These are small beginnings. Occasionally perhaps, it leads to their being too subtle, or for that matter, too obvious. I am interested in how painting can relate to space; how the two-dimensional can communicate with the three-dimensional. I have tried...
this by tying them together with the aid of paint and form, or through, for example, a movement on the canvas that points outwards to the room suggesting a continuation out into it. An arm throwing, in one version, two versions, three versions, one of which is in mirror image.

I think it is exciting to have a conceptual structure into which I can insert painting’s various means of expressions, to juxtapose them and to compare them with a meaning generation like that of linguistics. The wordlessness of painting speaks many words through the associations that it triggers and through the bodily sensations that the paint emits. I am fascinated by painting’s presence and function as a time capsule. I am drawn to and inspired by painting’s capacity for fiction, to its capacity to act as windows onto something else. There is something decidedly seductive about oil paint, something that draws us in and on.

There is a distance between the self and the world. In that distance a longing both to get away from the context that cannot be reached and, at the same time, a longing to belong. There is something disillusioned and sad about the postmodern worldview that is no longer whole, but also something wild and free, now that walls and scales of values have collapsed. In this: Every man is an island. What happens if we take a step away from all the voices and look around us? If the gaze sees beyond the expected and the inculcated, does not the world then become both more terrible and more fantastic?
Further into the darkness
further into the light
further into oneself
further into togetherness
further out into the darkness
further away from the darkness
further away to the darkness
Reaching far in, you make your way out
to something else. Reaching far in, you are moved
further away from everything else,
from all other options.
Moving inwards, but feeling outwards.
To be inside, but find yourself outside.
Being inside or outside.

#1 Girl Getting Doughed
A young woman dressed in white, projected
in a space. Her arms are turned away from her
hips, and her eyes are fixed on a distant point.
Two other people, dressed in bright clothes,
ocasionally come into view. They pick up pieces
of dough from the floor, and work them into
long teardrop shapes that they proceed to hang
from the young woman's shoulders, head, and
outstretched arms. The young woman seems to
be close to losing her balance, and her expres-
sion reveals the considerable weight of the dough
she has had loaded onto her. At some point,
the situation makes her laugh. Sometimes, the
look on her face suggests that she is wondering
why she ever agreed to take part in any of this.

The dough is dragged to the ground by its own
weight, as the pieces stretch longer and longer,
until gravity finally brings them to the floor with
a thud. The two workers seem disappointed, but
the young woman seems relieved. They begin
repairs, and perform them while completing the
original vision. The projection follows the action
in real time, except for one cut about two thirds
in. After the cut, there is a lot more dough rest-
ing on the young woman's chest and shoulders,
and by now she looks bored out of her mind, not
really paying attention to the situation in front of
her any more. The dough on her chest looks like
a big bunch of grapes, and another large piece of
dough is placed on her head, almost obscuring
her face. The two workers seem satisfied now,
standing at a distance to examine their work so
far. All that remains for them to do is make some
minor improvements. Then, suddenly, the dough
won't cling to the young woman's body any
more, and falls to the floor, almost in one piece.
For a few seconds, the workers are paralyzed by
surprise and confusion over how to respond to
the situation. Then, they begin a desperate at-
tempt to recover the work they've done. Without
preparations, however, it proves to be impossible
to reattach the pieces to the young woman's
body, and the workers have to give up and leave
their vision behind. The film fades to black, and
starts over from the beginning.

NEW LIFE GROWS OUT OF
EVERY GRAVE

The temple of Diana in Selçuk, Turkey, No-
vember of 2011. Perhaps it’s something about
the decay of it that enchants me so? The fact
that something so magnificent that it was once
named one of the Seven Wonders of the World1
has been reduced to a pile of rubble. The only life
The ancient Roman town of Ephesus, is located 2 km away from the temple of Diana.


The Every-thing Mary Book (Aron USA: Adams Media, Fiw publications, 2006).

In the film, parts of the image fade in and out of each other, tempting you to let your gaze wander around the image through the openings that appear. Nothing outside of the house seems to have any relevance, and you might even wonder if other places really exist? The group has stopped. The person who was walking in front leans back, and is lifted and carried, lying down, out of the room and on through the house. The action is repeated several times, and the participants take turns being carried by the others. When we return to the basement, the film reaches its loop point, and the group begins their walk all over again.

OVER Thresholds AND Under Lintels

Rituals interest me, and I recently became familiar with the term Liminality, which was first used in the early 20th century by ethnographer Arnold van Gennep in Rites de Passage (1910). In the 1960’s, the concept was revived by the anthropologist Victor Turner, who developed and broadened the concept over the next three decades, and made it applicable to large-scale events in different societies and cultures. The word Liminality originated from the Latin word Linea, which means “threshold” or “limit”. A threshold is something you have to step over before you can reach whatever lies beyond, and somebody or something that enters the initial stages of a process can be said to be “crossing a threshold”, a literal is a horizontal architectural
Double page:
#2 Mårtsangatan 7, 2010
Two channel video
projection, loop
9 min. 40 sec. HD video
element that spans and usually carries the load above an opening, to allow passage between different spaces, and between indoors and outdoors. A lintel is there to protect the person who walks through an opening. The term liminality denotes the psychological state that an individual reaches when performing a ritual. According to Gennep’s definition, liminality has a three-fold structure. First comes the pre-liminal phase, the rite of separation, where the individuals about to go through the ritual shed the habits and social status they used to possess, a metaphorical death. This is followed by the liminal phase, the transition rite, in the middle of the ritual, where the actual transformation occurs. The destructive aspect of the liminal state allows for huge changes to be made to the identities of the participants. This state involves a passage over a threshold that marks the boundary between two phases, and it is this passage that the term liminality was introduced to describe. Finally, in the post-liminal phase, or rite of incorporation, the individual is awarded a new social status, and is re-assimilated into the group or society as a new individual.

“Just as chaos is the source of order, liminality represents the unlimited possibilities from which social structure emerges. While in the liminal state, human beings are stripped of anything that might differentiate them from their fellow beings – they are in between the social structure, temporarily fallen through the cracks, so to speak, and it is in these cracks, in the inertercies of social structure, that they are most aware of themselves.”

Different physical actions, sounds, and spaces enable us to leave the sphere of the ordinary behind, and enter into an altered state where we are able to focus on details that would otherwise have no significance to us. These details are given value as potential means to help us reach even further into a different perception of reality. Once you return from that altered state, which is an essential feature of liminality, you return to reality as you knew it before, yet retaining an alternative point of view from which to regard the things around you, and the world in general. A memory with both physical and emotional dimensions.

#3 Sofie

Paper is mounted on three iron frames held up by steel cables that are stretched from floor to ceiling. These screens are positioned in the room like the sides of a triangle. Films are projected onto these screens, and in the ceiling above, loudspeakers are mounted, to provide the individual soundtrack for each projection. You can’t quite get your bearings without walking through and around the installation, as there’s simply too much information coming at you from all angles for you to process it all, and there’s no obvious best position from which to watch. The paper picks up the projections, but also lets them through, making the image appear from both sides of the screen. If you stand inside the triangle, you see the light from the projectors shine through the fiber of the paper, which creates the impression that what you’re watching is an animated watercolor. From one direction, the sounds are rhythmic and pulsating, while from another, we hear dripping water and a rag being wrung, and in a third, cameras flash. The images are blurry and somewhat abstract, and zoomed in so close that the girl’s facial expressions are clearly visible and easily read. She undresses, pulls a white gown over her head, studies herself in a mirror, adjusts her hair, and touches up her mascara. A woman begins to give her instructions, and together they make their way to a stage. You get the impression that she is surrounded by a large group of people. She fidgets a bit, smiles anxiously, looks away, and hides her face in her hair while the cameras flash at her from every direction. The woman pushes her in front of her, past some stairs and into a recess in the floor. They stand close together for a minute, and then, the girl falls over backwards. The flashing of the cameras intensifies when the woman helps her up. She’s soaked. The girl dries her eyes quickly, to stop her mascara from running, the woman hands her a towel, and they exchange a hug before disappearing from view. In the next frame, they are backstage, trying to remove the wet and heavy clothes that are clinging to their bodies. Another older woman hands them new towels, and uses a rag to wipe the floor dry. The girl looks at herself in the mirror as she carefully dries herself with the towel, and then, she suddenly gazes right into the camera, as if to say “I know you can see me, but I can see you too.”

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Time has separated me from the Christian identity I used to have, as well as from the experiences that belonged to it. I am no longer in direct contact with these memories, and they have faded into history. These days, I am no longer stuck in that maelstrom of trying to understand and make sense of those experiences, looking on from a distance, and trying to see the big picture. I no longer experience the regression to my earlier beliefs, something that used to be triggered by events that reminded me of an experience from that part of my life. I have been excluded from the person I once was, transported across a boundary. Just like Liminality, the word Limit originated from the Latin root Limes, which means “Strip of unsanctified ground marking boundary”. Limit is defined as “The point, edge or line beyond which something cannot or may not proceed.” Unlike liminality, a limit involves no movement. A limit is simply something you either enter within, or beyond.

“Conventional modes of behaviour and ascription are unsanctified ground between spectator and artwork, seeing and being seen, ‘active’ and ‘ passive’ are called into question and can be reversed.”

My films are experiments, with unpredictable results, performed in collaboration with invited participants. In these actions, I seek to challenge my own social fears, and those of other people, in an effort to create a group, that differs from other groups I have experienced. To create a group, you need an opposition to define it in relation to, and in this way, the concept of Limits plays an important role in my work. Usually, this limit exists between the work and the viewer, but sometimes it exists within the work. On other occasions the viewer is included in the group, and the limit is located outside the exhibition space.

I use the stage, and lighting, as symbolic of the acts of watching and being watched. Being the center of attention. Fearing scrutiny and embarrassment. Longing for attention and acknowledgement. On stage, you’re aware that you’re being watched, just as the audience is aware of the fact that it is watching you. Eyes and gazes play important roles in my works. In my film “Soft”, which is based on documentary material, it’s clear to see how uncomfortable the girl is with her role of being watched, but also that she is actively pursuing this attention. The installation of the piece transfers the voyeuristic role of the audience in the film over to the viewer of the piece in the exhibition space. The sound and brightness of the camera flashes increase the power of the
viewer in that role as a voyeur. It’s all obviously been staged for our benefit, but we’re close enough to Sofie to see things from her point of view as well. She is right in the eye of the storm, with no choice but to relate to the rapid events unfolding around her, and to maintain control over her exterior, to make sure she remains an attractive object to those who are watching her (including the camera and the visitor in the exhibition space). The desire to belong, to take part, to do the right thing, to receive attention. The danger of being exploited. Being chosen and sacrificed for the sake of the group you belong to.

**HOMO SACER AND FLAMEN DIALIS**

Homo Sacer is a human being that is inclusively excluded. The right to equal treatment as a free agent has been taken from her, and she is reduced to the most basic of existences, on a level with animals and gods. This is the sacred life.

“The sacredness of life, which is invoked today as an absolutely fundamental right in opposition to sovereign power, in fact originally expresses precisely both life’s subjection to a power over death and life’s irreparable exposure in the relation of abandonment.”

Homo Sacer is a concept used in early Roman law, a punishment that was dealt out to those who had broken oaths, rebelled against their parents, or illegally moved the boundaries between patches of land. The Homo Sacer cannot be sacrificed for the sake of the group you belong to, because they are inclusive and lost their right to full control, even though they have given me permission to do so.

**# WORK ME**

From a room nearby, you can hear the rhythmic sounds of stomping feet and strained breathing. When you enter the room, you come across a large video projection. On the screen, two women make energetic, methodical motions, with their eyes fixed on the floor in concentration, stamping their feet on something that lies outside of our field of vision. They are wearing simple, light clothes, suitable for physically strenuous activity, and are sweaty and flushed from their exertions. They look to have been at it for a long time, judging by the state they’re in. You get the impression they have reached the climax of their activity, and that the physical effort required by their work consumes them completely. Without looking at or touching each other, they move across a small surface, echoing each other’s movements in a way that seems unconsciously choreographed. The brief glimpses of their activity that we are shown alternate with fades to black, creating the impression that we are sealed off in an existence where there is neither progression nor regression.

**SHARING THE SAME FLUX**

“The sixties rock performance, combining rock’s trance-inducing qualities and psychedelic drugs, ritualistically led performers and audiences on a ‘trip’ around the edge of the old consciousness to the inner psyche, like the Shakers’ deliberative evocation of the Devil in order to purify the psyche and dissolve individual consciousness.”

“Rock my Religion”, artist Dan Graham writes about the ways that rock music has been inspired by religion, and how it has to some extent replaced it. He draws comparisons from the ecstatic religious circle dance of the Shakers, the whirling dance of the spinning Dervishes, and the ghost dance of native Americans, to the performances of artists like Patri Smith, Jerry Lee Lewis, or Jim Morrison. In the religious groups he discusses, specific physical actions, such as spinning in place or stomping your feet, are used to reach a state of trance. The Shakers would meet on Sundays to perform the “Shaker Dance”. Rhythmically reciting Bible verses, they would march around in circles, and stomp their feet as they shouted “Stomp the Devil” before beginning to spin round and round in one spot. From time to time, tremors and ecstatic cramps would spread among the group’s members. The sensation of experiencing of music is a blend of auditory impressions and bodily motion, which gives rise to a reality experienced by the entire body. The rhythm of the foot stomps. The physical act of drumming. The body’s existence in the rhythmic state is also a state of somatic awareness, where other bodies are mirrored, and actions are unconsciously reproduced. The video piece WORK ME looks choreographed in places, but the two women are not aware of the fact that they are following each other’s leads, repeating each other’s motions, and stomping their feet at the same rhythm. They have entered an altered state so deep that they are both unable to register the movements of the other, and their synchronisation occurs unconsciously.

“The dancers connect through sharing the same flux in the musical and kinaesthetic process and also establish a communicative frame that is not founded primarily on a semantic system of expression and interpretation, but rather in a bodily “tuning in” to each other’s movements … this kind of musical – and I add kinaesthetic experience – creates a “we-relation” between the dancers, hence diminishing interpersonal distance between the partners.”
You make your way through a narrow, unlit corridor. You go through a passage of a few meters, taking you from daylight into smothering darkness. You begin to use your sense of touch for orientation, rather than your vision, extending your arms to measure the dimensions of the space, and determine what direction you need to go to get further in. You make your way through a draped doorway, into the room where the video is projected. Despite the projection, the room is so dark that you can’t tell if there are any other visitors present, or what size the room is. The mat on the floor dampens every noise, which creates a sense of isolation and distance to everything outside of the room. In the darkness on the screen, you see two figures appear in a beam of light that shines down from the ceiling. They stand next to each other and shut their eyes, and then fall backwards, out of the light and back into the darkness. Their fall is somehow reversed with no effort on their parts, and they return to a standing position. This movement creates a sense of weightlessness, of defying gravity, and disrupts the viewer’s sense of balance. The movements on the screen take hold of your own body, as you have no other points in space to anchor yourself to besides their bodies. The boundaries of the room shift in relation to the viewer, who is included in their actions. The mystery is revealed as your vision adjusts, and you can make out the two people standing behind them in the darkness, who catch them when they fall and stand them back up again. This is repeated a few times, until the people who have been doing the falling are finally laid down on the floor. When they get up again, the roles are reversed, and they take their places behind the others, ready to catch them when they fall. New people emerge from the darkness to take over from the others, and the same actions are repeated again. After two thirds of the film, the scenario changes, and we see the group stand in a circle, pushing one of the participants back and forth between themselves. They push her carefully, since her eyes are closed and she can’t protect herself, but they still need to use enough force to send her all the way across so that somebody else can catch her and push her back. The film fades back to darkness, and after a few seconds the two people you first saw reemerge and it all starts over.

A loop is an existence, a state of being that can be meditative, but also threatening in the sense that the film offers no potential for escape, or progress. Instead, it creates a closed circuit of repetition, which is meditative by virtue of the way repetition allows the viewer to delve deeper within herself. The only way out of the feedback loop is for the viewer to break it by leaving the room.

I am interested to find out if it is possible to capture a fully genuine human presence with a camera. Is it possible to capture, maintain, and repeat authenticity? When is it the most “real”? Is it when you put a camera in “reality” and call what you do a documentary, or is it more “real” if the person in front of the camera has a well-defined task or role to perform? In the latter case, the person will concentrate on the task, not on how she comes across as a person. Achieving that same state in a documentary project can be very time-consuming, as the person being filmed is always conscious of his or her own persona, and how it is expressed.

Ideally, authenticity can bridge the gap between artwork and viewer, in an inclusive way. At the same time, it can have a repellent effect, maybe because it can make you feel as though you’ve been included against your will? Our emotions
These pieces of rock show so clearly, in their state of decay, how time passes, and how power is always changing hands. The place where it was once so important to erase any opinions found disagreeable has now become part of an archeologically excavated ruin. There’s something about this manic devotion to the destruction of things made by others only to be forgotten, replaced and erased by time that fascinates me.

Malin Franzén

#6 Threshold (2012)
Installation view
100 kg dough; flour, yeast, salt and water, styrofoam

During my shoots, I use repetition to exhaust the people I am filming, in order to make them forget about the artificiality of the situation and their own vulnerability in front of the camera. I want them to forget that they are in a situation where they are being recorded for posterity (and will later be displayed in public spaces), so that they can enter fully into the present, and into their own direct experiences of the situation. I am trying to get to the point where the person being filmed can set his or her intellectual and reflective attitudes aside, and enter a fully somatic mode of perception. I use looping for the same purposes within the exhibition context, to transform the mental state of the viewer in a similar fashion. There is a dimension to explore here that could potentially offer the subject of the experience new insight into herself and her surroundings. This is one way in which liminality enters my artistic process. In the liminal phase, the structures of society are temporarily dissolved, which makes it possible to reform, question, and reconstruct them.

EPILOGUE

The Church of Mary in Ephesus, Turkey, November of 2011. I find recycled pieces of marble in what must have been the main entrance to the church. The original writings on them have been carefully erased, letter by letter. It must have taken just as long to erase each letter as it had once done to chisel them out of the rock. The significance of the act of erasing. What an action it is, to erase something that represents values or beliefs you don’t subscribe to. We want to shape and control our surroundings until they match who we are and what we stand for. If we can’t, the place won’t be “ours”, and the urge to tear down, repaint, refill, rearrange, remove and add our own touch will be left unsatisfied. Only once that work is done can we relax, and enjoy the view of what we’ve created.
NINA JENSEN

Against nature

Natural beauty, unnatural death. The concept natural often occurs in connection with food, health, wellness and childbirth, sometimes in agriculture. Unnatural shows up in religious contexts and appears to be used as a synonym for disgusting, frightening, or morally reprehensible. Both concepts often mirror ideas about morality but how that which is spoken of is natural/unnatural is rarely defined, the concepts are meant to stand on their own as if their meanings are evident. When human status in many cases is defined by its degree of civilization I think it strange that natural should be positive and unnatural the opposite.

natural

1. that which has been created or can be created by nature without help from human beings example: The mushroom is a natural satellite

2. regarding a conclusion or rule: is simple and corresponds to intuition example: My finger has rotted a bit under the plaster. It smells disgusting and looks unnatural. My finger is not supposed to rot, that isn’t natural.

So nature exists without any help from human beings. Does this mean that humans are civilized as a species and thus distinct from nature, or are there people who live naturally; where is the boundary between that which is civilized and that which is natural in humanity? That which is innate can be regarded as natural, that is, the body. But where is the body’s boundary; is it our physical manifestation, the mass of flesh itself, or does it include instincts and the behaviour caused by instincts?

The body is a natural satellite, it exists without any help from human beings.

This time of year I feel like a mushroom. An insipid turgidity with a thin, delicate skin that stretches over an unjustified interior. It is neither animal nor plant. It isn’t skin, it is surface tension on substance. My face itches, feels tight, my hair downy, body shapeless and swollen. Warm. My hands feel small and my legs strong but stiff and filled with blood. My mouth like an angry little hole, all orifices like angry little holes.

I want to float around in a cool cream that spreads over everything and allows me to stretch, expand and become one with my surroundings. My brain can float freely in all the smoothness. But when I am at peace, what will I think, what do I have left if I do not have the struggle against my body, against the itching, chafing nature that is myself?

Accepting the body, would that be accepting death? If I have children, will my body become meaningful, will I like it if it is allowed to give life to another person? The angry little orifices will be forced open and burst and there will be body fluids everywhere from all the holes and from new holes that I didn’t even know that I had. It is natural. It must be surrender and the ultimate defeat.

The mushroom reminds me of the body’s swelling, uncontrollable shapelessness, the birds of the fragility, of the hollow bones of my little finger that...
snap like a twig. The transparent, vulnerable layer of itching dry skin that envelops the boiling masses of entrails and fat, muscles, bones. The mess that is the very recipe for my existence. I cannot think without this mass of flesh, blood, bone, feathers, scales, spores, and seeds.

Someone has left a ball of hair here. It looks like pubic hair, prickly, short and long intertwined, dead. A curly little strand wants to be blown up by the draught and cling to my sweater and be a part of my living existence. I cannot accept it.

Disgust

“When the eyes see or the lips touch that skin on the surface of milk – harmless, thin as a sheet of cigarette paper, pitiful as a nail paring – I experience a gagging sensation and, still farther down, spasms in the stomach, the belly; and all the organs shrivel up the body, provoke tears and bile, cause forehead and hands to perspire.”

According to Julia Kristeva, abjection is a method for creating the self, for shutting out the other in order to define the self. She describes the sensation as a violent revolt against a threat from ‘an exorbitant outside or inside’, a reaction that reminds us of something (within or without ourselves) that terrifies and simultaneously fascinates. In the experience of disgust we glimpse something we recognise but don’t want to understand. The reaction becomes physical; we want to vomit it out, that which we have suspected; the body becomes infected by the glimpse.

If it is one’s own body that elicits distaste, the result may be a complex struggle against nature/the body or against civilisation/culture. The body is soft, shapeless, uncontrollable, tepid, wet. The skin on milk, the slimy snail, mussels and bones, the nauseating smell. The human being is everything that it wants to reject and separate itself from. Kristeva describes abjection as an experience of degradation, a process of rejection. I imagine that the feeling of being degraded by one’s own body can arise; partly from the outside – from being seen as an object and being unable to identify with that which is projected onto oneself (or worse, seeing oneself as an object subjected to one’s own values), or it can come from within – from the realisation of one’s own puny mortality.

The self-disgust could be a female experience of self-contempt caused by a misogynist heritage or it could be the experience of the sweet, soft decay of all life that is part of being human. I will, in time, rot and decompose and merge with everything; the process has already started, some cynics point out, and according to Céline even Tom, Dick, and Harry may have these problems.

Since we are nothing but packages of tepid, half-rotted viscera, we shall always have trouble with sentiment. Being in love is nothing, it’s sticking together that’s difficult. Feces on the other hand make no attempt to endure or to grow. On this score we are far more unfortunate than shit; our frenzy to persist in our present state – that’s the unconscionable torture.

Unquestionably we worship nothing more divine than our smell. All our misery comes from wanting at all costs to go on being Tom, Dick or Harry, year in year out. This body of ours, this disguise put on by common jumping molecules, is in constant revolt against the abominable farce of having to endure. Our molecules, the dears, want to get lost in the universe as fast as they can! It makes the miserable to be nothing but ‘us’, the jerks of infinity. We’d burst if we had the courage, day after day we come very close to it.”

The abject, that which disgusts, does not fill the function that an object can fill, that is to say, being the opposite of me, defining me as something else, something detached and


3. The concept object can mean rejected, originally separated, but Kristeva refers to something that is neither object nor subject but that stands apart from these concepts and is thus experienced as terrifying.

autonomous. The object is something other than me, but instead of giving me meaning, clarity, and order it pulls me down to ‘the place where meaning collapses.’

Is it myself I am supposed to merge with so that meaning will not collapse, or is it someone else, nature or cosmos? Is it merging through sex, dissolution through death? Perhaps I can transcend only by accepting my own body.

‘The feminine sex organ is mysterious even to the woman herself, concealed, mucous, and humid, as it is; it bleeds each month, it is often sullied with body fluids, it has a secret and perilous life of its own. Woman does not recognize herself in it, and this explains in large part why she does not recognize her desires as hers. These manifest themselves in an embarrassing manner.

‘The Indians were naked, but their natural members were however covered.

I look for the definition of natural and find this example in The Swedish Academy Dictionary. Fun to imagine that the genitals are more natural than, say, a leg. Well, there is something about them.

I had heard that in France all girls bathe up to the age of 12. I turned toward the beach; no one else bathed in that example in The Swedish Academy Dictionary.

Human bodies and to the human body.

It was pleasant and giddying and I thought it was the end but it only resulted in a swollen lip, a thigh contusion. My disgust and democracy

Disgust is defined by some scholars as a defence against contamination, a ‘[evolution at the prospect of foral incorporation of an offensive object?’ Many of those who write on this topic seem to agree that disgust concerns the boundaries of the body. Perhaps it was originally a survival strategy but in that case disgust has developed into so much more. The feminine sex desire is the soft throbbing of marginal decomposition.

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more. Disgusting objects are more often animals or products of animals than plants, writes Martha Nussbaum. That tears are the only bodily secretion that is uniquely human and not considered disgusting is an example of our fear of our own animal nature. The difference between human and non-human animals must be defined. I don’t even want to eat animals, it seems so bestial and those who do it prefer to eat them in the shape of sticks and balls. But I identify with plants and mushrooms and mountains and the sea as well. Everything can be an extension of myself and it frightens me when I no longer know where I begin and end.

The magical thinking that is the basis for disgust is also a sign of civilisation, according to William Ian Miller; the more magic, rituals, and taboos, which is what distinguishes human-ity, the higher the form of social development and of civilisation. Every culture has regulations regarding abnormality, or the credibility of that culture is forfeit, writes Miller. Disgust can be a reaction against chaos or threats to the prevailing order: ‘the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications.’ Examples of this could then be man as norm – woman as alien, impure, disgusting. Does that mean that civilisation according to Miller’s definition is misogynous, racist, and anti-democratic? If so, how is it distinguished from uncivilised culture and natural selection and how can it develop in a more democratic direction?

Nussbaum writes about disgust as a powerful instrument of social conditioning. Through rituals and taboos a society can effectively use disgust in order to create or maintain views on animality, mortality, gender, and sexuality. Disgust in Miller’s view is civilising; it is not enough to separate ourselves from animals, and if we can also have the group of quasi animals between us and animals, the distance will become even greater, writes Nussbaum. Slime-ness, stench, stickiness, decay, and foulness have been associated with groups over which more privileged people in society have attempted to elevate themselves. Women, Jews, homosexuals, untouchables, lower-class people are groups that have been depicted as tainted by the dirt of the body. For instance, feminine qualities have been attributed to Jews in order to diminish them as a group. It would then seem that women are the lowest category of human creatures. The reasons for woman ending up at the bottom of the scale are, states Nussbaum, that she ‘received the man’s semen’ and because childbearing and menstruation are so closely linked with death. (Read in the light of Nussbaum’s explanation, it seems evident to me that Simone de Beauvoir’s analysis of female sexuality, which I quoted above, is a male construction.) This is also supposed to be the source of men’s fear of homosexual men (and their gaze), which has to do with a fear of penetration and a loss of integrity. For example, disgusting qualities are also attributed to Jews for political reasons, while women and homosexuals are so treated because they are reminders of death since they receive semen, which is suggestive of decay.

Karin Johannisson talks about disgust being a symptom of tedium, emptiness, and a lack of personal contact in circumstances where life is characterised by individualism. When all our
needs have been met and we are expected to manage on our own, it is easy to be gripped by a sense of alienation. Disgust is existential and originates in a sense of meaninglessness. Human contact, contact with others who may not be able to manage on their own becomes intrusive because it reminds us of our own faults and weaknesses.12 Disgust can also be a reaction to moral or social decline, a context in which the concept unnatural also often crops up. But, Nussbaum points out, a reaction of disgust always has to do with separat- ing oneself from those/that which disgust/s. It is an egotistical and anti-social reaction. In order to act with compassion in a moral conflict it is necessary to overcome disgust. Nussbaum illustrates this with a story about the composer Gustav Mahler, concerning how he, in a piece of music, turns away from the decadence and emptiness of humanity with a ‘cry of disgust’. In the next movement of the piece he returns to the situation with a more naive attitude and uses childlikeness as an antidote to disgust in order to achieve closeness.13 I think this is a good example of how one can, through art, in a playful manner confront that which is terrifying.

Nussbaum argues that disgust must be opposed in order to achieve a better society, that a greater acceptance and a transformation of our relationship to the body is a prerequisite for democracy.14 Catherine of Siena was a saint who did not want to accept her aversion to the sick people for whom she was caring. She sucked pus from the sores of a leper in order to achieve closeness, open up to that which disgusted her. She suckled the breast of a woman who had breast cancer. The patient who received this care did not appreciate her saintlike aspiration for equality but found her perverted.

This bridging act makes me think of art. Making art is for me a way to confront that which frightens me, to share what I have to give, to defy taboos. The believer must not feel a distance to his or her fellow human beings. What do I believe in, then, some kind of general goodness and equality, why compare myself to a saint? The feeling of achieving closeness, physically and mentally, achieving closeness to my unconscious, achieving closeness to the strange man. Is this confusing the sacred with the impure? Is there in actual fact something impure about sex? Yes, what the saint does is to transgress boundaries for the sake of God. Disgust is one of these boundaries and the physical barrier of the body is another. What is taboos is impure. But I who don’t believe in a god still believe that everything should be a unified whole, although not in the presence of something greater. I want to be on the same level as animals and nature instead of being disgusted and resisting. But there is a difference between love for people, humanism, and equality with nature. All flesh is grass. But there is nothing wrong with grass. The ritual

What are object/subject, passive/active, nature/civilisation, chaos/order, dirty/clean, female/male, animal/human, body/psyche?

Mary Douglas writes in Purity and Danger15 that an exaggeration of the differences between

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of Pollution and Taboo
Analysis of the Concepts


Douglas means in the quote above is that one can deal with the difficulties that one experiences, and how these can be resolved, how our consciousness can function in different contexts, how one can regard phenomena and objects, sculptures and installations in various ways in relation to exhibitions, the role of the viewer, along with ideas about the perception of time. Through these areas the context extends into others such as anxiety about people’s decease and the experience of someone’s decease, missing our dead, seeking out death in order to come vaguer, and what is required is a search for something else in a totally different way than is usual. Accepting that this is a search for oneself in the rituals, in that state, is perhaps not possible. It resembles more an unconscious search for oneself in the expectation that the self will be found where one last left it. With time, you find you do not fully recognize yourself. Like when, during an examination, you make a doctor cry simply through eye contact, what did he actually see with his eyes? Or placing oneself alongside a wall clock and listening to the seconds tick by, simply through eye contact, what did he actually see with his eyes? Or placing oneself alongside a wall clock and listening to the seconds tick by, simply through eye contact, what did he actually see with his eyes? Or closing your eyes and trying to understand what it might have to do with one’s own pulse, should they not beat in time. There is no subsequent erosion of the self in the distinction between different readings between the lines, since it is written on the newspaper placards for you, and solely for you at that moment, as well as later on, when there are opposites like these is a means of creating order in a culture. Defining, differentiating, and delimiting are methods for systematising our unsydy experience of the world around us. Like Miller she believes that in this systematisation taboos and rituals come into existence in order to emphasise boundaries and that a confusion of the concepts can, contrary to creating order, elicit feelings of disgust and terror. But Douglas also writes that confronting the dirt and shapelessness is stepping across a boundary and that this can be a positive act.

“The danger which is risked by boundary transgression is power. Those vulnerable margins and those attacking forces which threaten to destroy good order represent the powers inhiering in the cosmos. Ritual which can harness these for good is harnessing power indeed.”

The provocative feeling of disgust or confusion that can arise in the confrontation with chaos, that place where meaning collapses, I seek out in my work process. My interpretation of what Douglas means in the quote above is that one can work with the disorder that exists around us through ritualised form, e.g., through art. I return to a disturbing image, a chafing memory. The stone wall returns in the scene with the flasher, in Svalbard, along with the hitchhiking man in the story about the boating accident, in de Beauvoir. It captures me and frightens me as something sublime and at the same time limiting. The blasted precipitous mountain wall next to the motorway has been manipulated by humans. The mountain wall is what I am confronted with every time I try to get to the bottom of why the attributes of death are ascribed to woman, the female body; we are all, after all, rotting. The arguments I can find are: that sex is associated with death, well, if it is then sex is hardly a female characteristic; that childbirth and menstruation verge on death, well, or life rather than death perhaps; that she [like male homosexuals] receives sprem, which is the lowest and most disgusting thing that can be imagined, well, that is something the man who constructed that theory will have to answer for. Why was I so afraid of a mushroom? It was like when Meikian frightened me with Freddie Krueger when we were ten years old. I became dizzy, cold and warm by turns but I couldn’t leave. The mushroom was so alien. At the same time it was of necessity a part of myself, since I am a representative of nature. The half of a frog that we passed on the muddy forest path, which made my heart race and cold sweat break out on my upper lip. It was still a frog, but half of one. The same feeling that I got from the ball of hair in the studio. The hair was human but without life, without eyes and skin and brain and soul, just like the frog was a frog.

Kicking the mushroom to pieces was una-voidable. Dissecting the geese was a necessity. Understanding what I refuse to understand. The inside of the goose, the half frog, the ball of hair. The blood stains on the sheet. The glimpse of the flasher’s middle, the second when the coat is torn open. Look it in the eyes, the most natural thing I have. No matter how I rational, pure, controlled, and immortal. My body because it threatens my civilised existence’s being out of habit. I miss nature but when I see it I am afraid

To emphasise boundaries and that a confusion can function, we have in our minds of a space, either real and physical or more imagined, or part of it, along with the interactions between the volumes in the room, its spatial features, silent actors, as such furniture and other immobile objects, living components, humans, animals, plants, and also the discussions that takes place between these components), and what they can do, how can one deal with the difficulties that one experiences, and how these can be resolved, how our consciousness can function in different contexts, how one can regard phenomena and objects, sculptures and installations in various ways in relation to exhibitions, the role of the viewer, along with ideas about the perception of time. Through these areas the context extends into others such as anxiety about people’s decease and the experience of someone’s decease, missing our dead, seeking out death in order to try to understand it better, various proposals as to how we might achieve a shared ground for thought, internal visual images, and how images of memories can function, along with thoughts about how one can judge the value of what is displayed through communication about what is displayed, various ways in which room-images can function, and how they can be experienced, methods for investigating room-images, along with the description of art’s sphere of activity.

The ideas presented here revolve around these areas: *room-images* (the image we have in our minds of a space, either real and physical or more imagined, or part of it, along with the interactions between the volumes in the room, its spatial features, silent actors, such as furniture and other immobile objects, living components, humans, animals, plants, and also the discussions that takes place between these components), and what they can do, how one can deal with the difficulties that one experiences, and how these can be resolved, how our consciousness can function in different contexts, how one can regard phenomena and objects, sculptures and installations in various ways in relation to exhibitions, the role of the viewer, along with ideas about the perception of time. Through these areas the context extends into others such as anxiety about people’s decease and the experience of someone’s decease, missing our dead, seeking out death in order to try to understand it better, various proposals as to how we might achieve a shared ground for thought, internal visual images, and how images of memories can function, along with thoughts about how one can judge the value of what is displayed through communication about what is displayed, various ways in which room-images can function, and how they can be experienced, methods for investigating room-images, along with the description of art’s sphere of activity.

In hopes of support from the rooms we use

Nina Jensen / Master of Fine Arts 2
Max Ockborn / Master of Fine Arts 2

Max Ockborn
Investigating spatial Features through a linear ritual
Installation view from exhibition at Museum Cite, Lissabon, Portugal, 2011 Measurements of the room with the pyramid in the ceiling: 5.4 x 8.8 x 4.2 m
hope that there is a still fragment of what one identifies oneself with, locked deep inside the prison of the brain. With a long, strange, drawn-out path in front of one, before one will again find the key to oneself. It is usually called the light that is never extinguished, or the spark of life. The part of oneself that one has scraped together during the time one has had so far, which one then has to depend on blindly to take one back. That source of light is put out while one is still alive, one enters into bare life, half-life.

As such, it is experienced as a prison, being shut inside one's brain until it wants to change, which it perhaps will never want to do at all. How long it will take until it can change one does not know. The everyday life one has is when one sits inside the nice ladies who have come back from electroconvulsive therapy in the morning and are not as talkative as in the evening. Short-term memory is affected by the treatment, but the relief balances it out. In any case, one sits, and mostly smokes and chats constantly about something, almost all day, with the others, then one watches TV until it is time for lunch or dinner. At lunch nobody talks about her new hand- age or about how she managed to get hold of a sharp object. Her husband is nice, he buys one cheap packs of cigarettes, cheaper than it costs to buy them in the hospital shop. Waiting for a visit in a place like this is very unlikely waiting outside of it, perhaps one will get a visit today? When one plays cards with one's nice lady, she prefers it if the black cards are not there. If they are included, they lose whatever value they have. She has even forgotten the rules of the game she once again. Despite the fact that there is firm

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Time takes on another meaning, cases the self as one knows it is obliterated, but also mean that there is nothing after it. In both worry about dying in the same way, but death can part of the universe. If one can convince oneself that one is never annihilated completely, one is a authority that has devised a system for the whole between which parties, or some sort of divine choice that comes from somewhere above, approx- which one cannot choose personally). or from a as chance (which becomes a system in itself, from absence of choice, which then has to be counted as chance (which becomes a system in itself, from which one cannot choose personally). Or from a choice that comes from somewhere above, approx- imately, but not from oneself either. Consequently the supreme decision-maker is either an agreement that has happened at some point, it being unclear when which parties, or some sort of divine authority that has devised a system for the whole thing. The assurance lies in one being conscious that one is never annihilated completely, one is a part of the universe. If one can convince oneself of this, or have a revelation, one does not need to worry about dying in the same way, but death can also mean that there is nothing after it. In both cases the self as one knows it is obliterated, but time shall still be spent.

Concerning disease, inner visual images, the possibly shared, and missing someone: What the angst about someone’s decease can be like and the experience of the death of someone close; seeking out death to try to understand it better. In the park where he found him there was an arbour, a bowery, shaped like an octagon in its foundations, there they went. The expectation that was caused by their meeting was met with a subdued joy in the absence of the reason for the expectation. Which had been growing, half-for- gotten, but in no way overcome. The expectation

the strength must have been shifted somewhere else, elsewhere. There is nothing in this that one can make use of right then in any case. When one twists one’s neck, it is no longer the continuous feeling that one is used to that is there, but more something that is as if there are different parts hooking onto each other and giving out sounds resembling those during an illness; a vertigo-like complaining that begins in the abdominal region, but which then spreads further up into the head and finally settles itself like a kind of broken ring around the posterior parts of the brain. In such cases a different communication from the one that happens in most other situations is carried on.

Concerning when someone goes into the unknown and what it entails for others in terms of a sense of loss; a commemorative speech to give for someone close.

"The tired body rests under a velvet mantle of dreams."

It is an altogether special period that one has to go through, that accompanies the very song that is constituted by loving a person; in the sense of loss when someone departs and embarks on the road after life. I loved, and I love you, with all my heart, you were my mentor, and now you are dead. There is nothing in me that wants to believe it. But I have seen you, talked with you and patted you, in a room for leave-taking at the hospital. You were so beautiful and sweet, but now cold in your blood. Your hands still, as if you were sleeping and on the road to dreams, you had pulled up the cover because you were getting a little cold. A rose from your own rosebush in one hand to accompany you on the road, your eyes peering at us. Your mouth only a little open, which from a certain angle looked almost like a slightly cheerful smile. It looked as if you wanted to say: mourn for me for what you think we had when I was here, but your life goes on, you are not done yet. What we in the family, your kin, friends, workmates and others have lost, what we mourn, is a person whose gift was to be able to make others happy in a way that is so rare and is so needed here. A gift that was like being able to give someone else the feeling of reliving the full breadth and assurance of a fond memory, albeit here and now, through a small person who stands before one. Always so considerate of their fellow human beings without distinction, everyone is fine as they are, and if you didn’t think so, you felt a bit ashamed for thinking the wicked thought. Because you gave so much.

The way that you loved your own almost as if you were an angel among us was characteristic of you. The shock that you are not living alongside me, among us, any longer, will probably never leave me. After you slipped away from us in the night, it has been like a mist, in which things merge together in the grieving process. Perhaps when the time is right, it will turn into a kind of acceptance. You are not sitting there on your chair in the kitchen, we cannot eat dinner and drink coffee together any longer, not before I, too, leave this life, and that assumes that I, too, will get to heaven. For if there is anyone I know who I believe will definitely get to heaven, it is you. So, strong arms, bear my friend there. we who live on here still love you and you now live in our hearts instead. what you once said to me has perhaps never made more sense than it does now: home is where you lay your head. with so many people who loved you, liked you, usually always smiling, usually never complaining. Now you are forever at home with us here instead of in your own body. After a long road from where you were born, where it all began, to the terminus where it came to an end beside your beloved.

You meant a great deal to me, and the day when you were to die has long been the thing I was
most afraid of life. Then that day came, and it turned out to involve things that I had not been able to understand, or see, in advance. In my vision it was always a gaping hole going straight down into my heart, a black and infinitely vast. You have to sit down at my kitchen table: You have to sit down and down by the canal. o r on the dock that bobs up and down a long time ago. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not in the toilet with the board games. Not in the guest room with the clothes iron, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not in the toilet with the board games. Not in the guest room with the clothes iron, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not in the toilet with the board games. Not in the guest room with the clothes iron, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs. You were not round the back, the stereo with the classical music, there in the room, except in paintings and in photographs.
retrieve the memory with the aid of what is needed to trigger it again, which one believes that the attempt to re-attach the limbs has succeeded, but that, when one looks down at the newly added attachment, one sees a heap of earth instead. If one scratches away the earth, one does not find one’s body parts, but instead long white worms that are now stuck to the ground for dialogue has become more collective. In that moment there exists a kind of jointly achieved foundation for what happens in dreams. That possibility would stand in opposition, if the activity, or consequence, can be seen as unanimous, but that the ways of arriving at experiences the loneliness of not being able to convey our thoughts on a satisfactory level? Communication comes to stand as the key, but without access to the lock. If one always looks for grubs in raspberries before starting to eat them, one is constantly experiencing the loneliness of not being able to convey our thoughts on a satisfactory level? Communication comes to stand as the key, but without access to the lock. If one always looks for grubs in raspberries before starting to eat them, one is constantly reminded of what grubs look like, how they move, what feelings they awaken, at the same time as one is eating the raspberries. The idea is not thinking about grubs, but rather to consider the uncontrollable aspect of the dream. But how would it be possible to make a picture of something else should be. The images in dreams are representations, in a way, imagined experiences placed in other situations than when they are experienced in the waking state. Like a kind of reworking of what is experienced when one is awake, however peripheral or unobtrusively it might have gone by, what is worked on in the dream is supposed to have been experienced by the person having the dream. Since it is possible to see dreams in one’s head, they can occasionally be tremendously rich in detail, and occasionally less, so that, when one wakes up, or is half awake, one can have the sense that what happened in the dream will at some point be possible to remember it. Perhaps it is also a kind of subconscious, but one that is possibly easier to remember when one can wake up abruptly, almost without remembering it. How would it be possible to make a picture of what is a true image in the dream, the dreamed reality; an image that is true to the idea of what is experienced there? That which is experienced by some people as implausibly horrible in a picture can, on the same occasion, be said by others to be the diametrical opposite; that which in an image of a dream can for one person be seen as an aid to handling difficulties, can by others be seen as merely a horse trotting across a meadow. Where in the communication about a picture can we concur? Something that is given a name in a discussion always runs the risk of losing precisely the thing that is to be communicated through the naming of it, at times, it can perhaps make it easier to talk in circles around the goal in order to be able to get nearer to it. Internal visual images can be seen as be- able to be communicated in their entirety for everyone except oneself, but we still seek to share them between us; the desire to communicate about them is strong. The visual images are dead in the sense that we as people cannot transmit faultlessly to others exactly what we have been through as
we ourselves understand it. A displayed image of a dream gets to stand as a form of wish for communication. The distinction has to be made between what we want to say with the image and how it is interpreted by the recipient. The experience of talking about the same thing, a unity, is as rare as a genuine art experience. These experiences resemble a love affair, it becomes difficult to think about anything other than the conversation, or the artwork, that is in front of one. When we converse about our images from dreams, what we say is on a higher level, or a lower one, an accessible passing on of what we have apprehended in dreams. We have an experience and then pass it on later to someone else who was not there at what was presumably a personal experience. If this passing on is to be shareable, in the direction of what is completely shared, it is based on the assumption that it is a translation that resembles that of copying a picture. With the difference that one does not have the original as a basis, but instead two of the copies from a string of many that are compared together, and then also assuming that the ink or other circumstances do not between them change the appearance. The copies, as a basis, for the dialogue about the images from dreams, are equal. The original instead gets to stand as what is in common; a translation that appears to be without errors. If one cannot share with someone else precisely what was experienced in the beginning, one can also see communication as a reality in itself; the communication carries on, in all its various jargons, a type of communality. There should then exist both a separate reality, at the same time as one in dialogue with others. Perhaps it is not possible to have a precise understanding of what we then have is the connection through conversation. Demonstrating that we exist as persons is roughly as possible as conversing with deities, but it is pleasant to assume that we are who we think we are.

We would willingly carry on a conversation about what we have subjectively seen in our inner visual images, but it will not be seen as some thing new by others in the same way as it is new for ourselves. The observation of this involves another subjectivity. What then happens in the present moment which is now new can be as elusive as the present moment itself; how can one weigh up something that exists as much as it does not do so? As Walter Benjamin puts it:

“The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again. ‘The truth will not run away from us’: in the historical outlook of historicism these words of Gottfried Keller mark the exact point where historical materialism cuts through historicism. For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably. (The good tidings which the historian of the past brings with throbbing heart may be lost in a void the very moment he opens his mouth.)’”

The expression in the heat of the moment is about the heat that exists during the time when one experiences that one is going into and is inside another level of consciousness. A different consciousness from the one that one carries with one into the period when the heat is turned on, or suddenly hits you. At this level one almost sees the place that one has seen in the distance. The expression in the heat of the moment is used descriptively about time, to heat, with but another meaning. As in the expression time had frozen, which means that time stood still at a certain point in time, and that the place where it happened is no longer experienced as being in the present moment in the same way as before. Which shared features of memory are preserved and used later on in the expression that time froze? It is possible in a way to agree with each other that time has occasionally frozen in certain places, it serves as something communicable.

Since the image in the dream gets its structure from the experiences had by the person who dreams, with the potential of being constructed out of everything that has happened, anywhere, right up to the moment when the image is shown to someone else, it can be difficult to distinguish the subjective experience, since it was diluted right from the start. It may be considered subjective at any actual point in time, as no more than an illusion, depending on the way the shared information and experience are seen. We have an ongoing search for varying, distinct events. A search that we perform daily, sometimes consciously and at others not at all. What we are searching for is constantly present, within arm’s reach, ready to meet us; it is constantly flickering past. If one follows a railway in the summer towards what a long way off appears to shimmer in the heat, it ceases to do so when one reaches the place that one has seen in the distance. The shimmering will then have shifted further away. But the memory image of how it shimmered in the heat over the rails can etch itself firmly into one’s consciousness. Even if one can grasp the origins of an image from dreams, it will still be partly separated from the images that constitute the present moment. That which is produced in the present is in any case purely subjectively new, but will presumably not be experienced by others in the same way. Is there a difference in communication about images where there can exist either from the waking state or the sleeping one? What is experienced as archaic or seeing could be a key to greater understanding of something, more shared in experiences and in communication. Via expressions that many people have in its common to like, something that seems largely rooted in our genes. This shows itself in highly primal images, passed down over a long time, kinds of observations that happen almost automatically. Our eyes seek them out and stop there. In order to be considered archaic the feeling that the pictures evoke should be recognizable to everyone regardless of where they are.

Staring into a fire is one such experience, many people find it almost seductive. The eyes fix their gaze on the flames, it is enormously attractive to look into fire. That image reverberates to us over thousands of years and one finds it hard to tear one’s eyes away from it.

On room-images and what they can contain.

At some point in the escape into the dream one wants to leave it. One can perhaps find the oppos ite of internal visual images in the very solid, the tangible. In feeling, touching, as a sense.

It can be automatically recognizable to many people in a unique, but also difficult to explain why this should be the case. The impression in observations is changed if what one sees is highly tangible, that it invites us to take hold of it, or if it has been worked on a great deal before it is displayed. At times, one experiences the difference
If one takes things apart in order to try to discover something and to get a clearer view, when something is taken apart and the parts are laid out side by side, it can in a way be easier to grasp the system that they are combined together to form. This method can also furnish one with new ideas about the construction of other things, one is given an insight into the way things can work together, a logic that was previously hidden from or out of reach of the hand. One can also gain a greater understanding of objects through seeing how they are made, as in the mass-production of souvenirs in Mombasa, on the outskirts of the city. They make traditional, symbolically charged artefacts, which are simplified and deprived of their original purpose. They are made in countless copies, without soul and deprived of the aid of machines, by artisans sitting in huts in large areas resembling a run-down residential area, but with nowhere to sleep and a bit more tidy. The area contains materials, tools and work surfaces optimised for making, as many objects as possible per day. A reproduction associated with technology, but here done by handcraft. There is more to be gained from going round and seeing the signs of manufacturing: wood chips, chopping blocks, sharpened tools, half-finished objects piled up like fruit or vegetables, that remain seeing the finished result. In such cases the potential aura of the objects is located in everything that surrounds them in the manufacturing process, the production in its entirety seen as a single entity, but definitively not in the objects. Possibly in the journey or memory they will come to represent later, but not in them in themselves as objects, immediately after being made. In the idea of how it feels or is experienced when one holds two or more batteries in one’s hand and lets them knock against each other, a very dull, muffled sound is experienced, here a possible aura resides in the feeling of touching them, holding them. The feeling of distance, however close to them one is, is there in the memory that this evokes as perceived through one’s hands. That feeling can presumably not be located in memory, but the hand knows it. This is very satisfying in a way, like the way it feels the second one can finally lie down to sleep and stretch out and relax after far too long a day. There are a few very precious seconds when it is happening, it soon passes. Then it is only a matter of waiting until it happens again the next day, or even later, for it does not happen every day in the same way, and it particularly occurs when one has one’s own place to live where one can feel safe.

Even if a darker version of an aura in a room is not experienced as thrilling, almost to the point that one has to leave the room immediately and feels sick, so that darkness can be experienced as a strange memory that creeps slowly down without the eye physically being able to register it, but the recognition in the memory from one’s hands means that one can see it anyway. In my exhibition Investigating spatial features through a linear ritual part of the installation comprised a careful washing of all the walls and floors in the gallery. Since the furnishing of the gallery has never been completed, there were a number of sketches and other scribbles on the walls left after the construction work. It is perhaps tempting to clean the surface, since the walls are built out of large blocks with mortar running out between them and the floor is unfinished concrete, both with remarkably rough surfaces that easily wreck the cleaning equipment, especially sponges and rags. It also turned out that even those who had been in the gallery many times before did not really notice the cleaning intervention, but that, when it was pointed out to them, they said that they liked the way the atmosphere in the gallery had felt very different, without their having known what was causing it.

8. Investigating spatial features through a linear ritual (Lisbon: Lumiar Cítia, 2011)

Max Ockborn / Master of Fine Arts 2 Max Ockborn / Master of Fine Arts 2

one’s spine and makes one feel something one had hoped to be spared experiencing again. This does not have to mean that it is a memory that is obvious in the way it is being retold in image, sound and smell. But more like something that is half forgotten, but which has never disappeared, almost to the point of it being unclear whether it comes from a dream or has been experienced in the waking state. Whatever the case, the memory is there in you now, and you do not want to experience the slow, creeping feeling that something is not quite right when you are in the room. Rooms presumably acquire such an aura partly from the actions carried out by the people who live, or who have lived in, them (but also from the circumstances around the time it was built or created). Its inhabitants or otherwise lingering figures can, like cogs wheels in a clock, exist in an active cycle, an infinite loop, or then they can be totally static. They can be active for their own purposes or as a part of a context, sometimes it is a stamping on the spot, and sometimes frenetic activity. This regardless of which of them is productive in the context or the person in question, who now also resides in the room, it happens simultaneously in the room. Chance and various desires work together to create an aura in a room. But like one of the English words for people residing in or inhabit- ing a place, a dweller, which comes from the older form dwelthen, which originally meant to lead someone astray or to get lost, so a room can presumably also have this capacity in collabora- tion with those who dwell there. Sadly enough there are instances in which one can get stuck in part of a thought or a frame of mind that one cannot subsequently get out of. A complete prison for the mind. Unfortunately rooms can help to create this prison.

Like a sword has its edge, but also a blunt side that one can use to strike someone without cutting them, so in the same way a pistol has the function of shooting bullets, but also the possibility of quite simply being hammered against something. In a situation in which someone is to be executed with a pistol and is tied up, one could delay the execu- tion for a while if one first strikes the condemned with the pistol so that skin, blood, muscles, hair and other things get caught in the weapon’s mechanisms. If this then dries in sufficiently so that it can no longer be fired, provided that the person does not die already from the blows, then it first has to be cleaned before the actual execution can take place. That the same thing could happen in a comparable situation, in which a sword is to be used by the executioner instead, seems more unlikely, even if it might be possible. So many dried parts from the condemned would have to get caught on the duller side of the sword that there might not be particularly much left of the person for the sword to be wrong. If one pounds pieces of raw meat against a wall (it has to be against wall material that absorbs moisture, such as concrete) until the pieces are so small that it is no longer possible to bang them against the wall with one’s hands any longer. Then one can smear on the last remnants of the meat, a little like when one washes a table with a dishcloth, but with the opposite effect. This should make it so that the action is stored in the wall when the meat dries in, it then sticks in the room instead of on an object. But in both the case of execution, and in the case of hanging the meat, it affects the room’s aura; atmospheres, events, and physical interaction with the room can leave impressions in its ambiance.

In the room with the dried-in meat on the walls there was a bow window like one that one might have sat in when small, while waiting to say goodbye in the morning to the person who was later one at the daycare centre. One used the leave-taking that happened there as a defiance against any problems that might arise during the rest of the day, or until one was distracted by tasks from the staff. If later on, after the person that left one
there had disappeared, one followed a path that led as far away as one was permitted to go during the day, one came to a sports ground. This was when one was so small that it was still not clear which sport one was practising, but the field had a basket high up on a pillar. But nobody ever got the ball into the basket, since it was too high up. Alongside the field was a rocky outcrop, then experienced as being a mountain, with a sparse grove of trees where one could eat two different kinds of ants. The red-and-black ants had a sourer taste than the saltier black ones. The room with the bow window that resembled the one in the room with the dried meat on the walls was where one had a rest after eating, but it was also where one got to hear that, when the questions come to an end, one’s head is full. But since one’s nursery nurse smiled a little when she said this, it seemed not to make sense; in any case she did not explain when it was empty again. Sitting in the bow window in the room with the dried-in-meat, now, is like accidentally hitting oneself too hard with a hammer, the aim not being to create acute pain, but to try to do something constructive. The reason one is there, with a friend, is to look for a place of one’s own to live in. Except that the difference between arranging a place for oneself to live and hitting oneself on the fingers should perhaps not feel the same. That is why it seems necessary to have been in an apartment and to have formed a sense of its aura, before being prepared to reside there, as though one is finding oneself in one’s own room-images.

Now, one sat there in the bow window and felt subdued and listless, like when it feels as if small knives are dancing round under one’s skin and want to force one away from there. An impatient feeling, a sensation divided into equal proportions of tremendous fatigue and slowness, together with a kind of unconscious desire not to be able to decide what one is to do. The two inner directives conflict, with the listlessness tipping the balance. In order to build the room with the dried-in-meat, one has taken parts of the forest for the wood, and parts of caves for the stones in its foundation. Like the mystic who lives in the forest, and like during agent Cooper’s hunt for the inhabitants of the Black Lodge in the series Twin Peaks\(^{10}\), this enigmatic something had now perhaps moved into the room where the trees had been chopped down and built up to form a framework for the house. For it was not there that that one lived, in the forest, it was in a wooden house built out of the forest. With a foundation of stone taken from the caves and later coated with paint. In the series the characters are highly captivating and work in a subtle symmetry like a symbiosis, with the dark atmosphere, which is constantly nameless, or partly named and hard to define, looming in the background. This is supplemented by a well-judged sense of slapstick humour\(^ {11}\) and a great delight in coffee and pie. It turns out that this fear that the inhabitants of the village have of something that dwells in the forest is justified. But very few people bear witness to this, those who have survived the tragedies in the series. In the final episode, in the final scene, the main character Cooper is himself possessed by the evil that he has constantly tried to put a stop to. For other people he becomes something hovering in the room in which he dwells, to all appearances himself as normal, but now something evil that will break out and create pain; a potential zone that in some way feel uncontrollably restless, yet at the same time, as quiet as at a grave or in a crypt. Parts of rooms can also be dead zones, volumes of something that in its simplest form consists of two thin planks that are joined together at one end. It is held by the join so as to conceal it and, when someone or something is hit with the device, a loud noise is made by the planks striking together, giving the impression of a blow that sounds harder than it actually is. It works a little in the opposite way from hitting someone with a sock containing a bar of soap, which does not sound like much at all, but can cause major internal injuries.

\(^{10}\) David Lynch, Mark Frost, Twin Peaks TV series, Definitive Gold Box edition, (Los Angeles: Twin Peaks Productions, 2007), DVD.

\(^{11}\) The term slapstick, with its origins in the Commedia dell’arte, presumably comes from the use of an arrangement that in its simplest form consists of two thin planks that are joined together at one end. It is held by the join so as to conceal it and, when someone or something is hit with the device, a loud noise is made by the planks striking together, giving the impression of a blow that sounds harder than it actually is. It works a little in the opposite way from hitting someone with a sock containing a bar of soap, which does not sound like much at all, but can cause major internal injuries.
much. Except on special occasions, such as the anniversary of something. If there is nothing that particularly reminds one of it, it does not occupy one’s thoughts much. If on the contrary one is reminded of it, one feels a whole lot of melancholy about it. This in the light of a conscious choice of attempts to forget, or an actual functioning, executed conclusion, in which one was able to move on. The zones can also be unconsciously created out of a lack of interest in what dwells there, the result is the same. The dust that collects in a zone like this can easily be more than in other places in the room. If instead it is experienced as a crypt, the same things partly apply, together with the added fact that it is more out of some sort of quiet worship of the zone. There is something unfinished looming over this, since it continues to be used in rituals that in some way are in common, like those carried out in a crypt for a special saint. This does not perhaps feel as private as when visiting a gravestone. These dead zones are a part of the room’s formations that are always near you every day, which are passed by without a second thought, aided by ingrained patterns. But they are rarely used especially much, they are outside of user focus. These zones accumulate various things, such as dust, objects that do not move easily by themselves, and forgotten memories. The furniture in them has probably stood there longer than the rest of the furnishings in the room. They are probably a kind of capsule for preserving something that has been a part of us, but which, now was a desire for acceptance of the incomprehensible. What had simultaneously been a decapitation and a beginning was now almost back to the time before the decease of one’s friend, but with an extra weight laid on one’s heart. But we still have the day, one can in various ways construct rooms inside rooms, or alter the appearance and representation with the aid of light. During the night, one will probably always go where one does not want to. It gets to be a continual search for death at an undefined time, in order to try to understand it better, so that one later can hopefully receive word of messages about it when they come. It can make it easier if one can agree on what one considers to be its purpose, or to be that which it has in turn been taken to be good for; an exhibition that is called good without a context, or a form, having been presented, within which, or within more than one of which, it moves around, and that it should be good for, is presumably equally good as bad, since in such cases it would stand totally apart from everything that is not specifically itself. Such a statement without any explanation thus also implies that what is exhibited is totally unique, without its like anywhere else. One can pose a variant of the question: why is it a good or a bad exhibition in the context one believes oneself to be reading, within which it operates? If the answer is not found in words, but in the form of a sensation, this can in its turn mean that it is perhaps not possible to fully formulate an answer that is experienced as adequate, despite the fact that there can exist a definitively experienced presence that is then left unspoken. And this becomes an answer without a verbal answer, but nevertheless an answer. This elusive definition of value or of what is expressed can be perceived as a quality or attribute in itself. But it stems from the information available where the exhibition is being shown, regardless of what it is, or in a combination of the prerequisites for it. It can have its basis in the exhibition space, the physical or the mental one. In the works or in what is presented. In the context, which in turn is understood on different levels, within more than one of which, it moves around, and that it should be good for, is presumably equally good as bad, in some cases it would stand totally apart from everything that is not specifically itself. As well as in the positioning of the works and their ongoing dialogue, between their dead and living players. It can also be with pure disinterest with regard to what is being shown that one comes out with the assertion that one does not know why one likes what one about it, and yet still considers oneself to like it. A standpoint that in a dialogue does not provide any information at all, apart from just the words good or bad. These words then have a total lack of value to everyone except oneself in a direct meaning (if that is actually possible, subjectively). Such a standpoint can serve as an inclining of a value or a piece of information in the communication, depending on what the social situation is like between the participants in the dialogue; we communicate different things with different people.

There are numerous different viewpoints and aims that can be incorporated into the assertion that something is good or bad, one might think that the exhibition will be an active segment of a trend that one has great faith in within art. A tendency that one sees as being a fitting form, or part, of a development or superstructure on top of that which has occurred previously. That is it perceived as being important in the sense that one wants to share with other people what one sees oneself as having experienced, in the hopes that it will also be able to be edifying for others. A viewpoint that in a dialogue does not provide any information at all, apart from just the words good or bad. These words then have a total lack of value to everyone except oneself in a direct meaning (if that is actually possible, subjectively). Such a standpoint can serve as an inclining of a value or a piece of information in the communication, depending on what the social situation is like between the participants in the dialogue; we communicate different things with different people.

On judging the value of what is displayed by investigating what it can communicate

What is experienced as a good or a bad exhibition at the time one sees it, compared with the way it is recalled to memory later on? Later on, in the sense that one no longer finds oneself in the place where it is being shown. In order to be able to call something good during a dialogue, it can make it easier if one can agree on what one considers to be its purpose, or to be that which it has in turn been taken to be good for; an exhibition that is called good without a context, or a form, having been presented, within which, or within more than one of which, it moves around, and that it should be good for, is presumably equally good as bad, since in such cases it would stand totally apart from everything that is not specifically itself. As well as in the positioning of the works and their ongoing dialogue, between their dead and living players. It can also be with pure disinterest with regard to what is being shown that one comes out with the assertion that one does not know why one likes what one about it, and yet still considers oneself to like it. A standpoint that in a dialogue does not provide any information at all, apart from just the words good or bad. These words then have a total lack of value to everyone except oneself in a direct meaning (if that is actually possible, subjectively). Such a standpoint can serve as an inclining of a value or a piece of information in the communication, depending on what the social situation is like between the participants in the dialogue; we communicate different things with different people.

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and later perhaps to become history. History is written down after the events are considered to have finished, or in stages if the events go on for a long time, by someone, but, in the present moment, one cannot know who. And yet there is a prevalent discourse about quality, almost a kind of contemporary canon in the present moment. A kind of joint standpoint that is subject to constant reformulation. This also involves things that do not happen in the present, written history is simultaneously reformulated. There is a kind of prevalent notion of quality that changes, an etymologically peculiar situation as regards the origins of the works. The reasons for putting on an exhibition can in themselves be affected in turn by totally different fields, as many as the number of exhibitions. The common feature of the various arenas where exhibitions emerge may be that they come about with their beginnings in an idea. Which later becomes a decision that what has been thought is going to happen in some particular form, in which various formulations take over. The formulations surrounding the production then come to a kind of stop when the exhibition is shown to the public, in which there is a different communication from that during the production enters the scene.

Thoughts are, in a way, in all their simplicity dead to everyone but oneself, to strain their communicable aspect. Nevertheless, we try to transmit them between us, there is an enormous urge to communication. They are dead in the same way as we cannot, in impeccable guise, as persons, mediate precisely what we have experienced to someone else in the way that we have experienced it ourselves. A mediated thought can be counted as a kind of envisaging of an urge to communication; what we try to communicate and what is perceived by the recipient who transmits it back in the dialogue. We can assume that we are mediating our first-hand information in the form of second-hand information to the best of our ability. When one talks in terms such as good or bad, one can also involve our meaning a more or less accessible formulation of the originally experienced sensory impression, or frame of mind. It can also involve that the experienced sensory impression, however accessible it is, is not experienced as interesting in the way it is envisaged, or that it is. Something has been happening, which has since been expressed in a medium and later, in some context, shown to a person other than the one who formulated what was experienced. What one judges to be good or bad can thus presumably, in the best case, be nothing other than a judgement of a kind of second-hand information as regards what was subjectively originally experienced. This in its turn presumes that what is expressed is a direct translation of what is experienced, regardless of the medium. A translation that serves as such completely faultlessly. What one judges as good or bad is also the way the interpretation of experiences and communication operates as happened up until the formulation has emerged, something we do subjectively as viewers.

If one can talk about qualities that are not just subjective observations, but which are instead shared? That something is experienced as good or bad does not need to be linked with the origins of what is experienced, the formulation of what is experienced by the person who has expressed it or submitted it for viewing by others. We cannot precisely re-experience the original experience had by another person. Rather, what we experience in communication with others is a kind of reality in itself, since it is something that we have set up together. This results in compromises that make it possible for us to carry on this dialogue about what we are experiencing, a kind of personal reality and a shared one. As was said earlier; many people find it a meditative "tomb", and later perhaps to become history. That camera is a portable tomb, you must remember that, "The residents of Mirror Travel in the Yucatan", Artforum, September 1969.

If the communication does not go far enough, then that is precisely what happens, it does not go far enough. But this lack of reach will not be experienced in the same way by different people. Even the fact that it does not reach us is an agreement in the communication. During a search for a positive symbiosis between the expressed and the unexpressed on a subjective level, but also on a more elusive shared level, one frequently finds that the very searching is what one was searching for; like achieving a kind of balance by not doing so, when the question is constantly changing. It is perhaps possible to talk about stages with relatively open-ended outcomes. The outcomes that are experienced like this in order to make it possible to go on. But it will still be an open door for some and a closed door for others. A shared meaning construction, whose objective is intended for development within the subject, but which is not overearable when it is expressed. It is carried out with a hope based on a striving to go forwards in some way. We look for changing, different, phenomena, everything as well as nothing. Sometimes actively and sometimes not, always with the presence of what could happen irritatingly within reach and ready to be captured. Everything that happens in what we call the present is in a way a part of a contemporary context. That which has been saved and which continues to be shown is, on the contrary, not always something that is counted in what we call the canon. But it is, nevertheless, experienced in the present moment and is consequently also a part of what is contemporary. Becoming aware of an origin of a formulation is usually separated from what is produced in the present moment, which is created is always new purely subjectively, but will not be experienced as such by others. If we have to remember that "[the] camera is a portable tomb", then we should perhaps also remember that we either were there when the picture was
Proposition for what a linear ritual could be and its potential capacity for use as a means of investigating room-images.

That which is experienced as beautiful by some people can, at the same time, be experienced as the opposite by others; that which is a banal central perspective in a picture can, at the same time, be a beautiful symmetry, seen in relation to the viewers of an exhibition. That which is so beautifully put in spoken form, as opposed to that which can be counted as an experience without speaking, always risks losing precisely that which is referred to through the naming of it. In these moments, silver is exchanged for gold when one keeps silent¹⁴, and the knowledge that the experience is over can later be measured in the falling level of evaluation after the culmination. After this, looking for the next experience takes over. When a table is said to be, it is different from saying that the table is finished. If it is finished, that means that it is as it is — that is, the wood has been burnt and there are only ashes left after its demise. The table’s original function has been eliminated, but the ash is still there and the function is still there, somewhere, another day. In the room one currently finds oneself in one is in continuous contact with matter, and beyond that also with the functions that it involves. In order to get past a surface layer of what purports to be a fact, one must put aside something in order to get to the core. This is done in the hope of later being transformed into a communicable expression in a presentation. What can be considered to be interesting, a constant, is that the investigation of functions will continue for an indefinite period, which simultaneously makes it consciously unfinished. That which deviates from a habitual pattern will be tested until it can be included in the pattern. The rooms where there is no trace of an outcome, which is then physically acted out, are then counted as undiscovered regions. But like the present moment, it would presumably not be possible to take hold of such an undiscovered region, as soon as it happens, has it actually left that stage behind?

My exhibition Investigating spatial features through a linear ritual? was partly a continuation of a theme that Thomas Mulcaire presented in his written reflections on the preceding exhibition in the gallery¹⁶. A complete reversal of the ordinary type of working relationship between artist and architect. But besides the choice of taking parts of an original architect’s plan, as in Mulcaire’s exhibition, the unconscious functions in the architectural project as his exhibition space, Marcos Corrales was committed to draw up an architectural project with the objective of giving an identity to the unfinished space. The plans were submitted but the building work has been on hold due to a complex set of financial and bureaucratic constraints. In the meantime, Maumaus took up a newly built shopfront in the Alta de Lisboa precinct to use as an exhibition space. Thomas Mulcaire, Limities (Lisbon: Lumiar Cité, 2011).

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of sauce or garnish, then it has to be well-cooked, but as plain as possible, there should be nothing left to chew on; a functioning symbiosis of function and expression.

The ambivalent expression that the gallery space had in its preliminary stage involved another type of attractiveness. There was a great opportunity for intervening in the room-image in a different way than in the white cube; it is like a trap where one gets caught in architectural issues when it is sprung. One becomes the quarry of the architecturer as hunter, and if one is captured, one becomes partly its prey. Being trapped is a choice, but it is more tempting here than in the case of a white cube. The possibility of choice has been reduced to the advantage of the ambiguous room-image. Regardless of whether the gallery space could be seen as being consciously unfinished, or if the construction got stuck in the process of development for its completion, the rooms had a distinct physical expression which one could lay one’s hand upon, it looked like it did. This tempted one to make interventions into the room-image through its irregularity, it disrupted a habitual pattern. The choice of disrupting a pattern is clearer here than in the white cube, but does one then ignore something else? The parts that Mulcaire had selected for a kind of accentuation in the space, chosen from the original architect’s plans19, are now a part of it. With regard to the intervention that he carried out in the room by commissioning artisan’s services, those who follow him have to adopt their own standpoint in a different way than would they in the relationship between artist and artist in a series of exhibitions in which the works are sent back after the show is over. Mulcaire’s exhibited works are not finished being packed up to continue their journey, they are as much physically present in his exhibition as in the following one. His role in the continued exhibitions, right up until the original architect’s plans are completed, instead becomes that of a kind of executive architect. Even if it is possible to see the selected sections that he has completed as sculptures. Without information available in the gallery saying that these are his creations, one presumably reads them not as works from an exhibition, but as construction work in progress. If one chooses to see them as works that have been left there, in relation to one’s own exhibition, it is like presenting one’s own works inside another exhibition. A context that is tempting to address, even if it is also possible to avoid it.

The stone floor with the traditional white tiles that are normal in Lisbon is a full completion of the floor in the lower room, and people will presumably not think about it very much20. It already looks like it belongs there. The white, elliptical pillar and the white L-shaped wall in the upper room, in contrast to the floor, stand more on their own21. They are surrounded by the incomplete parts of the gallery, which are waiting to be like them, the apparently unfinished demanded attention. The pillar and the L-shaped wall could have been seen as a part of the interventions that I carried out in the gallery, but they were not. Instead of ignoring them and going around them, they were incorporated into the plan for the interventions, without being part of it. They were already carried out before what happened next. In the stage that the exhibition rooms were in before the exhibition there were signs of decisions by the artisans that were clearly visible, since the rooms were not completed as planned from the beginning. This same stage partly recurred again after the exhibition22. Since the room could be considered to be finished as it was, it had the effect of the artisans then being able to see either as participating in the planning of the architecture, or as kinds of unintentional architects in the creation of the room-image. The decisions they made during the construction work, which presumably were not intended to be finished solutions for the interior, manifested themselves in an expression that gave the impression of being intended to be covered over later in a more refined end result, rather than continuing to be left in view. The aim of the interventions in the room-image within the framework of the exhibition was either to accentuate the artisans’ unintentional expressions, or to cover them up. This was done in the hopes of making a proposal for a more completed room-image, one that could not be read as ambiguously as before. What happened before and during the interventions into the room-image can be compared to a kind of linear ritual? A ritual that has then been carried out in the hopes of moving out into a favourable situation for the presentation of works other than this specific one. It was linear because it was not intended to be carried out in the same way, in the same place, more than on the one occasion when it happened. But it simultaneously contained similarities to an established ritual, in which the decisions about what needed to be changed or carried out were not exclusively just decisions. This was something that also happened according to a kind of automatic thinking. The decisions were then not made in the moment, but rather by a conglomeration of events that had happened earlier, without any large measure of knowledge of why the decisions were taken as they were, but that they still had to be made precisely like this, and in no other way.

These decisions thus have similarities with dead metaphors; they have come to a point at which fewer words give the same meaning as an original longer version, according to an unspoken agreement that has been developed through using the metaphor, communicating it. The metaphor has vanished, but, at the same time, still has its meaning in the accepted expression into which it has been transformed. Like the recycle bin in a computer does not contain so extremely many bits of paper like those we write on with a pen, and not is it particularly round, or purely three-dimensional, as the one we have under our desk, the decisions can partly be taken in a similar way. The two different wastepaper baskets have a common function, just as the different types of decisions do. The decisions are experienced as in some way having been made in different tenses; they have their origins in separate periods, but within the same person. Seen from an outsider’s perspective, the difference of versions of decisions are experienced, and then formulated in an expression, presumably, however, without any distinction between them. Regardless of whether it is a subjective reconciliation that has occurred within the person, between the decisions, or neither. What is presented in the gallery is there to be viewed as a distinct entity. But traces of decisions, which were then carried out physically, with or without any clear, original agent who dispatched them, are presumably always found in any room that is discovered. Could the opposite pole be possible and graspable? The purpose of a decision that physically affects a room-image is often to communicate something to another person, but not always. In contrast, there are likely to be traces still left in the room in both cases. Through carrying out a linear ritual one can perhaps further approach some sort of mitigation of the experience of being imprisoned in one’s own mind. In those cases where it can still be called a mind, when it dwells in the same physical form as one is used to, and therefore continue to be part of that mind that are active. The person one knows as oneself, the person one refers to when one thinks ‘I’, occasionally flashes past in a vague and somewhat hazy mush of images that is then the waking state. So as to subsequently take itself off elsewhere again. It is experienced more as following a half-and-half recognizable notion, which in some strange way comes from within one’s head, than the waking state we usually experience. Even the mirror shows a somewhat
unfamiliar person, who moves in response to even the smallest switch that one makes oneself on the other side. Except that it is not entirely the same person as usually does so who looks back. One can stand there and wonder where one’s mirror image has gone to, why it is not complete and in order; where the image of oneself has hidden itself. It does not, however, do to stand there and ponder for particularly long. The dazed, slow, feebble part of the body is matched in equal measure by a restlessness that is totally out of proportion to the physical possibility of motion. Despite the feebleness, there is still an inner compulsion to move almost constantly. Consciousness and the body are then not in sync. Trying to read even one whole page of a book is more or less like trying to thread a rope through the eye of a needle; the rope might resemble a thread, but the sense of proportion with regard to its function is void. The words in the book seem not to fit together any longer, but the desire to understand them is strong. The whole thing results in a very odd frustration; that of being imprisoned in one’s own mind, and not even being able to read a whole page of a book, even if one tries one’s best.

Setting about searching with a set goal is then, likewise, not at all easy. What does, however, exist in the mush that is one’s day is, nevertheless, a kind of searching, or a task, which can be compared to something that makes its presence felt far back in one’s head, as something that is familiar, but which cannot be fully located. An expedition that is very explicit as to how it should be carried out, and which is also hard to avoid carrying out. In which the goal is in a way highly self-evident as regards what it is. Except that there is nothing that can explain what it is that is going to happen when it is achieved, or why the object of the search should be found. The task in itself is highly visible, with an apparently well-defined goal and clear steps on the path that is to be taken in order to achieve a grand culmination of events. But in the state of haziness it is not possible to see how paradoxical it is that it is going to happen. Afterwards, one can point out that what should have happened did not do so. But there is presumably always the possibility that it could have been the right thing? Occasionally, postconstructions (reconstructive reconstructions and memory modifications) are useful for being able to go further. But what it was that happened becomes, in memory, a linear ritual, a ritual that is neither intended, nor able, to be carried out more than once. But it is equally self-evident in its steps and in its goal as something one does far too many times out of habit. With its inexplicable elements the ritual can only be carried out by the person in whose head it exists. Presumably exists there as an effect of a memory that was once measured by its isolated practitioners, and which can, now, hopefully function as a kind of self-help on a convoluted road back to a more familiar state.

The temporary completion of the exhibition space according to the standard of the linear ritual was carried out in seven different interventions. The wooden rods that were sunk into holks where, according to the original architect’s plans for the room, there should have been a different type of handrail than the one that is there now, were one of the interventions into the space. The rail that has instead been there since the gallery opened is, in a simpler design, made out of bits of reinforcing steel welded together. Other interventions into the room-image involved: covering over two pipe formations in the ceiling, which resembled Mulcaire’s pillar, although as if they had been cut off in the middle lengthways; the overpainting of a white panel in the ceiling to be as near as possible to the original gary and to the pattern in the concrete\(^2\); the removal of the blue lettering, pencil sketches et cetera from the walls; the covering over of electric wiring in the ceiling and on the walls; together with the covering over of the damage to one of the panes of glass in the lower room. The last intervention was an accentuation of the pattern that was created on the floor in the upper room by the concrete ridges that cover over the cabling, by filling the cavity between the ridges and the walls with sand. These interventions were what it was possible to see during the period when the exhibition was open for viewing. Every time-limited exhibition can be seen as a conscious time capsule with a date when it is opened and a content that is then displayed\(^2\). The envelope for such a time capsule is a time period in itself, which leads up to the opening, when another sort of investigation of functions begins, that of the visitors. How do the elements in the experiment interact according to a viewer? The various different trajectories for ideas intersect in the communication between people who talk about the topic. That which diverges from a viewer’s habitual patterns is put to the test, until it can be incorporated into their own patterns, or they can try to ignore it. The unconscious functions in the architecture that were created in the room-image by the artitians have, in both my and Mulcaire’s case, now been put under the spotlight as a proposal for further communication about them. While the gallery in the preliminary stage resembled a skeleton in the midst of an animal, in the usual, during the exhibition it perhaps looked like it had been given the hide of an animal from another species. One that was then pulled over its skeleton, in an awareness that it will be sloughed off.

The inverted and temporary hide was in itself a proposal for something that could be seen as incorporating features of being both a sculptural installation and a space with a clear function. A potential central point in the temporary room-image could have been that, if one of its elements had been altered, then it would have vanished, the centre was thus the symmetry as a whole; since there was no actual centre, everything was equally centred. In such a case, the installation seems as a symbol of function and expression was very fragile. The weaker part of this symbolism was its function, and its regularity. Which was more vulnerable in its tidied-down position derived from the linear ritual than the expression, which if it had been changed, would presumably not have been affected in the same way. The ambiguity of the room-image was still there in the way the rooms looked, but the function as a gallery space was of a more fixed character, since it then had a kind of interior. In the subsequent exhibitions the exhibitions will need to adopt a viewpoint on both Mulcaire’s and my permanent interventions into the room-image; even if one always presents works within other exhibitions, here one also has to do so in a strictly physical sense. The unfinished parts of the rooms will continue to await their completion, as long as the premises have their current function as an exhibition venue. If the apparently unfinished aspect is ignored for long enough, perhaps the question will nevertheless negate itself; even if the answer is that it is not interesting whether the rooms can be considered finished or not, then that in turn is an agreement in the communication between people. Are we all then unintentional architects in the creation of the room-images that we dwell in? A path laid out in a circle is not experienced as being so round if one follows it straight ahead for a while, as if one were to see it from above in full outline. But if one continues around the path lap after lap, some parts of the surroundings will become more familiar, and others the opposite. Each action performed is.
at the same time, a foregiving of another possible action, and hence one can enjoy spending the present moment with someone, since that which lies before us in time does not necessarily exist, but it might do.

As a postconstruction can be fertile, so can counting circuits of a circular path in stages be so. Like an experience of different layerings or groupings of interest that is abandoned or forgotten. If objectivity exists, in the sense that one can subjectively bypass oneself into an observation of something else, then that would complicate any such view of possible stages; all the different factors that can be incorporated into the experience, from the smallest to the largest, would be made visible in their entirety. With this sort of objectivity, assuming that it is totally transferrable in its form, a mutual culture mass might perhaps be possible; the starting point is then the same for everyone, via the escape from subjectivity into objectivity. But what would the effect be of a communication in which all the participants have exactly the same basic information? Where one is one's own has then been partly transposed, one's background comes in as a part of the dialogue, but the basis for communication is completely shared. There is then a kind of agreed, shared background for a specific topic. But even if such pure objectivity could be made possible, are there decisions that solely affect oneself? Such a view would be the opposite of the function, or the conclusion, being visibly the same, but the methods for achieving it differ; with various starting points one can still reach the same candle-lit cottage at the end of a forest grave. It can then be a complementary body, instead of isolated units.

The two pyramids in the exhibition's originally intended function are there in the installation, presented in visual language. But in the exhibition the function was transposed so as hopefully to be pleasing aesthetically in a different way from the originally intended one. In the same way, the bow's function was transposed to try to show something that can be seen as being beautiful. If an optimised function can be beautiful in itself, then an object produced with the idea of being beautiful can presumably fulfill a function through this longing to be seen in the same way by others. It is beautiful to like the same colours, if it is experienced as being beautiful to do so. If it does, one can then try to talk about it, about the same thing, which can also be beautiful; something that is beautiful is so on the assumption of mutual communication. A subjective decision that something is beautiful influences others, whether it is pronounced to be so or not. We all have more or less overlapping interests; nothing is beautiful without this communication. The stage in which our interests overlap with each other perhaps includes the communication that is naturally brought more into the light; one undefined period in an ongoing methodology within an area of interest meets another in a dialogue within the defined period that exhibitions constitute. Once the perimeter of eye contact with the work has been passed, then a different, but similar communication about an exhibition is carried on. But memory describes experiences differently from the way the senses do in the present moment.

**APPENDIX**

**Description of the sphere of activities covered by art via a revised version of selected parts of the article: “Konst” (art), in Svenska Akademien Ordbok, or SAOB, a dictionary published by the Swedish Academy.**

It is partly its task to justify treachery, it is not its task to totally desanitize fertility. This is found in such expressions as: according to all its rules. Or outside of them, reformedul and before that which nobody made unclear. It also consists of soon getting me onto exemplified feet, where my feet are now experienced as being imposed. It does not concern me that my dirty hands later, when those hands have already been without the experience of being free. It can be a function that involves the creation of something exquisite (aesthetically effective); a productive aesthetic activity. But also a branching out into similar activities, often in the context of being a beautiful or liberated version. It once consisted perhaps more of something of one such beautiful function (or had several such beautiful functions),” its whimpers, while others bark.

That which has been learned through it from the animals is not to reproduce with one’s own offspring; the opposite of animals might be furniture, which in itself is not capable of reproducing, and nor can it move about by its own devices. That which has been learned from dead animals can be found to be as diffuse as that in living furniture; it occupies the domains of myth, or allegiance.

People said my sense of loss was like that; a dissemblance or a foolish extreme. But people grasped your being closeness so as not to exist as something else; in many realms or exaggerated highlights. This acts like the terminology used in ball games, in expressions like: to make a shot, or something similar. That is to say in the hopes that the ball will bounce against a cushion, another ball or component, before it hits the ball against which it is being played; this involves a constant longing for communication. It is occasionally transient in its meaning: procedure, method; and before as well as in: a way, or means. But it is constantly fixed in the sense of not being a behaviour, with a lack of method, in the present moment solely possible as a way in and an objective.

The intended area for it will never be totally clean, but has to try to be cleaned with it. Its run-around periphery never exists as an imperfect dirtiness; it does not need to be made unclean with anything else.

It exists through investigations of the subject and understanding of something acquired through practical repetition. One uses all these areas that one knows that the failure will let us to sweat properly, hot stones are the thing right now. Nothing helps it towards death, for it is presumably not alive. But everything in its turn obliterates something else from life; the other is surely always still there in death.

Capturing material with material, that is one of its goals; granting freedom to nothing, without anything, is not one of its polar objectives. It exists in the father’s and son’s minds, which are so opposed to each other that the spirit is needed in order to win the confidence of both. But the mother’s viewpoint, seen without the daughter’s purely rational way of looking at things, is not exactly coherent; the tangible material is not necessary in order to lose mistrust of one of them. It is there in the ice, through which it was made; but also in fire, where what is outside the fire cannot be undermined.

**APPENDIX NOTES**

1. All quotations are taken from Ordbok över Svenska Språket (dictionary of the Swedish language), volume 14 (Ked-Kraj), Article: Konst (art), columns K2161-K2198 (the dictionary is divided into columns rather than pages), published in Lund by the Svenska Akademien (Swedish Academy) in 1937. There has been no updated edition since then. Supplementary volumes are planned for publication when the dictionary is complete and, at the time of writing, work is being done on the word “UT” (outside). The dictionary is an etymological reference work and the first volume was published in 1898. The planned date of completion is 2017. Below are the quotations used in this adaptation, translated into modern English from old forms of Swedish, the origin of the sources used in the dictionary, and the column numbers in the dictionary (if no other source is given, the note indicates the editorial office of the SAOB):

2. The capacity, skill; formerly sometimes coming to mean: craftiness, sagacity etc.; also more concretely: something that demands or requires (great) power or skill; now esp. (in connection with 3 and 4) with regard to technical or mechanical skill etc.” SAOB column K2161. “& it is part of art’s task to
Plastic arts, art that works with a material sub-art (beautiful arts); occasionally, in more restricted context of fine or free art(s), formerly also beautiful of such activity, branch of art, artform; often in the effect), productive aesthetic activity; also branch forth of something beautiful (having an aesthetic 5.

The activity that is considered to be the bringing holm, 1816-1860), part 6, 335. SAOB column K2162.

4. The whole of art consists in putting me soon on free feet.” Handlingar rörande Skandinavias historia (documents on the history of Scandinavia) (Stockholm, 1816-1860), part 6, 335. SAOB column K2162.

5. The activity that is considered to be the bringing forth of something beautiful (having an aesthetic effect), productive aesthetic activity; also branch of such activity, branch of art, artform; often in the context of fine or free art(s), formerly also beautiful art (beautiful arts); occasionally, in more restricted use, of representational art; also concrete (see b). Plastic arts, art that works with a material sub-

3. In the expression “after (alla) konstens regler” ([performed] according to [all] the customs of art), formerly also simply efter konsten (as in the art), (formerly also: a way out, a means).” SAOB column K2164.

10. More commonly, coming to mean: procedure, process, method; an artifice; formerly also: a way of art, with the use of artistic ingenuity or artifice; esp.: methodically”, “thoroughly” etc.; artistically; also (commonly) coming to mean: application of certain doings or trade etc., observing the proper ceremonies etc., occupation (vocation or profession) that requires special insights and proficiencies; among with other learned men), and augmented with many spiritual hymns, Stockholm, 1626), 461. SAOB column K2162.

11. The silicon soil never occurs in totally pure form, ingredients) make a Cataplasm according to Art.” methodically”, “thoroughly” etc., more concretely: exercise of a proficiency etc., occupation (vocation or profession) that requires special insights and proficiencies; Newes with reference to exercise of something practical and often with secondary connotation of artistic talent or knowledge.” SAOB column K2162.

12. Insight and skill in something (acquired through theoretical studies and practical exercise); proficiency, ingenuity; esp. more concretely: exercise of a proficiency etc., occupation (vocation or profession) that requires special insights and proficiencies; (i.e. the one sick of the plague) can come into a sweat, with the aid of hot stones (etc.)”, Bercht, Om postlantizen och hennes orsaker (on the plague and her causes), (Stockholm, 1589). SAOB column K2163.

13. “(One) sees — all Arts that one knows, that he (i.e. the one sick of the plague) can come into a sweat, with the aid of hot stones (etc.)”, Bercht, Om postlantizen och hennes orsaker (on the plague and her causes), Stockholm, 1589). SAOB column K2163.


15. “Capturing fishing line with fishing line, that falls to art,” Grubb, Penu proverbiale (a treasury of proverbs) (Linköping, 1665), 228. SAOB column K2161.

16. “The dispositions of father and son are so different that it would have taken much Art to win the confidence of both.” (translated from the Swedish Mollien, JBPs, translation Lagerström, L’avec eller den girige (The Miser, Stockholm, 1731), 8. SAOB column K2161.

17. In expressions with (sometime by means of or through) art, with the use of artistic ingenuity or artifice; esp.: in artificial ways (opposite: through natural development etc.; cf. o”), SAOB column K2165. & “the, which — becomes — by means of art produced.” Block, Annmärknings ifwer Mortalström-stradbande (Notes on the cessation of the Motala-stream, Stockholm, 1708), 29. SAOB column K2163.

A collapse does not mean that something ceases to function – a collapse is a way of functioning. Instead of viewing the violent transitional phase as a blank, futile period of time that is needed for casualties to find back their old, or rearrange into a new order, the transition can be seen as an own realm, not only bearing the potential of consequences but in itself a valid and powerful continuum.

“The invention of the ship was in the same moment also the invention of the shipwreck.” says Paul Virilio. We can watch proof for his remark on the daily news. Conflict and crisis seem conditions which have risen as inevitable consequences from the way we chose to organise the world around us. For now, collapse seems to become a new status quo. Sometimes I wonder if understanding the principles of shift and rupture in conditions could help us acquire skill sets which would allow us to navigate within such a situation in a more intelligent, active way – instead of waiting it out. Like the famous rabbit, caught in the head lights of a car, who freezes and pretends that he is the world around him. He plays dead in order to survive. What can in certain situations prove to be an utmost ineffective strategy, is on the other hand, if consciously applied, the basic thought behind another highly functional technique.

ANIKA SCHWARZLOSE

becoming collapse
disguise and deception – mimesis and adaptation

“every lie creates a parallel world – the world in which it’s true.”

I see the moment a system collapses, not foremost as a big bang, that bears the potential for a new system to come into existence – but the collapse itself already has it’s own intrinsic systematic. It follows it’s own logic, that wants to be deciphered. We know and we can recognise the way a building slowly slumps down after a detonation, the way the masses are magnetically drawn to the streets in fury, the way the smoke eventually settles. We had countless possibilities to observe and analyse those moments. And if only on TV. Many of us though, have had first hand impressions of such situations, whether that is a bliss or a curse. Watching something that was supposed to be rock solid, something that was supposed to regulat and provide structural support - grant your life essentially - watching that buckle and sink to the floor, like an exhausted dying horse, whose legs are finally giving way, is an experience of a special kind.

Max Ockborn / Master of Fine Arts 2

“time moves into one direction, memory into the other death”


PART I

A military base as a symbol for the struggle to create our own world, the limbo of creative force and ideals, ideology and submission, deception and self deception

“Tarnen und Täuschen” means “disguise and deception” – it is the name of a German military base, I recently started to work with on a project, where technicians are occupying themselves with the fabrication of decoy weapons; inflatable tanks, fake rockets, fake land mines – they create make believe versions of something that is not there. To distract the enemies attention from the real resources. And on the other hand they are busy inventing new forms of stealth technology, camouflaging and disguising already existing soldiers, vehicles and weapons. This activity again stands in an interesting relationship to their own history: Being the only facility of the Eastern German army, that has been allowed to remain active, after the reunion, all the soldiers and civil workers have been confronted with a very harsh disruption of their own reality. After 41 years of service for the ideological goals of a socialist regime, almost overnight, when the cold war ends, they have been told that now they were serving the ends of a free-market capitalistic system – the implementation of the former eastern German soldiers, speaks of “the men’s hurt souls” when I ask him about the process.

Like Woody Allens movie character Zelig 3, who has the magical gift to become one with the crowd that surrounds him, we play that we are like someone else in order to protect and preserve our own intrinsic identity. Zelig is not imitating the upper class party guests he encounters, he is not imitating the black jazz musicians, who he socializes with – he naturally adopts their accent, behavioral codes and on top of that their physical appearance. Even still, when his curious talent lands him in mental hospital, he becomes one of the psychiatrists and reads patient records, he evaluates the ability of the men to bend, amend and readjust according to their new working climate, the officer who had been in charge with the implementation of the former Eastern German soldiers, speaks of “the men’s hurt souls” when I ask him about the process.

As I walk through the workshops and the large storage halls, I look at all the decoy vehicles – nothing but rubber and resin – I am reminded of a theater workshop. Where does the theater end and where does the war start? From up close a lot of the mock ups look clumsy and have a certain innocence to them. The soft shapes of the larger vehicles invite to be touched and poked, while at the same time a lingering aura of danger remains to surround them. I have to think of Paul McCarthy’s piratical ship and some of his other, theatrical setups, that once made a big impression on me when I saw them in a Belgian museum. The childishness of the construct reveals itself purposefully, only to brutally penetrate all your grown up protective mechanisms and to go right through to the point where you are still naive and open. Delivering the horror directly into the infantile part of your mind, that had staid vulnerable and receptive, because it never learned to protect itself. It mutates, adapts and assimilates to new logics. Our soldiers and technicians have been allowed to remain active, after the reunion, all the soldiers and technicians of the military base. As one system fell, there was no time for them to sit back and contemplate what had happened; they needed to adapt to new vocabulary for familiar concepts, new ideas for familiar causalities, but eventually they had to become the other.

If it had not happened in such a compressed period of time, their transition process would have been much more painful, could maybe go unnoticed even. Human culture continuously mutates, adapts and assimilates to new logics. Our soldiers and even schoolchildren how to protect themselves. It’s called mine awareness, I am told. The close resemblance with their original makes these objects the benign half to their evil twin brothers. While I have always found the concept of artifacts being good or evil belonging into the world of occult magic and fetish rituals, here in those heavily guarded facilities radiate the beauty and affirmative atmosphere of a place where things are made, in the same moment there is a curious tinge to it all. What the technicians do is nothing but a very respectable and salutary job. Who they do it for, that is another story. The story of the

time moves into one direction, memory into the other
Installation view, wood, tarpaulin, tie wraps
2,60 × 1,75 × 7,00 m
existence. Consciously orchestrated self erosion as an ultimate proof of universal power. Maybe also a process of self sacrificial constraint for the sake of preserving power – the fox gnaws of his leg, if trapped in a sling, to prevent his doom. Is mimicry an act of peaceful warfare? The only possible condition, that like a loophole within the sturdy fundament of right and wrong, permits such an oxymoron to exist in reality even? Adorno had the beautiful idea that mimesis could be a way of reconciling with our surroundings. Instead of relating to our inner own, but also our external nature in a way that is determined by order and authority, we could relate to the other in reconciliation through assimilation.

“Rather than dominating nature, mimesis as mimicry opens up a tactile experience of the world in which the Cartesian categories of subject and object are not firm, but rather malleable; paradoxically, difference is created by making oneself similar to something else by mimetic imitation.”

Mimesis as a strategy of approximation is in the same moment a strategy of reproduction. The attempt of recreating, approaching and becoming that, which is not identical to the subject, leads inevitably to a proliferation of multiplicity. In the contrary to a mechanical reproduction like the ones Walter Benjamin describes, a mimetic appropriation often differs strongly from its role model. Mimesis thus leads to a diversity of “versions” of a subject.

PART II

copies, versions and adaptation as means of artistic production in the light of a new era – and in the shade of an old era

In the course of our life time maybe all of us have to become such versions of ourselves – not only one or two – but even many at the same time. At some point we too had to become accustomed to do what we were told. We formed habits according to convention and moral. On all levels. I suddenly become intensely aware of how my own artistic practice is oscillating between my goals and wants, my very personal ideals on the one side and on the other side there are the circumstances, surrounding me, that I comply with.

In my practice I am gathering images and video footage, like a gleaner who picks up everything that might have been overlooked. Sometimes I harvest from my own imagination and sometimes I harvest from others. even their creative decisions become my raw material. I make no difference between items that I have produced myself or what has taken others time and effort to bring into existence. Such strategies of production seem to become rather a new norm than an exception. “Found footage” work is not approached with an emphasis on the act of appropriating foreign material anymore.

“In the Post-Internet climate, it is assumed that the work of art lies equally in the version of the object one would encounter at a gallery or museum, the images and other representations disseminated through the Internet and print publications, bootleg images of the object or its representations, and variations on any of these as edited and recontextualized by any other author. The less developed stratagem for pointing to a lack of representational fixity is that of taking an object to be represented (to be more direct, presented) as another type of object entirely, without reference to the “original.” For objects after the Internet there can be no “original copy.” Even if an image or object is able to be traced back to a source, the substance (substance in the sense of both its materiality and its importance) of the source object can no longer be regarded as inherently greater than any of its copies.”

Being active participants in what the media theorist Howard Rheingold calls a new hierarchy of “many-to-many culture production and distribution”, artists of my generation seem to facilitate an increase in the culture and media economy of current time. The splitting line between audience and author is continuously blurring. The passing author, whose death has been elaborated on by Roland Barthes and his contemporaries, has also reached out a hand and pulled his readers onto the stage. A gesture of quick generosity that has made all of us into contributors to – and consumers from a pool of images and knowledge that is so vast, that there seems not always a reason to feel cut off from it. Sometimes what has been made available already is exactly what you needed, to feel provoked into action. The copies and versions which are created as result from such a situation, are substantially rich and often bear more vital forward looking potential than many of the clever acts of concluding and cataloging which are forming such an important part of current artistic practice.

“A lot of art has become a way of looking back at the last sixty years of the modernist project, which we feel has failed. It’s almost like a lost world, and we are cataloging it, quoting it, reconfiguring it, filing it away into sliding drawers as though we were bureaucrats with no idea what any of it means. They’re got nothing to say about it except that they know it didn’t work. It’s not moving onwards – we’re just like academic bureaucrats with no idea about it except that they know it didn’t work. It’s completely recontextualised in connection with what the artist had written. He had driven the pictures in a direction, that I had deliberately avoided. I liked that. The article wasn’t uninteresting either, that surely made it easier to agree with the adoption of the images. But especially the thought of not only appropriating other peoples material, but also leaving my own real, is encouraging. The way I, and many other artists use the creations of others, is exceeding the concept of appropriation. It is closer to a notion of ideas and artworks as commons – in the sense as described by Antonio Negri 8. Like a word that belongs to nobody and is ‘only’ a brick in the fundament of language. Like a widely diverse and constantly accessible array of vocabulary can render a language rich and powerful, the free availability of ideas for common use can bring forth progress in the field of artistic invention. Especially within the realm of net art and popculture the potential of sampling and and reinterpreting is already widely understood and activated. Also contemporary conceptual art is starting to exist in versions, which are not occupied with their position in a serial production as a main subject. Since the whole process has caught the public eye largely in shape of youtube video reactions, surf clubs and other internet-specific forms of cultural content creation first, pieces that seem equally aware of their methods of representation and dispersion are referred to as post-internet art. Maybe a bit of a foggy term, that is providing a generalising and pritty inapp oversimplification. But nevertheless it is an attempt to find a description for a new chapter in cultural development. Inapt name creations are usually the first signifier that something so important is happening, that we have the strong urge to define it at once. We have to give this new big thing a name – even though it is so incipient that we still lack the distance to find a terminology which can adequately describe the process. Sampling, appropriating and reinterpreting are strategies which have become less controversial. They rather start to be seen as necessary and worthwhile consequences which are expanding the growth and hence the impact of an idea. As such they are an important step in the development of art and knowledge production. Clinging on to concepts of creative ownership that treats ideas as physical goods seems futile, since the attempt to artificially preserve scarcity as means of value creation has failed so obviously in mainstream culture already. Growing up facing the break down of unique authorship, this generation of artists seems to have developed the positive reaction of understanding the beauty and democratizing effect that derives from the process, and we have decided to join in. Now it seems more a question of time until this idea will finally pervade the art world and its economy.

Another problem posed by contemporary socio-cultural development is what the artist Artie Vierkant calls “collapse of physical space in networked culture”. 9 The fact that social interaction and cultural exchange are increasingly based on the use of digital networks is provoking a lot of discussion concerning the consequences and benefits of such processes. In his book Program or be Programmed the media theorist Douglas Rushkoff tells the story of a very popular highschool student whom he met with on a regular Friday night. “Gina, he writes, is the girl who is everywhere at once, ye – ultimately – nowhere at all... She describes her having a “mantic, compulsory need to keep tabs on everything else is doing at all times. It has not only removed her from linear time, however, but also from physical space. She relates to her friends through the network, while practically ignoring whoever she is with at the moment. She relates to the places and people she is actually with only insofar as they are suitable for transmission to others in remote locations. The most social girl in her class doesn’t really socialize in the real world at all.”

I wonder how useful in this case Rushkoff’s conclusions about Gina are. The way he regards and judges the teenage girl, reminds strongly on the judgement that we easily impose on behaviors that is so new to us, that we don’t feel familiar with it. So we just can’t relate. He is using an old set of parameters to evaluate the strange new behavior he encounters. He probably remembers his own youth and how much joy it gave him to be with his friends, fully encompassed with a social situation, and how he indulged in the direct experience of a particular event. But who tells us that the way Gina is behaving in her world makes her less happy and why is her instant reaction of mediating an event not a valid one? Is it because the world she moves in, is less real? Is she not participating in life, because she responses to the party she visits with an immediate impulse of digitising the experience for others to evaluate? Is the validity of social interaction depending on what sphere it takes place in? Rushkoff says: “We lose sight of the fact that our digital tools are modeling reality, not substituting for it.” Maybe he is approaching the subject of digital interaction with a fear in his neck that might be derived from a view, originating in the theories about public sphere as outlined by the thinkers of the Frankfurt School. When Jürgen Habermas described the emergence of mass media like newspapers as a threat to the public sphere, he feared commercial mainstream media would turn a “culture-debating public”
into a “culture-consuming public”, thus any form of critical debate would be prevented in favor of using media as an instrument of social control. This classification however is not suited to the way we are using online communication platforms now. If they have been once modeled after reality, then by now the virtual world has become as real as anything else. Artie Vierkant suggests that: “Mass media and the world of the screen” is our communal space. And with it comes new fragments with their own particular hierarchies. As readers-authors navigating these fragments, where now would we find a space within which to delineate “art”? Or, if the new “mass media” is as distributed and varied as our social networks themselves, and in fact driven by them, is that delineation even necessary? Another part of the notion of collapsing physical space, is de-materialization. In anticipation of upcoming development, we will need to readjust our notions of materiality: In this context it is important to bear in mind that a lot of things we perceive as virtual representations are intrinsically of a material nature. Digital files, even if they are not tangible are material. The way we access an increasing amount of the information we search for, is in shape of digital files. “If we think about artifacts of traditional art: painting, carving, ceramics – forms that exist in material objects. But if we need information about them, we don’t usually get on a plane and fly somewhere. We just sit in front of a computer and see this on the screen. So, that digitalization of the world doesn’t just mean there are more and more digital forms, but also that we consider them not as digital forms, but part of our reality... the more often we come in contact with virtual forms, the more real forms change, ones that aren’t virtual by nature, but simply exist with us in a world that is being virtualized. And then we start to look at usual forms of reality as if they had virtual properties. They become fluid, they don’t have lasting forms, their existence isn’t stable. Although they are material, or physical or theoretical. What we call reality is a construct that we build ourselves based on mental experience. If part of this mental experience has a virtual character, then this is projected on the entirety of our mental experience. So, our world of knowledge is in a sense virtual and if we have a virtual digital conscience, then this strengthens our belief that the world is virtual.”

This digitization of materiality is also directly tied to a changing perception of ownership. When owning an object used to mean that you were able to store it and lock it away, then the contemporary interpretation of ownership is much more defined by the ability to access. This new position towards materiality and ownership has already brought forth a wide array of responsive acts: from appropriation, to online piracy and free exchange of cultural goods. Ideas which are all inherently utopian thoughts – not unrelated to socialist ideas like collective ownership, free access to culture and education. Concepts that are far from new, but the emergence of networked culture and the internet as a territory, which originally was virgin in terms of law, customs and routines, has enabled a radical realisation of those ideas. As content creators, and especially as consumers we see the world around us transform and open up possibilities. We insert our images, sound, or videos into a system, where they can be downloaded, reused and altered. By maintaining blogs and tum- blrs and by engaging in participatory acts like file sharing, we become active entrants in that process of transformation. Again this behavior constitutes another strategy against the idea of domination over our surrounding, in favor of participation and adaptation.

The question is how far does an individual have to immerse into his encompassing system to exist in it? Where to draw the line between participation as a field of potential to influence a process and the submission of your own values to the set of surrounding circumstances. How do we continue our artistic practice in a world dominated by digital communication and computer based systems of production and dispersion?

The artist and writer Brad Troemel approaches this question with regard to McLuhan in a very pragmatic way. He says that systems are by nature creating a set of conditions around themselves that alter the way we behave towards them: “...While these contexts are certainly influential on technology coming to be, so too may technol- ogy exert its influence on its human inventors, as was obviously the case with the re-organization of society due to the printing press, radio, television and so on. There is an ebb and flow relation- ship between humans and technology, as each one simultaneously guides the fate of the other. Providing a more polemic example of this notion of reversed influence and the perpetual interplay of human will in the face of technological op- portunity and limitation, environmentalist Denis Hayes concludes, “The increased deployment of nuclear power facilities must lead society toward authoritarianism. Indeed, safe reliance upon nuclear power as the principal source of energy may only be possible in a totalitarian state.”

In other words, as the theorist Langdon Winner states, “the adoption of a given technical system actually requires the creation and maintenance of a particular set of social conditions as the environment of that system.” If it is feasible to conceive of technology as producing an authori- tarian or egalitarian disposition for those in its presence, so too is it within reason to believe the function of technology also presents its own ethical and aesthetic concerns. In the case of productive systems, the criteria I seek to establish is one of aesthetic judgment for what conditions are necessitated by the use of their interfaces and also how such a system’s existence relates to or is situated within the wider fields of art history and social media. There is simply no such thing as a ‘neutral’ or ‘natural’ structure for art to exist through, whether this is via a museum, a Tumblr, or one of the systems applicable to this writing.”

Given this realisation it might be even more important to take very conscious decisions about what kind of technology we would like to maintain and develop further and what kind we might want to replace by different technology, causing different consequences. All in all it seems like a lot of trial and error – and of course: a once green screen Installation view, dvd, monitors dimensions variable

- Anika Schwarzlose
established system leads to dependencies and is hard to overturn again. not impossible however.

I remember a story that I was told by the army official I spoke with about the transformation of the German military base.

“It was in September 1983...” he starts (to early for me to remember, I think, because I was one year old at that time and had just been hospitalised for a mysterious sickness that could not be diagnosed – instead, after a month of MRI scans, various tests and quarantine, it just vanished by itself.) At the same time in Moscow, Russian spy satellites reported, due to falsely interpreted weather-related reflections, the launches of five intercontinental missiles of the type Minuteman. President Andropov was informed right away. The colonel Stanislav Petrov said that he felt a blow to his nervous system. On the control chart, he saw a light flashing on a location in super slow motion. The colonel Stanislav Petrov decided against the computer and took his finger off the trigger. If he would have followed his instructions the world would have come to an end.

But here this is not about what is or is not rational. The rational thing for the people in this context was to risk their lives in order to escape what they saw as the absolute truth.

True belief overrides rational decision-making. But here this is not about what is or is not rational. The rational thing for the people in this context was to risk their lives in order to escape what they saw as the absolute truth. Dreams, inspirations, and fantasies are shaped into ideas, philosophies, and visionary utopias.

The human psyche interests me, and I frequently find myself returning to various forms of faith and idealism. What are the mechanisms which steer us when we become convinced by the absolute truth, perhaps a world spirit? The strong belief that sometimes leads us to separate ourselves from our fellow human beings and to campaign for The Message of Truth. Dreams, inspirations, and fantasies are shaped into ideas, philosophies, and visionary utopias. We are so engaged in believing in something higher that the present reality is not enough.

Every kind of faith is itself an expression of self-abnegation, self-alienation. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Antichrist

Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present. Albert Camus, The Rebel

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I

Baby dies following leap from window

An infant died and several people were injured under unclear circumstances on the night before Saturday in La Verrière, a suburb of Paris. According to the police, a woman panicked when she mistook her husband for the devil after he had got up, naked, to feed their child.

A number of other people who were present in the same apartment are then to have leapt from the window, some with children in their arms. An infant was taken to hospital after the incident but later died from its injuries. (Svenska Dagbladet [Stockholm daily newspaper], 27 October 2010)

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The Only Thing I Know Is that Darkness Descended over the Mountains

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800 columns, 390 colossal sculptures, and 45 altars. The church is 133 metres high, its nave stretches for 187 metres, and it has a transept that is 138 metres wide. Here are Bernini’s baldachin, under which only the Pope may celebrate mass, and Michelangelo’s Pietà (1499), which depicts the Virgin Mary holding the dead body of Jesus in her lap. When you enter the Basilica of St. Peter, you do not go in, you go out.

I accepted the thought that I now found myself in a kingdom of heaven, or in an idea of what a kingdom of heaven might look like.

Suddenly, a gong sounds and we are ushered into an aisle behind a railing. A boys’ choir begins to sing with pristine voices. Out of a door comes a procession of old men with bent backs. They move forward very slowly and stop at the high baldachin. The choir falls silent and after a moment the Pope begins to speak. An enormous light is switched on above him as he speaks his first syllable. He hisses out blessings and sacraments, it echoes between the walls and the sounds are unclear. Then he falls silent and the light dims. The procession moves slowly through the church, this time accompanied by burning incense; the boys’ choir bleats its soft angelic song and the light follows the Pope’s every step as he shuffles forward and is then extinguished immediately after he passes, as though he himself were the bringer of light. Balder, Lucifer — we have many names for what we love. After completing a circuit, the cortège is back at the microphone. Silence reigns for a moment. Then the Pope begins to sing, backed up by his thousand little lambs – a bombardment of lights is switched on around the entire dome; the effect is magnificent – HE is singing! I rush up the stairs and to the balcony of the dome. From there I look downward toward an opening a bit up on one of the large central pillars. A group of boys wearing glossy lilac cloaks hold a large mirror; they go out onto the balcony and direct the mirror toward spectators in various directions. I see the reflections of the sun thrown on the people below and upon the walls; I crouch down and avert my eyes so as not to see my own reflection in the mirror. A narrow escape. But I am astonished and enraptured. I did not know the meaning of the ritual, but I understood its gravity, I understood its power. Only a vain fool would gladly see himself in this mirror.

When I got out onto the street, I went to the nearest café across the street and sat down at a table in the sun. The heat was scorching and I looked forward to a refreshing ice cream, Italian ice cream. I ordered two scoops, but the ice cream man insisted on three scoops. After two attempts I gave up and he got what he wanted. The ice cream arrived, served with fruit salad and chocolate sauce. I ate the ice cream; it was OK, it was refreshing. I got the check; the hair on the back of my neck stood up. When I looked closer at the banknotes I could make out three black burn marks. They formed a triangle and looked like small insects. I shuddered, threw the bills on the table, and ran.

With the Christianization of the pagan Nordic countries a new kind of magic arose —
Many claim that the risk of illness is greater when certain rituals are not performed. Moreover, the ritual must be performed regularly, or the danger is great that something sinister will happen. Failure to do so creates in one’s psyche a fata morgana, a figment of the mind that can linger on into adulthood. After rituals have been established, one is also duty bound to adhere to them. But nothing lasts forever, not even art. Time passes, the body ages, and the environment is broken down. We desperately try to push death ahead of us, and meanwhile we strive to find Happiness, Truth, Knowledge, to be perfect human beings, good citizens, and part of a social apparatus that we only think is getting worse and worse.

But then the inevitability happens. Despite the fact that one is prepared for it, it comes as a shock. In many religions, there are long periods of mourning after someone has died. In the Balkans, it is customary for the nearest relatives to hold a vigil over the body of the deceased until the funeral. Family members mourn for forty days, abstain from all forms of amusement, wear black clothes, and the men refrain from shaving. People give up their ordinary needs, their ‘selves’, and, in a sense, enter into death together. The family becomes a sort of unit of asceticism, a circle of monks and nuns. An organism that, through its sympa-thy and grief, shall provide the dead person with power and love on the journey into the kingdom of death. The ritual sacrifice of the self creates a connection between human beings and the divine in order to restore the human condition on earth. The destructive process becomes creative.

I What you are now we once were what we are now you will be

The dim light, the smell of earth and damp walls and the grim receptionist with her sour, black comments created, to say the least, a peculiar advance warning of what was to come. A narrow corridor that was dully lit by lanterns. Ceiling and walls decorated in fantastic patterns. The cloven sensation of fascination and horror. So horrible… beautiful… I experienced an almost childlike exhilaration and took photos in secret in spite of the strict prohibition on cameras. Like being ten years old and in a chamber of horrors. Unaware of what is hidden in the shadows, one surrenders oneself to the power of the unknown, and one is drawn deeper and deeper into the darkness.

Darkness is not the same as evil because evil is often born of fear. When I confront darkness in my art, regardless of whether it is through representations of death in the form of animal skulls and skins, folklore, occultism, Satanism, or bad-trip psychedelia, it is about meeting oneself, entering into it. Sometimes this can be my own fears, sometimes the fears of society.

From 1650 until 1870 the monks buried their brethren in the crypt beneath the church, which also served as a paupers’ cemetery. During this period, the monks continued to place bones in the crypt. Eventually, six side chapels developed wherein the bones were arranged by different themes in five of them. These contained the bones of at least 4,000 monks and unknown Roman inhabitants who were buried under the church. The walls are covered with stacks of femurs and skulls, all neatly arranged in niches and vaults. Several skeletons are clothed in monk’s cowls and are seen standing in a line in prayerful poses or lying in vaults with crosses in their arms. The bones that cover the walls and ceiling are arranged
Memento mori, a Latin term that may be translated as ‘remember your mortality’, refers to a genre of artworks that vary widely but which all share the same goal: to remind people of their mortality. According to Freud, masochism is an indication of the death instinct.

I think about how the planning and sketching work was done. Models from architecture and ornamentation. The exhumation of skeletons, the cleaning and sorting of bones. What bestial fancifulness.

I am fascinated by death and the horrific. Sometimes I wonder whether this fascination comes from an underlying fear of death.

We dedicate the greater part of our lives to decorating and transforming our surroundings so that they form representational patterns depicting, for example, scythes and hourglasses and shapes that recall Gothic rose windows, or purely abstract patterns. On the ceiling in one of the rooms is a child’s skeleton with a scythe in one hand and a pair of scales in the other, surrounded by skulls decorated with wings on their sides, wings made from pelvic bones. If a bone should fall from its position, it is not returned to its place, but buried. Not even a memento mori is eternal.

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My graduation exhibition, The Sun in the Mouth, was designed as a studio, a living room, or a room in a museum. The hangings were relatively low; many works were placed directly on the floor. Manifestations ranged among large oil paintings and light watercolours, sacred models and kitchy folklore. When one passed through the plank-clad entrance, one stepped into another world. And in this world were smaller worlds and islands. Like looking at a Mandelbrot set, while simultaneously being inside of it. Many of the shapes that are generated by Mandelbrot’s surprisingly simple mathematical operations have long been familiar to humankind. Think of ornamental carpets, decorative patterns from Persia, Indian mandalas, or psychedelic images. This raises fascinating questions about the origins of art. One can speculate about whether we are so tightly bound to the universe that our brains have Carl Jung’s images of the ‘collective unconscious’ genetically hammered into them, and whether such images are indications of the fractal nature of the physical world.

The primary purpose of folk art is to be decorative and functional. It has most often been created in the context of festivals of life and the afterlife. Clothes, tapestries, furniture, and everyday utility items were decorated with designs and imagery. Folk art is sometimes naive, and it can break with perspective and proportion. In nature we find fractals in, for example, cloud formations, and in plants and trees. In folk art we find the same common denominator – symmetry, fractals, and S-curves. Just consider the floral motifs of traditional Swedish and Norwegian decorative painting, such as kurfis and rose painting, or the eastern European form of papercutting known as vytkunyka.6 Striking similarities exist with mandalas, symmetrical mirror images, and geometric forms, many of which we also find in the world of psychedelic images. Our might ask whether working with decorating one’s surroundings with these mandala-like images was a method of entering a trance-like state, and whether these images would then remind us of something deeply rooted in the human soul, or act as cosmograms, maps of the universe.

In the Mandelbrot set we find the golden spiral, which is closely related to the golden ratio. The mathematicians of ancient Greece were interested in what we now call the golden ratio because of its value continually appearing in different phenomena, such as the pentagram and the icosahedron. The discovery is usually ascribed to Pythagoras and his followers. During the Renaissance, the Franciscan friar Luca Pacioli, in his De Divina Proportione, published in 1509, called the golden ratio a ‘divine proportion’. In the second part of this work, the Roman architect Vitruvius’s ideas about the human body’s proportions as the starting point for architecture are discussed.

The word psychedelia comes from the Greek psyche, meaning ‘soul’ and dilosi, meaning ‘manifestation’. The term was coined in 1957 by the psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond in an exchange of letters with Aldous Huxley. ‘The official’ culmi- nation of the psychedelic era came ten years later, in 1967, with the Summer of Love. A psychedelic experience is characterized by experiences which can include changes in perception, visual hallucinations, altered states of consciousness, unusual patterns of thought, trance-like or hypnotic states, mystical experiences, and other sensory changes. It can open doors in the mind and awaken a new kind of understanding of one’s identity and one’s surroundings; it can come as a revelation, but it can also create confusion and chaos.

In the middle of 1968, one could read in the Swedish underground publication PUSS that ‘flower power is dead! Don’t send any flowers.’ By that time, psychedelic art and culture had long since become a mainstream phenomenon. But psychedelia has not hitherto allowed itself to be limited, and it does not seem to disappear. Culturally, one can see various aspects of it that live on in American political organizations of the 1970s, in New Age, in the technological sciences, and in the punk movement. Timothy Leary claimed that every individual was an artist and an artist is defined as someone who communicates an experience. Psychedelic culture is interesting in the sense that it is multifarious and difficult to categorize; it often includes many states – indolent and political configurations, information and anti-information, functionalism and fantasy, staging and pure presentation, forms of control and ‘letting go’, collectivity and ‘doing your own thing’.10

Psychedelic art provides an opportunity to practice art criticism from a non-controlling perspective and thereby to create the possibility of expressing both reflection and madness and excess, and this is something that appeals to me. This attraction to hybrid forms contributes sig- nificantly to breaking down the barriers between high and low culture. Psychedelia has in this way certainly anarchistic qualities. And the effect of anarchism is often provocation.

Well back to the exhibition, The Sun in the Mouth. Most of the objects present in the instal- lation have their own stories that are linked to my life. For me, it is important to have an authentic relationship to my working materials. Bearers of information and anti-information, functionalism and fantasy, staging and pure presentation, forms of control and ‘letting go’, collectivity and ‘doing your own thing’. Most of the works were created during the last six months in many different places. The exhibition is not based on any research, nor on some theme. One could speak of intuition and improvisa- tion. A musical rhythm.

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movement. Painting does not develop at the same speed as other forms of art. I see it as taking an active political stance when I choose to work with painting. This is a sensitive area that involves many risks and pitfalls, with such a long history behind it. I do not romanticize the tradition, but I accept it. Neither do I strive to renew painting, nor to deconstruct it; I am interested in something else, something that exists beyond technique and materials.

When I work, I do not think very much about context. I would rather that ideas are realized and that interesting meetings occur between the works, which might at first glance give the impression of having been created by different people, or by a schizophrenic person. I would rather risk being thought of as confused and indecisive than to tie myself to a particular thread is cut, the better. Contradiction and confusion are the fuel of my practice. Ricky Bruch did not only beat the Swedish record in discus throwing fifteen times and win an Olympic bronze medal, he was also an actor in Swedish children's films and in Danish humorous porn films; he wrote poetry, and a main thread. The more often the main thread is cut, the better.

I strive to make my works authoritative enough to convince the viewer, but sufficiently open to produce uncertainty and create questions. By combining different expressions, I can point the viewer in different directions. And by the use of well-known devices and methods, the viewer is met with open arms. But what happens within this embrace, when those arms close, will have to be left unsaid. The viewers must themselves take responsibility for their visions and their speculations.

OTHER REFERENCES


KIANOOSH VAHABI
Object and the State of Exception

The point of departure for this writing was an inquiry into perceptual change in relation to art objects and sacred entities as they shift between “ordinary” and “exceptional” categories. Of course this dichotomy can be registered individually or socially, however I will relate these two spheres to portray the mutual effects.

The significance of this question in relation to artistic practices is about our affiliation with “objets d’art” and how it is developed. By virtue of our perception and how we consider things to be aesthetically, culturally, historically and commercially valuable, objects of art – especially when presented within the institutional settings – fall into the category of exceptional. However our affiliation with art objects is essentially identical with modes of relating to “sacred” objects as another instance of exceptionality. “Exception” in this sense is based on a social norm which is widely accepted in relation to an object or a specific category of objects. What is “Sacred”? Frederick J. Streng delivers a detailed etymological and anthropological review of this concept in Britannica Encyclopedia. He writes: “The term sacred comes from Latin sacer (“set off, restricted”). A person or thing was designated as sacred when it was unique or extraordinary. Closely related to sacer is numen (“mysterious power, god”).

The term numinuous is used at present as a description of the sacred to indicate its power, before which man trembles. Various terms from different traditions have been recognized as correlates of sacer: Greek bagos, Hebrew qadosh, Polynesian tapa, Arabic barame, correlates of numen include the Melanesian mana, the Sioux wakanda, the old German barmneight (luck), and Sanskrit Brhadman.

Besides the dichotomy of sacred/profane the sacred includes basic dichotomies of pure–impure and pollulant—“free.” In ancient Rome the word sacer could mean that which would pollute someone or something that came into contact with it, as well as that which was restricted for divine use. Similarly, the Polynesian tapa (“tabu”) designated something as not “free” for common use. It might be someone or something specially blessed because it was full of power, or it might be something accursed, as a corpse. Whatever was tabu had special restrictions around it, for it was full of extraordinary energy that could destroy anyone unprotected with special power himself. In this case the sacred is whatever is uncommon and may include both generating and polluting forces. On the other hand there is the pure–impure dichotomy, in which the sacred is identified with the pure and the profane is identified with the impure. The pure state is that which produces health, vigour, luck, fortune, and long life. The impure state is that characterized by weakness, illness, misfortune, and death.

To acquire purity means to enter the sacred realm, which could be done through purification rituals or through the fasting, continence, and meditation of ascetic life. When a person became pure he entered the realm of the divine and left the profane, impure, decaying world. Such a transition was often marked by a ritual act of rebirth.2

“Sociologists who study religion have, since Durkheim, usually identified the sacred with social values that claim a supernatural basis. Nevertheless, the sacred has been identified predominantly as found in the social occasions (festivals) that disrupt the common social order (by Caillois), or as the reinforcing of social activities that secure a given social structure (by Howard Becker). During the 1960s, however, the usual definition of religion as those sacred activities which claimed a transcendent source was questioned by some empirical scholars. For example, Thomas Luckmann, a German-American sociologist, described the sacred in modern society as that ‘strata of significance to which everyday life is ultimately referred.’3

“For Durkheim, sacredness referred to those things in society that were forbidden or set apart; and since these sacred things were set apart by society, the sacred force, he concluded, was society itself. In contrast to this understanding of the nature of the sacred, Scheler argued that the sacred (or infinite) was not limited to the experience of a finite object.”4

In The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life Durkheim dedicated a chapter to the ambiguity of the notion of sacredness. As he writes in this chapter: “Religious forces are of two sorts. Some are beneficient, guardians of the physical and moral order, dispensers of life and health and all the qualities which men esteem. […] it matters little whether they are conceived as distinct personalities or as diffused energies; under either form they fulfil the same function and affect the minds of the believers in the same way: the respect which they inspire is mixed with love and gratitude. […] On the other hand, there are evil and impure powers, productive of disorders, causes of death and sickness, instigators of sacrilege. […] Between these two categories of forces and beings, the contrast is as complete as possible and even goes into the most radical antagonism. The good and salutary powers repel to a distance these others which deny and contradict them. Therefore the former are forbidden to the latter: any contact between them is considered the worst of profanations…”5

Then he continues to explain how these opposing religious forces are closely and essentially related. As he writes, “… the pure and the impure are not two separate classes, but two varieties of the same class, which includes all sacred things. There are two sorts of sacredness, the propitious and the unprouititious, and not only is there no break of continuity between these two opposed forms, but also one object may pass from the one to the other without changing its nature. The pure is made out of the impure, and reciprocally. It is in the possibility of these transitions that the ambiguity of the sacred consists.”6
The “Sacred” and the “Ready-made”

In Durkheim’s view an object may cross a vague border between the two categories of sacred and profane. However this transition occurs most often without a change in its physical or material characteristics. An affinity to a sacred entity or the rituals of consecration can cause the most common objects of everyday life to become sacred, revered and exceptional. Even if some form of modification in materiality occurs the prominent change takes place in the relationship of the object with its context as it leaves the sphere of commonalities and enters the state of exception.

Although consecration is a religious idea we may find similar aspects in practices such as art. In a historical perspective art has been close to rituals of worshipping and religion in many cases. However I would like to focus on modern and especially conceptual art in this comparison. Since the materiality of objects in this case is secondary to the perception and understanding of the artwork, transformation of an object from ordinary to exceptional is mostly an ontological change.

Joseph Kosuth writes: “‘Modern’ art and the work before seemed connected by virtue of their morphology. Another way of putting it would be that art’s ‘language’ remained the same, but it was saying new things. The event that made conceivable the realization that it was possible to ‘speak another language’ and still make sense in art was Marcel Duchamp’s first unassisted ready-made. With the unassisted ready-made art changed its focus from the form of the language to what was being said, which means that it changed the nature of art from a question of morphology to a question of function. This change – one from ‘appearance’ to ‘conception’ – was the beginning of ‘modern’ art and the beginning of conceptual art. All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually.”

Duchamp’s idea of the ready-made and the transformation of objects of everyday life – such as a urinal – into “objets d’art” such as Fountain – is obviously comparable with the idea of consecration. In Ready-mades the significance of art-making is not associated with material transformation or fabrication. The most banal object crosses the assumed borderline between ordinary and exceptional through being entitled and declared by the artist as an objet d’art.

“In a later example An Oak Tree [by Michael Craig-Martin] consists of an ordinary glass of water placed on a small glass shelf of the type normally found in a bathroom, which is attached to the wall above head height. Craig-Martin composed a series of questions and answers to accompany the objects. In these, the artist claims that the glass of water has been transformed into an oak tree. When An Oak Tree was first exhibited, in 1974 at Rowan Gallery, London, the text was presented printed on a leaflet. It was subsequently attached to the wall below and to the left of the shelf and glass. Craig-Martin’s text deliberately asserts the impossible. The questions probe the obvious impossibility of the artist’s assertion with such apparently valid complaints as: ‘haven’t you simply called this glass of water an oak tree?’ and ‘but the oak tree only exists in the mind’. The answers maintain conviction while conceding that ‘the actual oak tree is physically present but in the form of the glass of water…”

This piece subverts the semiotic structure that relates perception to objects in the context of language. We may consider Duchamp’s Fountain to be related to the original function of the object in everyday life through a series of associations between a urinal and a fountain. This chain of
associated ideas gives a metaphorical dimension to this piece within the context of language. This "signifying chain" - in Lacanian terms - relates Fountain as an art object to its original domain prior to crossing the border between the categories of ordinary and exceptional. However in An Oak Tree the piece questions the fundamental relationship of objective categorisation to words assigned to them. In this case the title and the text are not metaphorical suggestions, and the piece is a critical proposition in relation to the functions of language and perception.

Despite their differences in approach these two examples redefine the relationship between the viewer and objects of everyday life through the intervention of the artist. In both cases the most banal objects leave their original domain, gain significance and turn into exceptional entities.

We may mention another approach in conceptual art, which basically eliminates the material feature of the artwork. Artists such as Robert Barry tried to establish a new definition of art as a shared mentality or idea. "Major invisible works from his early period include Carrier Wave in which Barry used the carrier waves of a radio station for a prescribed length of time "not as a means of transmitting information, but rather as an object.""24

In this work Barry changes the function of an invisible entity and turns it into an 'object'. The invisible bandwidths of radio waves is set apart as a work of art and we are supposed to perceive it as such, even though there is no material point of reference for that.

In the trajectory of conceptual art we can observe a decreasing significance of materiality, while the role of artist as fabricator or craftsman is also questioned, to emphasise the value of ideas. Thus the perception of art could be mostly a subjective process without reliance on a form or object in a physical sense.

Craig-Martin says: "I considered that in An Oak Tree I had deconstructed the work of art in such a way as to reveal its single basic and essential element, belief that is the confidant faith of the artist in his capacity to speak and the willing faith of the viewer in accepting what he has to say. In other words belief underlies our whole experience of art: it accounts for why some people are artists and others are not, why some people dismiss works of art others highly praise, and why something we know to be great does not always move us."25

Perception as explained here is directly related to 'belief' as a prerequisite for understanding of the work of art and the artist himself. This is comparable to modes of relationship in a spiritual or religious context where "belief" is essential. In both discourses there is a social dimension in the understanding of an experience; it is not merely subjective. Our understanding of these propositions as 'artist's creative' is based on a form of social agreement – no matter how exclusive, progressive or alternative it might be – and institutionalisation of these forms of practice is a way to extend this agreement in the social sphere. As Thierry de Duve writes: 'The public life of the readymade begins at the same time as its institutional life.'26 The institution in this sense is a manifestation of beliefs on a social scale which has the authority to proclaim the state of exception even in relation to found objects.

In the eye of the beholder however there is a moment when an object is perceived as an artwork or a sacred entity. The object crosses the border between 'ordinary' and 'exceptional' categories at some point in time, based on a belief rooted in the social agreement.

We may find a great deal of similarity between perception of art and sacred entities. The 'object d'art' and the 'sacred object' are both exceptional in status. They should both be excluded and set apart from other objects in their original category. A glass of water is not equal to similar glasses of water if it has been consecrated in a religious context or declared as a work of art. It becomes exceptional in both cases.

We are supposed to handle these objects with reverence and care. They are not supposed to be treated like generic and mundane objects.

The state of 'exception' signifies distancing and exclusion. The exceptional object in this case is not easily graspable, mentally or physically.

Codes of conduct and rituals of handling in relation to art objects or the sacred are quite similar. Purification, cleanliness, respect and care are essential in both cases.

These 'rituals' are based on a taboo that follows from a social code or agreement.

Presentation and preservation of art in museums and galleries, when compared to sacred objects in temples and places of worship in different religions, seem to be identical. Exception, distance and aura

A state of exception is essentially bound to some sort of distance. An entity is exceptional if it is distant from the context of commonalities. In most religions there are signs, words, objects and places that are considered to be sacred. The rituals and codes of conduct in relation to these entities establish distance between them and the extended field of common objects. The distance and exception in this case is related to a form of taboo that restrains and defines the approach of the believer.

An interesting example about codes of conduct may be seen in relation to the Holy Script in Islam. For Muslims, the Quran is a highly revered text as the word of God and the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad. There are detailed rules in Sharia law concerning the handling of the sacred text that direct how it should be preserved from impurities or disrespect. Abla tion is mandatory for the devout Muslim before touching the holy words of the Quran and no part of it can be treated without respect. In the eyes of the believers the Holy Script is not merely a combination of letters, as the presence of God and secrets of existence are embedded in its words.

In this tradition ordinary objects are also ontologically changed when holy words are written on them. They are considered to be blessed and consecrated if they bear these words. So they immediately turn into exceptional and holy objects. In Islamic architecture holy text is used extensively on facades, however they are not merely seen as decorative motifs as they are primarily there as a means of consecration and protection for architecture, space and people. Development of calligraphy in the Islamic world is mostly related to this function of words and aesthetic necessities in this regard.

A sacred or art object in the state of exception are also associated with extraordinary qualities such as aura. Walter Benjamin underlines the relationship between ideas of distance and aura considering aura to be a 'strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be.'27
Although he refers to these terms in the context of his critique of mechanical reproduction we may appropriate them to this observation. The concept of aura with reference to objects of exceptionality may usefully be illustrated with reference to the aura of natural ones. Benjamin writes: ‘To follow with the eye - while resting on a summer afternoon - a mountain range on the horizon or a branch that casts its shadow on the beholder is to breathe the aura of those mountains, of that branch. In the light of this description, we can readily grasp the social basis of the aura’s present decay. It rests on two circumstances, both linked to the increasing emergence of the masses and the growing intensity of their movements. Namely: the desire of the present-day masses to “get closer” to things, and their equally passionate concern for overcoming each object’s uniqueness by assimilating it as a reproduction.’

Benjamin uses ideas of ‘aura’ and ‘distance’ in order to illustrate how technological reproduction undermines the distance and removes the aura of objects. However we may argue that the ‘objet d’art’ – as opposed to legions of reproduced copies of ‘ordinary’ things – has maintained its aura within institutional settings such as museums, galleries and collections. No matter how these objects are produced in physical sense, and even though they may have no material significance – in some works of conceptual art such as Barry’s – they are still categorized, presented, archived, narrated and referenced in a way that maintains the aura. Even though it might be an instance of a mass-produced product, the art object is ‘sacred’; it shall be ‘distant’ – from the context of commonalities as well as the viewer – by virtue of its ‘exceptionality’.

Distance with a sacred object or an art object changes the mode of relating to the object in several different ways:

The distant object appears to be valuable and it seems to belong to a domain that cannot be violated. Distance is the manifestation of a power relationship. By distancing an object from a form of power – either in secular or divine terms – it is established.

Distance activates faculties of observation and appreciation beyond the regular modes of engagement with ordinary and accessible objects.

Distance creates a longing for the object. Desire is intensified when objects are out of reach.

Reproduction, originality and aura

There seems to be a contradictory relationship between man and his surrounding environment apparent in the strenuous efforts to discover and develop methods of reproduction while there is also an obsession with notions of originality and authenticity in relation to the value of things. We want things to be abundant and readily available yet special and unique.

This condition can be observed in a growing consumerist culture around the world and different methods of customisation that are introduced by manufacturers to create a feeling or illusion of uniqueness in the consumer’s mind. As a revealing example one can “design” a pair of Nike sneakers through a limited and predefined number of choices in materials, colours and textures on a virtual web-based platform.

Mass production and reproduction have altered our perception of phenomena that are more closely associated with metaphysical values such as art. Benjamin writes: “One might generalise by saying: the technique of reproduction detracts the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it
substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced.14

From Benjamin’s point of view, by technological reproduction copies of the artwork are plunged into the world of commonalities. Following the same train of thought John Berger writes: “For the first time ever, images of art have become ephemeral, ubiquitous, insubstantial, available, valueless, free. They have entered the mainstream of life over which they no longer, in themselves, have power.”15

However ideas of ‘distance’ and ‘aura’, which refer to an irrefutable or essential gap between classical objects of art and the viewer/audience in Benjamin’s view could be seen in a different light in our time. Benjamin has associated notions of distance and aura to production methods, and the uniqueness of the product in the case of traditional works of art. However, a fundamental change in the definition of art after Duchamp’s idea of the readymade and the ensuing movement of conceptual art reformulated the relationship between the audience/viewer and the “object” of art, and “distance” in this experience can be perceived from a different stance. Within these settings uniqueness of an artwork is predominantly associated with originality of concept and experience, regardless of the corporeal existence of the piece. However appreciation of the experience is open to the audience if the ontological dimensions of an artistic proposition are comprehensible. One has to get over the distance - in terms of moving towards another ontological standpoint – to achieve the experience. This is another form of distance which regenerates the aura even in the case of the technologically reproduced object of art.

From another perspective we can see an obsession with works of art that is created through the idea of collecting. Collecting is not limited to a specific range of forms and even conceptual artworks without any significant material presence are purchased and collected in our times. The distance however is about a form of fetishism in relation to objects of art in the “collecting” era. Commodity fetishism as theorised by Marx is partly shaped by this desire for the uniqueness of collectibles, and this principle is extended to the art market as well.

The economy around art objects can only survive by propagating the fascination with the “collection,” of “originals” and not any form of reproductions. Within commercial contexts things are more valuable if they are rare and in short supply. Instead of the essence or content of things – including works of art – this distance with valuable objects is perceived in terms of social, geographic and economic gaps.

However the idea of originality in case of an art object is another way to formulate the state of exception. The “original” piece – which could be one instance of an endlessly reproducible object – becomes exceptional through the signature of the artist. A digitally reproduced image as a generic and common object can only become exceptional by this means. The collector is therefore primarily obsessed with this proof of exceptionality and rarity. Through this mechanism concepts of originality, exception, distance, aura, value and collecting are connected. There is a similarity between sacred objects and works of art specifically in the case of Ready-mades. They are both raised from the category of mundane, ordinary and normal to the status of extraordinary, precious and magical. The transformation in these cases is a subjective paradigm shift in perception and appreciation of the object. After declaration of an object as sacred or artistically valuable the protocol of access and handling in relation to the object changes in practical terms. The experience of being in an art museum is similar to that of pilgrimage and being present in a sacred place. We adopt a certain mode of reverence, respect and appreciation in both situations. We are supposed to be aware of the necessary distance between our bodies and the objects. We are allowed to observe things and appreciate them without breaching the limits and distances.

Benjamin uses the notion of “aura” in a specific sense and according to him the “distance” between works of art and the audience has been erased due to technological methods of reproduction. However distance – in most cases – is an insuperable feature of art and despite the now ubiquitous means of reproduction such as digital photography, “distance” exists as a major aspect of our relationship with an artwork when it is defined as such, especially within museological or institutional settings. Even though the means of reproduction and replication are precise and ever more available, the acknowledged work of art usually falls into the category of the precious, extraordinary, rare, valuable and respectable. All these attributes establish and reaffirm the “exception” and “distance” between the work of art – regardless of its material manifestation or form of expression – and the viewer/audience.

Returning to commonality

Within some religious traditions there are rituals for desacralisation of a holy object that return the object to the domain of mundane entities. A while ago I came across the story about a church in Malmo which is a very interesting example. The Caroli Church of Malmo was built by the German community of the city in 1688 and named after Carl XI of Sweden. In 2010 the deconsecrated church was sold to a real estate company - which also owns the Caroli shopping mall nearby- for two million Swedish crowns.16 The deconsecrated church might be used as a shopping centre in the near future.17 The building - which was considered to be sacred and holy for more than three centuries – has not only returned to the category of mundane objects but could also be used for the most earthly purposes. Although the architecture will be preserved and cherished due to its historical value, its super-natural aura as a holy space has vanished.

Religions – including Islam – have meticulously detailed rules concerning handling of the Holy Scripture that emphasise the distance between mundane forms of writing and the sacred words. Although they may use the same medium and appear to be physically identical the holy text belongs to the domain of exceptionality. However there are rules and procedures about retrieving the copies that have been damaged or polluted by accident. If holy words come to contact with impurities they should be washed clean immediately. A devout Muslim is supposed to take care of papers or objects that bear holy words. If they are going to be discarded those words must be erased or cleared beforehand. The copies that are not usable must be respectfully wrapped, tied to a weight and thrown into the sea. According to some traditions they cannot be simply recycled – like other books and paper products – and shall be treated according to complex procedures.

With all the extreme sensitivity, there is a time when the materiality of the object which bears...
holy words is detached from sacredness. At that time it returns to the sphere of commonalities, is stripped of its aura and thereafter may be treated as a normal object.

The potentiality in-between

In all forms of transition between domains of commonality and exceptionality there is an in-between condition where the object cannot be categorised. The object under such circumstances holds the potentiality to fall into either category. Because of this ambiguity we may find it difficult to define our mode of relating to the object. We can be disoriented, in a state of suspension for a while, until a clarifying hint or suggestion is given in one way or the other.

We may think about a time when rituals of sanctification or desanctification are carried out. There is a moment when the object is on the threshold of the mundane world before a decree. This is the moment of ambivalence and disorientation for the believer. The ontological understanding of this status and the perception of the object are blurred.

Despite all the detailed technicalities and meticulousness of religious codes concerning Holy Scripture in Islam it is ultimately impossible to define them in relation to some of the practical conditions that occur. Pious people usually pose questions that depict this complexity. Among them a devout Muslim had asked about occasions when he is typing sacred texts on a computer keyboard and whether his body shall be purified beforehand. The question is about the potentiality in the letters that may form a sacred entity. Of course the same characters and letters could be used to write completely regular words. The alphabet can be seen as a universe of potentiality for all sorts of combinations, words and meanings. In response to these difficult questions by believers the ultimate answers refer to the state of mind, as, in the words of the Prophet “the significance of actions lies in intentions”. We may experience a similar condition of ambivalence in relation to some objects in the context of art. In the opening of a recent exhibition – which was comprised of a complex collection of apparently trivial objects, sculptures and other artworks presented in a chaotic fashion – I noticed an empty can of beer on a shelf. As the same brand of beer was served to the cheerful and curious crowd, I was wondering whether a careless visitor had left the empty can on the shelf or whether it was actually and intentionally a piece of the complex artwork. I asked another visitor about the empty can and realised that we shared the same kind of doubt and disorientation. From our point of view the dubious beer can could be seen in completely different ways. The beauty of the experience however was the result of this in-between condition of the object, floating between ontological borders of ordinariness and exceptionality.

In the work “Story Endings” is a woven net hanging between four threads from the roof. Each thread is connected to a stone on the floor. Associations to a hammock can occur. I am interested in what happens when we are listening to someone telling a story and the end suddenly wakes us up from the state of listening. And also the retroactive effect an ending can have to a story. This work has its source in the idea of a thread that runs through fiction into reality. I am making an attempt weaving with this thread.
Introduction

“The physical differences between radio waves, infrared, visible light, ultraviolet, X-rays, and so on are only their frequencies. A very narrow band of this huge range of frequencies, less than an octave in width, stimulates the eye to give vision.”

As is well known, light is a prerequisite for our being able to produce visual impressions. Theories regarding the development of the eye suggest that light-sensitive cells, photoreceptors, that eventually developed into eyes, came to be grouped together in depressions in the skin during the course of evolution. In this way, they were protected from disturbing reflections of light in the environment. Millions of years after the complex development of the eye, the first Greek astronomers dug deep holes in the ground for the same reason. From the bottom of these holes they were able to study the stars, even during the day. These examples will serve as an introduction that directs attention to the processes that exist parallel to whatever fills our field of vision. An attention directed towards the periphery of vision. Perhaps this can, to some extent, be compared to the transition in the human eye from monocular vision to a synchronisation of the fields of vision of both eyes, and thus a shift in what we perceive.

“At monocular images float vaguely in front of things, having no real place in the world; then suddenly they fall back towards a certain location in the world and are swallowed up in it, as ghosts, at daybreak, repair to the rift in the earth which let them forth.”

The distant light of the stars reaches us during the daylight hours as well as the dark ones; to shut out surrounding reflections is a way of creating a visual silence, a silence that can be decisive in the meeting with subtle existences, and that can hopefully lead to the possibility of registering something that has previously passed by unnoticed.

The modified gaze

We always see past time, something which is the result of the limited speed of light and the delay of neural messages reaching the brain. Our perception of the sun is delayed by more than eight minutes, and everything we register visually from the most distant object that can be seen with the naked eye (the Andromeda Galaxy) is so ancient that we see it as it was a million years before humans first appeared on earth.

The development of different optical techniques has made it possible not only to freeze the moment and to capture a slice of a person’s life, but also to travel farther back in time, to long before the origins of humanity. With the help of advanced telescopes, today we have the ability to study light from a younger universe, and to create photographic images of times that lie beyond our own existence. Unlike the human eye, which clears the image in the retina several times per second, photographic film can collect photons over a longer period of time, and in this way, produce images of faint objects that lie beyond our field of vision. All these ways in which vision has developed, and that have led...
to our being able to extend our gaze further, have resulted in the revelation of new worlds, or rather, of new layers of the world of which we have long been aware.

Somewhere here, in the periphery of vision, my work has its point of origin. I am interested in areas that, with the aid of technology and/or a change of focus, can be made accessible to our perception. A process that in its turn is strongly associated with time (a slowing down to make discovery possible, in the work process, as an indication of distance, and so on). In a number of the works that I have dealt with modifying temporal processes, partly by slowing down processes that can be read as efficient, but also by transforming greater facets of time into something to which one can relate more directly. These transformations can be said to make up a ‘camouflage’ (I use this term for lack of a more appropriate one, since it is not a question of hiding something but rather of questioning what is registered visually). The work process is a combination of research-based elements and more intuitive ones. I often consort with an idea for a long period of time before it is realised, which makes changes among the different working methods necessary. Through this process the works themselves also develop more or less clear connections to one another. When it comes to the choice of material and form, I work with reduction, which results in the investigation of a pared-down aesthetics. These choices provide a framework that gives me the scope to explore topics that in different ways are in contrast to form. The works that make up my Master’s degree exhibition, *Transmissions, Untitled (Spindrift days)*, *Solar time, and Un-
titled (Relics)*, are all independent elements. The techniques vary (drawing, installation, video) but relate to each other through formal choices and themes. The exhibition works as a space in which these parts are composed as a new whole. Reality and illusion. With terms like dark matter and dark energy, the existence of something we cannot see, and that cannot be verified empirically, is, after all, accepted. A development that changes the idea of invisibility, and contributes to the fact that suddenly, it does not feel quite so strange, to apply the term parallel worlds to parts of the narrow field of science. Rather, it becomes a way of encompassing something that, for various reasons, is located outside the direct field of vision, on cultural, as well as on scientific grounds.

“The problem of the observer is the field on which vision in history can be said to materialize, to become itself visible. Vision and its effects are always inseparable from the possibilities of an observing subject who is both the historical product and the site of certain practices, techniques, institutions, and procedures of subjectification.”

_Selenography_

Leonardo da Vinci was long considered the first person to have conducted naturalistic studies of the moon’s surface without the aid of a telescope. In actual fact, Jan van Eyck completed his painting _The Crucifixion_ almost a hundred years earlier. In this famous scene the pale crescent of the moon is visible to the right of the crucified men, and its surface is depicted with naturalistic clarity. In its isolated portion of the sky, this celestial body has been rendered on a small scale, and can be seen as though it had been placed on a glass slide, ready to be studied under a microscope. During the period when Van Eyck was active, a transition occurred from symbolic depictions of celestial bodies to a more naturalistic tradition. But in all probability, it was not just this transition that prompted Erwin Panofsky’s opinion that “Jan Van Eyck’s eye operates as a microscope and as a telescope at the same time.” But also, most likely, the use of lenses to study parts of the environment and to compose the surfaces of images.

In my works _Selenography II and Transmissions_ I have been interested in, and used as a point of departure, the mediation of pictorial material, and how technology in many cases can function as our external eyes.

_Selenography II (2010–11)_ is made up of a series of drawn reproductions of photocopies. The source material I have used as a basis for this series consists of photographs of the moon, published in various astronomy books. I have chosen material from publications that were published before the Moon-landing (1969), something that emphasises the role of technology, and the camera as an eye outside of our own bodies. It was not the human eye that was located at these distances from our satellite, but space probes equipped with cameras. The images have then been modified in a number of stages, developed, (in some cases scanned in and sent received as radio signals), trimmed, published, and copied. By placing the books in a copier, the surface of the image is composed with the aid of a machine, where an ‘empty’ surface appears next to the selected book page. All the layers of time that these publications contain are compressed through this analogue process. Details and nuances disappear, grow darker, or are corrupted, while new traces from the copying process itself are added (dust, dirt), which is then reproduced with the same distinctness as the selected book page. My part at this stage of modifying bodies becomes an attempt to imitate a reproducing machine. No matter how hard I concentrate, this attempt is of course doomed to failure. My ambition is to place all the elements on the same level; details such as dust are reproduced with the same
care as the craters of the moon or the text fragments of the pages of the book. But it is my eyes and the motions of my hands that perform this work, and in the communication between them a gap comes into existence, a blind spot. Where I draw what I remember, not what I see. No matter how closely I study the motif, a displacement always arises, and thus a new original (or, more correctly, a new copy). Because of the time-consuming work process, this original contains another space of time than the photocopy I used as my point of departure. The efficient has in this way been displaced by a time-consuming process.

Transmissions (2011–12) can be seen as a development of Selenography II; here mediation of image material also plays a central role. But instead of using the copier and photocopies, I have used dissemination of information via the Internet as my point of departure. A technology that, unlike the copier, contains few analogue elements. In this work I have chosen to draw reproductions of printouts containing the first photographs taken of the far side of the moon. The photographs are part of a series produced by the Soviet space probe Luna-3, (1959), and they are taken from NASA's homepage. This distant surface that lies outside our own field of vision, always averted, like a final outpost towards the darkness beyond, has in this way been made visible to us with the aid of technology. Also in this work details from the printing process have been left intact (Internet address and date), together with the photographs I have focused my vision on. White sheets of paper on which I have looked have made visible small injuries on the cornea, which have appeared as dark traces in my field of vision. A source of irritation that has reminded me of the primary physical layer, that exists between the experience of what I perceive, and the object/thing in itself.

Silent witness

“This place had always remained so secluded from the rest of the house that for a century and a half scarcely so much as a gossamer-thin layer of dust had been able to settle on the cornices, the black and white square stone flags of the floor, and the green baize cloth stretched over the table, which seemed like a self-contained universe. It was as if time, which usually runs so irrevocably away, had stood still here, as if the years behind us were still to come.”


In the quote above, taken from W.G. Sebald’s novel *Austerlitz*, the feeling of being outside of time is very tangible. The reason for this gap depends mainly on the fact that an existence in the corner of one’s eye, the essence itself of past time, does not have the obvious place it is expected to have. In spite of its small size, dust modifies time and space, even if in a close to unnoticed manner, and can, as in the case above, be crucial to reading our surroundings. These particles that have their origin in earth, ashes, and scorched meteorites can both clarify and hide traces in our environment. Marcel Duchamp let dust create subtle structures and archived it as one material among many in *The Large Glass*. I draw parallels to the landscape as an archive, similar to the pane of glass Duchamp allowed to lie untouched to collect material, collect time, like a photographic plate.

Cosmic dust is the term for interstellar particles that to a large extent have their origins in supernovas. These microscopic fragments continuously rain down towards Earth and can, on dark nights, give rise to a faint, whitish light, the zodiacal light, which is caused by sunlight reflected from the cosmic dust and particles that orbit the Earth. These grains of dust originating in cosmic explosions are collected in isolated places, such as the South Pole and in deep sea trenches. In this way information about distant processes can be extracted from the untouched land masses, they become a kind of archive of cosmic activity.

Dust represents an overlooked, if perpetual presence, that lies on the boundary of what the naked eye can distinguish. In my works *Sidereal time* and *Untitled (Synodic days)* I have in different ways used this presence as a point of departure.

*Sidereal time* (2011) consists of a high-definition black and white video, seven minutes long, which shows the movement of dust in the air of a room; the video is intended to be shown in a loop and is made up of five different ‘scenes’. The first scene is cropped relatively substantially, giving an illusion of space, where grains of dust are seen to move against a black background. In the following scenes various spatial components become visible and the surroundings take on a more distinct form.

*Untitled (Synodic days)* (2011) consists of a slide projector (Kodak Carousel, and eighty glass slides) placed on a projector stand. The slides are empty apart from dust that has attached itself to the glass. The field of light that is projected through these slides can at first glance be perceived as ‘empty’, but on closer examination the dark details created by the dust become visible. I have chosen to project the images/light onto a screen and place the projector on a table designed specifically for this technology; in order to, in this way, create a framework and allow all the components to show their links to the studying.
of images. The illusory element is the shadows alone, created from dust and particles, which can be interpreted as images on photographic film.

Images as imagination

During the nineteenth century optical instruments, developed for use by the general public, were often produced in workshops linked to observatories. The Soleil-Duboscq-Pellin dynasty, which was a major supplier to the Paris Observatory during this period, produced for example, projectors for private use.15

“The emergence of the concept of the ‘public’ in the second half of the nineteenth century is related to the optical techniques of projection, of photography as a widespread amateur pursuit, and of both combined to create a large press industry. From the mid-nineteenth century this set of techniques helped to launch a broad-based popular science that produced representations of astronomical knowledge, along with visions of society and science’s place within it.”16

The work Untitled (Relic) (2012) can be seen as a reconnection with the development of optical technology in collaboration with the observatories. The work consists of a video shown on a TV monitor in a darkened room. The content on the video is taken from the noise found between channels in analogue TV broadcasts. Processing of the brightness of this material has transformed what remains of the white noise into a nearly black surface, where shadow-like grey traces refer to movements that could originally be seen. At first only a faint light trace is perceived, similar to an after-image, from the TV screen; when the eyes adapt, the movements that have been registered become visible. The point of departure for the work is the knowledge that about one to two per cent of the noise that is shown on an analogue TV derives from the cosmic microwave background radiation, and thus can be traced back to the birth of time (and space). Through the analogue TV network fragments of the Big Bang have been made visible also in the private sphere, cosmological traces in the space between the information flow that shape our picture of the world.

“In order to deal with fact it is best to resort to fiction.”17

Photographic film as a component in the creation of fiction, my perception as a part of a fiction. Both referring to ways of seeing, developed in relation to a physicality, my body or a light-sensitive surface, two forms for archiving time. When Tacita Dean caught a glimpse of a light phenomenon, a single ray of light, with the aid of film. And when the presence of this frequency could not then be found in a single frame, but only in the movement between them, all attention is directed to what we believe: do we see or do we not see?18

Colour photography may possibly be considered as more ‘illusory’ than black-and-white photography, because it hides its theoretical origins. The more ‘genuine’ the colours that are reproduced, the higher the level of abstraction of the surface of the image. Black-and-white photography, on the other hand, refers openly to its origins (optical technology),19 which consist of the components light and shadow, the grey scale, a framework of vision. This framework is also the last stage before vision is completely obliterated, in connection with the effects of strong gravitational forces on the body.

In colour photography the colour red is the most durable, which is the reason why older colour photographs often have a purple discoloration where over time the green colour has been shifted towards the red part of spectrum. This is reminiscent of another type of shift that can...
occur when a source of light recedes from the observer at a high speed. This phenomenon is to light what the Doppler effect is to sound, the effect occurs when the wavelength of light increases, and is called redshift. It is a shift that is used to measure the relative movements of celestial bodies. Also the theory of the general expansion of the universe is to a large extent based on this phenomenon. Which makes galaxies, interstellar clouds, and other objects that are at a great distance from Earth shift more to the red than those objects that are situated closer to us.20

“A naked color, and in general a visible, is not a chunk of absolutely hard, indivisible being, offered all naked to a vision which could be only total or null, but is rather a sort of straits between exterior horizons and interior horizons ever gaping open, something that comes to touch lightly and makes diverse regions of the colored or visible world resound at the distances, a certain differentiation, an ephemeral modulation of this world.”21

In this way, time that grows more distant is given a red tint, both in the photo album and within cosmology. With increasingly lower energy, it moves towards a region of invisibility in the spectrum. The use of various optical technologies makes it possible to slow down the process, and thereby, at least for a while, to expand both time and field of vision.

Paul Virilio believes that science as a practice attempts to illuminate ‘the non-seen of the lost moments’. A formulation that he also applies to Méliès’s method of creating cinematic illusions.22 In connection with this formulation, the fact that we are blind at every blink of our eyes, becomes relevant. These interruptions can to some degree place what the eye registers on a par with the cinematic illusion of movement. In this way, gaps (of which we are not aware) appear in the noise of information. Shuttering out surrounding reflections and creating a visual silence contributes to a concentration, which in its turn may lead to an awareness of these gaps, and, through this, to a questioning of what has been experienced.

The Individual

In order to understand our artistic practice, we have to first state that we create from the identities of us both, a new dual identity. In the making of the work, the dual identity we adopt gives us the possibility to escape from certain identification traps and clichés, without it being possible to recognize in our work which part identifies one or other of us. From this identity formed from duality we create our artistic projects. We go beyond production inside the institutional framework (by means of hiding our own identity through a third person formed by our duality). An art that enables us to be reclassified as a separate individual formed by both, with the contradiction that the individual comes from "our interior", imitating, shaping, inventing from our sense of belonging in order to execute our artistic practices.

Art gives us the opportunity of a life testimony assumed from our condition as comedians, prepared to travel through the thousand souls found within this dual identity. In ourselves, we experience a multitude of characters, successively experiencing the creation of an individual that emerges with the citizen that is yet to appear.

The projects we create lie outside the representation of individuals described from outside our life experiences. We are part of a dual identity that presents the reality of two hunters, two gatherers, two demonstrators – two small traitors to the great social mass, two hearts that grow larger in the face of economic, institutional and ideological power.

We seek a real presence in our dual identity. The projects we describe later in this essay, in which we both participate, are written as if we were only one person. Thus shaping an indeterminate evaluation of personal identification of the work we do, meaning it can only be valued from duality. It is a means to objectify ourselves and in so doing we push the boundaries of the way things are.

At the same time, we develop a written essay/dialogue from the personal identity of each member of the pair, where we provide our own thoughts, the same ones that build our dual identity. The parts of "individual" are written in the style of a classic artistic "manifesto". We reconsider the idea of forming part of the
present time, looking back on our research projects from a current perspective, letting the contemporary show itself by presenting our oeuvre in the geographical, political and economic space of “this moment”. One could say we are related to the development of both music and sound as well as visual art in as much as I am bound by our very existence into one voice – into this time and place. Thus, we relate to the historical development of all cultural production. We are a product of our time. 1

Today, the term ‘contemporary art’ does not simply designate art that is produced in our time. Rather today’s contemporary art demonstrates the way in which the contemporary as such shows itself – the act of presenting the present.2

What we produce is commonly referred to as contemporary art, but that term describes very little about each our actual work. There is no real consensus as to what the contemporary in contemporary art defines.

So our relationship to the historical development of music, sound or visual art is mainly how the historical works point out to us the possibility of bringing the events of the past into the present, beyond all geographic limitations. Most of our work can be seen as reflections of various systemic structures.

From now on the following text (description of our works) will be written in first person by the fictitious individual representing our voices within the context of contemporary art.

Urban Hunter

One of my projects currently under development focuses on the problems surrounding present patterns of production and consumption within the field of over-production, where the economic context of the supply of products exceeds demand. I place special interest on the consequences occurring in connection with legislation on the quality policies existing in supermarkets vis-à-vis consumers, which entails the focus of my actions on collecting food from the waste disposed of by supermarkets at the end of the day. Food I eat to live, as part of my day-to-day existence is the search for investigation of other possible supermarket skips where food can be found. I sometimes find these skips in private spaces, other times in public areas. My position is generated in a welfare system where, as a consumer, I cover 80% of my needs from the over-production of consumption.

I describe my quest for food in supermarket skips as the practice of foraging, feeding and surviving in a city belonging to the Western world. I detail the habitat of scavengers as its own ecosystem. I explain my practices from anthropological cynicism: I am a predator “able to know” my peers, a “rational animal” that acts in the role of a hunter, just like other animal species. It is an irony of my position that power has left me only with my Zoe. I am a human stripped of humanity in the present reality.

In the course of my research, I have found several historical references with social relations connected with this re-interpretation of a scavenger as a hunter. For example, ancient Jewish law dealing with land placed great importance on leaving part of the harvest for incomers, women and children, a concept that had its continuity with the “Gleaners”, a phenomenon that occurred all across Europe, prior to the industrial era. The term gleaning has for me its connections with the world of today: I am a collector, I collect from fields that are not economically profitable for harvesting, as my collection is gathered from supermarket waste skips.

A poacher is a historic social reference, over and above killing animals outside the allowed context.

4. The **Gleaners** (Des glaneuses) is an oil painting by Jean-François Millet completed in 1857. It depicts three peasant women gleaning a field of stray grains of wheat after the harvest. 85.8 x 111.8 cm. Location: Musée d’Orsay, Paris.

5. **Basket of Fruit** (c.1599) is a painting by the Italian Baroque master Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610), which hangs in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Ambrosian Library), Milan. It shows a wicker basket perched on the edge of a ledge. The basket contains a selection of summer fruit. 31 x 47 cm.

6. **Treasure Island** is an adventure novel by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson, narrating a tale of “Buccaneers and buried gold”. First published as a book on May 23rd, 1883, it was originally serialized in the children’s magazine Young Folks between 1881–82 under the title **Treasure Island** or, the **Sea Treasure**.

7. **The Protester** (usually translated as The Marksman or The Freewheel) is an opera in three acts by Carl Maria von Weber with a libretto by Franz von Dach and Friedrich Kind. It premiered on June 19th, 1821, at the Schauspielhaus Berlin. It is considered the first important German Romantic opera, especially in its national identity and stark emotionality. The plot is based on the German folk legend of the Fräischütz and many of its tunes were inspired by German folk music.

course of this research, where the sounds behaves as what they are, merely noise invading the city.

A process in which I, like any other citizen, also note what contributions the noise generates from a different perspective: everything is more alive with noise, out there in the city. Nothing is coercive, I try only to trigger a reaction among my fellow citizens in Malmö, fight indifference; just as valid for me are the friendly looks as the shouts of people telling me to turn off “the music from hell”. At this point, I reconsider, I am prepared to cope with any personal criticism or comments about my work, I tell myself: you can’t please everyone, people always love me or hate me, I am never in the middle of this paradox.

I am still analyzing my process since, as a citizen, I am exercising my right to invade the public space from my individuality. If they are not happy, all they have to do is call the police, generating complaints is equivalent to generating a dose of non-conformity. In the city of Malmö, the police called me up to tell me I am a persona non grata, banning me from holding any more demonstrations. Faced with this, I wonder: What happens with the visual invasion of public spaces conducted by private companies? Do citizens feel more comfortable with this kind of invasion? These are possibly questions of non-conformity, among so many other questions I could ask, but my discourse grows towards an angle that emerges from this process, or is immersed like so many others, there could be so many readings of this process as there are people in Malmö or beyond the city limits.

Opinions and reflections

I feel in my heart the need to create through a creative process in freedom, even though I cannot hide in my reasoning that the only goal of institutional power is the control of our will. Just as my most primitive instincts as a rational animal dictate to me the desire to eat, drink, love, live in peace and freedom, there are others like relational life that imply language, politics and citizenship, for which I suffer because I am human, and I observe from whichever unique anthropological structure I belong to, and whichever society.

I feel the pressure of power’s legitimacy within my reasoning, outside my thought, outside my control.

My “Ego” is divided into mere survival, mere existence, among devices intended to control my life within the construction of my subjectivity. Which entails stripping away the humanity one has as an individual when starting a relationship with power. I find the same parallelism between biopowers of my project’s research as in the pattern of production within the territory of contemporary art.

The synergy found in these biopowers requires a more detailed study of its social consequences in the terrain where the action of biopowers takes place. Within the synergy of powers, affective relationships deploy other biopowers beyond those triggering repression, creating a relationship of forces within a society. Power, rewards and punishments are an expression and function instituted by whoever exercises it. Power legitimates its system of domination.

I re-examine the relationships with things, I feel more like a citizen than a consumer, a desire to understand the world around me and to own it for myself, to question my challenges. My role is to be a hacker in society, I strive to transform the existing codes of integration, exclusion and belonging, I seek out the adequate codes. I scream NO! at regulating my behaviour through the legislation that moulded my upbringing, my insertion in the consumer market. From “the dangerous classes”, there emerges a lack of prospects, the wiping-out of their hopes,
in populations from both peripheral countries and marginal areas outside those considered central....... I contemplate the re-structuring of power, resistance to the global system.

The theoretical reflection of our work is given below, as a written representation of our voices. These voices, part of our own thoughts, are described through a continuous series of paragraphs, where the linearity, the structure of dialogue no longer exists. The description with its freedom of thought, without any bias, releases our words in a great rain of thoughts.

Oscar de Carmen (OC): Whenever I read Santiago Sierra, I recall the view he has of the artist’s function within the cultural apparatus, where the artist is required to have an exemplary attitude, a higher morality imbuing distinction. Paradoxically, artists are at the same time required to have a non-emancipatory attitude, tied by a coercitive function.

Martinka Bobrikova (MB): I remember in my childhood an appearance of normalcy that was laid down at the inauguration of my life as a duty (without parole from dictatorial adults). In this invisibility, in that atmosphere of power, absolutely impervious to all criticism, impartiality meeting concern for an objective character, of course pure coincidence with reality in which one should only submit oneself.

OC: In ancient times, mankind’s existence was aimed at political life; this relationship has been reversed nowadays, with politics aiming at living individuals. Power penetrates into people’s bodies, lifestyles and subjectivity.

For individuals, any insurrection against power is an act of self-transgression full of subjectivity, because the establishment, the politically correct has a direct link to the view the individual has of the world.

MB: An important moment in my childhood when I lived in Egypt was marked by the year 1989. The country I belong to, Czechoslovakia, was part of capitalist system! Change of power. What was public domain became private property and we were overwhelmed by the accumulation of capital.

OC: It is in this continuous emergence of other perceptions existing in forms that the idea prevails in me to date, the idea of the search for an art that changes the dividing line of the disguised fiction of reality, to make it real in itself. Blurring the traces of the dominant information regime through which the record of reality is presented to us in words and images. Deleting the border between the domains and the forms making up the field of what exists.

“Art is political, so art is always against the status quo, and art is always trying to break down barriers and occupy unexplored terrains; so I believe that it is not only that art is openly and expressly political, it is politics”

OC: I start from the idea that art becomes part of my life. Art takes the option to suppress itself, acquiring a value in the community’s identity area, an art merging artistic activity with collective life. Art lives in a moment of search for solutions to the forms of economic, institutional and ideological power. Walking the line between the relationships provided by that convention facilitates my actions in a field of reaction to effects. Effects that will confute in an intensity...
characterized by alterations in personality, hallucinations and loss of contact with the reality
between art and social practice.

MB: I present particular points of view in my
work even if they are not their particular politi-
cal leanings. The art is my interpretation of the
social climate I live in, where there are two
inseparable parts of each other.

"Art occupies the terrain of the paradoxical:
each work of art bears inscribed within it
the experience of its opposite, so that the work
is multi-purpose".

OG: I seek a modern-day device, over and
above the display of the remnants of power
from confrontation, an element that contem-
plates its own message within itself, beyond
a specific policy for art or a contribution of art
to politics. Proceeding from an intellectual
understanding to a decision for acting between
what is seen and what is apprised. The confir-
mation of the perverse, hierarchical and violent
relationships in place in our time beyond will
and integrated in the system in an agreement
between how it is interpreted and how its
signs are represented, the equivalence between
a simulacrum as a form of criticism and the
parody of criticism.

The Artist

MB: Why am I an artist? What do I do, as an
artist, look for in art? Freedom and engage-
mind in anything I do or live. These are the first
words coming to my mind. My quest for a
control we can understand them. I can’t imagine
doing anything other than art. The commitment
to the activities of an art, in other words an activity
in which problems are always undertermined, results
always refrutable, approval always uncertain.

OG: Everything obviously passes through my
perception, my ability to understand, my social
commitment; that is why my work is sometimes
marked by impotence but, if I am ever able to
reflect on my work the things that are important
for a new society, that is when I will be adding
something of value beyond myself.

Whenever I publicly criticize certain extreme
situations of economic or social exploitation, I do
not so much as political intention of resolv-
ing them and, by the by, mobilizing spectators
against these situations. On the contrary, I am
without any utopian intention of changing the
art world; I observe from my trench, I only re-
fuse to bend over, I still think that the art world
will not change me.

"Art has no ability to stir up the population. I do
not have that right if I am working as a decorator
of institutions".

The Work

OG: I get my ideas from life and from society. I
am interested in the mechanisms of the human
unconscious, as an individual belonging to a
social mass within the limits of capitalism. In
my view, art is as much a product of this reality
as myself. Being within the capitalist circuit,
if you want to change things it means you can
only change them from within – and I want to
change things.

I need to change things. The thoughts of social
theorists John Zerzan13 have had a great
impact on my own way of perceiving life and
cultural development. When regarded from a
Zerbian point of view it becomes evident that
the capitalist idea of growth is unsustainable in
a globalized world. Capitalist society has gone
in the confines of capitalism. In
my view, art is as much a product of this reality
as myself. Being within the capitalist circuit,
if you want to change things it means you can
only change them from within – and I want to
change things.

MB: My idea is to address the individual from
an objective standpoint. I hope that what we do can
lead to a new dissociation of art from capitalism. I
want to create a sustainable art which goes beyond
production or overproduction as in fact it is –
 enabling the individual to be integrated into a new
social structure that is clear and understandable. I
believe this can be achieved so our inspiration and
aspirations are the same.

Like many other artworks, ours seek a bal-
ance between a form of criticism and a parody
of criticism to enter into an open dialogue with
the people experiencing them.

OG: We are trying to balance what is seen and
what is understood. As for Doris Salcedo, our
work is not meant as an attack but more as a
means of negotiation of the individual’s reality
here and now; a reality where the work of art is a
sign-device caught between a certain mode of rep-
resentation and a different mode of interpretation.

MB: Paul Celan14 compares the work of art to
a message in a bottle thrown into the sea, and
whether this arrives or not has nothing to do
with the artist, he cannot do anything about it.

OG: The limits of my art are my present, within
the unconscious mechanism of humans, as an
individual belonging to a mass of society within
the confines of capitalism.

I act from an intellectual understanding
towards a decision in between what is seen and
what is grasped. Over and above my own will,
I act as what I am, an individual integrated
into the device between interpretation mode
and the representation of signs existing in our
violent, hierarchical age, equivalent to my action
between the simulacrum as a form of criticism
and the parody of criticism.

Located in the cracks in between,
all I have left to do is expose the
social wounds present from
the impacts of power’s condition on our
society.

MB: The archi-
tectonic space of
power is it not
made for humans,
but political
practices.

OG: I am cap-
tured by the voic-
es of those who
who go unnoticed,
of the people nobody
listens to, of those
considered not to
be part of this
society, because
public spaces have
to belong to all
of them.

MB: Social death is a death in life. As Foucault
proposes, divisions in humanity have not only
an economic and social origin, but also a
racial origin15.
Doris Salcedo describes her practice as a vain attempt to recover what is irreversible, unrecognizable, in an effort to synchronize different times where there is no shared measure between the present and the past. The ‘present time’ is built on continuous instants in an immobilized duration and dead time is an attempt to make a break with historic time.

"The gathering of memories is suspended, there is a radical silence, but a silence that I hope does not involve what is happening" 16

MB: She claims also that the events that are the strong pillar of her work are in the process of appearing and disappearing, so they cannot be represented if they are not always present.

"Art becomes the paradoxical intersection between silence and eloquence" 17

OG: I try to link a new order of a sense of community where different lifestyles have emerged (social rootlessness) due to capitalism. Thus my quest for a new social structure emerges from what is evident, explicable and double in a globalized world.

Which leads me to a further dissociation to make an art that occurs beyond production. Enabling the object, the reproduction and the message to be re-classified from the possibility of engendering new forms of ambiance and social relations.

Our vision of the oeuvre of an artist like Picasso is now impossible to separate from the vision of the artist and his work that has been carefully constructed by such institutions as the Museum of Modern Art. 18

MB: For instance, Courbet 19 began to educate the population by circulating copies of masterpieces, which he sent to the whole of France. Sherrie Levine 20, for instance, states that during her studies most of the art she had seen and studied had been through reproductions. Her proposal, "reproduction-repetition," for example, opposes the often vaunted representation of the nature of works of art. Not in vain, the exhibition series "After Walker Evans" 21 featured the slogan: "A picture is no substitute for anything" and the explicit expression of her critique of the relationship between art and representation.

Lawler’s 22 photographs of Mondrian’s paintings were placed alongside those and published in Wedge 1 entitled "A Picture is No Substitute For Anything." This series also brought into question: originality, intention and expressiveness. The notion of originality as the first obligation of every artist, and its greater or lesser contribution, has given rise to numerous legal disputes since the beginning of the 16th century.

OG: In my work, I use the concept of appropriating works of art as a means of expressing the object, stemming from the most varied of functions, incorporating it into my artistic production, as a real element to counteract the illusionism of the "pictorial image." 16

MB: Albert Dürer 23, for instance sued Marco Antonio Raimondi 24 for selling plagiarized images by him on the life of the Virgin. However, Dürer was unable to prevent Raimondi from plagiarizing his image of the Adoration of the Christ Child only because the latter included the monogram of his signature on it. The term “appropriation” has always had a negative meaning in legal circles, essentially translated as robbery or piracy. Many artists have been involved in legal problems referring to that.

The image and reproduction is not the same thing for Benjamin:

"Reproductive technologies, we might say in general terms, removes the thing reproduced..."
from the realm of tradition. In making many copies of the reproduction, it substitutes for its unique incidence a multiplicity of incidences. And in allowing the reproduction to come closer to whatever situation the person apprehending it is in, it actualizes what is reproduced.” {25}

MB: This concept of authenticity is increasingly questioned by the recognition that the future is a “prefabrication” of the past, or that many of those fabrications later confess to be “sub-standard, the work of others”.

“I never thought that I wasn’t making art, and I never thought of the art I was making as not a commodity. (…) I never thought that what I was doing was in strict opposition to what else was going on.” {26}

OC: I face re-appropriation as an identity in freedom.

Conclusion

I could sum up my oeuvre in a single word: hope. My work is a sum of many hopes. My work covers not only aspects of practical living; for me art could be about the absence of power. I believe that the spectator could experience the same kind of hope – particularly determined by seeing that we suggest an art that is showing a lack of power. The impossibility of perceiving, or the difficulty in doing so, brings with it a feeling of closeness, the closeness of a probable experience – yet there is only absence.

A present event whose memory is deliberately blurred, when the place and the objects preserving the traces of the rebellion are ephemeral, wiped away, destroyed to allow it to live on in our memory. In this way, the responsibility for having to remember would remain in us.
Existential Tourism in a Siberia of Social Events

“In notes found among his papers, Walter Benjamin imagines a ship resolutely pushing off from Europe’s shores, manned by Paul Klee, Bertolt Brecht, Adolf Loos and others. These artists, architects and writers turn their backs on millennia of culture, leaving behind “temples full of images of men, solemnly bedecked with sacrificial offerings.” They are headed for ‘the promised land of cannibalism,’ where man will consume himself and become something else. Benjamin christens the vessel ‘Poverty.’”1

Reading the above quote about Walter Benjamin begs the question “what comes after?” mirroring our culture’s obsession with obsolescence. To be frank the first thing that came to my mind after reading the quote was the ‘50s classic, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, directed by Don Siegel, in which aliens from outer space, known in the film as ‘pod people’, invade earth to replace humans with duplicates appearing identical on the surface, but devoid of any emotion or personality.

The film itself has been remade many times, in 1978 as Invasion of the Body Snatchers (Katzenberg), in 1993 as Body Snatchers (Ferrer), in 2007 as The Invasion (Hirschfeld/McTeigue) and Invasion of the Pod People (Jones). Parodies were made in 1980, 1983, 1992, 1998 (twice) as Invasion of the Brain Snatchers, Strange Invaders, Invasion of the Bunny Snatchers, Invasion of the Body Squeezers and The Faculty respectively. Added to that there are countless other films and works that explore the same theme, again reminding us how strongly this particular narrative permeates our culture.

Interestingly the original has been read as diametrically opposed warning signs of both turning a blind eye to McCarthyism and Soviet communist infiltration in America. However, director Don Siegel has rebuked both interpretations: “I felt that this was a very important story. I think that the world is populated by pods and I wanted to show them. I think so many people have no feeling about cultural things, no feeling of pain, of sorrow. The political reference to Senator McCarthy and totalitarianism was inescapable but I tried not to emphasize it because I feel that motion pictures are primarily to entertain and I did not want to preach.”2

In the words of the director, the film is not a critique of either proposed totalitarian system, but an expression of his own perceived, internal if you will, fascism. Speculative as it may be, the unwillingness to take sides, but to pursue entertainment and pleasure pure and simple,
reproduces the internal ideology at hand, namely capitalism. A burden I am sure (or hope!), that is shared by many cultural producers of this day. The hand that takes is the hand that gives, so what more is there to be said of such an arbitrary production and consumer system? Or, in the words of Lenin, what is to be done?

In the wake of Occupy Wall Street we stare down the barrel of the gun, asking ourselves “is this the revolutionary moment?” Art has never been so rich in its definition, so vast an enterprise and so big a business. The rapidly growing field of art production and art consumption is best described as precisely that, a ‘space’ that cultivates attention and social relations. Stating the habitus of the field to constitute bodies without organs would be to go out on a limb, but I’m willing to do it. It’s just a notion anyway, one that places any form of critique and political action outside the realm of art.

Do a Google search for the word ‘culture’ and one of your first hits (or at least one of mine given that Google customises search results based on past internet activity) will lead you to the usually misquoted and misattributed phrase “when I hear the word ‘culture’, I reach for my revolver”, deriving from Hanns Johst’s play Schlageter. Jean-Luc Godard poses a post-war, capitalist variant in his 1963 film Le Mépris (Contempt), namely, “when I hear the word ‘culture’, I reach for my chequebook”.

Based on Alberto Moravia’s novel Il disprezzo, Godard tells the story of a marriage dissolving in the course of a day. Paul is a promising and serious screenwriter living happily with his wife Camille until the vulgar Hollywood producer Jerome Prokosch appears and offers Paul the highly paid job of transforming the shooting script for a film of Homer’s Odyssey into a commercially viable blockbuster. In need of money, Paul accepts and as the drama unfolds, he (consciously or unconsciously) uses the charm of his beautiful wife (played by Brigitte Bardot) to win over Prokosch’s trust. Le Mépris is a film about artistic style and the problems of being trapped in a language not finding a way to adequately express oneself, but above all it’s a darkly ironic tale of a communist screenwriter turning Odyssey into commercial rubbish and in turn being abandoned by his wife not for his failure as a husband, but rather as an artist.

Just as Paul feels a sense of contempt for himself for cooperating with the capitalist system, cultural producers of this day are forced to take on an entrepreneurial position. By merging pleasure with self-realisation and economic interest, cultural producers redefine the concept of ‘work’ and thus nurture the neo-liberal ideal of an autonomous ‘culturalpreneur’. Without diverging into a discussion on life and labour in precarious times, I would still like to emphasise that it’s important to recognise that the art field is not an innocent bystander, on the contrary: it’s deeply entangled with the growing global market of symbolic capital. Despite this, I think we still tend to place ourselves in a state of denial when it comes to the economy and economic interests, asking questions like “isn’t art about reflecting on social issues and offering new insights?” or even “it certainly can’t all come down to gaining profit?”.

In Bernadette Corporation’s collectively written novel Reena Spaulings, Rodden tells the story of a marriage dissolving in the course of a day. Paul is a promising and serious screenwriter living happily with his wife Reena, a museum guard at the Metropolitan Museum. As the story unfolds, Reena is recruited
embrace the self-reflexivity of art may seem like a broken record, but is perhaps necessary in the process of opening up the field, almost like purging. At the end of the day, the ideological ‘content’ of one’s work is something that will be projected onto it, not something that emanates from it. Marcel Duchamp once said that “great art can only come out of conditions of resistance” so, far from subscribing to apocalyptic pessimism, my practice is an attempt to overcome the feeling of powerlessness and political impotence, reclaiming ‘happiness’ and maintaining a space of play where poverty and experience can mingle, join hands and disappear into the dressing room. One can only hope the lost vessel of Poetry can change its course to new horizons for a better tomorrow.

In response to the commodification of just about everything, one sees a return of criticism in the form or another of resistance movements, and more about our inability to actually do or perform more than what ultimately will be subdued by the system again. In other words, it’s a vicious circle where the complicated tango of the invisible forces of capitalism persists as something more natural and eternal than ever.

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An arrow that points in both directions, but it is important to note that one is not the same as the other, because there is no reason for also claiming that love, sound, and place actually are one and the same, and for just that reason there is a need for the double arrow that points from the empty space between the words in both directions towards place, sound, and love – more like an assimilation among them.

Place, sound, and love are manifested through motivation; this motivation comes from love – that is, love is the motivation behind this text. Love is a kind of shadow of a vision, the vision being music – that is, sound. Music is seen as a revelation – that is, as a vision. Music has need of an emotional dimension, this is love; at the same time music also has need of a physical dimension, this is place. Place is entirely physical – non-spiritual or non-emotional; place is the ordinary, that somehow facilitates the existence of a work, even if place, just like music and love, possibly only exists through a reference consisting of a title. Thus, music is located between place and love. The problematic thing about considering music a vision is that this vision points to the future, while simultaneously music is something that connects itself to the past, and therefore it is necessary to insist that music has a relationship to both the past and the future.

"Now, on the other hand, times have changed; music has changed; and I no longer object to the word 'experimental'. [...]"

For in this new music nothing takes place but sounds: those that are notated and those that are not. Those that are not notated appear in the written music as silence, opening the doors of the music to the sound that happen to be in the environment. This openness exists in the field of modern sculpture and architecture. [...] There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot. [...] Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death. One need not fear about the future of music. [...] Any sound at any point in this total sound-space can move to become a sound at any other point. But advantage can be taken of these possibilities only if one is willing to change one's musical habits radically."

The sound, the music, is like a machine with a built-in echo, an instrument that can collect and store stories, memories, feelings, etc., and later transmit some of this back to us again – a generator for a vision. This is the wholly and completely transient moment that music offers; a chance of seeing again or rather re-hearing – re-remembering a story in which the vision is and remains only a vision. The question is then whether an object can be considered a musical action, and yet still not be a sound, but a musical action alone that refers to the content of, for instance, a song (possibly made concrete by a title) by way of the object and not the song, i.e., that we completely remove the music from music – just like removing from an image its image, but still stand there holding the contents of the image in our hands? In the same way one can ask oneself whether place and love can be problematised through similar questions?

What kind of music is it that connects itself to a particular period of time, or a particular moment? What music was popular in 1987, the year I was born? And what about the 1980s in general? Can there be a certain connection between music that can be linked to the time when I was born and from there to the course of world history? That is, can there be a connection between myself and world history through music? What about the connection between my parents and the music produced during World War II? This slowly leads me toward the thought and the complex of problems surrounding the
word *hippie*, which in one way or another both points to this context and also calls attention to something external, for example a work. But what is it that connects itself to the hippie period that typically is tied to the end of the 1960s and 1970s and to a certain lifestyle and attitude? The word *hippie* is a point of reference, a word for an opening into history, that is, an allegory of the music/sound of that time, that can point to or lead us back into history, something through which we can reach a particular state. The whole period around the end of the 1960s and 1970s is to a significant extent characterised by musical events, that for one reason or another are also marked by the great impact of love on the period. Under the slogan ‘Make Love Not War’ protests and demonstrations were held against war and abuse of power; camps, festivals, and ‘places’ (e.g., Christiania in Copenhagen) were established; there were songs about humanity, love, psychedelic trips, etc. Consequently, this is a question of an entire period driven by a kind of love, or at any rate utopian thinking regarding love and the organisation of society. But, for one reason or another, it looks as though the remnants of those revolutionary thoughts with which we are left today no longer have the same influence. After all, we live in a different time, and it is instead the music from those days that is still manifested and is continually displaced into the future. And this is perhaps also the most interesting thing for this context, that is to say, that it is through music that we have here established an opening into history.

The motivation behind this text has its origins in love, and I will now try to elaborate a bit more on the concept of love. I will try to produce or even actually construct a meaning for this subject. Whether this has a direct connection, or any connection at all, to artistic production is not clear to me, but I still believe, as I pointed out earlier, that this context alone, the text, creates a relationship to artistic production, and the fact that I mention the concept of love is already a manifestation of my personal experience of love, as motivation. I will begin this expansion of the concept of love by quoting *Tales of Love* by Julia Kristeva:

“Nevertheless, if one grants – our young unbelieving women lovers notwithstanding, and in spite of the immeasurable amount of affect and meaning set into motion by the protagonist – that one can speak of a *love*, of *Love*, one must also grant that, as bracing as it might be, love never dwells in us without burning us. To speak about it, even after the fact, is probably possible only on the basis of that burning. Following upon the exorbitant aggrandizement of the loving Self, as extravagant in its pride as in its humility, that exquisite lapse is at the heart of the experience. Narcissistic wound? Ordeal of castration? Death unto oneself? – those are brutal words that give some idea of this state of hardy fragility, serene strength emerging out of love’s torrent, or which love’s torrent has cast aside, but which still harbours, under the appearance of reconquered sovereignty, a degree of psychic as much as physical pain. That sore spot shows me – through the threat and pleasure it lays in store for me, and before I withdraw into my shell again, temporarily I suppose, in the expectation of another love that I consider impossible for the time being – that in love ‘I’ has been an *other*. That phrase, which leads us to poetry or raving hallucination, suggests a state of instability in which the individual is no longer indivisible and allows himself to become lost in the other, for the other. Within love, a risk that might otherwise be tragic is accepted, normalized, made fully reassuring.**

I am pretty uncertain about how I have intended, or if it can be done through language at all, to draw a picture of love. In reality it has perhaps more to do with creating a form, with

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declaring love a form. I have no intention of writing about my love, my ‘lost’ love is only relevant as a motivating agent with regard to the work that I will establish in the context of love. It is love that becomes the unspoken point of reference, the place to which reference is constantly made. Love is the motivation, the motivation is the form for this context. The question then is how one can give, or perhaps rather assign to love a form, where there may be both a physical, but also an allegorical or possibly an assimilating form – that is, a form that it is not possible to define – that, then, must be poetry. Poetry as love and poetry as the necessity of the unknown for artistic praxis.

About motivation it can be said that it is often surrounded by desperation. A desperation that is closely linked to loss or the empty field that one fights against – that is, a kind of conflict from which one desperately tries to liberate oneself. The motivation has an image before it. The fact that the image has etched itself into the retina is linked to the motivation – an image that frequently can be linked to places, sounds, events, feelings, and so on.

"The circular kind of story, for me, goes back to Warhol films that really have no beginning or end. You could walk in at any time, leave, and come back again and the figure was still asleep, or whatever. The circularity is also a lot like La Monte Young’s ideas about music. The music is always going on. You just happen to come in at the part he’s playing that day. It’s a way of structuring something so that you don’t have to make a story."

If I were asked what sounds I listen to, or perhaps rather what music I hear, I will have to answer Bob Dylan, The Velvet Underground, Sonic Youth, etc., but if I return to what I listen to, that is, the sound, as a rhythm that is not music, but a rhythm that finds its timbre elsewhere on the horizon, then I can answer Bruce Nauman, Sarah Lucas, Roni Horn, Karl Holmqvist, Aye Erkemen, Marcel Duchamp, Allan Ginsberg, James Joyce, Thomas Mann, and I could go on. It is here that I want to differentiate among the different rhythms that are established, in accordance with how one enquires of the sound, that the very word sound can and possibly also should be inflected according to the needs of context.

I now quickly return to what was briefly presented early on in the text, that is, the relationship between the object in a work and that to which the music refers, the content of the music. Can sound be represented by a concrete physical object in a work, that is, is there a concrete correlation between an object that produces a sound, and the sound that is produced? Can, e.g., a loudspeaker in itself be sufficient as a representative of sound and thus also the connecting link between sound and love, or is there a need for a concrete sound that will flow out of the loudspeaker in order to describe a sound? That is, can that which the sound represents, the intention behind the sound, the content of the sound (if there can be talk about the content of sounds?) – for instance, there can be a point in time, a single event or an entire epoch in history, or a connection to love and the register of emotions – be named as an object, “objectified”? That is, can the content of sound manifest itself, be made material through an object?

The object becomes the manifestation of sound that represents content that points to memory, remembrance, history, etc. That is, it isn’t the object itself that represents memory, remembrance, history, etc., it is only a manifestation of the other. For this reason, it possibly becomes relevant to talk about the music in which I have an interest and listen to, when we talk about a work, because it explains some of the hooks upon which a reading of the work can be hung and stretched among.

There is not a direct connection as such between the music I mentioned previously and the fact that I want to point to love as part of my project, but that sound as an extension of an object can expose, e.g., a feeling, a rather personal feeling that cannot really be explained; yes of course it can be explained, but how does one explain, e.g., love one has experienced? Possibly it can be explained through language – that I have mentioned it now is already a concretisation of the experience of love, it has
Language explains a good deal, and can also rewrite many things, it can likewise also manipulate itself. It can be its own greatest opponent, its own self-destruction. For this reason, can there be points in language that lead us into time or history? Can there be a collapse of history, time, memory, multiplicity, etc. through language? Also in this context?

“The first image he told me about was of three children on a road in Iceland in 1965. He said that for him it was the image of happiness, and also that he had tried several times to link it to other images. But it never worked. He wrote me: One day I’ll have to put it all alone at the beginning of a film with a long piece of black leader. If they don’t see happiness in the picture at least they’ll see the black.”

In his cinematic collage Chris Marker leads us to his understanding of the world, a world of images and sounds about time, history, and memory. It is as if the questions about Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? have been torn out of Gauguin’s painting and placed somewhere else in history. It is as though the female figure in the painting, who picks fruit from a tree, has been replaced by Japanese or African women. It is as though here in between these two points in art (history), an entrance appears for me. An entrance or a portal that sends me back, that sends me home. I am not sent back to nineteenth-century Tahiti or Japan or Africa, but it leads me to a memory of myself, around the place from where I come, of the Faeroe Islands. And in this lies yet another opportunity for my artistic work, that perhaps itself will never become more than a poor reproduction of the ice floe that I am. Because my problem is the future, and the future is like an ice floe on the ocean. I am an ice floe on an open sea, and I end up in my own memory of my past. This is the place that creates the framework around the greatest part of my earlier understanding of the world, this is where I grew up. And where I have my body, my mind, and my soul. But slowly the ice melts into with the ocean, and I end up in a different place; I float out into the current and later become a cloud, from which rain washes down over the earth, and then I freeze to ice again.
MARTEN DAMGAARD

The Inexorable Shift:
Thoughts on Growth, Journeys and Exposure

Copenhagen Central Station was built in 1911. I can imagine what it was like back then if I look up towards the ceiling. The main construction is the same although the internal space has changed.

When I was a kid, say around 8 or 9, I remember a few small stores in here, made of glass and wood. You could fix your shoes, copy keys, buy candy or perhaps a sandwich.

Back then, I would take the train from my childhood home in the suburbs and this gigantic hall took my breath away. The middle part of the station was like a cleared stage on which travellers could perform. The huge, free space allowed you to move around easily and get to the train without obstacles. Central Station was all about trains, travelling and people. And the building itself.

Now, it’s been transformed into a consumer-luring labyrinth, forcing you to find your way around fast food chains and drug stores; they even call the place a shopping centre.

Central Station is the core of many people’s lives. Around 90.000 pass through here every day; through this heart of a bloodstream that we call the train network.

The people who actually spend most of their waking hours here are not travellers though. They seldom catch a train.

Homeless people, thieves, druggies, dealers, loners, wackos. I know most of them by their faces. Some have been around since I was a kid. They have chosen the least calm place in Denmark as their residence. Here there is always something new to look at every day, always a chance of something unexpected happening.

Perhaps there’s safety in being surrounded by constant movement. Keeps you sane. Or less wild.

If this was years ago, I could have retreated to a clandestine house nearby, close to the tracks. A peep-hole in the wall allowed me to watch people pass without being seen. The small nook had just enough space for me and my companion. We could prepare a meal, play cards, observe the street life and go safely to bed. It was hard to detect the door opening, even for rail workers passing the place everyday.

I decide to take a train any will do, the destination is not the priority. I walk down the stairs to the platform and await an incoming S-train. I won’t be lucky regarding the type; they’re all new. Still red, but nothing like they used to be.

I get on board, like I’ve done many times before. I know the network like the back of my hand. I’m familiar with all the stations along the track and what they look like and how to get around in them. This knowledge will probably never fade away. Hours after hours spent, year after year; watching, focusing, learning.

When a burning interest turns into infatuation, and then into passion, you become absorbed and unstoppable. Laws and regulations are no

Marten Damgaard / Bachelor of Fine Arts 3

2. The use of the term “Aristocrats” in this context, is borrowed from American photographer Diane Arbus. When describing her penchant for taking pictures of freaks she referred to them as aristocrats, because of their quality of legend; passing the “test of life” (which most people dread), already at birth.
I first heard this story when I was cycling through the Baltic countries. Me, my partner, and the sheep walked as little as possible, camping in forests along the road, cooking over campfires. The Man Who Planted Trees was a book small enough to bring on a journey like that, and was read to me by the fire.

The shepherd's great, yet subtle, action has stayed with me ever since. The persistence, referred to many times afterwards, and utterly appropriate to have in mind in that particular situation: travelling slow by pedalling. The distance behind you grows, feet by foot, and your energy is literally fuel for the vehicle.

Later, when studying the map to grasp the journey's full extent, the idea of cycling that same road, cooking over campfires, was a book small enough to bring on a journey like that, and was read to me by the fire.

Persistence intrigues me. The train continues, the scenery outside slowly changes from urban to rural. I see the landscape spread out, less and less having been shaped by man.

When stopping at a station, situated in the middle of a forest, I am captivated. I suddenly find myself passing through a world of its own with a chaotic, yet simple, order.

The trees continue to increase in number and size. The shepherd's tenacious deed has affected not just his own environment, but made a huge difference to others. While on the journey's full extent, the idea of cycling that same road, cooking over campfires, as little as possible, camping in woods along the road, cooking over campfires. The Man Who Planted Trees was a book small enough to bring on a journey like that, and was read to me by the fire.

First bend ahead is the farthest you look. The reactions are often immediate and positive. People need to be constantly reminded of their right to own the city, their right to trespass. The luxury of dirt.

The shepherd, living in isolation with his herd of sheep. The shepherd observes the shepherd walking the sheep up and down the surrounding mountains while tucking acorns in the soil, one by one. He has planted 100 acorns a day, for the last several years, with uttermost care and persistence even though the land isn't his own.

The young man observes the shepherd walk through the vast alps of Provence, far from the trodden path. He encounters a shepherd, living in isolation with his herd of sheep. The shepherd continues to increase in number and size. The shepherd's tenacious deed has affected not just his own environment, but made a huge difference to others. Me, my partner, and the sheep walked as little as possible, camping in forests along the road, cooking over campfires. The Man Who Planted Trees was a book small enough to bring on a journey like that, and was read to me by the fire.

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Perhaps that’s a state of mind easily accessible to me, since I’ve never truly belonged anywhere. The unfamiliar makes me feel at home.

I often bring my camera, as an alibi of sorts; an excuse to move closer.

To travel far and horizontally implies no immediate guarantee in experiencing unaccustomed ways of living. The real and eye-opening changes often appear in the vertical shift. Most people tend to overlook this, and generally move in their usual orbit; perception of reality is then never really challenged. A simple stroll around the block might be didactic, if you’re willing to tilt your angle a bit.

The underground is a well-known sanctuary for people unable to fit into society. The staggeringly vast system of tunnels and cavities that form a subterranean society in New York City (carefully described in the movie Dark Days8 and the book Male People9) does not occur everywhere. But each city has its hiding places. And above all, each community has people that seek shelter and camouflage sometimes. It’s surprisingly easy to disappear.

Regardless, if I’m moving in the previously untrodden field or in the worn down streets of a city, I’ll bear with me the same simple notion: I’ll never benefit from choosing a path that someone else has outlined for me.

I know I’ll head back to the city, later today, for that’s where I belong.

The sturdiness of my reinvented step will accompany me. Luckily there’s a thousand ways of approaching a sidewalk. I’m free to choose my own manner.

The real challenge that lies ahead is rather within me; to go ahead with the same undisputed easiness inside the wide open space of my mind, where there’s no predestined grid for me to bend, no spatial boundaries to break.

"Direct your eye right inward, and you’ll find a thousand regions in you mind. Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be an expert in home-cosmography."

Wherever you look, it’s there, right before your eyes: the performance of the self and its conceptions. Most of us have a mental image of ourselves, that tells us and others who we are and what we care about. The truth of the matter is that we choose who to be each day, by sifting through and selecting various aspects of ourselves in order to create a unity that we feel we can stand by, and that makes us feel less lost.

We spotlight our different personalities, the different parts in our play, when their turn to take the stage comes. After all, it would be a mess if they were all there at once, right? Despite the fact that a human being is never some single, persistent self, unchanged by its experiences, this seems often to remain our own preferred view: “I’d never do that…” “It’s not in my nature…” and so on.

In Theaters of the Mind, Joyce McDougall writes: "The I strives constantly to achieve and maintain a measure of libidinal and narcissistic satisfaction in external relationships and activities, while at the same time it tries to make sense of its symptomatic productions and thus assure coherence and continuity. In other words, our psyche seeks to keep the illusion that we really know who we are when we say I. This fact requires both imagination and invention, and the I is a constant creator." Maybe this belief that there exists a self somewhere in there, that you don’t have to choose to adopt, is the reason why we’re always trying to discover and face our own true selves. As a matter of fact, we wouldn’t have a personality at all if it weren’t for all of the people around us, who act as supports, foils, and even judges in relation to the image of ourselves that we put forth. In other words, the social contexts in which we exist are necessary elements of our conceptions of ourselves. “When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward himself, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him.”

I believe, then, that the “self” is not an entity or force that simply exists within us, but rather that it is more than anything else an activity that we engage in to maintain our identity, and that we begin to master the necessary skills involved during childhood. The situations we choose to enter into and the people we choose to interact with all play important roles in the verification of our personalities. For this reason, having to enter new social circles can cause nervousness and anxiety, as you don’t know which role you will be given within the group, or how well that role will match your own self-image.

But how is this drama acted out in art, and what is the role of art in all of this? To many, the art
world reflects and mirrors the community in general, so what will the consequences be for art if society keeps growing more and more individualistic? Is the main objective of art the establishment of an identity? Or can art also reject, even deconstruct, the very notion of personal identity? The notion of the ‘alter ego’ has been present in our popular culture for a long time. In this practice, men and woman have created new identities for themselves, either by starting from scratch or by exaggerating aspects of themselves that are already present. David Bowie created the extroverted and androgynous character Ziggy Stardust for himself, the contemporary Swedish band The Knife, which consists of the siblings Olof and Karin Dreijer, turned themselves into something of a pair of non-individuals when they refused to appear in public without their masks—which only served to strengthen the aura of mystique surrounding their identities, and Stefani Germanotta has, to say the least, managed to turn her media personality Lady Gaga into an extravagant provocateur, and a great diva. Does this, then, mean that the identity of the person who created the music or art is more important than the actual product? And is that a reaction to our society? It’s not what you do, it’s who you are? But how are we supposed to know “who” we are when we’re so many different people at once? The paradox here is that you keep trying to “find yourself”, when it’s really all about accepting that you’re not always consistent, or collected.

Next, I’d like to discuss some specific artists whose works relate to the topic of personality and identity in various ways, and also touch on the differences between them.

In his artworks, Tony Oursler makes inanimate objects come alive by projecting limbs and faces onto them, and makes them the co-stars of an inner drama by giving them voices with pre-recorded audio tracks. The personalities he interprets are fragmented by the society he is attempting to process, and we get to see how the mixed signals that we all received growing up in our communities struggle to make peace within a single human being. Oursler is fascinated by multiple personality disorder, where this interplay between our various selves occurs closer to the surface, and with greater intensity. Oursler challenges our images of others and of ourselves, as well as our notions of what a human being is, and which issues, fears and truths a human being could conceivably give voice to. In Oursler’s works, the animating spirit doesn’t emanate from the object itself, but rather from the projection that is made onto the object, that is to say, from Oursler’s own idea of what the object should be. Perhaps this is something of a metaphor for how society works in general. We have very little influence over who we actually are. Instead, it’s the situations, people and societies we encounter that dictate how we (and others) will perceive us, and the roles that we adopt.

Unlike Oursler, who uses inanimate objects for his starting points, Cindy Sherman usually includes herself in her pieces, in the role of the protagonist. This means that she begins with a person who already has a background and a personality, but proceeds to disguise this person by creating a different individual on top. She uses makeup and props to transform herself into somebody else; a character or person who could have existed, but who has been limited to an existence within her specific conceptual framework. Cindy Sherman brings us into a world of impressions where her images imply what may have happened without ever telling the whole story. In this way, her pictures urge the viewer to draw his or her own conclusions, and become a kind of “co-creator”. Although the person we see in the pictures is Sherman herself, the stories told by the images don’t concern her
own identity, they’re all about the characters. You could say Sherman’s work, while not a full departure from identity, is a separation, a reflection, or a game in which she projects her different identities onto her own self, to see what will happen.

Another good example of artists using themselves in their art is the artist duo Gilbert & George, who actually aim to turn themselves into art objects, unlike Sherman and Oursler. Their artworks are mainly different kinds of collages—often featuring themselves—and performances, such as The Singing Sculpture, from 1970. Gilbert & George wear suits whenever they appear in public. I find this choice of dress code interesting. The suit is a rather anonymous costume, that signals group identity, the power it symbolises. Because the suit is a symbol of power. Because the suit is worn in business or politics, which also makes the suit a symbol of power. The fact that they work as a duo constitutes a revolt against individualism in itself, and in this way some people who wear suits every day choice of dress code interesting. The suit is a symbol of power. Because the suit is worn in business or politics, which also makes the suit a symbol of power. The fact that they work as a duo constitutes a revolt against individualism in itself, and in this way they try to derail any attempt to interpret their art as authentic. After all, what could possibly be authentic about it if their authenticity is split in two? Instead, their identities become symbols, available for use in their own art.

Miriam Bäckström’s artworks also interest me, and this is particularly true of Rebecka, from 2004. For this project, Bäckström hired an actress who she met and interviewed for several months. The actress (Rebecka Hemse) was given the task of portraying a person, not a character. In this video piece, Bäckström uses the form of an interview, which is an essentially documentary phenomenon, a choice that adds further interest to the whole discussion. Rebecka has a script in front of her, which is a composite based on her own experiences, Miriam Bäckström’s experiences, and sections taken from Bäckström’s book Anonymous Interview. Despite the fact that you sometimes catch a glimpse of the script, and can hear all of Bäckström’s instructions and questions, and despite the fact that the film was obviously shot on several different occasions, there’s still something about it that makes you want to believe the things Rebecka Hemse says. Somehow, you want it to be true, but Rebecka Hemse isn’t playing herself. Her character here is nobody in particular, or everybody all at once. In this way, Miriam Bäckström deconstructs the notion of identity and gives new meaning to the question “What is a personality?”

While we’re on the topic of the role of the artist we should also touch on the topic of authenticity. The long and prevalent tradition of considering artists’ careers and works in the light of this notion of identity and gives new meaning to the question “What is a personality?”

However, we can never really, fully, know who we are. In conception of authenticity: it becomes a riddle happens every time we have to re-evaluate our own progress. The fact is that something exciting happens every time we have to re-evaluate our conception of authenticity: it becomes a riddle we may never be able to answer, and it confronts us with the uncomfortable truth of the matter: we can never really, fully, know who we are. In Miriam Bäckström’s piece, Rebecka Hemse says: “If I consider fiction more authentic, why leave it at all?”
Once upon a time, there was a little girl who decided to become an artist when she grew up. Her grandfather was a painter and it was he who awoke her interest in fine arts. When she was six years old, she made her first painting. She still remembers how her grandfather watched her as she used his oils on her tiny canvas.

I was invited to an interview at Malmö Art Academy that took place on my 19th birthday. At the time I found myself fascinated by artists such as Sophie Calle and Cindy Sherman. I had begun using myself as a recurring character and my theme was different types of observation. I had found that when I chose to use myself in my artworks, I had already chosen to use someone other than myself because all humans contain many different selves. I worked with oil on canvas and I felt connected to painting as I still do. Furthermore, painting and working with art in general has the ability to make me feel independent of time, like I can capture the present moment by painting, photographing or writing about it.

“(…) But thy eternal summer shall not fade Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st; Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade, when in eternal lines to time thou grow’st: So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.”

I am greatly inspired by the works of the conceptual artist Sophie Calle (b. 1953). She mixes photo, text, video and installations and often uses herself as a base for her artworks. Take Care of Yourself was the first work of hers I heard of. The artwork is based upon a breakup e-mail written to her by her now ex-boyfriend. The title is the last sentence in the e-mail that has been analysed and interpreted by 107 women with different professions and skills.

I admire Calle’s relation to the outside world, as a means of exposing the private individual. She is adventurous in the use of processes and has many different practices, which is appealing to me, because I like to try out various techniques to broaden my horizon and to create additional levels.

I have also been very fascinated by The Sleepers. The trace of absence, which constitutes the illusion of presence, was important for feminist art in the 1980s and Calle’s The Sleepers pointed out the melancholic trace of a repeatedly missed figure.

Sophie Calle’s collaboration with Paul Auster intrigues me as well. Calle asked Auster to create a fictive character that she would attempt to resemble. This led to the character “Maria”. Calle was so inspired by the mix of fact and fiction that she made a series of works supposedly created by Maria. This particular work makes me think of multiple personality disorders, constructed media personas and the subject of fiction. I enjoy fiction as a means of expanding reality and it is one of the themes in my own works.

Calle’s Address Book is a source of inspiration to me because of the attempt to find new ways of portraiture. Calle found an address book, which
she photocopied and returned to its owner. She called some of the people from the book and discussed the owner with them. She turned those conversations into an artwork and added photographs of the owner’s favourite activities. Thereby she created a portrait of a man she had never met. The man discovered Calle’s artwork and planned to sue Calle because he felt she had violated his privacy. I find her way of pushing the boundaries elegant, intimidating and very intrusive.

Another of my sources of inspiration is Cindy Sherman (b. 1954). Sherman’s Untitled (Film Stills) series and History Portraits suggest that memory itself might be an edited version of a picture never made – her photographic performances possess the charge of vivid memories of events that have never occurred.3

Francesca Woodman (b. 1958) made an untitled (New York) series of photographs back in 1979. A particular photograph consisting of Woodman facing a wall and holding a fishbone in front of her spine has recently inspired me. The relationship between her clothing and the interior, her body and the fishbone makes me think of disappearance relating to my previously mentioned fascination with absence and presence.

In my first year at the Art Academy, I worked with different kinds of illusions, namely painting versus photography, and I tried to figure out how to involve myself to a greater extent in my artworks. I began working with how my paintings worked in relation to space. Between floors (2010) was one of my first attempts. It is an installation consisting of a life-size self-portrait of me sitting in front of a red brick wall. The size and realistic painting style – the wall in the painting accurately depicting the wall hidden behind the painting – created an illusion of me really sitting and observing people passing. People often think that photography is closer to reality than painting, although painting has a longer history than photography. I wanted to point out that a painting is just as illusory as a photograph and that nothing would ever come as close to reality as reality itself.

In my second year, I worked intensely with Sir James Matthew Barrie (b.1860–d.1937) and his character Peter Pan. I felt an urge to try out different kinds of media and a fairy tale felt like the perfect starting point. I wanted to immerse myself in both Wendy and Barrie through diverse installations, attempting to become extracts from the fairytales, and self-portrait photographs. I found it compelling that Barrie’s fairytales mainly consist of adventures played out by himself and some young boys that he spent much of his time entertaining.

“The difference between him and the other boys (…) was that they knew it was make-believe, while to him make-believe and true were exactly the same thing.”

Barrie allegedly suffered from PSS (psychosocial short stature) caused by the death of his older brother. Barrie was only six years old when his brother died. Afterwards his mother, who was mourning the loss of her favourite child, neglected him. Furthermore, it was rumoured that Barrie’s marriage was never consummated, which created speculation about impotence. Barrie’s most famous character, Peter Pan, is a boy full of fun and pranks but at the same time he is a fierce and formidable being. He is indiffer-ent to the consequences of his actions, which is a very childish trait. Peter is very forgetful, he occasionally forgets who he has killed in Neverland. In my interpretation, it is because Peter is so very forgetful that he will never grow older than he is at present in the stories.

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Everyone is waiting for the show to begin. The room is filled with silence. The red velvet curtains are drawn apart. Our eyes search the stage, but it is still empty. There is a tension in the air.

A young woman enters the black stage. She is moving slowly towards the center. She stands still with her front towards us. She does not seem nervous. She seems confident and concentrated. She is filled with the same anticipation as we are.

My audience assuages me. I enjoy the moment. I see how they look at me. I have their complete attention. I breathe in. My hands move slowly from my knees and up towards my neck. Everyone is still staring at me. They have to. There is nothing else to look at.

I twist my hair around my fingers. I move around on the stage. I place my hands on my waist. Everyone looks at my waist. I feel feminine. My breasts are squeezed together as I breathe in my tiny dress. I feel my ribcage move as my lungs are filled with air. I turn on the spot. I show off my figure. My heels scratch the floor.

I am center stage. I feel the stage lights burn my skin. Am I everything my audience expected? I can be everything they want me to be. I listen to their breathing. I listen to the sounds of my theatre. There is a soft buzz from the bright beam of lights. I breathe it all in. I will make sure these people remember me when they leave. I wonder what they think of me. I am nervous. They make me sweat. My makeup is melting.

Suddenly my hair feels less blond and I have lost my ability to walk in these heels. Is my audience not intoxicated by my presence? I steal their time. They turn older as I watch them. Yet, I refuse to feel insecure. I am graceful and refined. I will not age. I invented this self.

She smiles gently at us. She bats her eyes. Her hands glide towards her thighs. She curtsies. Her heels make sounds on the floor. Her short dress moves around her. Her hair bounces as she walks. She is pleasing to the eye. One last glimpse of her and she disappears behind the heavy curtains.
My installation ‘Wendy’s Little House’ (2011) was
inspired by the content of Peter and Wendy, in which
Wendy is shot by a group of young boys called ‘The Lost Boys’. The Lost Boys and Peter Pan
decide to build a small house around the
wounded Wendy. When the boys finish the
construction, they ask Wendy if she would like to
be their mother. She agrees, and is then moved to
their underground home for safekeeping.

My installation reflects on women’s roles in the
Edwardian era (1901-1910), which had strict
class division and very traditional roles for men
and women, when the stories of Peter Pan were
written. The two psychology books ‘Peter Pan
by Dr. Dan Kiley also inspired the work.

Barrie invented the girl’s name Wendy, which was
used for the first time in his stories. Later on, the
term ‘Wendyhouse’ became a synonym for small
children’s playhouses. The exterior of my instal-
lation is based upon the instructions in Barrie’s
Peter and Wendy and my construction attempts to
be an extract from the fairytaile. Thereby I try to
expand reality by forcing fiction upon it.

When I joined the course ‘Destroy, She Said’
about Marguerite Duras (b. 1914, d. 1996), I felt
a connection with sound and text and was ready
to take a new path in my work.

The peculiar writing style in Destroy, She Said
and the female characters Alissa and Elisabeth
Alione appealed to me very much. Duras avoids
conventional ties by choosing not to describe
locations in detail and thereby lets the mind of
the reader complete the piece. The story is set in
a heavily psychological space where time does
not seem to exist. The two women Alissa and
Elisabeth look like each other; they mirror one
another and somehow blend into being Elisa.
‘India Song’ is a work by Duras in which she has

a unique use of disembodied voices. The film is
narrated by four voices that recall the events of a
party at the French embassy in Calcutta.

In Real Time by Janet Cardiff (b. 1957) fasti-
nated me because of the idea of moving around
in the physical world with a pre-recorded video.
She confuses your feeling of where you are by
making real-time and pre-recorded time clash.
Cardiff relates to Bertolt Brecht’s ideas of ‘epic theatre’, in which the spectator is constantly reminded that a play
is merely a representation of reality. Brecht
highlighted the constructed nature of the
theatrical event. He wanted to provoke rational
self-reflection and a critical view of the action
on stage, appealing less to feelings than to the
spectator’s reason.

Later on, I became acquainted with Janet
Cardiff’s and George Bures Miller’s (b.1960)
Murder of Crows consisting of ninety-eight audio
speakers. The structure of the piece and the
soundscapes tries to mirror an experience of the
dream world.

My first piece involving sound was constructed
for the Destroy, She Said course exhibition.
Duras’ ideas of remembrance and pre-recorded
voices in India Song along with Janet Cardiff’s In
Real Time were my two great influences. My work
She Recites Subtitles (2011) consists of a bound
publication with pre-recorded audio and movie
subtitles and scrapbooks. The recording consists of
the written text recited in a sound studio.
The text is handwritten with white
ink on black paper and the layout refers to both
movie subtitles and exercise books. The audio
recording is played out loud in the gallery
once every hour.

The text and sound start by telling the audience
about the emotions they might feel as they look
at the stage. Later on, the spectator listens to the
thoughts of a young woman entering the stage.
Yet there is no woman. By means of the sound and
the text, the audience follows her stream of
thought while she struggles with herself being
on stage. The text and sound end by shunting the
spectator out of the woman’s mind. The spectator
is left with the same kind of images as in the be-

ginning, explaining the woman’s looks and move-
ments. The artwork is presented as a performance.
It deals with different existential and psychologi-
cal aspects of the true and false self, narcissism
and Joan Riviere’s feminist idea of womanliness as a
masquerade.

The little girl from the
beginning of this story is
all grown up now. She has
told me that psychologi-
cal aspects of theatre and
fairytails fascinate her cur-
rently. She wants to make
her own presence known
in different ways, presently
by directing herself as a
protagonist. She strives to
create tension between ab-
sence and presence, and
wants to experiment with
the different distance between audience and performer.

(…) and thus it will go on, so long as children
are gay and innocent and heartless.”
ARVID HÄGG

Rotten seaweed1, spring flood2 & a free horizon3

“To pass freely through open doors, it is necessary to respect the fact that they have solid frames. This principle, by which the old professor had always lived, is simply a requisite of the sense of reality. But if there is a sense of reality, and no one will doubt that it has its justification for existing, then there must also be something we can call a sense of possibility.

Whoever has it does not say, for instance: Here this or that has happened, will happen, must happen; but he invents: Here this or that might, could, or ought to happen. If he is told that something is the way it is, he will think: Well, it could probably just as well be otherwise. So the sense of possibility could be defined outright as the ability to conceive of everything there might be just as well, and to attach no more importance to what is than to what is not. [...] Such possibilities are said to inhabit a more delicate medium, a hazy medium of mist, fantasy, daydreams, and the subjunctive mood. [...] Such fools are also called idealists by those who wish to praise them.”

So long as what has been thought but not created does not become an ideal, I will be a man of possibilities as much as I am able. The artist is the creating subject – a subject that sometimes must become an object; the self must be seen from without in order to reach insights about what has been created. Also the observer is part of this interplay between being subject and object: subject when engaged in an exhibited object of art, but for the artist at the moment of creation, object as a receiver of communication.

“Hey, remember that time when we decided to kiss anywhere except the mouth.”

When a something is created in a context of art, a narrative of this something is also invented. How dependent is the reading of the object relative to the information that is available? A prose narrative with an object at the centre is what creator and observer move around. If an object lacks something, or contains an openness, it is possible to relate to it and, by doing so, have an experience, an impression, or a new thought. The task of the artist as I see it is to direct the beam in a certain direction, but how wide the beam is and what it finally encounters are events that are so specific that it is impossible to say something general about them. When you translate from one language into another some linguistic nuances, certain double meanings, are always lost. Words that have no correspondence in the target language disappear or must be explained. The limit of the conceivable is the limit of language. The visual language has its own set of words and expressions; this is something one should not try to disarm but rather to support. The explosive force in such an attitude is perhaps less violent, but at the same time it has a greater potential for dissemination or may create resonance on other levels or in other areas than I myself originally have anticipated or planned. This is where the attraction of images, paintings, installations, or objects becomes tangible. It is possible to determine in a fraction of a second whether that magnetism exists; this...
In my work I have in different ways worked with spaces and in some cases with a room. A room is a delimited part of a building; a room is a space but a space doesn’t necessarily have to be enclosed in a room. If one thinks about a house in the form of a microcosm, the different rooms are like different spaces according to the definition above. I use distinct and demarcated spaces as intellectual metaphors for the topics I am working with or the questions I have: these can be, for instance, how perception functions, how it can be affected, and how the concept of space can be altered. The properties of a room and its contents affect our perception of it. This work is an attempt to reduce all these concepts, to create another room by means of the installation.

“It’s an itch that I’ll never stop scratching / It’s a hole that I’ll never quite fill.”

I use my spatial ability to contemplate the place I am in, places I have been to, and places to which I am going, in order to consider questions concerning identity, perspectives, or the subjective experience of the surroundings. These metaphors, thoughts about spaces and existence, function as tools in my hands: the inner picture of my own space, an idea of my own place and how the self relates to its prejudices regarding the surroundings. All people have areas where they are uncompromising, parts of their personalities that cannot be reduced or transformed without dire consequences for their own identities. All choices are expressions of a person’s view of his or her own identity; products that create identities are also what companies sell to people. One’s own identity is something to which everyone must relate because every choice is an expression of one’s own character and thereby potentially capable of identity creation. Every decision regarding the creation of my sculpture has been about opposites, colour, form, and opening.

“Full speed ahead.”

“The Late Great Cassiopée.”

“I don’t make art if there is nobody who sees it. This is not totally true, but generally speaking it’s very important for me that the art has to be seen in the context of the exhibition space, the history of the space, the identity of the space on one side, but also the history of the people, the memory that you bring with you when coming to see some of my work. The expectations you have and how these expectations they seem to some extent co-produce the work.

[...]

I started to become more and more involved with spaces, maybe architecture also: urban space, public space, but not so much about how to make them, but more why they are made, and to some extent phenomenology in my view is very much about how I feel when I see and engage in something. In so order to look into the transformation: ‘How does a space change when I feel it?’ I went beyond phenomenology a little bit and I looked into something as crazy as animism; like how does the chair feel when I look at it? does the chair know that it is crazy as animism; like how does the chair feel when I look at it? does the chair know that it is... and also the list goes on... and also the worker who did the chair, the worker in the forest that [sic] cut the tree, the industry, the tradesman, the commercial people, the design, the advertisement, the marketing. Was it exploitative? Was it resourceful? If we ever, ever will gonna [sic] have a relationship with the climate crisis we have to develop an understanding of not the situation right now but the situation where it comes from and where it’s going. If we can get a physical relationship to the future we will start to develop a sense of responsibility, collectively. And this is [sic] the transformations I’m interested in.”
Presence/Absence

When I was younger, I would often confuse my dreams with reality. If I had a dream that was vivid enough, it could be difficult to distinguish it from the real world. Often, I would have to question whether an experience I recalled was the memory of a dream, a daydream, or an event that had actually happened. A friend of mine has told me how I would often wander about in a daydream, seeming to float from place to place. These experiences had a lasting impact on me, and I have explored the topic of the locus of the mind and the body in many of my works. Therefore, in this essay, I will attempt to illustrate how my art has been influenced by different ideas about the mind and the body. I will also give examples of artists that have inspired and informed my work in various ways.

When you’re fully in the present, your mind and body are functioning on the same level. Our imagination (“einfühlungskraft”) allows us to create a parallel world, where we lose awareness of our bodies, and are able to travel freely through time and space. Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback summarises Immanuel Kant’s definition of the faculty of the imagination, which he calls einfühlungskraft in a way that opens up this line of thought:

“Kant defines ‘einfühlungskraft’ as the ‘ability to imagine an object when it is absent from perception’. By ‘absent from perception’ Kant means to say that our einfühlungskraft allows us to imagine objects, irrespective of whether they are in our presence or not. It can replicate the given, but it can also make the absent present, even if it no longer exists, doesn’t yet exist, or has never existed at all. Here, einfühlungskraft involves the production of images by both the memory and the imagination, and is defined as the ability to make something present. Einfühlungskraft has a fundamentally temporal constitution. Whether the object being made present is ‘real’ or not, or whether it ‘really exists’ or not, are secondary concerns in this context.”

In the installation Staircase 111, South Korean artist Do Ho Suh succeeds in making the absent present. His ability to create moods and layers, both in spaces and in my mind, is fascinating to me. At Tate Modern, you see the red glow before you’ve even entered the exhibition space. The light makes you feel as though you’re entering into what I feel is best described as a borderline dream state. Once you’ve entered the room, an enormous piece of transparent red fabric hanging from the ceiling catches your eye. The fabric is shaped like a staircase leading down towards the viewer. It is a replica of the staircase in the artist’s New York apartment, done to scale. He takes an interest in transitory spaces, such as staircases and bridges, that link different places to each other. The only details in the piece are in the stairwell, and are things like a banister and a light switch. The rest of the fabric acts as a ceiling for the viewer, but is the floor of the imagined apartment. Because of the way the details delimit the space, the viewer is invited to use his or her einfühlungskraft to fill in the blank spaces within the apartment.
Medium and Work Process

I mainly create installations that consist of video, sound or objects, or some combination thereof. Installations are especially interesting to me, as the piece relates to space that the viewer physically inhabits. In my installations, I often create the illusion that what is shown, such as a video, is happening in real time. I feel that this does something to the atmosphere within the space. Until recently, the physical act of creating the piece was mainly a step along the way to the fruition of my idea. But lately, I’ve tried to allow my work process to become a more creative phase. I am content to formulate my ideas along the way, and I am more open to experimentation than before. The objective of this is to push myself to try different methods, and avoid getting stuck in one way of working or thinking.

Mind and Body

Rene Descartes’ well-known proposition “I think, therefore I am” was a consequence of his methodological scepticism, and his conclusion as stated should not be understood as the claim that he can’t doubt his own existence, as there simply has to be some subject or other doing the thinking. However, he was not at all certain about the existence of his body, as he couldn’t rule out the possibility that he was being deceived by his senses. He would later conclude that he did, after all, have a body, but that his soul (or mind) was independent of it, and could exist even if it weren’t attached to a body.1 Maurice Merleau-Ponty rejected this idea, claiming instead that the body and mind cannot be separated. We experience the world through our physical experiences of it. A mere thought, then, cannot provide us with the same ideas of the world we live in as our perceptions of it.2 These two approaches, as I have interpreted them, have had an influence on my work. In Descartes’ theory, I sometimes feel that the body is secondary, and that a longing not to have to relate to it, or a feeling that it is a limitation, is expressed. Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, gives perception, or the experiences we have of the world through our bodies, a more important role. Here, emphasis is placed on the body, and its position in space. Although it may seem to be something of a paradox, I have combined these ideas in my work in the past, in a back and forth movement between the use of the imagination to transcend physical limitations, such as time and space, and the awareness of one’s own body in space.

Perspective

Merleau-Ponty has written about Paul Cézanne’s (1839-1906) painting style. He describes how Cézanne broke tradition with the one-point perspective of the Renaissance, and painted objects from the perspective he saw them from, in a way that allowed each element within the image to be regulated by its own perspective.3 Eventually, this approach would serve as an inspiration for the Cubists.4 “I feel there is a connection to that attitude in some of my earliest installations, in that they represent attempts to capture a situation from several different angles at once, depending on what is happening at the moment, he was a person, and in the next, all that remained was an empty shell. That was the first time I witnessed the transformation of a complete human being into a mere body. I believe that this experience was the source of my interest for the body and the mind as objects of the surface.”

The Influence of the Body

I have begun to develop an interest in surfaces. A surface can be both an obstacle and a protective barrier. We are surrounded by surfaces, and we relate to them in different ways, depending on the locations and contexts within which we encounter them. The human body can be regarded as a surface, a boundary between ourselves and the outside world. We use our bodies to express our thoughts, and using our voices to communicate with language is one of the ways we do it.

If you believe thought to be independent of language, you might say that language is a translation of your thoughts that will be translated in turn over several stages, by other people. That is the original meaning could end up lost in all of these translations. Language and thought are also strongly influenced by the way we perceive the world through our bodies.6 The importance of the body for our personal identity interests me from a phenomenological point of view, and also invites us to consider the limiting aspects of the body. The idea of being able to think without being attached to a body intrigues me, although it seems like a logical impossibility. On a few occasions at the nursing home, I was on deathwatch with people who were dying. Once, I was there when a person actually passed on. I remember how his breathing kept getting heavier and heavier, until it finally stopped. That moment, he was a person, and in the next, all that remained was an empty shell. That was the first time I witnessed the transformation of a complete human being into a mere body. I believe that this experience was the source of my interest for the body and the mind as objects of the surface.


5. Merleau-Ponty, quote.

6. The importance of the body for our personal identity interests me from a phenomenological point of view, and also invites us to consider the limiting aspects of the body. The idea of being able to think without being attached to a body intrigues me, although it seems like a logical impossibility. On a few occasions at the nursing home, I was on deathwatch with people who were dying. Once, I was there when a person actually passed on. I remember how his breathing kept getting heavier and heavier, until it finally stopped. That moment, he was a person, and in the next, all that remained was an empty shell. That was the first time I witnessed the transformation of a complete human being into a mere body. I believe that this experience was the source of my interest for the body and the mind as objects of the surface.


8. Gormley writes the following about this piece: "Modernism rejected the body, yet 90% of the populations of the western world live within
the urban grid. Within this particular spatial system architecture protects and identifies us. To what extent do we form and to what extent do we conform to the dictates of its organised geometry? The body is our first habitation, the building our second. I wanted to use the form of this second body, architecture, to make concentrated volumes out of a personal space that carries the memory of an absent self, articulated through measurement. I hope that the exterior evokes the potential of a hidden interior the same way that a bunker does. Can we ever be outside the outside? Can we make the inside felt? Bodies and buildings, cities and cells, monuments and intimacies, each of the volumes (rooms) in this piece is someone’s, is connected to the moving body of an individual, alive and breathing. Each work acts as a marker in the flow of the life of that individual and acts as a witness to the evolution of life in general.15

I interpret that as saying that Gormley’s interest is partially directed towards the ways that human beings relate to life within our physiological and architectural “habitats”, and partly towards the difference between the outside and the inside. He wonders if we can penetrate the outside, and make the inside tangible somehow. It seems to me that he has a desire to explore non-physical space. John Hutchinson wrote the following in a text about Gormley’s works:

“In many interviews and writings he has alluded to his belief that the physical body is inseparable from consciousness; sometimes he describes it as a kind of prison, with its various orifices the only conduits between the inner self and the outside world, and occasionally as a ‘temple’ of being.”16

I sense a certain ambiguity in this attitude to the body, which is interesting to me because my own art also touches on these very issues.

Ulf Röllofs’ installation Sövd 17, which was shown at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm during 2011 and 2012, is another artwork that makes me think about the relation between the exterior and the interior. The installation consists of photographs, a security door that has been blown to pieces in an explosion, and tinted sheets of glass featuring bullet holes. The photographs show an anaesthetised person who is undergoing surgery. Detailed images of the operation are included in the suite. Above these photographs is another series of images that are connected to the other ones. It takes a while to identify the connections between them, as they depict very different scenes, such as a dog, or a green landscape under a dark, cloudy sky. But soon, you begin to see how the images are connected, perhaps by a common colour or shape, or a sense of foreboding that they both invoke. Across the room, sheets of tinted glass are mounted. There is a bullet hole through each pane. These holes ruin the reflective surface, but the cracks that surround them reveal the many layers of the glass. I think of the holes through the glass as points of entry to something new, that lies beyond physical pain.18

This leads me on to thoughts about expansion of the body and mind. This is a topic Gert Marcus explores in his works. Kropp och Ytor (Body and Surface), a sculpture made of diabase that is shown at Skissernas Museum (The Museum of Public Art) in Lund, is a good example of this.19 The peculiarities of the form of this cube’s expanding and imploding surfaces have had a lasting impact on me. In a catalogue where Gert Marcus’ public works are described, it is expressed as “a paradoxical way of describing it would be to call the sculpture the expression of a static dynamic […]”20

Gert Marcus writes the following in his notes from the 1980s: “Where are the boundaries? Are there always other boundaries than the ones we draw...
ourselves? It is always necessary to define boundaries? Do our mathematical and linguistic concepts prevent us from understanding any “unbounded” context in full?21 The questions that Gert Marcus raises here are the same ones that I am interested in.

Another piece that has an especially paradoxical element is Anish Kapoor’s installation Memory.22 Here, he makes a three-dimensional surface appear two-dimensional. The hole in the wall opens through to an enormous oval steel structure, which is completely sealed, and pitch black, giving you no way of estimating its depth. From a distance, the room looks more like a blotch of paint on the wall.23 'Critics have connected Kapoor’s work to the Buddhist concept of the void, a state of consciousness that exists outside of the material world, suggesting that they might even allow viewers to touch the void.'24 This use of surfaces as something abstract is an approach that appeals to me.

Ann Veronica Janssens also explores spatial perception in her works. In some of her installations, she fills the empty space in a room with a mist of colored light. The viewer’s perception is altered, and his or her sense of time and space is dissolved. This interests me, because these are the very elements that serve as the main limits for the body.

Choice of Materials

Lately, I have begun to work with transparent materials, and in that regard I have found a lot of inspiration in the art of Astrid Svangren, as she often uses transparent materials such as Perspex or fabrics. She applies these materials in layer after layer, which contributes even further to the suggestive atmospheres in her works that I find so appealing.

The Ungraspable

I have begun to develop an interest in the mental images we have of concepts that we don’t fully grasp. An example of this is the concept of the infinite, which nobody has ever experienced directly, but which everybody has tried to understand. It seems impossible to imagine something that goes on forever. This is the kind of mental image that I find particularly interesting.

When we fail to grasp a concept such as infinity, our minds seem to keep starting over, as though trying to approach the problem anew, but failing each time. I’ve begun to experience a new sensation that reminds me of this line of thought, and it keeps getting more and more captivating. The only problem is that I don’t know what it is. All I can say is that it is a triggering emotion that I can’t quite define. How can you find something if you don’t know what you’re looking for? As soon as I try to approach it, it disappears.

This reminds me of Roland Barthes’ concept punctum.25 He describes it as a detail within a picture that grabs hold of the viewer, like a dart fired through the surface of the image, leaving a wound behind in its trail. There's something in the picture that touches you, and arouses feelings in you that remain even after your eyes have moved on. I feel like I’ve been hit by a punctum. By continuing to work in a more experimental fashion, and allowing the openness of my process to produce new possibilities and exit points while I work, I hope to find the answer to my question.

"Even when normal and even when involved in situations with other people, the subject, in so far as he has a body, retains every moment the power to withdraw from it. At the very moment when I live in the world, when I am given over to my plants, my occupations, my friends, my memories, I can close my eyes, shut down, listen to the blood pulsating in my ears, lose myself in some pleasure or pain, and shut myself up in this anonymous life which submerges my personal one. But precisely because my body can shut itself off from the world, it is also what opens me up upon the world and places me in a situation there."

My pieces often contain some sort of narrative involving an I, or first person. The theatre and the stage have always been present in my life in various ways. The theatre is a place intended for fiction, and for play with identity and roles. It's one of the places, if you can call it a place, that have inspired me to learn more about psychology, enactment and social issues.

Sophie Calle often uses herself as a fictional character in her work. In The Shadow,26 a private investigator trails Calle for a day. The detective was hired by Calle’s mother, on her behalf. She shows her own journal notes from the day, along with the notes and photographs produced by the private investigator. The piece inhabits the space between the viewer and the person being viewed, and as a viewer one takes on the role of a third party within that space. The piece makes it impossible to get a consistent and clear idea of who she really is. It causes me to reflect on the fact that we can never perfectly understand the experiences of another person.

When I discovered the boxed set of Chantal Akerman’s films in the library, I watched them all, and was immediately moved by the theatrical aspects of many of her works. The space is often closed, with a cellular-like atmosphere. Her scenes are often long and static, allowing the viewer’s gaze to wander around the image. In her films, she often depicts the details of events, and focuses on the trivial minutiae of everyday existence. The main characters in her films can sometimes be reminiscent of the flâneur, who finds hidden messages within the automated processes of our everyday existence.

In Hollis Frampton’s Critical Mass,27 a young couple is having an argument about their relationship. Occasionally, the dialogue is cut off in mid-sentence, partially repeated, stopped...
again, and then repeated again, until the entire sentence has been uttered. I wanted to adopt this structure. In my piece *Om EU* (*About the EU*), two men walk onto a stage, sit down across from one another, and read a dialogue out loud, that is based on a debate between two members of the Swedish parliament. Their speech is garbled and repeated in such a way that it’s impossible to hear what they’re actually saying, beyond a few discernible words here and there. Their reasoning is almost impossible to follow, but they are obviously locked in debate all the same. All that remains is the rhythm of language.

I have spent many years working in the healthcare sector on the side, and have often found that particular professional role a strange one to adopt. My job is to help people with things they can’t manage due to physical or psychological impairments. I think of how each individual harbours different versions of his or her ego, and how in my work I almost become an internal element of the ego of the person I am helping. Our separate egos dissolve into a shared one, and we become one and the same person. The line between helping somebody with something you think they need and helping them with something they think they need isn’t always so easily drawn.

In an enactment of a scene from my workplace, a male member of staff and one of the residents read a scene from my script. My instructions from behind the camera are another element of the structure of the film. They act out the routine that they go through every day: breakfast, making the bed, washing himself, doing the dishes, and choosing what to have for lunch. The daily routines that we all follow in some variation or other bring the notion of rituals to my mind. Actions that are repeated at specific times, in specific ways. Rituals can act as transitions from one phase to another. A blind you draw each morning, and then again each night. The actions and rituals we perform in our everyday lives can, in this way, be considered moral actions, ways of ordering our societies.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault writes about the disciplining of bodies, and how it came to be when it developed from a mere matter of achieving greater submission and skill in a body into a realisation that the body is made more obedient the more useful it is, and vice versa. In this way, the human body is a component within a machinery of power, where discipline enhances its abilities and utility in the economic sense, while simultaneously diminishing them in the political sense when obedience is enforced. Foucault writes that “discipline is a political anatomy of detail.” This attaches to the long traditions of attaching great significance to detail in Christian upbringing, the pedagogy of schools, and military training. Here, no detail is insignificant, not just because of any significance it may actually have, but also because of the leverage this value system gives to those in power. Discipline sometimes requires a closed environment, a place both separate and different from other places.

“Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed. One must eliminate the effect of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation; it was a tactic of anti-desertation, anti-vagabondage, anti-concentration. Its aim was to establish presence and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using.”

Besides division of space, discipline also requires scheduling, a phenomenon that originated...
within the regimented lifestyles of the religious orders, and soon spread to schools, workshops and hospitals. The motivating force that drove this scheduling was essentially negative, and directed towards the elimination of idleness: "it was forbidden to waste time, which was counted by God." However, discipline also had positive consequences, in that it enabled one to continue discovering new opportunities to do useful things and exploit each moment to the full. Time had to be divided into its most minute components. This state of maximal productivity was correlated to the division of time into smaller and smaller units.

Foucault writes: "Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge." Rather, one ought to be aware of the interplay between knowledge and power that legitimises the existence of both. I was recently made aware of this when I visited my sister and her one-year old son in Tanzania. One night, he suddenly came down with intermittent attacks of vomiting. Each time he drank some water, his body would soon reject and expel it. What was wrong with him? It could have been something serious, that would only keep getting worse, but it might just as well be something we could safely allow to run its course. The home testing kit ruled malaria out, so we had to rely on our own knowledge in identifying his affliction and determining how to best take care of him. But what knowledge did we really have? There was no Health Hotline to call, no Internet to search, and no hospital safe enough to visit without risk of infection, so basically, we had no system to rely on. At dawn, his condition was so poor that we finally decided that our only remaining option was to go to the hospital. Once we got there, the doctor felt his chest, and told us he had no fever, and didn’t have malaria. He then prescribed two different antibiotics and told us to “take this, and if it doesn’t work, take the other one.” Once more, the decision was left to us.

Modern society employs a variety of strategies to exert power and control over its citizens. Without control, without gathering data on each individual, there is no way to gain knowledge about the health of the population. In this way, the citizens are controlled, and made productive members of society in the long term.

I often use a film camera to register things. I consider it a spectator of the events that unfold, one that has my own subjective point of view. The performative aspect of what occurs in front of the camera is the manifestation of an idea of something. My working process often involves the following of rules or instructions. My actions are an exploration, or a way of approaching something that has caught my curiosity. The Fluxus movement strove to erase the boundary between everyday objects and art, between performance and audience, or between performance and art. What appeals to me is their attitude to collaboration, the idea they had that Fluxus was not a specific group, but rather a series of actions. Francis Alÿs often uses the city and walking as a starting point for his work. Many of his actions in city spaces are metaphors for the modern city dweller. The way a city is designed and planned can say a lot about the social differences and relations within it. What interests me is the way he involves other people, often giving them the role of narrator in his pieces. Their actions and participation are what drives the story along. He transforms social problems into stories that involve the people at the specific site in question. Playfulness is an important part of my process, and using places where other people can interact with the action adds an element of the uncontrolled, or of randomness.
Last year, when spring arrived, I walked around Malmö sowing grass seeds. I walked through the city, planting grass in places that were more or less paved over, and had varying amounts of space for the grass to grow. The initial inspiration for my sowing of grass was something I heard on the radio a long time ago, that has stuck with me ever since. It was a report concerning the distances to green open spaces from residential areas. If the nearest green open space is more than seven minutes’ walk away, you simply won’t make it there. The grass made a circle around my home, with a radius of seven minutes, and it grows there now in these conditions.

In an ongoing work, I investigate the idea of “nature” by approaching a tree in various different ways. In Landscape and Memory, Simon Schama writes that features of nature are defined and named by us, not by nature itself. An obvious example of this is a national park, which is given boundaries so as to be preserved in its original form. It isn’t the rock, the tree, or the water itself that means something. Rather, the important thing is the context in which we place them. What is nature, and where is it? It’s the important thing is the context in which we make it there. The grass made a circle around my home, with a radius of seven minutes, and it grows there now in these conditions.

A walk is also the means of discovering places in which to make sculpture in “remote” areas, places of nature, places of great power and contemplation. These works are made of the place, they are a rearrangement of it and in time will be reabsorbed into it. I hope to make work for the land, not against it.

My interest in the sciences lay primarily in the explanation and answering of day-to-day problems through the ‘bigger secrets’ that are in astronomy, biology, physics etc. I see these problems as in some sort reflecting the problems we face in our everyday and believe that if applied correctly they can give us half answers and half questions. I also see the arts in the same way as able to do something or have the possibility of converting the questions of the age into questions of the alienated lives most of us live.

My background is one of distress, one of many problems, or put differently a fairly common background. Like many of us, I see myself as a child of the Gulf wars. Post-Communist scare, the age of the new enemy. Modern warfare, the war for the people’s minds and hopes. The realisation of 1984s Big Brother concept. One of the lost generation. This war has been long in its making, and the tools have become more sophisticated, with the rise of psychology and popular sociology. It has always been important for us to have an enemy of the mind’s eye, as Bob Dylan says in his song Only A Pawn In Their Game: “He’s taught in his school. From the start by the rule. That the laws are with him. That the laws are with him. To protect his white skin. To keep up his hate. To protect his white skin. To keep up his hate. To protect his white skin. To keep up his hate. To protect his white skin. To keep up his hate. To protect his white skin. To keep up his hate. So he never thinks straight. “Bout the state he’s in. but it ain’t him to blame. He’s only a pawn in their game.” This song, if translated correctly to fit the problems of our time, describes perfectly what wars are all about. What my generation has lived though, why we feel so apathetic about the future, that it cannot be changed, that it is already written. This feeling torments many souls with the darkness of inhumanity.
in terms of the past, while most industrialists don’t see anything at all. The artist must come out of the isolation of galleries and museums and provide a concrete consciousness for the present as it really exists, and not simply present abstractions or utopias.”


5. Muddy Waters on the album *King of Chicago Blues*.

The earth sculptures should rehabilitate the natural area destroyed by industry, such as strip mines. This method of rehabilitating is what I have attempted in the city space. I imagine the feelings between the object and the spectator being much like my own when I witness something unexpected. The feeling of ‘wow’, sending new information through my body. I believe that this is what art in a public space should do. To put new thoughts in the head of the spectator. To give a feeling of extended awareness of the microcosm in the city. To make one see new possibility in the moment (as in Henri Lefebvre’s moment, the moment which is, in short, an extension of the everyday, where new possibilities emerge and if all bets are on the table the possibility of realising or failing the possible. “We will call ‘moment’ the attempt to achieve the total realisation of a possibility: possibility offers itself; end it reveals itself...every realisation as a totality implies a constitutive action, an inaugural act. simultaneously, this act singles out a meaning, and creates that meaning”)

Phallic and the public space

Throughout several months I was discovering and observing the different public sculptures around Malmö. I got very excited by their common features. They all tended to have a phallic nature, most of them being monumental in appearance. Made out of either precious metals or massive stones. There are almost no other kinds of monuments. There are no real modern sculptures, which tend to have no time (not looking to the past or the future, but having some kind of non-time that defines its own time in the now of the space it occupied), made out of unconventional material like plastic, chrome metal and other materials of modern development. Most of them also have a phallic nature, which tends to empower those in positions of control. To validate their position in society. To give an image to aspire towards. These monuments have become my point of aesthetic reference. Building my ideas for public sculptures and intervention upon this already established monument. “Instead of them being spectacular, they were just these small but very odd signals that you would stumble across.”

Adam Chodzko wrote this about a project in public space, where he would put ads in free pamphlets for advertising. He used this cheap way of getting ideas out to the public. These advertisements were descriptions of art works unrealised. This minute form of applying art to the free space of the city, together with the way land art would use the surrounding material for their works inspired me into making less colossal sculptures. Like *The Last Man*, a body sculpture first inspired by the Muddy Waters’ song *Mannish Boy*, in which he says: “but now I’m a man. Past 21”. This song made me think of initiation rites. Where a boy should do a task to prove his transition from adolescence to manhood. I made this informal ritual in one of the Galleri Gadekryds events. I had made an object that would make me three and a half metres taller. I would then stand upon this wooden structure overlooking the Xing of Vårnhem, from a distance. So that I was almost invisible from the crossroads (hidden behind trees in full blossom) and at the same time could see all of it. This instrument made me over five metres tall, making myself into a monumental/phallic sculpture. The performance was not rehearsed, so as to allow the possibility of spontaneity and failure. I did not know how I would react, since I have a morbid fear of heights. Standing upon the structure. The only thing I could do was try not to realise just what it was I had undertaken. The surface of the structure with its small area (9,5 x 9,5 cm) restricting the flow of blood in my legs to such an extent...
extent, that I lost the feeling of first my feet, then slowly my entire lower body became numb. Making my dread of heights even more real. As Agent Dale Cooper says when shot and lying on the floor of the Great Northern thinking death is near, in David Lynch and Mark Snow’s Twin Peaks. “It’s not so bad if you can just keep the fear from your mind.” For me the fear, after some time without feelings in my legs and trying to keep the idea of falling out of my mind, got too great and I had to realise that I had failed to stand upon the pedestal for the entire duration of the event and had to split the moments up into durations of 15-20 minutes upon the structure and 5-10 down on the ground.

In the next installation of the Galleri Gadekryds I decide not to have such a direct performative aspect to the work and instead moved this part of the work to the days before and the moment just before the beginning of the event. In the days before I would go to the space and take moulds with my Capp Machine of a specific place of control, which directed the cyclists to the correct route. These moulds would then be brought back to my study and become a sculpture. An extension or elevation of the stones lying in the space, with the dimensions of modern Scandinavian street tills and raised 15 cms above the other stones. The material used was the same as modern buildings are made of. A material with deep philosophical and concrete based on the same classic materials, plaster and bronze. The stones made of bronze were placed instead of real cobblestones in a sort of glorification of the unseen and the ancient structure of our cities. And under the title Autonomous/Autonomy the copies in plaster sought to make the connection between the double meanings of this object. Autonomous deriving from the non-controllable and unconscious nerve system responsible for the breathing, heartbeat, etc. And autonomy, the right to self-government and the freedom of action. The ideas of rising have over the last year come into all of our minds. With people in the Middle East fighting for democracy, the youths of London fighting against racial bigotry and oppressive poverty. The Occupy Wall Street demonstration in New York. And finally the less well-known student riots in Chile, for free education. In Chile it has been very important for the government to make the people extremely ignorant and uneducated so that the exploitation of their land could go on without any bigger problems. Taxes on books, none on wine is a documentation of the aftermath of the riots. Now the students have started school again after threats from the government that all those who continued the riots would lose their scholarships. The work is pictures of the masts made during the riots and homeless dogs from the streets where the riots took place. In Joseph Beuys’ work Auflegen from 1972, Beuys together with two foreign students swept Karl-Marx-Platz in West Berlin after the Labour Day demonstrations on 1st May. I relate my work to this work, by both taking the aftermath of a demonstration for solidarity into the work. My work is not criticising the demonstrators as I guess Beuys’ work does. For I believe Beuys was more affiliated with Lefebvre than with the Communist Party, with the change in his work method after the ‘68 riots in France and Lefebvre’s exclusion from the Communist party in 1958. My work is concerned with the struggle of the students, their supporters and their possible future. Many of the Chilean citizens believe that the riots will start again and then the street dog will be waiting for them. The title comes from a fact, that there are no taxes on wine and taxes on books. Most of which are on the publishing and not a direct tax of the book. Most of my inspiration for works comes from a combination of poems, songs and the different sciences. Most of the sciences that I study are oriented towards the social or social history, or if some scientist has a good idea which other people dislike or makes them uncomfortable. Noam Chomsky once said in an interview, that you should always take sides with the underdog. Though it is mostly the structure of society that interests me, where it comes from, what it is and how did it come to just this outcome. I do not really believe in change, one of our generation’s greatest flaws and maybe your greatest strength. I believe that we must sleep in the bed that is already made.
Paris Hilton comes in through the door. She is accompanied by a large group of people. All of them with a function to fill in the next two hours. We are in a photo studio in Copenhagen, where I have a permanent job as a photographer and assistant to a Danish advertising photographer. Paris Hilton is to be photographed with her new handbag collection and today the studio has been rented out for this purpose.

My own function is comparatively modest. I make tea for our guest. I serve the tea with a little bowl of honey. I have beforehand moved the honey from its original plastic container to the little bowl, as I have been told.

The model for the photo session is Paris Hilton herself. A model is defined, at the most basic level, as being a representation of something else. In this context often a representation of an idea with the ability to sell a product. An idea of a reality a consumer can identify with and appropriate to a greater or lesser extent depending on the consumer’s economic situation.

Today it’s a bit difficult to distinguish between the model and the idea.

we are in a place the main purpose of which is to stage ideas about reality. For this purpose we choose the models for an assignment according to their ability to convey and represent an idea in the best possible way.

The ability to sell the accompanying product seems on this particular occasion to be working, judging by the crowd of teenage girls from a nearby school who flock in front of the photo studio.

The practitioner is in the region of Saxon Switzerland. He has brought sixteen steel pipes, a concept, and a couple of roles. We will return to the roles repeatedly in the text.

The steel pipes are a little longer than he is tall. They are packed in two bundles, and each bundle weighs a little less than he does. The steel pipes are painted and lacquered in the following colours. Two red pipes, two green pipes, two blue pipes, eight black pipes, and two white pipes. These are the components from which to construct two models. Two models that are to represent a concept. A concept that is based on an idea.

Of relevance for this account is the fact that the practitioner has in addition brought a large load of photographic equipment.

He is not the first person to have moved into this region in the role of an artist. The landscape is famous, as a tourist description charmingly states, for being a favourite observation point for artists.

Photography is a tool. This tool can be used to create a representation of an idea.

This characteristic makes it possible to transmit an idea between a sender and a receiver in the form of a photographic representation.

The photographic process of producing a representation of an idea can be seen as a space in which a translation of the idea occurs from one form to another. This translation, or transformation, has, to a greater or lesser extent, an influence on the statement of the idea dependent on how the idea is translated and on what the idea in question is.

The practitioner struggles with the first photo session. This session takes place on a little ledge covered in snow. This is an uneven and difficult place to work. The heavy and unwieldy model
must be put into a countless number of positions, and the work is made more difficult by the danger of falling the seventy to eighty meters that make up the distance from the ledge (or the stage) to the forest floor below. Several times the practitioner must change the ideas of the work a little in order to make them fit into the landscape. The work and the view from the ledge produce large amounts of adrenaline, and the practitioner, in his role as an explorer, laps up the precious drops.

The governing factors for the translation of an idea, with which this text will deal, are the following: The practitioner, the model, the medium, and the visible/physical world. The translation of an idea can be seen as a dialogue, or a negotiation, among these factors.

A dialogue whose product is limited by the limitations of the factors. Linguistic limitations, social, cultural, economic, political, ethical, corporeal, physical, technological, etc.

In the dialogue there emerges a hierarchy among the factors that can rarely be classified into a fixed architecture. This hierarchy is, to a certain extent, autonomously steered, in the sense that the many delimiting relationships constantly move the balance of power back and forth among the practitioner, the medium, the model, and the visible/physical world. Thus it is not a single factor alone that controls the translation of the idea, and by so doing, its expression.

If we have any interest in understanding this expression, other than the obvious statements it is bound to contain, we must examine the relationship from which it emerged. This relationship is rarely visible in the photographic representation of an idea. It is an important characteristic for an idea's potential to unfold its expression, and also a characteristic that makes it possible to implement agendas the sources of which are not apparent.

Another circumstance to take into account is that the practitioner does not exclusively act speculatively in this context. To this one must add many automatic actions. Actions that may have originated in a speculation, but which have over time become mere habit. Actions that are often influenced by the ideologies of the time. Influences about which perhaps the practitioner no longer takes a position.

Examining underlying constructions can be described as an expansion via a limitation. A conjuring trick, for instance, will have a limited effect on the audience the moment they become aware of the subterfuge behind the artistry. The artistry is entirely dependent on limiting a part of reality.

The art of conjuring is relatively harmless, and we are amused by the slight manipulation. Furthermore, it may be more relevant to an examination of the underlying constructions if we direct the focus onto a photograph's representations of ideas of, for example, a scientific, economic, political, and religious nature, among others.

Contemplating the construction of something in order to understand it is mirrored in part in this text as well as in my work. This could be a sign of one of the ideologies of the present time. The ideology that has accompanied the natural sciences. An ideology that, to a great degree, deconstructs reality in order to understand it. A method of which I try to examine the effects, along with the complex of problems they necessarily reflect. Achieving closeness to something means that one simultaneously distances oneself from something else.

The following day the practitioner has reached the location of the second and final photo session. It is foggy and the rain beats down upon his technologically advanced polar jacket, which comes as standard equipment for the role. The snow and the fog make it impossible to identify any kind of distinctive spatial features in the landscape. There are only the colour white, and his own footprints in the snow.
A hundred meters before the practitioner reaches the position he has chosen for the photo session, he must scream from exhaustion in order to compensate for the attendant pain that comes with carrying fifty kilos of steel pipes on his shoulder. A reaction that produces yet another fix for the explorer.

When the practitioner reaches his chosen destination, he begins to put the steel construction together, hammering it down into the snow. The practitioner moves hurriedly toward her by the task of staging an idea, and this idea representation is, to a greater or lesser extent, a method of constructing ‘knowledge’. This method is not without problems. An important aspect to take into account when considering this text (which is in part an example of the same thing) is the need for understanding the circumstances of an assertion in order to understand that assertion. These experiences are based on very different circumstances, and are another example of our need for understanding the circumstances of an assertion or not depends of course on what one is searching for. There are also other things to find in an assertion than the understanding of the assertion.)

The assertions don’t therefore have a universal character, even if they perhaps appear (or are staged) as though they do in Sol LeWitt’s case. However, Sol LeWitt has defended himself against this criticism, in Paragraphs on Conceptual Art (1967), he writes, “These ideas are the result of my work as an artist and are subject to change as my experience changes”.

This is true of me as well.

In addition, this is an idea based on specific observations that have occurred in a specific situation. In slightly different words, my own story about my own story. It immediately becomes more confusing at the moment when it becomes my story about someone else’s story.

Producing stories on the basis of stories is a method of constructing ‘knowledge’. This method is not without problems. An important aspect to take into account when considering this text (which is in part an example of the same thing) in order to avoid potential universal conclusions. Here I choose to share an opposing position to such conclusions as the ones that Jean-François Lyotard makes in his book The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1979).

Sol LeWitt writes, in Sentences on conceptual art (1967), he writes, “These ideas are the result of my work as an artist and are subject to change as my experience changes”.

This is true of me as well.

The practitioner ‘occupies’ a physical territory with a model that functions as a representation of an idea. There are many ways in which to occupy a territory with an idea. The idea doesn’t necessarily have to be physically represented in the place in order to take ownership of the place, define the perceived reality of the place, and have a potentially infectious effect on other places.

The place could just as well have been occupied by something that is not physically present, but which still affects and defines the perceived reality that it must be possible to discover in the place. It could be ideas in the form of a famous painting, a word, an advertisement, a religion, etc.

The practitioner takes on several roles during the process accompanying the work (or they take on the practitioner). It may be the role of an artist, a scientist, an explorer, among others.

In order to make clear the links between sections, we call the visible/physical world the landscape. Translating an idea into a photographic representation is, to a greater or lesser extent, a staging. The most painstaking stagings often appear to be the ones that are the least staged. The focus of the practitioner is determined by the task of staging an idea, and this idea will function as his optical tool for viewing the landscape. The practitioner only sees and acts on that which is relevant to his idea. In a somewhat abstract figure of speech, one could say that the landscape becomes the idea.

The staging is driven by a need. A need that leaves deep traces to the identity of the practitioner. The staging of the idea is, to a great extent, driven and controlled by the practitioner’s need to stage parallel ideas. Among other things, the idea of himself, his gender, his values, etc.

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In these contexts there may be room for an analysis of one’s own brain. In my case it’s mostly a matter of using time as well as possible. It isn’t directly about doing as much as possible, but about thinking as much as possible. I don’t philosophize. It could be called active daydreaming. I live out innumerable versions of the day before it comes. All conceivable scenarios have to be played out. I envisage what could change with conscious choices that conflict with the fantasy. The day is seen as a straight line. Every time a choice is made, the line diverges into several branches. Dr. Walter Bishop explains the theory clearly on a blackboard in the TV series *Fringe* (season 1, episode 19, “The Road Not Taken” (19:44 – 20:30)) where the subject is parallel universes branching from the choices we did not make. I envisage scenarios that come to coincide with everything that will never happen. This is a normal preoccupation for many people, but I have come to understand that in my case its extent is extreme. It is in the versions of the days and the related fantasies that the ideas emerge. The fantasies that become ideas are those that directly provoke a kind of buzz, preferably in the form of a mixture of feeling happy and feeling embarrassed. This is how it has worked for a long time. I remember to make allowances for the rational and to maintain control of the difference between fantasy and reality as long as it is to my advantage.

**Obsession**

Is the main driving force. Being obsessed with a person close to me or a stranger, fictive or real, mine or someone else’s.

The gift that I want to give is the reason for making something. Gifts to myself can be given in special cases. The gifts are not always practical and don’t always reach the intended recipient.

**Exposure**

Talking about something secret, for excitement’s sake. That’s where the reason for the performative comes in – but never to pester others.
Anything can be invented in the form of a story, but I'm hardly able to invent forms. This may be due to damage to the right hemisphere of the brain. The daydreaming is stored in a good memory for narratives and social situations, but the ability to work with space, direction and picturing is not to be counted on. My relationship with invented forms is naturally problematic, because of the damage, but I hope it is also determined by taste and personality. The problematic relationship distinguishes between an idea that becomes a project and what simply comes from aesthetic fascination. An aesthetic fascination, for example a serious hang-up with a certain shade of blue, a certain material or a texture, is not relevant and never finds a place among my projects. This is related to how the final products are to be presented. If I manage to envisage a final result, an aesthetic presentation, at the same time as the idea appears, then the idea is not good enough. The idea has to be worked through such that the aesthetic result remains unpredictable for my imagination as long as possible. It's a matter of preventing content from being locked into the object. In the activity of looking at the art of others I prefer the internal execution.

The pressure you put on yourself for a result and a personal illusion of the hard working day and the result of a free will.

This is where the entertainment aspect comes in: giving them a show, something they didn't expect, yet still what a spectator always comes to get. This has a lot to do with film. In film it is often clear that an initial thought, an action or processed coincidence has led to the result. It's a matter of seeing the film without reservations. It's a matter of empathy, for example when I watch a film without reservations and let the emotions flow. Empathy takes over, and what I see is added to my mental archive in the category of versions that haven't been imagined in advance. The full-length feature film is perhaps the only kind that can put my capacity to imagine my own universes out of action. It works like a drug and an antidote in one and the same dose. I see a lot of films, as many feature films as possible, preferably seven a week. I can remember the great majority of them. Mainstream films consider more what everyone likes. To consider every one, you have to follow many rules. This is the creative method with most prohibitions from the outset. It has become relevant to see all of them in order to search for the attempts made to stretch the rules. With good insight into films that follow the rules it becomes even better to see those that choose not to bother about them.

Memory

Several versions of a day, several versions of a conversation, a situation, expanded daydreaming, many versions of life, time to live someone else's life in your mind.

Self-deception

It's natural to exaggerate, overdramatize, add things—this influences the realities along the way. To put so much effort into something that may never really affect anyone else. It helps here if it's about someone I know, who knows me, or someone I pretend to know, become acquainted with. What happens on the screen affects me in more uninhibitedly physical ways than real situations. It can be watched in secret and I can get really close to created characters and universes. Making films means spending time creating more time and more people. The film often gives its audience the chance to get closer to people than is possible in everyday situations. As invisible...
viewers we are allowed to read minds and see what the main characters themselves can’t see. We become omniscient.

Empathy and madness, which can’t be a word that’s politically correct. All madness with empathy as an ingredient is something to search out, be entertained by, investigate and preferably use.

Acting

Several sides of the same thing: two totally different people in one. The humour is in the artificiality.

The film, big as well as small, almost without exception starts with a single individual. The idea starts in your own universe, but has to be shared to be realized. In the sharing of the idea it is changed and influenced in so many respects that the end result is often something quite different. A feature film production rarely involves fewer than a hundred people, and often it is more like several thousand. This explains why my own projects will probably never lead to bigger productions. I am not willing to turn my ideas into a workplace where the starting point risks being lost.

The lie

The buzz of believing you can do what you want, be who you want.

Self-deception

Feeling yourself into believing that you can be who you want, the person you want, give meaninglessness things meaning – these claims begin to become meaningless.

It has always been the individual who is most interesting. After the film idea has to be split up and sacrificed, it is the job of the actors to present their version of the individual, but the actor is always two people at once. I’ve never been a fan of realism – more of an opponent. This isn’t opposition to realistic plots, themes or actions, but to the trend in the commercial film industry that is called naturalistic acting, the effort to depict genuine human beings and realistic stories with a sad side-effect by underplaying them. What is desirable is heightened reality. My view is that anything that can be acted happens as it is being acted and is therefore realistic. In many cases the actors must portray characters with personality traits and courses of events that are far beyond anything to be found in themselves. Example: Liev “Huggy” Schreiber as vice-presidential candidate Raymond Shaw in The Manchurian Candidate (2004). Schreiber was brought up by a single mother who was a hardworking artist without a regular job and home, but with a love of black-and-white films and the theatre. In short, Liev had all the preconditions for a so-called liberal-arts life. In the film, Raymond is an important element (spoiler alert!) in a bloody bid for the top jobs in the American power system. It turns out that his own mother has had a chip implanted in his brain that she uses to hypnotize her son into killing anyone who stands in the way of her plans. I often think about what it could be that Liev dredges out from himself so he can try the way he does when Raymond realizes what his mother is up to. “Huggy” usually plays his moral opposite, the conservative or militant villain. This is partly due to personal preferences and chosen pretexts, but as he also admits, it has most to do with his appearance. The artist (actor / film-maker / author) Crispin Hellion Glover had his breakthrough in the role of George McFly in Back to the Future (1985). For ideological and economic reasons Glover turned down the role in the sequel. As a reaction some of the leading figures behind the production chose to make up another actor with a false nose and chin to imitate Crispin’s characteristic features. The new actor spends most of the film hanging upside-down so the substitution will not be revealed, and scenes from the first film were also edited into the new one. All this was done without informing Glover, and he was neither credited nor paid. He sued the film company, and in 1990 worked to introduce a new law that makes it illegal to imitate another living actor without special permission. From then on, the actor with a protected, recognized “I” was a commodity with copyrights, rather like the way things work in artworks and music.

To move from the “I” of the actor to the ego of the omnipotent film-maker, it is as a rule the director who gets the credit and is seen by ourselves as the brains behind everything. Lars von Trier is an example of a creative ego who seems to be willing to expose himself to get his point across. In De fem benspænd (The Five Obstructions) it is the artist, author and sports reporter Jørgen Leth who is the point: “...It’s arrogant, Lars, but I can see it was meant in a friendly way. You wanted to get down to the scream. You thought “With a little help we can make Jørgen let it all out. He’s the most beautiful bird himself,” you thought. “He just doesn’t dare believe it. I’ll get him to spread his wings and fly.” That’s what you thought, Lars. And then you started directing and laying down verses in advance, to distract, to break through my armour. “For example we could distract Jørgen by letting him make films. That’s how the perfect human makes films. Look at him now; he’s making a film.” Here Jørgen is reading from the letter Lars wrote to himself in Jørgen’s name. Complicated, cynical and funny. In a joint project Jørgen agrees to make new versions of one of his best known films, De fem benspænd. The perfect human: Avedøre, Denmark, dir. Lars von Trier and Jørgen Leth.
something away, the buzz of the risk of failure, the buzz of working.

In July Jørgen Leth always meets me with lots of energy and undisguised anticipation as he stands there on the TV screen as a commentator on the cycling. Tour de France does something to me and I don’t know whether it’s good or bad. For three weeks in July just under two hundred men cycle 3200 kilometres. For over a century they have cycled the same roads. Today everything is filmed from motorcycle and helicopter. It beats film. And there I meet Jørgen Leth as more than a match for me, since he willingly sacrifices his ego for the enthusiasm and deliberately loses himself.

Many of those who also are, were or have been preoccupied with other people, human phenomena, acting and the artificial, are people I myself am, was, have been or can be preoccupied with. In the final analysis we all share the property of being visible and available for viewing.

Repetition
Mental repetition is healthy for you and me; with real obsession you have to think in a circle to find what hits hardest.

Life as performance, awareness of it and hate. Dr. Hunter S. Thompson* taught it to me first: “It’s not as much fun anymore, it’s hard for me to work on a story now, I’ve become a part of the story. The first time I went to a press conference to work on a story now, I’ve become a part of the story”.

They thought I was an astronaut. I used to be able to stand in the back, you know, and observe stories and absorb them. I can’t do that now, I admit it, I appear in a story and then I become part of it.”

The elephant in the room is the wheelchair, but it mustn’t be mentioned, its absence is urgent. Just as the word “Mafia” is never uttered in the course of the “Godfather” films.

Thought action. Letting thought and materials flow together. Thinking in a correspondence between thought, materials, and action. Co-operating with materials. Thinking with objects. Letting oneself be carried away by processes. Do I produce without thinking or do I think through the production? Or do I in reality speak rather than think? And if I think at all, what is it that I think about?

Basilica di San Clemente is a church in Rome that, archaeologically speaking, is organised as a complex of buildings in four layers. The first layer is the present church, built around the year 1100. This is the building we see from the street and into which we enter. But if one moves down below street level and down under the uppermost church one will find here layer number two. A church from the fourth century. This building originally functioned as a private home, but was transformed into a church at some point in the fourth century. But the layers don’t end here! Part of the cellar in the private home was used as a temple of Mithras around AD 180–220, and this whole group of buildings was built on top of the remains of the foundation of a building from the era of the Roman republic. I am interested in how we remember through architecture. How the city remembers. How time and history are archived in layers, in shapes and materials in the city. Lately I have been thinking about my work as a city. – A kind of construction of a city. – A search for influences and accommodation. In a city shapes, architecture, systems, etc. have to adapt to what already exists. The roads have to adjust to the placement of buildings, and the shape of a building must be defined on the basis of its relationship to its surroundings.

On the buildings in the city there are ornaments. Among the buildings in the city bodies move about. Behind the walls – in the homes, in the city people decorate their bodies. – And this is nothing new. Even before there were walls there were people who decorated their bodies. I think of whether the tattoo’s relationship to the body can be compared to the ornament’s relationship to the building. Because don’t they have several similarities? They both cover emptiness. The ornament fills the otherwise empty surface of a building. The tattoo covers the emptiness of the skin – the uniform expression of the skin. Both types of decoration create variation in an otherwise uniform surface. The ornament is a kind of flat sculpture. From a distance it often looks like a flat drawing, but many times the ornament is sculpted into the surface of the building and thus acquires a third dimension. Consequently, the ornament is integrated into the shape of the building as a whole. In the same way the tattoo is internalised in the skin. Pigments are laid under the skin so that the tattoo becomes an integrated part of the body’s whole. The tattoo is like a flat drawing that is given a third dimension. That is, when the drawing is transferred from the sketch to the body, it changes characters from being flat to being three-dimensional. In this case there is perhaps not a completely analogous correlation to the building, but I nevertheless mean that there are similarities with respect to spatially
and surface. But here perhaps the relationship is reversed: the body makes the tattoo three-dimensional. – The ornament creates a third dimension in an otherwise flat surface.

I would like to understand space better. Because what is this, all things considered. Surely a space is only defined by its boundaries. Without the boundaries there is nothing but infinity. Spaces are the boundaries of infinity. If you fill an empty space with solid matter, you can say that you remove the space. – You fill the space with solid matter, while you at the same time squeeze the space out of its container. – You empty the space of emptiness by filling the space with matter.1

In an installation I have combined a group of images with a group of clay objects. The images hang on the walls and the objects are scattered over the floor beneath them. The images are copies in motion with their basis in images of stones. These images have been stretched out in the copier at the moment when they were formed. When an image is stretched out, its spatial existence is extended. And because this extension happens at precisely the moment when the image is created, an expansion in time also occurs. The moment of production of the image becomes prolonged and extended. A movement becomes frozen. Can I extend time? And can I expand space? In the production of these images both body and machine play a part. The copier catches the movement that the hand activates. The stone is in itself a storing of time. A lump of time. But in the extended moment a storing of time is also embedded. Extending the moment of image production via movement. Storing time and freezing a movement. In this way the image becomes a memory of the activity that occurred at this moment. A tension between flexibility and fixation. The original images that I copied from were in colour, but my versions are in black and white. The clay objects are painted in the same colours that the stones had in the original images. – As if the colours have fallen out of the images on the wall and landed on the objects.

Transgression. Extension. I began collecting coffee cups painted with motifs from the world outside the home – landscapes, ships. There is a strong tension between the near and the far in such a cup. It lives in one of the innermost circles of society – in the home – in the kitchen cupboard. It is taken out of the kitchen cupboard, falling into a hand into which its proportions fit perfectly. We sit by the kitchen table talking about topics that take place outside the boundaries of the home while we hold our cups. – Perhaps we pass it between our hands or move it around on the table while we talk. We move it up to our mouths, its surface touches our lips, and we pour its contents into our bodies. Often the cup moves around with us – in the home or in the office. We have a close relationship with cups. This tension between near / familiar / inner space and distant / nature / outer space, also exists in a flowerpot. In it planting is brought into the home. Like the cup with the landscape motif, the pot is an object we have in the home that refers to something outside the home.

Mark Manders says that he writes. – But using objects rather than words. Since 1986 his work has been collected under the title Selfportrait as a building. The totality of this building is an imaginary construction that functions as a mental context for the whole of Mark Manders’s physical work. – A building as a mental state that contains objects that have a physical existence. It is an interesting paradox. – That the context (the building) does not exist in a physical sense, while it nevertheless contains physical objects. The physical objects are given a strong mental character when you are forced to move them into your thoughts. In this way the physical and the mental merge and explore the

1. Rachel Whiteread is an artist I definitely not relate to; however, she is relevant in this context.
grey area that exists between thought, object, and language. Mark Manders himself says: "What interests me is the moment when the difference between thinking and the object of thinking falls away."2

Manders's works are capable of transmitting his being overwhelmed by the immediate surroundings. A bit in the same way as one in Jonas Mekas's film is constantly aware of being ecstatically overwhelmed by the totally regional.3

A place where my thoughts are frozen together is a work by Mark Manders from 2001. A human femur and a coffee cup have been placed next to one another holding a sugar cube between the handle of the cup and a little bump on the femur. "I thought it was interesting how the cup has gradually acquired a handle during its evolutionary process. If you think about the evolution of cups, it is a beautiful evolution. The first cups were human hands: folded together you could take the water with your two hands out of the river. The next step were things like hollow pieces of wood or things with folded leaves, and so on. The last beautiful moment in the history of the cup was when it was given an ear."4

Mark Manders has let a little bump grow out of the femur in the place where the sugar cube is held between the bone and the cup. It looks as if something has slowly grown out from inside the bone – comparable to the slow process by means of which the ear has grown out of the cup. Mark Manders does several interesting things in this work. He produces a combination of objects that is visually and sensually stimulating. He combines two objects that have common evolutionary features. And in combination with the title, A place where my thoughts are frozen together, he creates a territory in which I can lose myself.5

Like Mark Manders, Isa Genzen also uses her work as an autonomous language. Both these artists use process and form to consider things. The work of Isa Genzen is held together by a pervasive interest in a space that lies between sculpture, painting, and architecture.6

Her work Sie sind mein glück consists of a large number of columns – individually labelled with names of persons. Some columns are semi-transparent, some have surfaces that reflect the space around them and are composed with a great deal of freedom in their use of materials and colours. The columns contain a clear reference to skyscrapers and to a great extent their composition is based on the kinds of surfaces and architecture one encounters in today's big cities. These skyscraper-like columns are brought inside from outside. A tall building is brought into a small building. An exterior space is brought into an interior space and is here transformed into interior architectural elements. A building is scaled down, is worked on abstractly and brought into a space that is far smaller than this building's original size. Being in a state of transformation. Being in a process of becoming something else. Being in transition from one thing to something else. Transgressions. Evolution. After all, we are all the time in the process of transition between past and future. This transition transpires continuously. When I search for something and I don't know what it is, this is perhaps because the 'something' keeps moving. – It is all the time on its way to becoming something else.

Processes and movements, activated by associations. An action creates an effect, that leads to the next action, that creates an effect, that leads to the next action, etc. – Thought action.
**JESPER VEILEBY**

On the subject of canaries

“All art is once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril. It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors. Divinity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex, and vital. When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself. We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely. All art is quite useless.” 1

Never too many canaries

An outsider is a person who is not, or views him- or herself as not being, a member of his or her own community. He has his gaze upon that which he is excluded from, and it is the self-awareness of his own gaze that constitutes the outsider’s position and maintains it. The gaze is one of the artist’s main tools, as well as the awareness of his own gaze. So the nature of the artist is similar to that of the outsider, and perhaps that is where he and his peers find their true potential and contribution to society.

Not as visionaries or great minds of their time, but as potential whistleblowers and canaries as society heads down the minishaft of the future in search for utopian gold. “Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible.” 2 The artist and his practice can be seen by society as a reactive. But only if society pays proper attention to art, and it is, without the intention to alter, conform or normalise it according to its own agenda.

The Evil Eye

The evil eye is a look of envy or dislike thought in many cultures to bestow bad luck on the one at whom it is directed. A common notion is that a person can do unintentional harm simply by letting an envious gaze remain focused for too long on the desired person or object. 3 Psycho-analyst Melanie Klein claims that “the primary prototype of envy in general is the infant’s envy of the ‘feeding breast’ as an object which possesses everything (milk), love the infant desires.” 4 This corresponds with some folk belief that the evil eye can be acquired as an infant at the time of weaning. But instead of Klein’s, and especially Lacan’s, strict and hierarchic notion of the gaze where the inscription occurs mainly one way, I am tempted to look at “the evil eye” by considering the material gaze as presented by Bracha L. Ettinger. 5 This gaze does not deal with a subject and its object, present or absent, but rather a process of multidirectional change and exchange in a field of “trans-subjectivity”. 6 In such a case one can look upon the evil eye as an infection of the gaze that can be traced back over the last 2,500 years, dating back to ancient Greece. 7 Once a “victim”, one is trapped in a pattern of looking at and comparing one’s misfortune with the fortune of others, and in doing so the potentiality arises to cast the evil eye on to the next person.

The paralysing qualities of images

Images are powerful things. They are part of our language with society and our culture. Their influence over the viewer is direct and strong. One is attracted to what one recognises and even more so if one recognises it as something “new”. The visual stimulus is like a drug, the more you have the more you want. And it strongly influences not only how you view your surroundings but it also attacks and changes how you act and how you structure your thoughts. The making of images has always been a natural part of my relationship with the world as a way of interacting, analysing and escaping. But over the years there’s been a growing resistance to alter, conform or normalise it according to its own agenda.

Manipulation of symbols

In 2011 the magician Ferdinando Buscema held a lecture under the title of Magic and Management in which he presented one of his favourite definitions of magic, written by Arthur Clarke: “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.” 8 Stressing the word “technology”, with its etymological root techne meaning ‘a body of practical knowledge’, Buscema makes the point that “techne is the practical knowledge that allows us to make something happen in reality”. Through history the word magician has been used to describe a person who possesses occult knowledge that is unknown and inaccessible to common people. It is by the means of this esoteric knowledge that “the magician can make extraordinary things happen”. Buscema continues by presenting three secrets of magic, the first one being, “Reality is not always what it seems to be”. There is a limit to what we are able to perceive from situations that might create the right context to situations that might create the right context. Buscema also points out that transfixes him and makes action impossible. Longing to participate but not willing to lose his position as an observer, the outsider wishes to be ravished by the world, to be dragged kicking and screaming through the door.

The artist also wants to keep his position as an enshoer and at the same time to be a participator. Thus outsider and artist are both drawn to situations that might create the right context for the crossing of that threshold, where one can be both audience and actor. Malicious thoughts, drugs, self-destructive behaviour and the temptation to run away from that which must be faced are in constant conflict with the potential to enlarge one’s world, so find unexpected possibilities and to achieve far beyond one’s dreams and expectations.


7. Psychoanalysis and Matrixial Bordespaces, lecture by Bracha L. Ettinger seen on European Graduate School youtube channel, dated from 19/07/2007. http://www. youtube.com/watch?v=6RnXWEm6Y&feature= BFg&list=PE3DD6b4mZb/7DF91B8YX7Nist_related


10. This paragraph uses quotations from and is based on the lecture Magic and Management by Ferdinando Buscema (21/05/2011), (http://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=bqu2ZbIYeFg) 28/02/12


5. Ibid.


10. This paragraph uses quotations from and is based on the lecture Magic and Management by Ferdinando Buscema (21/05/2011), (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqu2ZbIYeFg) 28/02/12


5. Ibid.
supreme power to shape reality through dream-
ning it before it is made concrete. Finally, “reality
is made of words”, whereby he states that the re-
ality of our world is deeply shaped by the words
we use. That our world is made out of words
and that our reality is ultimately constructed
of symbols, abstract in their nature but with
a concrete and absolute effect upon reality. In
conclusion he says “a magician is someone aware
that reality is a dynamic process whose flow can
be influenced and guided, through the proper
use of imagination and the conscious manipula-
tion of symbols”.

Other spaces
In 1967 Michel Foucault gave a lecture11 in
which he presented the idea of Heterotopias, an
idea that has become a favoured play tool of
many artists.

“These spaces, as it were, which are linked with all
the others, which however contradict all the other
sites, are of two main types. (…) First there are the
utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. (…) There are also, (…) real places – places that do ex-
sist (…) Places of this kind are outside of all places,
even though it may be possible to indicate their
location in reality. (…) I shall call them, by way of
contrast to utopias, heterotopias. "12

Roughly speaking these heterotopias can be seen
as approximations of utopias existing simultane-
ously on both a physical and mental plane. Fou-
cault goes on to list several groups of heteroto-
pias and their classifications. what they all have
in common is that the heterotopian qualities of
these spaces are sustained and nurtured by the
usage of these very spaces, within the framework
of their assigned functions.

One type of space that contradicts this pattern
is the abandoned and forgotten urban space that
has lost its function inside the borders of conven-
tional society. Although these places can be seen
as heterotopias of time, they do not conform to this
labelling. They are neither “tombs”, as they are fre-
quently sought out and used/inhabited by a variety
of individuals, nor are they “museums” of preserved
slices of time, as they are in a constant state of
decay. A space that lost its function becomes a
vacuum within society, not an other space, but a
non-space13. These heterotopias are not in approxi-
mation to an utopia but rather a dystopia, they have
been stripped bare from the functions assigned
to them by society and what is left is a place that’s
raw but yet not wild. Such a heterotopia refuses the
inscription of its users, it is a space that needs to be
rediscovered and reclaimed over and over again.

Due to the loss of inherent functions these
spaces gain a specific mirror effect. The space only
has the function assigned to it at the given time
of one’s presence, and so this type of heterotopia
stands as a stage set while one moves through it,
rediscovering and reclaiming the mental land-
scape of one self. This allows an individual, not
only to step outside the borders of society, but also
the restrictions of his own self-image.

These spaces attract people that already are
outside of society or seek to escape it, if only for a
short period of time. The homeless, drug addicts,
rebelling youngsters and secret lovers, the traf-
fic of people unofficially coming and going,
effectively lends these places an atmosphere of
nomadic quality.

The stage

“The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a
single real space several spaces, several sites that
are in themselves incompatible. Thus it is that
the theatre brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one
after the other, a whole series of places that
are foreign to one another.” 14

It is interesting to note the relation that Euro-
pean theatre has with ritual practices, going
back with its roots into ancient Greece. At that time there were places thought to be sacred to the gods, filled with divine power. What they usually had in common was the presence of a theatre, originally built for the festivals and worship of Dionysus (the god of wine), from which Greek drama eventually developed. Theatre (theatros, theatron) literally means “a place for watching”.

On the matters of biography

“The true collector, Benjamin says, liberates ‘things from the bondage of utility’.”

I have almost an obsessive behaviour when it comes to collecting in general. Since early childhood I always had a fetish for boxes. Smaller boxes are placed inside bigger boxes and that always made sense and provided comfort. As a child I was equally preoccupied with placing boxes inside boxes inside other boxes, as I was with making images of my own hands. Something I was made to stop doing as if it was a bad habit. “These images of your hands are not interesting”. The boxes were never discouraged.

MADELINE ÅSTRAND

The uncertainty relation

“Who will tell me how, all through existence, my whole person has been preserved? What was it that carried me, inert, full of life and spirit, from one end of nothingness to the other? “1

I’m looking for a point. realise there is no point. only in theory. According to Einstein, ‘physical reality must be described in terms of continuous functions in space’. I see existence as a composition of constantly changing states and its complexity overwhelms me.

Scientific processes have always interested me and the desire to unite them with other disciplines like poetry, philosophy, phenomenology, and psychology has always been great. I seek expressions for unity between material and immaterial, between natural and artificial, between mind and body.

Something that has long amazed me is the paradoxical in human nature. Contradictoriness in general. Its necessity and the dialectics between opposites. The natural in relation to the manipulated.

The void seethes with energy. Everything is set against its extreme and it is only through this relationship that we can understand what we call reality. Sometimes I want to step outside of reality as an observer, with a bird’s eye view, which is an impossibility because I will never be capable of defining something of whom I myself am a part. As Bachelard puts it in his critique of Bergson: “In vain do we try to differentiate between understanding a process and living it”.2

Is the hesitation of the particle also that of humanity? Asks Helena Granström in Osäkerhetsrelationen (The uncertainty relation).

It seems that humanity’s nature is as difficult to define and predict as that of a quantum particle. When it is exposed to external influences, light or energy in some form, its state changes, its position and speed.

I turn around, change my position to forget. To break the trajectory of my thoughts.

Go in, go out, completely, with all my power, preferably simultaneously. Go up and down, to the right and to the left. Turn around and realise it has no meaning.

We want to measure, be able to predict and define. Our society has been dominated by Western rationalism where everything of value...
can be measured. But how do you measure a thought? A dream, an inner flow of energy? Is a thought a particle or a wave?

Granström writes in Alltings mått (The measure of everything), “To live is to cause death. The denial of this, and the objectification, distance, that it entails is more than anything the the zero point of what we call evil.”

Measurement – an attempt to reduce to the least common denominator with a number as the final answer – is not always applicable because measurement itself causes an object to change. Perhaps I am looking for a potential number. A number that neither is nor isn’t. A one inside the zero, not yet defined.

Granström likens the scientist to the pornographer in his or her attempts to objectify and measure in a time when human relations have been reduced to digital ones, when economic growth no longer is distinguished by unification but by appropriation.

The dream of the future.
We are constantly on the move.
On the move to where?
The straight line will inevitably be forced to bend and the circle ended where it began.

In Lars von Trier’s film Antichrist the calculated is related to the unpredictable and chaos to structure. I see the woman in this film as the primary connection to nature. She is a part of it but alien to herself. She feels guilt because she could have acted to prevent the death of her child and instead she gave in to her instincts. Interestingly enough, the child’s fall out of a window coincides with the mother’s orgasm.

In a scene in which the man discovers the photos of his dead son in which the woman has laced up the boy’s left shoe on his right foot and vice versa, it becomes apparent that she has deliberately tormented her own son, something which she seems to have denied.

To me, Antichrist elucidates the question of whether human beings are by their nature self-destructive or whether it is society’s denial of the natural that has given rise to destructiveness. In Antichrist, as in many other of von Trier’s films, I see a kind of critique of rational reasoning. Melancholia is a film that throws this sharply into focus. The scene where Justine rushes into the study and exchanges pictures of modern works of art with classical Bruegel-paintings is to me a critique of the progressive character of modernism. Everything doesn’t just go forward. It goes in all different directions.

In the films of Andrei Tarkovsky it is as if the elements become living beings. He personifies nature, verdure, wind, fire in a way that speaks to an inner reality. As though humanity’s inner nature speaks to its outer one. Nature mirrors us and we nature in an almost ‘supernatural’ way. In the same way, in the film Mirror one can see how a man’s wife is reflected in his mother, how everything is repeated. The roles exchange places, boundaries are erased until time almost ceases to exist.

Dilapidated industrial settings are mixed with poetry. The doctor in Mirror says, ‘We don’t trust nature, ourselves.’ When he leaves her the wind rises. He stops, as though it were trying to tell him something.

An artist I feel strongly for is Hiroshi Sugimoto. In the work Lightning Fields (2008) he photographs static electricity. A way to observe light with light. It is as though he has managed to capture the movement of light particles/waves in a visual experience where fractals, branchings, and blurred boundaries form a pattern that makes me think of the structure of life. It reminds me of an experiment where a proton and an anti-proton collide with one another at high energy and give rise to a couple of nearly free quarks.” To me he manages to unite art with a scientific experiment, something I myself would like to develop.
I also see that Sugimoto is drawn to some kind of emptiness, or nothingness, as in the work where he, using a low shutter speed, photographs cinemas and drive-ins cinemas during an entire film. The result is a completely white projection where, during the process, all information has been erased.

Horizons are something by which I have long been fascinated. The limit of what we can see with the eye's limited field of vision and what lies beyond. Linear perception of the three-dimensional. This is one of the reasons why I am inspired by Sugimoto's suggestive photographs of sky and sea at different times and places.

Sugimoto has a way of illuminating almost invisible details. This wealth of detail can also be found in Gaston Bachelard, who has long been one of my primary sources of inspiration. He goes to the bottom of the nature of matter and translates it from a psychological and poetic perspective. His analyses of the four elements in the books about “the imagination of matter,” as well as his texts on the theory of science, have formed the foundation for many of my works.

He believes that science would never have existed without the ability to imagine, and also that thought has substance. The physical body can also be seen as a complicated form of motion. The equation energy + mass = acceleration has long interested me.

"Is it not obvious that the wave’s vibration is at the same time both heat and light?"11

Also Lee Ufan’s multifaceted works and links to natural science and interest in energy in a mixture of ideas about femininity, sexuality, and violence have a strong appeal to me.

Language and the limitations of the body - Challenges, exhausts, Disturbs, Destroys - The traces of the process go on.

To mention some other sources of inspiration: Lee Ufan, Pippi Lotti Rist, Hilma af Klint, Patti Smith, Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails), David Lynch, Sally Mann, Jeanette Winterson, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Igor Strawinsky, Wolfgang Tillmans, Björk, and others.

Many of my latest works have focused on weight, guilt, and human aspirations. In the work Potential Traces time has stopped. But the fall is inevitable. Gravity, the force that makes us unite while it simultaneously causes us to degenerate or be crushed in the abyss, has already or has not yet left its mark. Or will the objects for some reason rotate differently during the fall and result in a different impression? Have the past, present, and future become united?

"The pull of gravity will be analysed in two phases by relating two objects, the moving body and the earth, and also by distinguishing between the time of the possible and the time of the real."8

In Potential Traces there is, on the other hand, a desire to strive upwards. Toward purity and clarity. Up toward empty air. The silence. Liberated from weight, conscience, and guilt. Free of memories.

Usually weight is associated with depth, but according to Bachelard, Nietzsche finds true depth in height. He speaks of the substancelessness of air, as an element of freedom that is associated with depth.

"But it is with human beings as it is with this tree.

The more they aspire to the heights and the light, the more strongly their roots strive earthward, downward, into darkness, depths – into evil."10

"Weight does not weigh on the world but on our souls, our minds, our hearts – it weighs on man."12 Bachelard speaks of Nietzsche's ethical imagination. In it Bachelard sees that good and evil have never been so close to one another, or rather, never have good and evil, high and low, so clearly been caused by one another."
In the video *White Wall* 2010 I focus on embodying a striving for weightlessness and purity. I want to liberate myself from my conscience and human guilt. It is also about trying to fit into an impossible existence and a yearning for dissolution in the whiteness, for annihilation.

In this work I have been inspired by Albert Camus’s *The Myth of Sisyphus*. In Camus’s interpretation of the classical myth, Sisyphus has been condemned by the gods to roll a boulder up a hill just to see it roll down again, and perpetually to have to start all over again. In the same way, the woman in *White Wall* tries to climb the flat white wall, a task which is doomed to failure. She falls again and again, but starts over.

I want to dissolve this state. Dissolved in water. Let the thoughts mix. Gradually they lose their value, their specific character, their symbolism. They dry out and grow pale with time.

Once again I find myself thinking about Nothingness and Emptiness. Emptiness is a space between, a field between objects that is affected by the objects in question. Emptiness can never be completely unaffected because it is surrounded by energy with which it interacts. Nothingness on the other hand is rather the lack of empty space. Compressed matter, energy under high pressure collapses in on itself. A black hole. Complete compression of information contributes to complete loss of information.

I toy with the idea that if one could compress all the consciousnesses of the world into a single consciousness and press it together, then it would probably cease to exist. A place where contradictions cancel each other out. Is that a place? Or perhaps rather a state? A state of being a non-being. Where the deepest meets the highest, where the most compressed meets the most dissolved, where nothing embraces everything and everything nothing.

The thought is ambiguous and fluid. The effect of it is often definitive. So many possibilities. A single outcome. These problems of physics. All these states to which subject myself. All these extremes. All these creations of states. Where is the non-state?
This handout is spurred by simultaneous desires: on the one hand, to reveal curatorial rationale, and on the other, to refrain from explanation. Given that curatorial voice is imbedded and enacted in the exhibition, further articulation, such as disclosing the specific points of entry or considerations the works stimulate in me, seems somewhat redundant, an interference even, that risks short-circuiting other experiences. Nonetheless, some aspects of the exhibition warrant emphasis. *Ever Ephemeral* is conceived as a space to reference and continue my investigation of the significance of the archive, and its intricate relationship with registering history. 

*Ever Ephemeral* is part of my doctoral research in fine and performing arts, Malmö Art Academy, Lund University. The symbiosis of archive and history. The permeability of the archive. The plasticity of history. Inquiring of history writing while writing history. Artifactual sense. Coproduction of memory and artifact. How art gives history form. Chronology and antichronology: Archiving and unarchiving. *Ever Ephemeral* is more of an intersection in this inquiry than it is a conclusion. Its formation denotes specific exchanges that have contoured, and shed light on, the research arena. Here, works stand for themselves, for distinct practices, and for influential dialogues.

It is difficult to identify where an association of ideas or interests begins, and it is just as complicated to pinpoint ending. Chronology is not much help. A chronology can start or end anywhere. It can extend in either direction indefinitely, depending on the scope of its frame(s) of reference. Storyline. Lifeline. Timeline. History. All open to reformulation. The linear appearance of chronology is deceptive, as is the perception that time flows from one direction to another. Physicists and philosophers widely agree that “the flow of time” is a creation of consciousness which we rely upon for order. Chronology and tense are inspected, analyzed, disarranged, and played with in *Ever Ephemeral*. A labyrinthine set of frictions that unfold in the archive is awakened here as well: between past tense and present tense, between remembering and forgetting, between completion and continuance, between the enduring and the ephemeral. The diffusion of *Ever Ephemeral* across two venues is meant to infuse its experience with recollection. A game of tag is set in motion as the exhibited constellation lays open innumerable relationships between archiving, memory, history, and narrative.

The inclusion of texts and publications organizes the exhibition as a place where reading and viewing conjoin. Text-based visual works by Danh Vo and by Felix Gonzalez-Torres encompass and anchor each space. Some textual components are integral to what is shown, such as the booklet by Alejandro Cesarco that accompanies his projection work, *Present Memory*, and the script for Rasmus Røhling’s video installation *Self-Titled*, which he has amended with footnotes for written form. Publications by Roni Horn are her work in the show, highlighting the union of photographic investigation and reading that the artist has evolved. My essays and publications included here speak to the archive and historical representation as fields of action, via Vo, Horn, James Benning, and Group Material. *Time Frames*, the conversation between Andrea Rosen and myself about the re-collection of Gonzalez-Torres’s clocks, has been produced for this occasion.

The commentary in this handout is not intended to begin or end the exhibition, but is rather, one node of its emplotment.
Signal – Center for Contemporary Art  
Mønbjogatan 15, entrance from the backyard  
SE 211 53 Malmö  
September 23, 2011 – November 13, 2011

Inter Arts Center  
Bergsgatan 29  
SE-214 22 Malmö  
September 30, 2011 – October 30, 2011

Signal Checklist

Danh Vo  
*Death Sentence*, 2009  
Ink on sixty pieces of paper  
Text compiled by Julie Ault and handwritten by Phung Vo

Julie Ault, Danh Vo.  
*Where the Lions Are*, 2009  
Publication [Kunsthalle Basel]

Twelve vintage clocks designed by George Nelson, late 1940s and 1950s  
Collected by Felix Gonzalez-Torres  
Loaned by Julie Ault, John Connelly, Amada Cruz Harman and Rick G. Harman, Jim Hodges, Roni Horn, Michelle Reyes, Andrea Rosen

Julie Ault and Andrea Rosen,  
*Time Frames: A Conversation*, 2011  
Booklet (published for the occasion)

James Benning  
*casting a glance*, 2007  
16 mm film transferred to dvd, 80 min.

Julie Ault  
*4195.6 feet: Geography of Time*, 2010  
Text handout

“Viruses”  
November 3, 1986  
*Time* magazine  
Loaned by The Group Material Archive, Downtown Collection at the Fales Library and Special Collections, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University

The Fales Library & Special Collections  
Web page, finding aid, not yet published

Julie Ault / Ph.D
Julie Ault
*Historical Inquiry as Subject and Object*, 2010
Text handout

Julie Ault, ed.
*Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material*, 2010
Publication [London, Four Corners Books]

Doug Ashford, Julie Ault
*Group Material: AIDS Timeline*, 2011
Pamphlet [Hajö Cantz, dOCUMENTA (13)]

Alejandro Cesarco
*Present Memory*, 2010
Color video, no sound, continuous loop, 4 min.

Alejandro Cesarco
*Present Memory*, 2010
Booklet [published for the occasion]

Inter Arts Center Checklist

“Liberace 1919–1987”
February 16, 1987
People magazine
Loaned by The Group Material Archive, Downtown Collection at the Fales Library and Special Collections, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University

The Fales Library & Special Collections
Web page finding aid, not yet published

Interview with Julie Ault on Group Material archive by Marvin Taylor, for Art Spaces Archives Project (AS-AP)
Color video, continuous loop, 45 min.

Julie Ault
*Historical Inquiry as Subject and Object*, 2010
Text handout

Julie Ault, ed.
*Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material*, 2010
Publication [London, Four Corners Books]

Doug Ashford, Julie Ault
*Group Material: AIDS Timeline*, 2011
Pamphlet [Hajö Cantz, dOCUMENTA (13)]

Felix Gonzalez-Torres
“Untitled” (Portrait of Julie Ault), 1991
Paint on wall
Painted by Phung Vo

Rasmus Rahling
*Self-Titled*, 2008
Video installation

Rasmus Rahling
*Self-Titled*, 2008 / 2009
Text handout

Roni Horn
*You Are The Weather*, 1997

Another Water*, 2000

This Is Me, This Is You*, 2002

Dictionary Of Water*, 2002

Cabinet Of, 2003

Index Cressy*, 2005

Doubt Box*, 2006

Roni Horn aka Roni Horn*, 2009
aka, 2010

Well and Truly*, 2011
Publications [various publishers]

Julie Ault
*Roni Horn, a compilation*, 2008–present
Text extract on wall

In addition to the artists, lenders, Malmö Art Academy, Signal, and Inter Arts Center, I would like to thank Andrea Rosen, John Connelly of The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation; Marvin Taylor, Lisa Darms of the Downtown Collection at the Fales Library and Special Collections; Ann Butler of Art Spaces Archives Project (AS-AP); Matthew Buckingham, Mats Eriksson, Frans Jacobs, Professor Sarat Maharaj, Professor Gertrud Sandqvist, Simon Sheikh, and Apolonija Sustersic in the Visual Art Phd program at Malmö Art Academy, Lund University; Stefan Pedersen; Alejandro Cesarco; and Martin Beck for support and dialogue essential to the exhibition.
MATTHEW BUCKINGHAM

Elementary Data consists of the verbal exchanges made among a group of children in the spring of 2012 as they reflected on their education – schools, curriculum, teachers, learning processes – and how education might change in the future. The dialogue began in a workshop setting in Queens, New York, where six fourth- and fifth-grade students talked about their educational experiences. Next the students considered the many different ways that they learn about other people and discussed the idea of face-to-face interviewing, including the ethics of interviewing and being interviewed, and a few of the techniques that interviewers often use. The children then developed a set of questions to use as a basis for interviewing other children about their opinions and feelings concerning education. These topics generally ranged from the quotidian to the abstract, from “would you change school lunch if you could!” to “are thoughts real?”

The children teamed up in pairs and moved from the workshop to a public space where they approached other children and conducted the interviews and conversations. When the interviews were complete, the teams discussed the results and reflected on and compared the answers they received.

The work is ephemeral, existing only during its duration. Afterward it consists of the ideas generated through face-to-face conversations about the work. In this way it becomes a space of recollection and projection, partly imaginary, accessible by word of mouth, through the written interview questionnaire and photographic documentation of the exchanges. Elementary Data took place at the Queens Museum of Art and in Flushing Meadows – Corona Park on the 12th and 13th of May 2012 as part of The Queens International. The participants were Rachel Feingold, Hannah Gaertner, Talia Kampion, Sarah Kwok, Daniel Tam-Rich, and Megan Wilson.
The project ‘Aesthetics of Resistance’ deals with contemporary demonstration culture and political activism, seen as performance through performance.

With these themes in mind I have chosen a series of real events; real moments of political struggle in contemporary Scandinavia and beyond, and have investigated them from this aesthetic angle: How are the movements and their political goals influenced by the construction of symbolic images? How are these events staged both by the activists and by the societal power being opposed? How do both sides carefully plan the creation of a certain scenario, and how is this scenario ‘becoming image’ by being performed? Or, in the more intricate moments, how are these agents being cast to perform certain images by their opponents?

The use of performance/gesture is double: It is what I am looking for in the events that I investigate, and it is the tool I use to interpret and re-present certain aspects of these events.

FRANS JACOBI

Aesthetics of resistance

An investigation into the performative politics of contemporary activism – as seen in 5 events in Scandinavia and beyond.

The project ‘Aesthetics of Resistance’ deals with contemporary demonstration culture and political activism, seen as performance through performance.
Unauthorized

This exhibition is a showcase for various archival artifacts and works of art, organized around the notion of unauthorized cultural practices and initiatives, that may or may not go against official and sanctified cultural policies. This is a vast field of positions and possibilities, ranging from historical forms of counter and alternative culture, to current strategies of political exodus, as well as in artistic positions such as the secretive, even elitist, underground ethos, or such figures as the amateur and the outsider. In each of these very different instances, there is a shared concern, namely the attempt to establish a separate, independent system of value and meaning: a system, or discourse, which do not require institutional validation, which do not suppose institutionalization as such, but rather its own, often private, forms of circulation and authorization.

What is, then, the role of authorization within artistic practices of self-organization and publishing? How is something authorized and indeed authored outside of hegemonic cultural institutions? And how does such efforts relate to, as well as alter their articulation, when confronted precisely with institutional inscription and initiation, as when presented in an exhibition like this one?

In Unauthorized four projects will be represented, each of which attests to its own mode of archiving and collecting. Exhibited will be objects and artifacts that have do with artistic production, research and autonomy, each referring to its own system of production, ordering and circulation, but compared through the system of the exhibition itself. The exhibition is thus employed as a mode of organization of objects and discourses, and the represented artistic positions are to be seen as exemplary.

On show will be a number of mail art objects, stemming from the artist Niels Lomholt’s large collection of mail art objects from the 1970s and 80s. The representation of this informal and anti-institutional global network is in the form of a single project, initiated by Lomholt in 1976, entitled Two-Circle Formular. This was a formula designed by Lomholt and sent out to all in the network, and to which he received 224 responses, making sender and receiver one and the same. Moreover, a formula is a tool for collecting and organizing data, although, in this case, there is no apparent function for this data. Rather, it functions as a type of MacGuffin, as a template for possible artistic responses and rejections.

In addition to this historical material, there is a collection of even earlier self-published magazines, edited and drawn by a teenage Otto Melchior between 1918 and 1922, when he was a young Communist. The three magazines, Quick, World Echo and The Free Review, have been excavated by the artist Eva la Cour, and has formed the basis for a series of works and reflections, as seen in the video accompanying the display of the archive. History is not only commemorated, but also actualized.

In her self-described ‘eccentric archive’, Ines Doujak has collected artifacts and textiles from...
Bolivia and Peru, that escape easy classification as either art or craft, and lies outside such hegemonic Western concepts and modes of understanding. They not only have their own system of signification, but also of use, having both a practical and symbolic function. In turn, these artifacts, and their stories and storytelling, inform Dousjak’s collages, here presented through a number of posters, whose surface becomes a place for multiple inscriptions of meaning within a transcultural transfer. Dousjak’s collection is thus not ethnographic in any sense, but immersed into artistic practices of research and representation.

Finally, a collection of album covers, mostly from the 1980s, by the reclusive Texan outsider Jandek will be on display, alongside a documentary on his enigmatic work. Jandek is a pseudonym of a cultural producer whose ‘real’ name or even life world has so far never been revealed. His albums are all self-produced and released through his label Corwood Industries, and they bare no credits apart from the song titles and a P.O. box. They simply exist in themselves, as conceptual objects, without any participation into the circulation of discourse – interviews, promotion, concerts etc. – that usually characterizes the music industry. This has lead to almost obsessive speculations about the nature of the project by Jandek’s few followers, as can be seen in Chad Friedrich’s documentary on the subject, Jandek on Corwood.

These collections will be displayed through and around a reconstruction of George Nelson’s Struc-tube display system, a light transportable module made for trade for exhibitions in 1947, thus at the height of modernist architecture and design as social aesthetic production. Indeed, George Nelson was later commissioned to design the American National Exhibition in 1959. The easily moveable and constructable Struc-tube was never actually put into production, though, and has been reconstructed by the artist Martin Beck, questioning both authorship, authenticity and authorization.

The works and objects are presented in the form of the archive, but with internal and perhaps uncertain rules, while at the same time shedding light on the very processes of collecting and exhibiting: the exhibition as a mode of address. The exhibition is thus a site for both presentation and representation, where forms of display are interwoven with the discursive formation of marginalia and authority, not least in the sense of a politics of autonomy in the act of self-instituting. As cultural producer, the four positions represented in Unauthorized, indeed all attempt to sidestep institutionalization the through self-instituting of production, circulation and reception.
Apolonija Šušteršič

Hustadt project
Community Pavilion – Brunnenplatz 1 opening at the Hustadt festival, Blackboard action
September 2011

Hustadt project
Community Pavilion – Brunnenplatz 1, work in progress, July / August 2011
(in collaboration with Aktionsteam)

Hustadt project
Community Pavilion – Brunnenplatz 1 opening at the Hustadt festival,
Opening speech: Dr. Barbara Steiner, writer and curator, September 2011
Apolonija Šušteršič

Hustadt project
Community Pavilion – Brunnenplatz 1 opening at the Hustadt festival,
Film shown at the festival: Gitte Vilesen, Juju (White Magic), 2008
37:56 min
September 2011

Faculty
STAGING, LIGHTING AND FILMIC CONVENTIONS

Lead teacher: Junior lecturer Margot Edström
Also teaching: Torbjörn Mineur
Credits: 7

See page: 304

What can different light settings and camera movements mean and how can we deal with the problems of composing for the camera? These and other questions around cinematic conventions as the staging approach versus a more editing based film making were the starting point for the video course. The focus was on the implications of these conventions for the individual video works of the participants and how to work in a practical way with the available technical resources. During the first part of the course guest lecturer Torbjörn Mineur held workshops on light setting techniques for indoor and outdoor shots. The rest of the course were housed at Inter Arts Center (IAC) where we could use the Black Room with associated technical equipment for experimental workshops and also screenings of films to discuss the use of different mise-en-scène approaches and editing techniques. Some of the films were *Play Time* by Jacques Tati, *A city of Sadness* by Hou Hsiao Hsien, Fantômas by Feuillade and *Almanac of Fall* by Béla Tarr. The course was finished with a public exhibition event at the White Room at IAC where the videoworks by the participants were presented.
In April 2012 a group of students and I went to Medelplana, Västergötland, where they were left in the care of Andreas Eriksson. He gave them an assignment to make paintings that should relate to nature in a similar manner as a white stretched canvas relates to the white wall of the painter’s studio. They stayed for four days exploring the beautiful spring landscape of Kinnekulle, painting, talking and thinking. The quality of the work made during this period bear witness to the competent guidance of Andreas, and also to the students’ high level of ability!

Viktor Kopp
Keywords, a personal story depicted in words
Tourist; immigrant
Barefaced,
Touristic
immigrant

You're not really like other people. You're indivisible and hence ultimately simple
Monad; in the philosophy of Leibniz an

This way of mapping has become some-
thing of a trace of my personal journey in
enlightenment, a tailor made illumina-
tion by the readings. By extrapolating
words and sentences out of a book or
reading and then placing them together
in a booklet, it has become almost a sort
of diary. By doing this the one page or
spread I devote to this has become the
essence of the book I have read, which
however is not always the subject matter
of the book. The sentences, sometimes
just single words are similar to sound bits
or smells, which could "trigger" personal
experiences, current ones or past ones. It
has formed a mode of mapping, organiz-
ing material by little phrases that tingled
my mind, touched me and gave an en-
tranceway in the text or where a seed was
placed for deeper thinking. Or conceiv-
able the contrary has happened; that it
has become an artifact of un-mapping,
in the sense of for example getting lost in
an unknown city as a way to get to know
the city too. Trying a different route
can bring you to wonderful new sites,
and that is how I feel about reading new
material. I get to know the "city" a little
bit more, but at the same time the city is
still so new that I cannot really orientate
myself exactly of my whereabouts. It is
a personality-altering journey, which
makes it a thrilling voyage.

By using language this way I intention-
ally wish to communicate with the fellow
soul. At video-artist I am usually in control
of the concept and the image, framing,
movement, color, sound, production and
what not. This process is a way of collecting
images [read words] that I want to make a
collage of, so as to say, by creating an
experience depicted in images. "The process
of "video-making" follows a particular
itinerary: research, pre-production, produc-
tion, post-production and distribution.
And those five phases were the parameters
for the journey of this booklet as well. Al-
though the words used are not "my" words,
but other author words, making them my
words, appropriating them and here and
there abusing them out of context. That
is the beauty of "words" nobody really "owns"
them. They are free like songs. The tunes
and the song lyrics can be "protected" but
we can sing them and enjoy them. When
we reasonnable them, are they still "theirs"?
Sound bits would be another possible name
of keywords or sound words. Or in my
case language tunes, which I would like to
sing, because I like the tune. I collect them
in order to remember them for me and for
fellow spirits, who appreciate the personal
beauty of the moving and inspiring words
from a more academic context. Learning
by enjoying, when texts relates to experience
the material opens up and by doing this
benevolently closes the gap between mind
and body.

The map can be read and also be folded
a way in case we need it later to find our way
in the city.

[To be continued] In her documentary "I
will be your Mirror", Nan Goldkin says that
her pictures form her visual diary of her life.
And while saying this in the movie we hear
Dean Martin singing; "Memories are made
of this." For the maker and the receiver it is
perhaps a different story, maybe not similar
but nevertheless a valuable one.

PICTURES OF THE SELF
IN VARIOUS STATES

Mapping of SELF in texts:
Henry A. Giroux, Neoliberalism and the
Vocationalization of Higher Education,
20103: Self-interested
Self-restraint
Self-help
Self-critical
Self-definition
Endnotes:
1. Leibniz, Gottfried. The Monadology.
philosophy.leeds.ac.uk/GMR/moneth/mon-
dology.html>
2. Ionesco, Eugene. The Chairs. Ionesco,
TINA HELEN
Not To Find One’s Way

A map of Berlin galleries is superimposed on the City of London. What at first was a guide to esteemed Berlin galleries now leads to abandoned alleyways and backyards in East End, London. This area contains some of the worst poverty in Britain, but is undergoing rapid development as London competes to be the creative capital of Europe. All gallery maps look alike. More than just leading from one gallery to the next, this map holds the potential of not finding one’s way.

Not To Find One’s Way, 2012
Multiple Poster B/W Digital Print
62 × 42 cm

26 Photographs
B/W Injekt Print
40 × 30 cm
CASTING COURSE: BRONZE / ALUMINIUM / SILICONE

Lead Teacher: Senior lecturer P O Persson
Also teaching: Robert Cassland
Credits: 9

See page: 305

CASTING COURSE: BRONZE / ALUMINIUM / SILICONE

WELDING

Lead Teacher: Senior lecturer P O Persson
Also teaching: Robert Cassland
Credits: 6

See page: 300
A NEW WAY TO UNDERSTAND ART IN RELATION TO POLITICS
Lead Teacher: Professor Gertrud Sandqvist
Credits: 9
See page: 302

Hannah Arendt died from a massive heart attack on the night of the 4th of December 1975, having just enjoyed dinner with some friends. She had planned to spend the next day writing the closing section of her last book, The Life of the Mind. A sheet of paper remained in her typewriter, completely blank but for a single word: Judging.

Of course, we don’t know what Arendt was going to write, but we aren’t entirely without clues. Hannah Arendt, one of the most original political theorists of the 20th century, seems to have had a completely new idea concerning the role of art in society, and a justification of the claim that art belongs to the public. On her view, we need to educate ourselves to make aesthetic judgments. Arendt referred to the Life of the Mind as a continuation of vita activa. The book is about art and contemplation, the spiritual life. If you combine these works in this way, comparing their main categories, something interesting occurs: thinking becomes an analogue of animal labours, as thinking is an activity that is always in progress but leaves no traces, the Will corresponds to homo faber, the producer, and Judging, in this sense, is connected with politics, as the contemplative equivalent of the political activity within the polis.

Judging, the text Arendt was never to finish, is thus central to her political ideas. Arendt usually made thorough preparations, often for several years, before committing herself to committing her thoughts to writing. She would try out and experiment with different ideas, first in essays and lectures. Once she began writing, her thoughts would be fully formed, and her writing required very little revision, apart from the editing of her English that was usually performed by friends or editors. For this reason, we can be fairly sure that the ideas concerning “judging” that she developed in her essays, The Crisis in Culture – its social and its political significance (Between Past and Future, 1960), and later in her lecture notes on Immanuel Kant (the Gifford lectures, 1970), which have been collected in an appendix, The Life of the Mind, would have made up the core content of Judging.

As always, Arendt takes her point of departure from the philosopher or situation that gave rise to a phenomenon or event. For her, thinking is based on Merleau-Ponty, that there is where the artist, as well as the craftsman and the philosopher, gives rise to a phenomenon or event. For her, thinking is an activity that is always in progress but leaves no traces, the Will corresponds to homo faber, the producer, and Judging, in this sense, is connected with politics, as the contemplative equivalent of the political activity within the polis. The qualities required of, and refined in, a person who judges and appreciates art, Kant suggests, are the very qualities that are used in judging human actions, and calling right from wrong. Later on, Kant would abandon this idea, and claim that the fact that the faculty employed in moral judgment is reason. Arendt stuck with the younger version of Kant. Perhaps she had seen how little use reason is to us in judging human actions. She quotes Cicero, both in The Crisis in Culture and in the Gifford lectures: “Errare humanum est, sed quam casu ista venture?” – “I would rather be wrong with Plato … than right with such men as these.” She seems to feel that thoughts to judge are not only not useful but that they tell us what is possible, and even what the observer of the event has or has not possessed as the company one prefers to keep.

Contrary to the more common opinion, Arendt doesn’t consider taste to belong within the private sphere. Rather, it is an element of public or political life, and both politics and art are performed by examples, not through categories. In the Gifford lectures, she goes into more detail on how her theory, which is a continuation of Kant’s, explains how our appreciation of art leads us to develop the ability to make ethical judgments. In order to appreciate art, Kant says, we require imagination and common sense. Imagination allows you to conceive of things that aren’t right there, in front of your eyes, and it also provides the necessary distance for the proper passing of judgment. Common sense enables the piece to communicate with more than one person. That is to say, people can pass judgment on an object without knowing about the meaning of a work of art in their roles as social beings. There is only one way to convince somebody else that your own judgment is valid: by justifying it, i.e., to speak and persuade your listener (the very same means that politicians have access too). The imagination provides the ability to empathise with somebody else’s situation (”enlarged mentality”), something Arendt calls “going visiting”, which allows you to understand and experience how somebody else views the world, through a work of art.

Further to this, Kant and Arendt claim that the precondition for any appreciation of beauty is a absence of egotism, the famous “disinterested”. To be able to appreciate the beauty of art, we need to take pleasure in its existence, without holding any personal stake in it. Arendt continues: “By communicating your feelings, your pleasures and disinterested delights, you tell your choices and you choose your version of the public. Kant. Perhaps she had seen how little use reason is to us in judging human actions. She quotes Cicero, both in The Crisis in Culture and in the Gifford lectures: “Errare humanum est, sed quam casu ista venture?” – “I would rather be wrong with Plato … than right with such men as these.” She seems to feel that thoughts to judge are not only not useful but that they tell us what is possible, and even what the observer of the event has or has not possessed as the company one prefers to keep.

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FEMINISMS

did it occur and is it essential or relative? where does it derive from? when and where inherent and foundational to our thinking, reality. There is something that is real and depiction. And then the depictions of

We are all fine again.

I have gone mad. Now I know how it feels.

small Christmas decoration out of branches. who is both? I am automatically making a and the world? Am I in on the deal? Or am I

their agendas then? To get part of the power, so that they will feel safe. If we are, say ten women, we can be three two mothers each day and then we could work the other days. Then the kids would know each other and the parents would know each other and all the kids. Then we wouldn’t have to leave the kids to strangers.

How could you leave me to strangers? Would you rather have wanted me to be a housewife? No, of course not.

Girls, let your hair be a little wet when you make a ponytail then the scent from the shampoo will stay there until you let your hair out. It will make him mad with desire. Thank you for not covering the stupidity. But men want other women too, they want entertainment and intellectual com-

positions. Are they also part of this? What are their agendas then? To get part of the power, and the world! Am I in on the deal? Or am I also one of the slaves? Not clear yes. Or one who is both? I am automatically making a small Christmas decoration out of branches. I have gone mad. Now I know how it feels. Then it is suddenly all back to normal. We are all fine again.

Truth and reality versus image, depiction. And then the depictions of reality. There is something that is real and something that is unreal. A notion so very inherent and foundational to our thinking, where does it occur and where did it occur and is it essential or relevant? This text began as an attempt to grasp the term Mimesis and how its meaning has developed, and shaped our view of depiction, reality and fake. Could it be more fruitful to turn to the concept fake? The fear of the fake is when it is listened to or ignored. As the notion of something as real has not been questioned. Now I have the same feeling again, trying to be smart. Someone who writes. Reads. A parasite fish, travelling along. Never grasping, the existence of the whale, only where you just have your mouth. The questions will not be answered. Split fragmentary thinking and writing just reflect back what you are. Do you think that your language has to mime truths? I am not a theorist. Is there a simpler way to speak, to avoid exclusion! Or can these complex things be simple without losing content? Are there images and are there realities? Is this split related to two different "reals"?

The signs and ciphers, the languages are fictions and the means by which we travel to the realities.

That double character the signs and letters have. The connection between the depicting and the depicted cannot be ignored, what is that zone? What happens there? In some thinking there seem to be a hierarchy of existence, a hierarchy of reality? More real, less real, unreal? The images exist to the limit that some people speak in words. The reality is flooded with images. (Was he right then) Repetition to the limit of exhaustion.

Plato’s care allegory has been monumental in Western philosophy. Reality is not real, the real is an illusion and the truth is the ideas (to me this sounds like fiction, but I am also an artist). Artists make false imag-

es of reality (that is an illusion) Literature and art replicate clichés. Three strikes and you are out. This thinking has been funda-

mental but not even Plato follows his own mimetic actions. He mimetically lets himself write Socrates’ words, text miming spoken dialogue, speech.

The feminist movements in different awak-

enings and then going into another slumber. But language is always there even when a ‘woman’ says something each time, but also similar, pulse, repetition. The Narratology of the texts is as important to the reading as the political implications, it’s intertwined and entan-

gled, bodily, behavioral signs, through looks, if one is a mother? If that group is so unstable and the criteria for what a woman is, are so unstable and excluding, how can changes be claimed in her name?

“It is not enough to inquire into how women might become more fully repre-

sented in language and politics. Feminist critique ought also to understand how the category of “women”, the subjects of femi-

nism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought.”

“Juridical power inevitably produces what is claims to represent, hence, politics must be concerned with this dual function of power: the juridical and the productive.”

But, what we call women are structurally discriminated even if they do not exist. Has it not sometimes been valid to group people and, make a female identity or an identity in the making, just to push the most basic changes?

Butler claims that the attraction and stabil-

ity that this universal category of women can offer in creating a subject, the core in human beings. Something that is self-identical over time is what grants identity. Even though the text almost strips me of the cores of my beliefs about body, sex and identity, it is in the same instant offers the feeling of losing something heavy that I carried.

Through using all images in a parodic act, the stereotypes in one sense exposes the apparatus the images of men and women can be questioned and experimented with, and thereby the structures can be loosened. For Butler identity is an act that is performed, constantly changeable, an effect not an essence. Thereby foundations of our existence is somehow questioned. But at the same time she shows that we can go on living anyway, and was it really a founda-

tion to existence or just a possibility? What the feminist movement can do is to think over its his-

tory and reflect on the consequences, and revive it on new premises. Could we maybe split the person in two? The old body and soul division, and give all the bodies equal rights? No, this is not possible and maybe then that would imply that biological sex is more real and that gender is a construc-

tion that is culturally inscribed on the body. And the body is then equipped with a predictive unimpeached past, that we cannot reach, without first appropriating gender, no matter how experimental it may be. Then it is not the body that is our destiny but culture.

If it is all a construction then that opens up some kind of choice? The binary structures are of course already in the language and this therefore limits the fantasy of the choices. But the important thing in this articulation of sexism is to focus on where power articulates.

She offers in this text a thinking where both gender and biological sex is per-

formed and acted.

And not only that, there is no agent, no space where it is inscribed, it is a con-

stant fabrication.

She is thereby also questioning the notion of indentity, the idea of a substance, the core in human beings. Something that is self-identical over time is what grants identity. Even though the text almost strips me of the cores of my beliefs about body, sex and ident-

ity, it is in the same instant offers the feeling of losing something heavy that I carried.

Faculty
In this text I want to focus on different modes of prostitution at the turn of the last century, and by extension also in history and in the present.

First, the more or less self-chosen role of the courtesan, an almost respected and in some cases privileged woman.

Second, the women who had prostitution as a sideline and the ones labelled as prostitutes from their behaviour in relation to the moral laws.

The courtesan

The courtesan is a historic figure who is surrounded by myths and romantic stories. I focus on the courtesans of the 1800s, since there’s enough source material to get a good picture of their lives. They are described as a dreamy, perfect creature, a “vision.”

One can simplify them as the supermodels of the fin de siècle, fashion houses wanted them as clients, and respectable women also studied and copied their style. They were a small, privileged group of celebrities, and socially were high above the whore on the street. Many of them were mistresses to noblemen and royalty.

They were also known as demi-mondaines (half-world) since some parts of society were closed to them.

My persons of focus are Liane de Pougy (1860-1950), Catherine Walters, also known as “Skirtle” (1839-1920) and Carolina “La Belle” Otero (1868-1965). I include these photos of them to give an image of what kind of style and wealth I am dealing with in this text.

I often wonder how the courtesans actually lived their lives, what did an ordinary day look like? The ones I’ve chosen to focus on had rather turbulent early lives, with sexual abuse and forced marriages that later broke down. As a way to make a living they used their talents, for example for dance or acting. There are also cases where an older courtesan taught the young girl the profession.

I believe they were women who made use of the mythmaking around them, who used their appearances combined with social skills to make themselves seem desirable enough so that men wanted to spend a lot of money to meet them and sleep with them. They knew that they were a projection of men’s fantasies.

To speak the language of Simone de Beauvoir, they played on the “feminine mystique,” they knew that men’s minds were captured by the “ideal” woman in her finest garments.

The courtesan figure disappeared when society changed, for example the women’s liberation movement helped to change social mores and thus put the extravagant demi-monde out of fashion. Yet it’s tempting to think about who are today’s equivalent, and socially were high above the whore on the street. A police-man from the vice squad is guiding him through the Paris night and the two of them see young women on the boulevard and the policeman tells him: “Most of these young women are seamstresses. There are 90,000 of these unfortunate creatures in this town, and only 60,000 of them have work all year round.”

Cavling describes the various forms of prostitution he sees: “The café lady, a woman who sat in a café to lure more customers to the place. She was hired by the owner, with free food and special price on the wine as payment. To me it sounds a bit like modern day club hostesses, for example in Japan.”

The lady who dines”, a woman who spends the whole day working on her looks and then goes to the Jardin de Paris to meet clients and earns her day in a ‘private room.’ She rents a furnished apartment where the conditions for the two-years, and the rent is too high. After a year the landlord asks the porter to scare away all of the woman’s clients, thus leaving her without an income, and kicks her out on the street.

Cavling and the policeman visit a “public house”, a brothel. A hostess greets them and they enter a room with mirrors on the walls, red satin sofas, and a piano. The hostess is an ex-prostitute with permission from the state to run a house, which is not to be located close to a church, a school or a state building. They continue up the stairs and see decorated rooms of different kinds, and of it a woman who has been described as someone who has worked short periods of their lives as prostitutes. They then returned to a normal job, becoming respectable women, often marrying, which makes sense when so many jobs were only seasonal.

Back to Cavling again, who serves as our eyes into this world of the past. A policeman from the vice squad is guiding him through the Paris night and the two of them see young women on the boulevard and the policeman tells him: “Most of these young women are seamstresses. There are 90,000 of these unfortunate creatures in this town, and only 60,000 of them have work all year round.”
A Room of One’s Own is an extended essay, based on two lectures given by Virginia Woolf at Newnham and Girton Colleges, Cambridge, in 1928. Attached by the peculiar representa-tion of women written by men. Virginia Woolf begins a search for literature written by women and describes the conditions under which this literature was produced. The central message of the essay is that a woman must have money and a room of her own if she wants to write fiction. Virginia Woolf puts forward the accusation that female authors are more likely than male authors to have difficulties achieving these fundamental requirements. The body of the text presents arguments underlying this claim expressed in the voice of a narrator named Mary Beton. Using Mary Beton as her alter ego – detaching herself from the narrative voice of the essay – Virginia Woolf brings forward a call for social change. She was well aware that she lived in an unequal society, but convinced that anger should not interfere with her writing.

Female architecture

The title A Room of One’s Own embraces both the intimate and the architectural room. ‘A room’ can be understood as the idea of being (existence) and indicate the author’s need for a personal expres-sion (voice) in the public space. Without moving too far into the field of feminist architectural theory, I find it relevant to question how environments affect our sense of self and identity.

Dutch philosopher Finn Collin states in his book Konstruktivisme (2003) that language shapes our social life, because language defines the frames of our thoughts and these decide what actions are possible and hereby what social practices are realisable in a given society. In what way is architecture linked to our personal construction? Can rooms have presupposed structural boundaries?

Katarina Bonnevier, a member of the Stockholm-based group FATALe, works with feminist interpretations of architecture. She suggests that we should read buildings as queer performative acts and not static preconditions. This opens architec-tural interpretation and makes it more confined within normative constraints. In 2007 she published her thesis Behind Straight Curtains – Towards a Queer Femin-ist Theory of Architecture in which she quotes architect Leslie K. Weissman’s definition of architecture: “Even though built space shapes the experiences of people’s daily lives and the cultural assumptions in which they are immersed, it is easy to ac-cept the physical landscape unthinkingly as a neutral background. But the spatial arrangements of buildings and commun-ities are neither value-free nor neutral; they reflect and reinforce the nature of each society’s gender, race, and class relations.”

The ways in which buildings participate in the construction of gendered identi-ties have been the focus of many feminist architecture theorists. According to The Sex of Architecture (1996) architecture is shaped by gender-based assumptions: “Man builds and woman inhabits; man is outside, woman is inside; man is public and woman is private; nature, in both its kindest and its cruelest aspects, is female and culture, the ultimate triumph over nature, is male.”

Public-private / Masculine-feminine


In Villa Müller Adolf Loos makes a clear distinction between the outside and the inside of the house. According to Beatriz Colomina the radical difference between the inside and exterior reflects a split between the intimate and the social life of the metropolitan being, a gender-loaded split. She reaches the same conclusion analysing images of architecture by Le Corbusier, “Here again the woman is in her bedroom, the man ‘outside’, the woman looks at the man, the man looks at the world.”

Adolf Loss refers to the inhabitants of Villa Müller as spectators, for his defini-tion of architecture is really a definition of theatrical architecture. The inhabitants become in their own domestic theatre space. Yet detached from it. Architecture is not simply a platform that accommodates the viewers. It is a viewing mechanism that produces the subject. It precedes and frames its occupant.

Female and the common

A Room of One’s Own has inspired numerous artists since it was first pub-lished in 1929. Myself included. Stricken by the many questions Virginia Woolf raises in her essay, I have adapted these questions in an attempt to rearticulate them through a contemporary video work. Questions that might have a stronger potency and tone today, but still are strik-ingly relevant.

Another great artwork related to the essay A Room of One’s Own is by the Swedish architect A Room of One’s Own. A thousand Libraries is a compilation of all the marginal notes made by readers in the Swedish library copies of A Room of One’s Own. In the work Virginia Woolf’s words are reframed within a collective voice of responses, tied together not only across individuals, but also across a period of nearly half a century (it first appeared in Swedish in 1958). One of the most understood sentences is: “For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice”.

The idea of the common and women’s struggle for equal rights is treated by Silvia Federici, teacher and activist from the radical autonomist feminist Marxist tradition, in her essay Feminism and the politics of the commons (2011). Silvia Federici looks at the politics of the common’s from a feminist perspective with the aspiration that it can become the foundation of a new anti-capita-list programme.

She opens the essay with a quote from The Subsistence Perspective: Beyond the Globalized Economy (1999) by Mies and Befehlens-Thomson: “The way in which women’s subsistence work and the con-tributions of the commons to the collective survival of local people are both made invisi-ble through the idealizing of them are not only similar but have common roots ... In a way, women are treated like commons and commons are treated like women.”

While neoliberal tendencies toward the removal of the public space, increasing the logic of the market, a new awareness of the danger of living in a world in which we no longer have access to seas, trees, animals and all the resources become a topic. And the question of the commons is behind the single voice”.

In her lecture “The politics of the common’s” she argues that the current situation is far superior to the previous one and includes public goods such as public space, public education, health and the infrastructure that allows us to function. They are resources ‘held in com-mon’, owned or shared among communi-ties populations.

Are the women’s struggle for subsistence and the contribution of the commons simi-lar in the way that they both are threatened by commodification? Are both being taken for granted? The feminist perspective on the commons is important. Commons has been the thread that has connected the history of the class struggle into our time. Women have always depended on the commons for access to communal resources than men and have been most affected by their privatization and hence most committed to their defense.
CLAUDIA DEL FIERRO
Fire short scenes and a Western for gender politics

“In a magazine you come across a full-page color picture of a nude girl. He paused. “Is this testing whether I am an android,” Rachel asked tautly, “or whether I’m homosexual?” The gauges did not register. He continued, “Your husband likes the picture.” Still the gauges failed to indicate a recall of his study, he said, “is lying face down on a large and beautiful bear-skin rug.” The gauges remained inert, and he said to himself, an android response. Failing to detect the major element, the dead animal pelt. Her - its - mind is concentrated on other factors.

“Young husband hangs the picture up on the wall of his study,” he added, and this time the needles moved.

“I certainly wouldn’t let him,” Rachael said.


The future then

It is the future of the late twentieth century. We are all hybrids; part machine, part organism. We are cyborgs. This is real. It is not a metaphor. The machines are not just there, they are inside us, as part organisms. We are cyborgs. The term was coined by Donna Haraway in her 1985 book, "Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminist Research." She argues that we live in a world where technology and biology are intertwined, and that this is not a choice we can avoid.

Our society is one in which human and non-human elements coexist. We are not just human beings, but also machines. This is not just a metaphor, but a reality. We are cyborgs, and this means that we must rethink our relationship with technology.

Some feminists argue that it is not capitalism, but patriarchy that is women's biggest enemy. Claiming 'a room of one's own' is even more problematic. Feminists claim that women have been denied access to the cultural capital that would enable them to achieve equality. The idea of a 'room of one's own' was first introduced by Virginia Woolf in her novel "A Room of One's Own," where she argues that women need a space to write and think. This space is not just a physical room, but a space of freedom and independence.

Rachel is a cyborg, she can simulate anything but she is emotionally overqualified for her function as replicant. She is a threat, almost spontaneous. As a replicant, she is a cyborg who maintains her own faith in women's experience, in the myth, but she warned me: this myth is an illusion. She is a cyborg, she can simulate anything, but she is emotionally overqualified for her function as replicant.

Our society is one in which human and non-human elements coexist. We are not just human beings, but also machines. This is not just a metaphor, but a reality. We are cyborgs, and this means that we must rethink our relationship with technology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For me, gender is a field of ambivalence. I will never find a place to be a woman. To be feminised means to be made vulnerable within a given economy, too. To be feminised means to be made vulnerable within a given economy. This is the case of my friend, who is a transwoman. She has been feminised in her effort to be a woman. To be feminised means to be made vulnerable within a given economy, too.
that failure is desirable since there might be no single position where we will (ever) fit. Whatever we identify with, we can perform, but it does not mean we succeed.

Performing what for whom

"Simulo? ¿Qué? ¡Quién! Mi madre, una mujer, la mujer de mi padre, la mujer? O bien: la mujer ideal, la esencia, es decir, el modelo y la copia han trasladado una relación de correspondencia imposible y nada es pensable mientras se pretenda que uno de los términos sea una imagen del otro: que lo mismo sea lo que no es. Para que todo signifique hay que aceptar que me habita no la dualidad, sino una intensidad de simulación que constituye su propio fin, fuera de los que imita: ¿qué se simula? La simulación."

Haraway writes that "...certain dualisms have been persistent in Western traditions; they have all been systemic to the logics and practices of domination of women, people of color, nature, workers, animals – in short, domination of all constituted as others, whose task is to mirror the self." But what is engulfed in and per- petuated as others, whose task is to mirror the self? What is not? What is not a dual system of inclusion-exclusion that gender might not be understood as part of a dual system of inclusion-exclusion that generates a sexual ordering of gender?, but a plural system where grammar allows as many genders as we desire. To be one is to be many, open to be reassembled, open to resignification.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:
2. "In order to know what it simulates, it is necessary to go to that space where knowledge is not set in a binary function, nor does it arise in the interstices, magnetism or the antagonism of opposite pairs, but that the conditioned, quiet body, receives it more than it conquer, without deprecation of an exterior." Sarduy, Severo. La simulación, in Ensayos generales sobre el Barroco. Monte Avila Editores, Caracas, 1982; Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 1987. (Translation is our own)
3. "For a transvestite, dichotomy and opposition of the sexes has been abolished or reduced to ill-timed or archaeological criteria. For the transsexual, on the contrary, this opposition is not only maintained but highlighted, accepted: the subject simply takes “the cut” literally, he has jump to the other side of the fence.” Sarduy, Severo. La simulación, in Ensayos generales sobre el Barroco. Monte Avila Editores, Caracas, 1982; Pg. 93,Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 1987. (Translation is our own)
7. “I simulate? What? My mother, a woman, my father’s woman, or the woman? Or: the ideal woman, the essence, meaning that the model and the copy have set up a relationship of impossible correspondence and nothing is thinkable while it is expected that one of the terms be an image of the other: that the same be what it is not. In order for everything to signify it is necessary to accept that what inhabits me is not duality, but an intensity of simulation that constitutes its own end, outside of the ones it imitates: what is simulated? Simulation.” Sarduy, Severo. La simulación, in Ensayos generales sobre el Barroco. Monte Avila Editores, Caracas, 1982; Pg. 93,Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 1987. (Translation is our own)
BFA / technical courses

PLASTIC
Lead Teacher: Senior lecturer P O Persson
Credits: 3

Participating students: Sandri Leifsson, Rina Eide Leavasan

The course in handling plastics gives knowledge and skill to important professional and aesthetic abilities. The course is based on information about the safety regulations in the workshop. After finishing the course, you will get a "driver's licence" that permits you to work in the workshop on your own.

WELDING
Lead Teacher: Senior lecturer P O Persson
Also teaching: Robert Cassandral
Credits: 3

Participating students: Josefine Adda Dahl, Maria Bonfils, Martin Damgaard, Malin Franzén, Simon Godtfredsen, Kalle Enok Lindmark, Rina Ede Leavasan, Emil Rann Andersson, Emel Sandström

Through this course you will gain knowledge and experience of the welding techniques such as MMA and gas welding techniques. After the course you will receive a "driver's licence" that allows you to work on your own with your welding equipment.

BFA / ART COURSES

PERFORM
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CONCEPT OF PERFORMANCE AND ITS POSSIBLE CONTENT
Lead Teacher: Senior Lecturer, Maria Hedlund
Also teaching: Annika Eriksson, Sophia Lugn
Credits: 9

Participating students: Josefine Adda Dahl, Carolina Hellberg, Arvid Hägg, Emma Lindqvist

A collaboration between the Malmö Art Academy, Wanås Art Foundation and senior high schools aims at enabling dialogue and to develop shared understanding and methods of learning and thinking. The goal of this collaboration is to develop a concept of performance that is open and flexible, and which can be applied in different contexts. The course will provide students with the opportunity to explore different forms of performance and to develop their own ideas and projects.

THE TEXTURE OF LANGUAGE
Guest Teacher: Haraldar Jonsson
Credits: 6

Participating students: Andrea Albrechtsen, Uma Margret Árnadóttir, Martin Berring, Marie Bonfils, Yun Chi, Simon Godtfredsen, Arvid Hägg, Susanne Johannsson, Ida Bakke Kristiansen, Ronni Lykke Lauridsen, Sandra Mujinga, Sofia Berti Rojas, Jessica Sanderheim, Marten Tjard, Simen Godtfredsen, Arvid Hägg, Emma Lindqvist

In the workshop the students will approach language as a material in various ways, such as sculpture, and as a language, as a building, a map, a cloth or a reflection. There will be the exploration of a single word or sentence and make experiments that will be presented at the end of the workshop.

THE ART HISTORY OF MODERNISM SEEN THROUGH A PAINTER’S TEMPER
Guest Teacher: Silja Rantanen
Credits: 3

Participating students: Josefine Adda Dahl, Daniel Peder Askeland, Martin Berring, Susanne Johannson, Ronni Lykke Lauridsen, Kalle Enok Lindmark, Rina Ede Leavasan, Emelie Rann Andersson, Emel Sandstrom

The Finnish artist Silja Rantanen presents in three lectures her view of central figures within modernist painting. 9.12: Self-portraits and primitivism 17.12: Vincent van Gogh 9.13: At Casals Eriki, one of Finland’s leading contemporary painters, we present the work of each participant and discuss it in a group setting. The aim of the course is to develop a deeper understanding of intention and working methods, to find ways of creating new projects, and to expand our vocabulary when discussing our own and others artists’ work.

The course will be based on an exercise, which will be introduced on February 24th. Showing and Talking Art is limited to 12 students.

ECONOMY AND LAW
Guest Teacher: Gáza Antal
Credits: 7.5


Lectures about basic accounting and Swedish tax law for the cultural sector, with special emphasis on artists as entrepreneurs. Workshop with reading in basic accounting and income tax declaration.

Lectures in basic Swedish and international intellectual property law, with special emphasis on artists and their working situation.

MFA / ART COURSES

DESTROY, SHE SAID; INTER ARTS DIS-
CRIPTE, AND PRODUCTION
Guest Teacher: Andrea Ray
Credits: 9

Participating students: Garcia Andres, Marcia Andres, Catrin Collberg, Neja Lee Jensen, Ida Bakke Kristiansen, Henriette Elsine Lea, Alexander Luttrell, Sandra Mujinga, Maria Norrman, Helena Olsson, Jessica Sanderheim, Linda Spjut

In recent contemporary art there has been an active appropriation of theatre structures. The idea of appropriating art forms (i.e. the inclusion of video). In such cross-disciplinary cases, how does the aesthetic ethos evolve? Participants in this three-week workshop will develop their work beyond their existing practice through a challenge of a shared discussion. Assistant director will provide a foundation for discussions and inspiration for the development of new work.

A study of various works of Marguerite Duras takes on the presence of alternative, and often opposing, approaches to production within a singular oeuvre. India Song, for example, is a piece Duras adapted in different forms over time – first as a play, then a radio drama, and finally in 1975 as a film. In the film, Duras utilizes the technique of voice-off in which the characters converse do not speak, but rather their words are heard through an off-stage narrator. The actors’ movements and sounds, the narrative and mise-en-scène and diction and music. Another element Duras’s work incorporates is a type of sound text where she develops a complex orchestra within musical instruments, chants, disembodied voices, non-verbal sounds and cadence-driven dialogue. Here, sound makes meaning. The utilisation of sound can be thought of as both the backbone and the vanguard of the work, and the very different experience one has with her film versus her text and vice versa inspired this course.

How can you approach your work differently to take advantage of the different skill sets and the increased importance of sound? How can you rethink your work through the production of a radically different form? Workshop participants will be challenged to form a unique inter-art discourse where the different roles are developed. A multidisciplinary and inspirational research process will be employed in response to seminar topics, faithfulness to the original material is not required. The social conditions of performance,
MFA / CRITICAL & PEDAGOGICAL STUDIES:

LEADERS:

Lead Teacher: Professor Gertrud Sandqvist

Credits: 9

Participating students: Una Margrét Árnadóttir, Daniel Peder Askeland, Martin Berring, Kahi Bae Cheo, Johanna Fajcestad, Ingrid Furuholmen, Mari Hadji-Culea, Kim Engeling, José Tomás Giráldez, Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea, Karin Hasselberg, Tina Helen, Tobias Karlsson, Nikolaj Kilsmark, Henrietta Elsine Hoff Levinsen, Maria Normann, Jessica Sanderhoem, Emélie Sandström, Juliane Stepp

What do we mean when we talk about feminism? Is it Mary Wollstonecraft's 'manifesto' for the vindication of the Rights of Woman? Or is it Luce Irigaray’s ‘sexual economy’? Or Judith Butler’s queer theory? During this autumn, with the help of important texts on feminism from the past 200 years, we will discuss the differences between feminism both as a political project and as a biological, cultural, social, economic hub for thinking about life and society.

The reading list will consist of texts by legendary feminist thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Dora Barlow, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, Gayatri Spivak and Judith Butler. But we will also re-capitalize the interesting and often turbulent history of feminism from the French revolution onwards to its heterogeneous and potentially gender-friendly WSPW (Women’s Social and Political Union) to the Scandinavian reform builders, and their colleagues in contemporary India.

The course is concluded with a five-page essay, contemporary art practice is now so highly saturated with theoretical knowledge that it is becoming a research practice itself. Artists have not only taken up art criticism and newspaper writing, but their own research methods and scientific knowledge into their artistic process to such a degree that it even appears to be developing into an independent form of knowledge on its own.

CART: Critical \\
Art Research \\
Theoretical Knowledge \\
Concepts and Methods. Vol. 2 No. 2 (Spring 2009)

In recent years, art critical research has been the buzzword, with practice-led PhD programmes cropping up around the globe. But what does it mean to conduct an artistic research, especially in a context where a terminology around the idea in the present is an emerging field?

The aim of the series of readings is to generate a broader understanding of the term artistic research, and how the notion can take on different forms in terms of methodologies.

The sessions will last approximately two hours, and international artist have been invited to contribute to the reading sessions by selecting the texts to discuss and lead the class. You will receive the texts a week in advance. You will then have the chance to conduct an artistic research project on 4 October.

MOVING TOWARDS A NEW INSIGHT INTO PRESENT AND PAST THROUGH AN UNDERSTANDING OF WEST AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN ART:

Guest Teachers: Michelle Eistrup & Tjana Milivojevic

Credits: (The course is a part of the Critical Theory Module 21)

Participating students: Claudia di Ferrro, Kim Engeling, José Tomás Giráldez, Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea, Karin Hasselberg, Tobias Karlsson

During this course, we will look at the multiple religious manifestations and expressions within West Africa and the Caribbean to understand the co-existence of different cultural groups, to test our notions of what constitutes cultural history, and to highlight the different social and political power structures in these worlds. Hopefully, we will arrive at a comparative analysis of the transformation of French colonialism and how this has caused blue colonial forces upon the social, urban, and political landscape and environment and the health of post-colonial societies today.

The structure of the course will combine theoretical knowledge with artistic practice by building a bridge between several methods such as: studio visits, reading groups, discussion sessions, small presentations by students, case studies and documentation of the classes.

GROWING CRITICAL DiALOGUES

Guest Teacher: Marit Hest, Journal of Artistic Research

Credits: (The course is a part of the Critical Theory Module 21)

Participating students: Claudia di Ferrro, Kim Engeling, José Tomás Giráldez, Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea, Karin Hasselberg, Tina Helen, Tobias Karlsson, Nikolaj Kilsmark

The workshop uses the idea of a hosted conversation, a dialogue, as its main thematic towards understanding how the media generated social movements express the media’s voice.

The workshop involves readings, discussions, presentations and a proposal for a project. Students will create a project (dialog, web portal, performance, band etc) that specifically frames a unique topic or an art form. The sessions will occur and be discussed in relation to Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah (1985 film) and Peter Watkins’ Punishment Park (1977), to which will take place during the first part of the seminar.

Between the first and second part of the course, every student will have a presentation on 4 October. While the course is directed towards an audience, there is no requirement to have a different take on the act of telling. A seminar is directed towards an audience.

STORYTELLERS ON STORYTELLING

Guest Teacher: Jeanne JE Kim

The course is a part of the Critical Theory Module 21

Participating students: Kah Beew Cheo, Claudia di Ferrro, Kim Engeling, José Tomás Giráldez, Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea, Karin Hasselberg, Tina Helen, Tobias Karlsson, Nikolaj Kilsmark, Bjarni Thor Petursson

Storytelling – This is a noun whose implicit meaning is to tell a story, to present something to someone. It takes a narrative form in order to relay a set of sequential events within a chain of plausible transitions, drawing upon a voice that is directed towards an audience.

This is a writing seminar on storytelling with a different take on the act of telling. A seminar is usually meant to write fiction.

The POWER OF IMAGE MAKING

A TWO-PART SEMINAR ON RepRESENTATION AND image making

Lead Teacher: Maj Hasager, Critical & Pedagogical Studies Programme Leader

Credits: (The course is a part of the Critical Theory Module 21)

Participating students: Andreas Albrechtsen, Johan Martin Christensen, Claudia di Ferrro, Kim Engeling, José Tomás Giráldez, Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea, Karin Hasselberg, Tina Helen, Tobias Karlsson, Nikolaj Kilsmark

"This film is not at all representative" states Godard in a talk before the screening of his 10-hour-long film Shoot (1989). Bowling continuous images from a movie and images is it at all possible to claim that a work is not representative? And how does the artist achieve a different position himself or herself in relation to this?

In the seminar The Power of Image Making we will investigate notions of representation, narrative, the power of images perceived as reality. With the invention of photography a different way of seeing appeared, and it is from the changed perception of vision and reality that the mathematical hub for thinking about life and society.

Through reading Hannah Arendt, Susan Sontag and Bill Nichols, different perspectives and aspects on image-making and representation will occur and be discussed in relation to Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah film (1985) and Peter Watkins’ Punishment Park (1977), which will take place during the first part of the seminar.

The second part of the course will open with an exegesis of Godard’s La Haine and a reading of Lubin Saxton’s analysis of the debate between Godard and Lanzmann on representation to what can be represented. This will be followed by the students’ presentations.
COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course provides basic knowledge in silicone and one-pour castings. With the help of mould and silicone the students will produce objects/molds in wax that they will cast bronco-aluminum in.

The course will be divided into two blocks. Block 1 (duration 3 weeks) is an introduction to casting products suitable for casting in bronco-aluminum and silicone. Block 2 (duration 2 weeks): Casting (one-pour), sand form casting, grind work and patination.

LOCATION: Kväntu (located in the same building as KHM Gallery)

SCALE-MODELLING

Lead Teacher: Senior lecturer, P.O. Persson

Credits: 9

Also teaching: Robert Moreau

Lead Teacher: Senior lecturer, P.O. Persson

ALUMINIUM / SILICONE

The course will be divided into two blocks.

Block 1 (duration 3 weeks) is an introduction to casting products suitable for casting in bronco-aluminum and silicone. Block 2 (duration 2 weeks): Casting (one-pour), sand form casting, grind work and patination.

LOCATION: Kväntu (located in the same building as KHM Gallery)

BFA / ART COURSES

THE STARS DOWN TO EARTH – THE VIBE

Lead Teacher: Professor Joachim Koester

Also teaching: Lars Bang Larsen

Credits: 3

Participating students: Ana Margret Amadóttir, Andrea Furberg, Karin Hadd, Lavinia Jannesson, Kathina Skarðsá, Ronni Lykke Lauridsen, Johan Lundqwist

This course is for those who want to explore different ways to work with painting. We will meet in the teaching studio for two weeks and perform different practical tasks.

You can see the course as a possibility to put your own work aside for a while and work in a way that is different. It is here you invent and attack the famous concept of the language-game, a key concept in postmodern thinking.

With the course we will immerse both in the early and late Wittgenstein, with the emphasis on Philosophical Investigations. We will use conceptual art as the field where we can try Wittgenstein’s ideas.

The French philosopher Michael Foucault’s idea of “archaeology of knowledge” is so significant that one can almost paraphrase Victoria and Albert exist, it would be necessary to invent it.

Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine his thinking. Third, his method concerns us through close readings of his texts.

We will try to understand his interpretation of insanity as a scene for normality through reading the History of Madness, his ideas concerning the relation of the body and psyche and the Body and the soul. Foucault reads and we are entering a global “convergence culture,” in which we are all involved.

Three courses give you the knowledge of the model as a means for artistic creation and for staging three-dimensional situations in your own artistic practices, as well as a sketching method for large-scale works.

TEACHING METHODS

The course is divided into two parts. During the first week, which comprises individual and group working sessions, we focus on materials, techniques and methods, and the production of small-scale models, not least exhibition spaces. During the second two weeks, we focus on the possibilities the model offers as a sketch and an independent artwork.

Course components

Presentation of materials and tools
- Exercises with different materials
- Survey of models in art, architecture, film etc
- Scaling of existing spaces for models and full-scale models
- Models as sketches for works of art
- Models as works of art

PAINTING COURSE

Lead Teacher: Junior lecturer, Viktor Kopp

Credits: 6

Participating students: Andreas Albrecht, Joakim Dick Hedlund, Lavinia Jannesson, Tiril Hasselknippe, Levi Mandel, Maria Norrman, Emelie Sandström, Jenny Åkerlund

This course is for those who want to explore different ways to work with painting. We will meet in the teaching studio for two weeks and perform different practical tasks.

You can see the course as a possibility to put your own work aside for a while and work in a way that is different. It is here you invent and attack the famous concept of the language-game, a key concept in postmodern thinking.

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CULTURAL TRANSLATION IN THE AGE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

London seminar: London – post-imperial capital of the 21st century?

Adrian Lahoud devoted his talk on Walter Benjamin’s ‘Paris—capital of the 19th century’

Teaching: Dr. Sarat Maharaj

Credits: 3

Participating students: Claudia del Fierro, Seher bir Demir, Stephen Dupont, Marta Miresa Girado, Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea, Karin Hasseberg, Tina Helen, Tobias Karlsson, Nikolaj Klimkam

FORMAT

This seminar brings together both the theoretical-discursive and experiential dimensions of the course. The London component puts the emphasis on the latter.

The workshop centre on processes of translation:

• The atelier of practices and colonial and post-colonial spaces, monuments, buildings and collections and curatorial projects in the capital centre of Empire — London, in particular

Blagoev and envisions.

• Biographies of everyday life, cultural diversity and translation

The aim is to draft and develop a post-colonial and through translation.

The seminar took place in London in January 2015 led by Dr. Sarat Maharaj. The London seminar is a component part of the larger area of study called Cultural Translation in the Age of the Global Assembly Line.

The seminar elaborates and builds on the discussions of earlier sessions held in September 2014 seminar in Malmö with other material, which was circulated to the group in the September seminar — with the addition of books and works cited during the September 2011 sessions — will remain our focal reference points.

The London sessions aim to complement and relate this study of translation and to develop a critical understanding of Bloomong of cultural and postcolonial and contemporary life and in the process of translation.

The aim is to elaborate a new mapping of these processes and attendant cultural translations and transnationalist work. Is this a visible and made known in a specific way — London? Visual and iconic images of this.

As part of work, labour and knowledge, how is it translated? — through and beyond the postcolonial perspectives — has to be taken on board a mapping of this new reality. London, post-imperial capital of the 21st century (and Benjamin’s Paris, capital of the nineteenth century) at this stage, students should have collated and extended references in an active prepara- tion of the reading list, each student relating the material to their own particular interests and practices.

The London seminar will look into re- balancing, and beyond postcolonialism including individual city explorations and exca- vations of historical places, galleries, collections and through other appointments, as individuals in the group axe fit for shaping and advancing their own studies.

Visits to the Enlightenment Room at the British Museum, a walk through Bloomsbury meeting the artist Zaira Brijm and the curator of her show at the Whitechapel Gallery to explore the press and icons of categorising arts and work as postcolonial.

An important consideration is the question of the formats of the above studies and sessions could be re-factored and reflected in following forms:

• A construction of keywords.

A new dictionary in the Eagleton Reader. Black-

• B. and Visual Map — Bloomon, Lon-

d through Copenhagen and Malmö to Lund.

Course Material:


8. Morin. Simplex Complexes in Educa-


10. B. Spiek. Death of a Disciple. Columbus 2003


15. M. Foucault. Structuralism & Poststructu-


17. P. Klint who worked hidden from any public ap-


20. J. Sartre. The Post-1914 generation of artists allowing themselves to be influenced by the West and the worldwide globalised commodity market.

21. How do we work? Guest Teachers: Learning Sites (Rike Luther and Cecilia Wendt) Credits: 4,5

Participating students: Claudia del Fierro, Stephen Dupont, Kim Engeling, Jose Tomas Girado, Ana Maria Hadji-Culea, Karin Hasseberg, Tina Helen, Tobias Karlsson, Nikolaj Klimkam

A theoretical seminar will be developed during its constant in between the course leader and the participants.

Throughout four days, ten artists (or art re-
lated personalities) will work together thinking in and beyond art in text and image.

Is there art beyond exhibition schedules, press releases, e-flux announcements, printers’ deadlines for invitations and other exhibition announcements? Can any new fields be con-
gained, invented, other visions in different fields be created, beyond the usual promises and how is it manifested in their thinking and re-

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A seminar will deal with the problem of translation — a process unconnected to one’s own past and their way of working against the grain. Florida sense will take place, understanding all systems as invented by us and consti-

These questions will shape the seminar. Texts will be read and discussed, films will be watched. A challenge is to work on our own doing.

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The course "Art Always Has Its Consequences" takes its title from conceptual text by the Croatian artist Mladen Stilinović and focuses on the relationship between the arts and reality, but also to the equal importance of internal, intrinsically artistic processes through which art - in a repetitive fashion - is understood as the "field of art." The course reflects on contemporary artistic practices, as well as the role of curating, both in terms of art's involvement in society. The seminar will additionally question the currency of failure and how it is ushered in. In the realm of art, though, success is never eradicated, and failure once again is ushered in. In the realm of art, though, failure has a different currency. Failure, by definition, takes us beyond assumptions and the notions we know. Artists have long turned their attention to the unrealisability of the quest for perfection, or the open-endedness of experiment, using both destabilisation and error as means to rethink how we understand our place in the world. This course addresses how 'the currency of failure' might be understood.

NORDIC SOUND ART

Nordic Sound Art, Joint Study Programme (MFA level) is a Nordic collaboration established within the KUNO network. The study programme is a collaboration between the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Malmö Art Academy, Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Bergen National Academy of Fine Art and Trondheim Academy of Fine Art. The ambition is to create a study programme that will provide the student with the necessary knowledge and professional competence to create and analyse sound art. It is an aim of the programme to enable the student critically and independently to make use of the sonic dimension in the visual arts. The study programme is a two-year programme. It is arranged as a series of intensive courses or workshops. A course module of the programme will typically last 1.2 weeks. The individual course module will take place in one of the four participating art academies (one course will be located in Copenhagen, another in Bergen etc.) The student will stay at that art academy during the time of the course. There are three course modules per semester.

The Nordic Sound Art, Joint Study Programme is now in its second phase. The current group of students started in October 2010. There are 10 students associated with the programme from five different Nordic Art academies.

Nov. 2011: Theory & Graphic Scores Workshop, Teachers: Stefan Klevadet, Matthias Kristersson, Jonas Olesen, Malmö Art Academy, Sweden
Dec. 2011: Installation, site specificity, gardens and expanded landscape Workshop, Teachers: Trine Friis Sørensen, Aleksandra Salawa, Aaron Bergman, Rebecca Mazzu, Joel Peterson
March 2012: Sound Art in Public Space Workshop, Teachers: Ivar Smidstad, Carsten Seiffarth, Eric Sambolec. Bergen Academy of Fine Arts, Norway
April 2012: Soundings 2 - Nordic Sound Art Graduate exhibition, examinators/consultants: Christina Kubisch, Jonas Olesen, Carsten Seiffarth. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Roskilde Denmark

NORSE Pedagogy

This is an intensive 3½ session reading seminar. The syllabus is suggested by the instructor taking into account the specific reading requests from the facilitators of the Critical and Pedagogical Studies programme, to familiarise the participants with the works of Paulo Frare, Henry Giroux, and bell hooks. In tandem with the readings and discussions, the seminar consists of collaborative in-class workshops and a writing component. These exercises are suggested to act as catalysts for articulation of the reflexion towards the development of knowledge and skills that can contribute to the participant's engagement with pedagogy and pedagogical practices.

Participants are expected to understand, discuss, and practice the following:
- Pedagogical dimensions: Focus on Freirean pedagogy (dialogic method, conscientisation, discourse of invention and construction) and the ensuing development of critical pedagogy, with specific methodologies and agendas found in the works of Giroux and hooks.
- Analysis of teaching and pedagogical practices within the arts and what are possible strategies that allow for Conceptually sound, ethically responsible, and culturally responsive sites of learning.

MABEST PROGRAMME: CRITICAL & PEDAGOGICAL STUDIES (MFA) 2 years. 120 points

Critical and Pedagogical Studies is an international programme that leads to a Master's degree in Fine Arts and it works across borders between art theory, practice, and pedagogy. Eight students will be accepted into the programme every other academic year— all artists with a bachelor's degree in Fine Art or a similar art education. The programme aims to encourage thinking within the artistic field beyond the limitations of the definition, theory, and production of art. We want to encourage initiative and experimentation, especially in the fields of art production, education, writing, and theory. The teaching is largely based around seminars and workshops, which are led by visiting lecturers, the professors at Malmö Art Academy and the programme leader of Critical & Pedagogical Studies. There is a focus on the student's own projects through group critiques and individual tutorials. The theory is seen as practice and practice theorised. Keywords are critical thinking, questions of artistic production, education and pedagogical strategies combined with an openness to learn and experiment.

NORSE Pedagogy

Reading Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, & bell hooks

Guest Teacher: Jeuno J.E. Kim Credits: 3


Uncertainty and instability characterise these times. Nonetheless, success and progress are as a condition to strive for, even though there is little truth in either. All individuals and societies know failure better than they might care to admit. Failed romances, failed careers, failed politics, failed humanity, failed failures. Even if one sets out to fail, the possibility of success is never eradicated, and failure once again is ushered in. In the realm of art, though, failure has a different currency. Failure, by definition, takes us beyond assumptions and what we think we know. Artists have long turned their attention to the unrealisability of the quest for perfection, or the open-endedness of experience, using both destabilisation and error as means to rethink how we understand our place in the world. This course addresses how 'the currency of failure' might be understood.

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Course description

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MALMÖ ART ACADEMY
2011–2012

MFA3
Kah Bae Cheow
Bror Sander Berg Sterseth
Zardashia Faraj
Malin Franzén
Johanna Fjæstad
Nina Jensen
Max Ockborn
Anika Schwarzlose
Danilo Stankovic
Kianosh Vahabi
Kirsti Wiikmans (exchange student)
Jenny Åkarkund

MFA2 Sound Art
Martinka Bobrikova
Oscar de Carmen

MFA1
Andreas Albrechtsen
Una Margrit Årnadottir
Daniel Pedler Askeland
Martin Berling
Johan Eldrot
Ingrid Furie
Tove Hasselknippe
Martine Sepstrup Jensen
Sindri Laidsson
David Nilson
Maria Norman
Jessica Sanderheim
Linda Sjöström
Julia Stepp
BJorn Thør Petursson
Sebastian Wahlforss

Critical & Pedagogical Studies MFA1
Claudia del Fierro
Stephan Dupont
Kim Engelen
José Tomás Giraldo
Ana-Maria Hadji-Cufea
Karin Hasselberg
Tina Helen
Tobias Karlsson
Nicolaj Klismark

BFA3
Ellinor Aurora Aasgaard
Johan Martin Christiansen
Yun Choi (exchange student)
Marten Damgaard
Cathrine Hallberg
Henrietta Elise Hoff Levinson
Arvid Hägg
Susanne Johansson

Helena Olsson
Michael Rojd
Emil Rønn Andersen
Ihra Lili Schamih
Marianne Storup Jakobsen
Jesper Vellev
Madeleine Åstrand

BFA3
Josefina Adda Dahl
Sofia Berti Rojas
Marie Bonfils
Simon Godtfredsen
Karin Hald
Ida Bakkå Kristiansen
Emma-Christina Landqvist
Ronni Lykke Lauridsen
Kaffe Erick Lindmark
Rina Eide Levaasen
Sandra Muñjiga
Emelie Sandström
Kathrina Skeaehä
Maria Uvelov

BFA1
Markus Bräken
Angelica Falkeing
Andrea Furbreg
Karin Andrea Furuseth
Joakim Dick Hedlund
Lavinia Jannesson
Tina Kryhllmann
Johan Lundgren
Marie Raffin
Daniel Spies
Mina Vetens

Ph.D Candidates
Julie Ault
Matthew Buckingham
Matz Eriksson
Frans Jacobö
Simon Sheikh
Apolonija Stebarič

Julie Ault
Matthew Buckingham
Matz Eriksson
Frans Jacobö
Simon Sheikh
Apolonija Stebarič

www.khm.lu.se

Johan Eldrot
Tales Of What-if
And Might-be
Backpack and camouflage net
Course description
Namn / Bachelor of Fine Arts