FOREWORD

Gertrud Sandqvist

Dear Reader,

This Malmö Art Academy Yearbook that you are holding in your hands is the seventeenth one we’ve published. The first one was just a thin little catalogue, with little else in it besides images. As our ambitions have grown, and new programs have been added, the catalogue has become a massive publication of 400 pages. Naturally, its most important contents are the presentations of our Master and Bachelor students’ graduation projects and texts, and the presentations of our doctorate students. Also, this yearbook is the first in which we are able to present texts and projects produced by the first batch of graduates from our new Master programme in Critical and Pedagogical Studies (CPS), which is run by Maj Hasager. The quality of their texts and projects is exciting and refreshing to see, and they are actually producing new knowledge within a domain that has not been the object of much study in the past; the methods of artists who teach future artists. In experiments, as well as in more considered expressions, the CPS students offer us some rather unexpected answers.

On the 5th of December 2012, Frans Jacobs defended his doctoral thesis Aesthetics of Resistance. Perhaps the most interesting part was the way he investigated the nature and potential of the aesthetics of resistance in a long series of performances. His exhibition at IAC, where he showed documentation from all of the performances and performed the final one in the series, made a great impression on all of the participants.

Frans Jacobs is the sixth doctor of Fine Arts to graduate from Malmö Art Academy. Apolonija Šušteršič is scheduled to defend her thesis during the autumn of 2013. New doctorate students are artists Rosa Barba and Andrea Ray, as well as artist and curator Marion von Osten. Great thanks go to Professor Sarat Maharaj, and to the excellent opponents and grading committee: Dr Sheryl Doraff of the University of Amsterdam, Dr Dominic Johnson, Queen Mary, University of London, Dr Bryndis Snæbjörnsdottríz, University of Gothenburg, and Dr Matts Leiderstam, Lund University.

When the Art Academy awards its degrees, we want every step along the way to make sense, and represent real knowledge to be acquired by the students, that will serve them well in their artistic production. At the Bachelors level, this means that students are required to formulate their own artistic position within a group exhibition, and write an essay to express where they come from as artists, as well as the art field into which they would place their own art. At the Masters level, the requirement is to present a solo exhibition, as well as to be able to offer deeper reflections on one’s own artistic process. The essay form is especially important to us, as we believe it to be closer to the way an artist writes than the form of an academic paper. This yearbook also offers samples of the inventive and imaginative expressiveness of our Bachelor and Master students, both visually and in writing. I’d like to extend great thanks to our external examiners, museum directors John Peter Nilsson and Lisa Le Feuvre, and for CPS, Dr Katrine Hjelde, University of Arts London and curator Reem Fadda. Thank you to all the teachers and mentors that supervised the Bachelor and Master students: Margot Edström, Maria Hedlund, Olav Christopher Jensen, Joachim Koester, Viktor Kopp, Matts Leiderstam, Nathalie Melikian, João Penalva, Per Olof Persson, Nina Roos, and Haegue Yang. Thank you also to the mentors of the CPS students: Dr Ann-Mari Edström, professors Sarat Maharaj and Matts Leiderstam, Jürgen Bock, Jeremiah Day, and João Penalva.

Another important function of this yearbook is as an account of what we have been doing for the last year. As our curriculum changes each year, the documentation given in the yearbook is our best opportunity to inform people about...
our programs. The reason for this is that we want to give our teachers the same opportunities our students have – the freedom to give workshops and seminars that they find interesting, and that reflect their own artistic position. Whatever cost this might carry in terms of lost predictability is more than made up for by the flexibility it allows.

During the summer of 2012, eight students were given the opportunity to work as assistants of two artists who were showing at dOCUMENTA 13 – Michael Portnoy and Tue Greenfort. They made the 100 days we spent at dOCUMENTA a rich and unforgettable experience. Thank you!

And finally, of course, great thanks to our small, but excellent, administrative team, which is supervised by director Silvana Hed. You make this school what it is.

Gertrud Sandqvist
Principal and professor at Malmö Art Academy
It is said that you should choose your battles carefully, in life generally, but especially when you roll up your sleeves as a visual artist. Many hours, if not months, in the studio are spent trying to draw water out of the air. This is of course meant as an allegory for the creative process – from the sweet itch of intuition to the final result left behind, whether it is in the form of an exhibition product or the documentation of an action. Then when you have finally succeeded in constituting a work formula, or an agreed-upon system that makes it possible to draw water from the atmosphere in the studio, it is wise to remind yourself to choose your battles before throwing yourself headlong into the open sea of possibilities, only by doing so to risk death by drowning in the murky depths of fleeting ideas. Learn to swim before diving – or you will sink. I can of course only speak from my own work experience and try to outline a linguistic image from this.

Choosing your battles carefully is a preconceived expression that implies that when you face a certain problem you should be able to draw on your experience with comparable problems, so that by doing so you can make the right decision and head in the right direction toward something. I always envisage the work before I begin to realise it. However, this does not mean that I can predict the results. When we see something in our mind’s eye it will always be an image that is composed of both the memory and the idea – that is, the idea of how a certain memory happened in reality. But images never tell the whole truth, because they are, by the nature of things, frozen – or as Roland Barthes stated regarding human memory through photography.

"Not only is the Photograph never, in essence a memory. But it actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory [...] The photograph is violent: not because it shows violent things, but because on each occasion it fills the sight by force, and because in it nothing can be refused or transformed." 1

In other words, photography always limits the memory of the viewer to a single picture frozen in time and place. Human memory, on the other hand, is constantly in motion; it expands and weakens throughout life. Thus there is always a risk that the memory is being manipulated by the idea when a memory becomes a picture both as a visual recollection and as a photograph. According to the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, this problematic relationship between memory and idea is as old as Western philosophy. It originates in Plato’s thematics concerning the icon, and speaks of the present representation of an absent thing. It is a discussion that problematises the memory within the idea. 2

In the introductory presentation of his Seminar XI about the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis, Jacques Lacan reflects on ‘praxis’ as a concept, and how it is the most comprehensive term denoting any human-engineered action that is capable of processing the real by the symbolic. 3 This definition of the term instinctively leads my thoughts to artistic praxis as an image-creating...
activity. Artistic praxis deals with, if anything, the real, i.e., that which does not allow itself to be materialised through language, according to Lacan – the unspoken. It is processing as a result of symbols taken from reality. The predominant presence of images in the world is an obvious illustration of what Lacan means when he says that our reality consists of symbols, that reality is something we understand by means of the symbolic order. Images, or rather photographs, are statements consisting of decodable signs – we are constantly reflected in the images with which we surround ourselves, and from there we also create the image of ourselves that we want other people to see. The problem is just that we can never attain full control of our self-image since it is a composite mass – a decoupage made from picture fragments that have appealed to us at different times throughout life, and that we have selected and imitated in an attempt to turn them into a part of ourselves. We are a product of our individual heritages and shared environments, but we are also a product of our fantasies; the people we want or wanted to become. This unavoidable fate through their reproductions. …

According to Barthes one only has to go back to the example of this Bergsonian problematic to get to the root of the problem when dealing with the semiology of images: “According to an ancient etymology, the word image should be linked to the Latin idea, and it is by dwelling on the word itself that Barthes poses the question, ‘Can analogical representation (the "copy") produce true systems of signs and not merely surrogate symbols? In this context, one can imagine any document whatsoever going through a copying machine, only thereafter to have its copy copied sufficiently many times so that the once readable image becomes meaningless. This is the story of the feather that, by turning into five hens at the same time lost itself – the original story of the feather was lost in the retelling.

Already in the interwar period in Germany, Siegfried Kracauer criticised the arising significance of photography in the media industry of the time. He described the instantaneous appetite for images of the illustrated weeklies. Kracauer’s aversion to mass media was based on the following argument: that it would destroy the human cognitive mnemonic process. Kracauer expressed it as a “flood of photographs swamping away the dam of memory”.

“the assualt of this mass of images is so powerful, that it threatens to destroy the potentially existing awareness of crucial traits. Artworks suffer this fate through their reproductions. […]

In the illustrated magazines, people see the very world that the illustrated magazines prevent them from perceiving. … Never before has a period known so little about itself.”

That the mass media, by virtue of images, portray a world that the viewer/consumer is at the same time cut off from, and that the memory of reality is overwhelmed by the desire for the image - the origin of the photographic picture versus the enigmatic existence of the image itself; the desire for an absent thing via the present representation. On the basis of Kracauer’s interpretation of the problematic of the photograph versus the memory, one can draw a subsequent parallel to Barthes and his thesis about the photograph always being an ‘anti-memory’, in that the photograph deprives the memory through the limitations of its physical frame. Walter Benjamin insisted that ‘history decomposes into images, not into narratives’; with this contention Benjamin ostensibly argued that the more traditional forms of communication no longer were sufficient for expressing the modern experience. Benjamin’s dramatic statement describes a poetic but bleak picture of our common past as though it consisted of quaking cards, ruins built from postcards and photographic snapshots that at every moment risk collapsing under their own weight into an eternal stream of images. Barthes later observed that one could not simply speak about Western consumer society in 1964 as a civilisation of mass production, and more traditional forms of communication no longer were sufficient for expressing the modern experience.

But it is most importantly a space that maintains and imitates, their thoughts, memories, and desires. But it is most importantly a space that maintains your long-term memory, because we are unable to remember everything we know, or to put it as a Socratic question “Can a man who has learned something not know it when he is remembering it?” The explanation for not being aware of our own complete knowledge lies partly in our eyes. We use our eyes to look up the right search term.

The ideal function of the Internet is to support our collective memory, to be a space into which people can project, unadorned, their thoughts, memories, and desires. It is most importantly a space that maintains your long-term memory, because we are unable to remember everything we know, or to put it as a Socratic question “Can a man who has learned something not know it when he is remembering it?” The explanation for not being aware of our own complete knowledge lies partly in our eyes.
words, we know more than we realise. This preconceived knowledge can be compared to Bergson’s description of ‘pure memory’, which is a non-visual memory that exists before the memory-images. Bergson described this pure memory as an intuitive sense of our memories – an imageless memory shrouded in mist. When we try to remember something specific we travel, according to Bergson, via this mist of memory back in time in order to there await a memory-image. Today we use the Internet to travel in time and to find the memory-images for us.

I search the Internet, but in order to search I have to have, in advance, a feeling for what I am looking for – a criterion. For this reason, a search for the totally unknown is, paradoxically enough, out of the question because there are always prerequisites for the search. I can only associate my way to things I did not immediately believe were related.

To seek and to find are two sides of the same coin, but nevertheless constitute two different domains. If one looks up these two concepts in a dictionary, one will find the following definitions: To seek: An attempt, or the wish, to possess or achieve something one in advance knows, or suspects, must exist. To find: Discovering or noticing, by accident or unexpectedly.27

I regularly use search engines on the Internet to find images that subsequently will function as models for my drawings. Herein arises an interesting paradox: If someone asks me which specific kinds of images I generally look for or that I am generally interested in, it would be difficult for me to give a general answer to this. I can in this context only ask myself the question, ‘How self-reflexive do you have the opportunity to be in a virtual world where search engines have in advance analysed your interests and continuously adapt the search results for you?’

‘Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present, controls the past.’28

‘Don’t be evil.’29

In my work I am constantly searching in the hope of returning to my studio with a souvenir or two. My souvenir collection consists entirely of photographic images and is in itself a rather worthless treasure, because these images only exist as digitalised reproductions of original photographs. My collection is stored as an unnamed archive on my computer, and the major part of the contents consist of screenshots taken of virtual images that were found on the Internet. The rest are scans of selected pictorial material taken from catalogues, postcards, and such things. I call my finds ‘souvenirs’ because the French/Latin origin of the word corresponds well to the way in which I use photography in my work: Souvenir – ‘from French […] derived from se souvenir ‘remem- ber’, from Latin subvenire ‘come to someone’s rescue’’.29 The main purpose of the souvenir is to come to the rescue of one’s memory; to remind the owner of the time at which it was acquired, and thus trigger sentimental values. Or, it can stimulate one’s imagination about the origin or earlier ownership of the souvenir in an observer finding it for the first time. The idea of the souvenir as a distorted, maybe even anti-decorative object is widespread; in the West one might speak of a ‘souvenirisation’ of the past, about the imprinting of nostalgia as a part of a commercial and marketing strategy that tricks consumers into missing what they

Andreas Albrectsen
Studio, Stereo (1-4)
Complexions, Intervention
Installation view

investor.google.com/corporate/code-of-con-
duct.html
In my case it has to do with the photographic souvenir, and what repeatedly speaks me is the autonomy of the image – the independence of the subject matter, in spite of the impact of time and of the earlier ownership of the image, or of its original context.

The Belgian painter Michael Borremans never portrays the individual in his figurative works; instead he works with archetypes, the universal human image. A major part of Borremans' painterly repertoire takes as its point of departure pictorial material that originates in, or is in a dialogue with, the mid-twentieth century.27 This was a particular point of intersection in history, characterised by the decline of idealism, by collective self-awareness, and by the emergence of a new political world order – a forward-looking but traumatised world, that, through the materialist renaissance following the war, once again lapsed into new dystopias. Our contemporaries are still reasoning in this world order, even though the economic power structures that have existed since that time are now in a state of disintegration. As an artist it is interesting to return to these pictorial relics that still rest in our collective consciousness, these images that express a longing for simpler times – a lost age. But these are ambivalent images that in the same context can be associated with a feeling of horror and melancholy. Time has in these images always left its conspicuous patina in the form of scratches, exposure to sunlight, etc. Thus the images acquire a certain ghastly aspect; they turn into a single statement in two layers. The first layer is the subject matter, the idealised picture of the past that the observer looks for. The second layer is the layer of time, that with its cuts and scratches undermines the first layer by making the observer aware of the transitoriness of the image. In other words, the second layer of time makes the meaning of the picture a disintegrated one.28 The physical presence of time that patinates pictures becomes meaningful in that it makes the photograph visible29 – it is not the subject matter that becomes visible but rather its surface. In this way, the photograph becomes self-reflective, in that one is made aware of the mortality of the people depicted in spite of their immortalisation through the photo. However, undated pictures still have a certain function, they can, like modern ruins, be a reminder of what the future, when our present becomes history.

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“...what is at stake is not conservation of the past but the fulfillment of past hopes.” 18

As a part of my image-searching activity and as an important consideration in connection with my drawings, it is noteworthy that the photographic souvenirs I use in my work are not pictures I have brought home – they are pictures I have downloaded. I work on the basis of existing analogical photos, but they are photos that by having been put on the Internet have lost their physical form, they have been dissolved through a documentation process. Once these pictures have been put on the Internet in low image resolution, which means that it is impossible to zoom in completely, or enlarge the picture properly. I can therefore not go exploring the details, and for that reason it is a matter of very small images that end up as the originals for my drawings. I often try to enlarge the pictures by stretching them on my computer, but only in as far as this degrades the image to a point where it is no longer possible to decipher the original document.30

In other words, we can probably only fully understand the meaning of something that we see.31

“...the photograph is always invisible, it is not that it see‘.” 32


30. Ibid.

25. Bergson's understanding of the present and past and present are inseparable because the basic essence of time; I select some of them and take them out anew. This interaction between the image and the memory membranes of the photograph; here I most often leave the small subjects behind before I collect them.31

Bergson himself says that in his view the photograph was an important document to the future about the two of them.32

“...Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future …”33

Unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory.34

I draw; it is my way of mediating on the images I find. Through the drawing I establish a personal rhythm to the way I relate to a material that otherwise lies ahead of my own existence. Like a tourist in time I travel around on the superficial horizon of time – in that the basic essence of the photograph is to relate to the past. My works are very much meticulously drawn; many working hours are spent reconstructing the ideal of the moment that was mechanically captured only to immediately slip past the camera’s lens again. It is my feeling that this integrated complex of time that is present in all my works can be brought out in relief on the basis of Henri Bergson’s understanding of the present and “being in time.”35

According to Bergson, the human ability to self-reflect, e.g., ‘to see oneself seeing’ is a testimony to the future living in time, since it is the result of the fundamental doubling of time: perception on the one side and memory on the other.36 Past and present are inseparable because the present is in a state of constant flux, and for that reason it is impossible to focus on. ‘... the past coexists with the present; every single moment we experience is doubled in two directions: one running forward, because it is a view to the future that one speaks, thinks, and acts, and one facing backwards. This can also be described as memory, since we remember all the time.’37

In principle all photos belong to an unrelated world, I select some of them and take them out of circulation. Through drawing I embark on a re-exploration of the found pictures; that gives me an opportunity to liberate an undelivered potential I sense resides in them. This potential is allowed to appear when I rearrange them on the paper; I try to avoid the formal effects of photographic composition in the new picture and focus on the parts of the original.38

Colleagues and friends have been an important consideration in connection with my drawings. They have always been a source of inspiration for the drawings, and have helped me to see what it is that I wish to convey through them. A drawing has become a kind of ‘projection screen’ for the people who have participated in the drawing process. It is an opportunity to express what is important to me about a particular situation, and to communicate this to others.

The effort of drawing – the meticulous translation of a photograph down to the minutest detail and further, to the point where the details begin to split up into individual grains of pigment – leaves me in a kind of automatic pilot mode. It is an endless trance in which my own and the work’s time/space ceases to exist, where the elements I am dealing with are all becoming opaque, obscure. In this way the drawing condenses the original source material, and through the drawing the act of drawing the picture is slowly redeveloped into a parallel world of representation that balances between fiction and reality.


31. Ibid.

29. http://rougeeforumblogspot.dk/2009/10/hauntology-past-inside-present.html...
An important observation I have made in relation to my finished works is that they in their entirety cannot be experienced through the photograph – the distance is quite simply too great, the small detailed drawings vanish in the oversized empty space of the surrounding paper. Every time I am about to document a finished work I find myself in the same situation: I have to decide whether I can settle for simply photographing the work in its entirety from a distance, or whether it is necessary to supplement it with a close-up so that one is at all able to distinguish the subject and the manual work that is behind it.

My drawings are, in other words, rather unphotogenic – they demand an intimate reading, a nearness that can only occur in a private sphere between the work and the viewer. Thus my drawings relate both to a presence and a distance, because from a distance one will most often notice the paper before the subject. The paper functions both as the foundation and the passepartout for the work – the paper presents the work, but something is ‘off’. This dual role at the same time introduces a double distance to the surroundings in which the work finds itself. The drawing is in its own framed sphere, flanked on all sides by the all but monumental negative space of the paper. In this way the work repeats the contemplative setting of the exhibition space and thus this double neutrality demands a one-on-one experience between the work and the viewer. The work demands a slow reading; this is the result of the slow creation. The size of the drawings look infinitesimally small in the space – they create a physical as well as an illusory distance, but this distance simultaneously gives the viewer the option of coming up close and exploring his or her own relationship to it.

This tug-of-war between intimacy and distance, presence and absence, which is an inescapable part of the whole of the works, can within Gestalt psychology be explained by the fact that we all have an innate ability to organise into foreground/background; however, not everyone organises his or her sensory influences in the same way. We can experience the same thing/work and agree on its general physical characteristics – but we will each experience it differently, depending on the psychological baggage we drag around. The photographs I use in my work have in common the fact that they can be read as being pictorial fragments from a common past, but by documenting them I establish a personal and acknowledged relationship with them. In this way the understanding of foreground/background is complicated because I as the author behind the work overshadow the original picture – in the most literal sense, because I have drawn on top of something underneath. Left behind is the statement of an unpredictable past, because it is in the end created subjectively through shifting forms of representation, first as a photograph, then through cataloguing, only to end up as a drawing.

“I thought of it as putting the images that I found in books and magazines back in the real world – in real time. Because when you look at the work you confront it here and now.” 32

With this reflection, Vija Celmins relates herself to the creation of her works; how she, through drawings and graphic prints, transforms a found and ‘flat’ pictorial material into something tangible – a physical work of art. Celmins observes that whereas a photograph consists only of a flat piece of exposed paper, whose depth can only exist by way of an optical illusion, the drawing on the other hand has a plasticity by virtue of its own material – graphite especially is accentuated in order to open up a world of metallic grey nuances, which, according to Celmins, has a stronger relationship to grisaille than to black-and-white photography. Thus her pictorial material recovers a materiality that the viewer not only feels that he or she sees, but that is purely physically in the same room. 33

There is an important part of my work that I feel I must put into words – namely, how my source material changes its character during the manual transition from photo to drawing. When I meditate over found photographs it should not be understood as an immersion in the history of the photograph – I concentrate exclusively on establishing my own understanding of the...
Andreas Albrectsen

**Bell-Mouth Spillway / Punch Hole Cloud**
2012
Coloured pencil, graphite dust on paper
56 × 76 cm

**Intervolution**
2015
Graphite, coloured pencil on paper
114,5 × 83 cm
subject in such a way that I, via the drawing, can emphasise some of the subject’s characteristics instead of others. In this way I add a human gaze to the photograph — or a paintier gaze that is free from the democratic documentation of the camera. In other words, I manipulate my material, and make use of various ‘devices’ to unfold the undeclared potential I see in the pictures.

Photoshop is a tool with which I can change significantly the statement of a picture. It is a powerful tool, but always try to work as subtly as possible in my interference, even if in reality I am not subtle. In the Silent Icons series, which belongs to my earlier works, I took as my point of departure mainstream art photography, which by its massive exposure and reproduction over the years had gone on to become common property. Here I was interested in removing by touching up central elements in the foreground, and leaving a ‘charged’ empty space, an iconic celebrity background without key figures. It was a series that to a great extent set the stage for the viewer’s own memory of the pictures — or the lack thereof.

A central theme in my work remains the corruption of images by memory and vice versa, where drawing as the most subjective medium still is capable of speaking with two tongues — the of truth and that of fiction. In more recent works I have moved across a pictorial world that seems more anonymous, or at any rate one with anonymous senders. I primarily use Photoshop for cropping, or changing the lighting conditions in the images. Thus I nearly always draw from a digital sketch. With the transformations that my images undergo, my strategic access to their placement on the paper, it is reasonable to think of my works not only as drawings, but as drawn collages — especially my latest works where I work with several pictures at the same time in a comparative situation. However, I have never exactly considered myself a collage artist, since I never work directly with my found material, but always implicitly through the drawing. Nevertheless, I operate within the domain of the collage when I create a new space for my pictures on paper, even if the space appears empty. This is still a matter of a staging of pictorial fragments.

In the oeuvre of John Stezaker, on the other hand, the physical pictorial finds are the medium with which he works. As a collage artist, Stezaker likes to assemble images in pairs in order to, in this way, create a ‘third image’. And in itself, the act of removing images physically from anonymous circulation and allowing them to come into their own as art is a device he has perfected over time and made into his trademark. It is said about Stezaker that he appropriates images — he himself prefers to call it stealing and vandalising them. The legal perspective concerning copyright Stezaker chooses to ignore; for him the forgotten images he collects are ‘orphans’, exempted from service. From this perspective one can discuss the ownership of the pictures being used.

I was walking by the sea yesterday thinking of all those things some of us think of and then I started to think of all of those that have been walking by the sea, thinking of all those things some of us think of and that they would also start to think of all of those that have been walking by the sea and so on and so on.

What is the reason for the existence of a giraffe?

The title of my MFA show, Giraffe, comes from the title of the first work the viewer is confronted with when walking into the space. The sculpture is standing there alone in a corner, completely naked and looking a bit insecure and unsure of how to be. At first grasp it might look like a cheaply built four-legged table missing a top surface, but the title says otherwise. It had been standing like this in my studio for a while before I realised it was probably ready to stand on its own, and surprisingly it was. Just like when one watches a video of an actual giraffe giving birth and the mother starts, as soon as the little one is out of her, to push it up on its own feet. One is always amazed when those tiny little legs actually manage to stand. Like the young giraffe, the work seems to be a bit unsure of why and what it is but at the same time it seems to be exactly what it should be. It does not need a head or a neck. One might even say that the title is its missing body parts.

The second work the viewer is confronted by in my exhibition is Flight Lesson (2013). The work was installed in a small room and when entering the room you would see a video loop projected on the wall, where my hands (and sometimes the top of my head) could be seen holding two store-bought porcelain birds, waving them in the air as if they were flying. In front of the video there is a porcelain bird, sitting on a pedestal, who seems to be watching the video. The radiator in the room is painted light blue, perhaps referencing the sky and the outdoors. The video can be seen as some kind of nostalgic memory of the bird’s ‘better times’. Or as if I’m trying to give the bird life, like I am saying: ‘This is how you do it, you should fly around like this’. Which makes no sense. For me to teach it to fly. Since I am not a bird and the porcelain statue is kind of just our idea of a bird. A predecessor to this work is a piece from 2012, titled Elephant.

The work consists of two pedestals, one of them has a small TV with a short video loop of myself imitating an elephant. On the other pedestal stands a small handmade clay sculpture of an elephant facing the TV on the other pedestal. While I extend my arm, waving it and shrieking like an elephant the elephant figure watches. It does not seem to comprehend what I am doing at all. It all seems hopeless and embarrassing at the same time.
"If a lion could talk, we could not understand him."

Humour

Humour seems to appear repeatedly through my practice. It’s a natural thing that seems to be inevitably intertwined with my practice or the way I present my work. It is my belief that using humour in art is greatly underestimated and people often seem to associate humour or laughter with something that is easy or simple. Artists tend to be afraid of using humour and perhaps think that they will not be taken seriously, as well as perhaps feeling as if they are not being serious enough. For me on the other hand it is the opposite. Humour is a certain sign of honesty. That is, I feel the story is only half told without it, or at least when I am telling the story. Without it there is a spark missing, or a heartbeat. Humour, specially when used right, can be almost invisible and hard to put a finger on. Still you feel it, and breathe it and know it’s there, without the need of analysing its reason for being there. Humour can appear to us in so many different ways and has many different faces. It can be bitter, sweet, bitter-sweet, nasty, delicate, brutal, beautiful, depressing, hilarious and I could continue and use almost every adjective from the dictionary. It can be hard to describe, like for example when you explain a joke and it then loses its spark. Humour is therefore an extremely delicate tool to work with, so delicate in fact that it doesn’t take much to jeopardize the work. That is probably one of the main reasons why it seems to appear in my practice, but the works become more vulnerable somehow, which I believe is a great asset. The work A Horse Back Riding is probably one of my works where humour shows its face in perhaps the clearest way. A Horse Back Riding is a two-minute video loop were I can be seen sitting backwards on a horse while riding it in reverse. Here the two wrongs seem to make a right, so everything seems to be normal except for the horse, which is facing the wrong direction. A work where humour is perhaps presented in a less clear or at least more complex way I will mention: an older work, Pet the cat. There I remade a YouTube video, a close-up video of a cat being petted by its owner. However, in my version I took the position of the cat while the original purr soundtrack from the YouTube video played. Since the hand that’s stroking me is clearly from a man, the work deals with female submission thereby creating an unfortun-able relation between the serious and the humorous.

“Like jokes and the comic, humour has something liberating about it; but it also has something of grandeur and elevation, which is lacking in the other two ways of obtaining pleasure from intellectual activity. The grandeur in it clearly lies in the triumph of narcissism, the victorious assertion of the ego’s invulnerability. The ego refuses to be distressed by the provocations of reality, to let itself be compelled to suffer. It insists that it cannot be affected by the traumas of the external world; it shows, in fact, that such traumas are no more than occasions for it to gain pleasure. This last feature is a quite essential element of humour. Let us suppose that the criminal who was being led to execution on Monday had said: ‘It doesn’t worry me. What does it matter, after all, if a fellow like me is hanged?’ The world won’t come to an end because of it.’ We should have to admit that such a speech does in fact display the same magnificent superiority over the real situation. It is wise and true; but does not betray a trace of humour. Indeed, it is based on an appraisal of reality which runs directly counter to the appraisal made by humour. Humour is not resigned; it is rebellious. It signifies not only the triumph of ego but also of the pleasure principle, which is able here to assert itself against the unkindness of the real circumstance.”

To be or not to be a crab

2 Crabs is the third piece the viewer is met by in the exhibition. It contains two video loops presented on two flat screens. On the left screen one sees a found computer-generated crab that moves back and forth, from left to right, in what seems to be the perfect infinite loop. On the right screen you see me, walking on a beach attempting to imitate the other crab’s movements as I fumble my (uncoordinate) way on this small rock, nearly falling couple of times. I almost become two-dimensional like the other crab. Still there seems to be no hope that I can accurately imitate its perfect movements. Yet the loop continues, and I carry on repeating my hopeless attempts. In an earlier piece of mine, A Repeated Attempt at Approaching a Rhubarb, a series of seven photographs, one can recognize a similar theme. For the work I put my camera on a rock, pushed the 10-second timer, and tried hopelessly
2726 to run towards a rhubarb bush to get my picture taken with it. Knowing that I was never really going to manage I kept running like Sisyphus kept rolling the rock up the hill, only to watch it roll back down, and to repeat his action into eternity.3 In 1969 the Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers made his piece, La Pluie (project pour un texte) where he sat out in the rain, with an ink pen in his hand and kept writing on a white piece of paper. Even though the rain constantly erased his letters he still kept on writing like I kept on running from the camera.

There aren’t really any crabs present in 2 Crabs, as there aren’t any birds in Flight Lesson. Only ideas (or forms) of crabs. Therefore I am, indeed, only imitating an imitation of something. Which leads me to what I learned just the other day about sushi; the crab in sushi is not real crab, but a crab stick. More rightfully referred to as an imitation crab. Imitation crab is made from white fish (in most cases Alaskan pollock) that has been mixed with some sort of a binding ingredient (usually egg white) and artificial crab flavour -ing. Then shaped in the form of the leg of a crab and finally a red colour is thrown on its outside to give it the final crab touch.4 In short it is a white fish perfumed with the idea of the taste of a crab.

There was recently an international scandal where a lot of food products from the Swedish company Findus deceptively contained horsemeat instead of beef. The best story I heard in connection to this horsemeat scandal came from Iceland, where a lot of popular meat products were being tested in connection to the Findus scandal. While many of them had horse ingredients, only one of them became world famous. A meat pie which claimed to be made of 30% beef, not only didn’t have any traces of horsemeat, it didn’t have any meat at all. A couple of years ago a friend of mine took two foreign friends mountain walking in Iceland. On their way they found a small brook with clean, natural water but he couldn’t convince them to drink it, no matter how hard he tried, they preferred their bottle water. It seems like we are getting further from nature somehow, and thereby ourselves. The more we know the less we know somehow. The work Grafting by the artist Petr Štembera now comes to my mind but “he attempted to graft a plant to his arm using the normal gardening grafting techniques. This involved cutting his flesh, using poisonous chemicals to encourage the growth of the plant in its new environment and binding its stem to his body. He explained that he wanted ‘to make contact with the plant, to put it in my body, to be together with it as long as possible’”.

Recently I broke my arm when falling off my bike. The doctors had to cut my arm open, place a titanium plate next to the bone and screw it down with 6 screws where it will stay within my body forever. The other day when listening to the radio I heard an interview with the Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson where he mentioned a conversation he had with his father. His father had said to him: “It is so sad and beautiful to be a human being”.

once in a while I get this bewildering feeling which is quite hard to describe. It is as if I lose the understanding of what this is, this body mass or spirit that is writing what you are reading right now. It is quite uncomfortable and sometimes I get afraid that I won’t manage to gain balance and control again. Therefore I usually try to shake this feeling off as fast as I can. It is not really visible when this is happening to me, but once I was sitting in front of the

3. A character from Greek mythology and a king of Ephyra who was punished for his transgressions.
computer and I managed to record a video of me in this state. It did not last for that long but I decided to watch the video and then record a video of me watching it. Eventually I recorded a video of me watching both of the other videos. It got quite confusing but unfortunately it didn't explain anything to me. I sometimes wonder though what would happen if I surrender to this uncomfortable feeling. Submitting to feelings and hunches can be a dangerous sport though. Sometimes when standing on high balconies and looking down it seems so easy to just leap off, or while waiting for a train, it would be so easy to just jump in front of it. It should be mentioned that this thought or feeling is not connected to any desire of wanting to die at all, it just seems too easy. I spoke about this with a friend the other day and he told me that after our conversation he started to feel and think the same in the same situation, and that he could not get rid of it. He was even annoyed at me for having introduced the feeling to him. The truth is that I am quite frightened by the idea of death and have problems for example travelling by plane. The other day I even realized I was starting to be afraid of riding buses, then I gave myself a good slap in the face.

That brings me back to a piece, or rather an action, that I did a long time ago when taking my first art steps. I remember the night before, when I had decided for myself that this was something that I would have to do, but was not sure why. I was so stressed I couldn't sleep. We were having a short performance course with artists Margrét Blöndal and Ásmundur Ásmundsson in which we got homework everyday where they would give us two words to work with, the day after everyone would have to do something around those words. I don't remember exactly what those words were but one of them was something like 'disobey' or 'forbidden'. We would all sit in a circle and one by one we would go into the middle of the circle and do a performance. I remember that I was almost numb from stress when it was my turn, I stood up and walked straight to Margrét, looked her in the eyes and slapped her on the cheek. I think we were both equally surprised. Margrét is probably one of the nicest people in the world and this is probably the first and only time she has ever been slapped. Something happened to me in that course, maybe I slapped myself into the performative practice that I seem to have held on to since.

Give her a massage

The last work the viewer was confronted by in my master exhibition is Massage. When approaching the work the viewer passed an arched doorway into a large white room where a video was projected on a wall. In the video the viewer saw me walking into the frame, a snow-white beach, where a small clay figure was lying on a massage bench. I wet my hands and as the soothing and calming spa music began I started massaging the small clay figure. In the beginning I am stroking it slowly and gently, but eventually the insistant stroking starts destroying and deconstructing the figure. In the end the figure has become something else, an abstract clump of clay and it does not seem like it will ever be able regain its original form.

On my birthday this year I went for a massage for the first time in my life. It was a comfortable but at the same time an uncomfortable experience, since I have a need for a certain personal space. Suddenly there was a complete stranger stroking my body. Afterwards I actually
thought she could have been a bit firmer. Later I went to see a chiropractor a couple of times. That was a related but still a completely different experience. I had to put my whole body in his hands and trust that he would not break it.

Lie down and find a comfortable position. I am going to see the posture of your body. Yes it is like I thought. It is quite obvious. Your legs aren’t the same size. This one is longer. Ok. Can you lie on your stomach now. I am going to touch some spots and you can maybe tell me when it stops to hurt. Do you know where the pain coming from? You’re not sure? You think it’s coming from in between you say? You feel quite stiff in your neck. Do you find it hard to move normally? The short leg might be bothering the rest. You should buy this thing for the heel to get more stable. To find the right balance.

In Massage, I am perhaps comparing the roles of the two professions, the sculptor and the massage therapist, by combining them but without completely admitting to either of them. It’s interesting to examine how these two professions treat their bodies. The massage slowly deconstructing the clay figure might therefore resemble the aforementioned hostile feeling lurking in my psyche.

It is interesting when looking into the origins of massage to find that body massages as we know them today have been utilized in different ways throughout history. I found it quite disturbing when reading about a phenomenon known as abortion massage, which appears to be quite active and still to this day carried out. Another intriguing phenomenon in the history of massage was when it was used to cure women that were believed to suffer from hysteria. The women would then seek therapy and a doctor would massage their vagina, sometimes even using water massage treatment. Today we understand that the doctor was in fact massaging the patients to eventually lead them to hysteria, which is probably the clearest form of completely letting go.

Female hysteria

The history of ‘female hysteria’ is as long as the list of the symptoms that supposedly came along with it and the phenomenon has been discussed and studied for centuries by many of the world’s most recognized philosophers, doctors and psychologists. It holds hands with the history of the rights of women, in the sexual psyche associated with women seems to stand at both the bottom and the top of the scale of human modes of relating.” Sigmund Freud was one of those interested in the phenomenon, and his and Josef Breuer’s revolutionary ‘talking therapy’ would have great impact. One of their patients, Anna O., who discussed her feelings and experiences during their talk therapy or the ‘talking cure’ as she would call it, eventually overcame her symptoms and later became an innovative social worker and a leader of the women’s movement in Germany. “Anna O.’s illness was the desperate struggle of an unsatisfied young woman who found no outlet for her physical and mental energies, nor for her idealistic strivings.” The history of female hysteria therefore not only holds hands with the history of rights of women but also the feminist revolution. “Female hysteria seemed to be on the way, as feminism was on the rise. (…) The despised hysterics of yesteryear have been replaced by the feminist radicals of today.”

Yet still today women carry born marks from allegations of female hysteria and the sexes are far from being equal. The ‘male artist’s angel’ as I would like to call it is still worshipped to some point and the ‘female artists angel’ is still an underdog, the crazy hysterical stamp never being too far away. As a female artist, especially when working within the field of philosophically speculation, you therefore definitely have a heavier weight to carry. It appears to be quite active and sometimes quite disabling.

The female artist’s work is also almost constantly being connected to the subject of feminism and when working within the field of performance this becomes even more apparent, where the way you look and dress can have a big impact on whether you are taken seriously. The female artist has in fact to waste precious time on wondering if she looks too good or too sexy. Don’t misunderstand me, this is not intended to mean that it is always bad to have your works connected with feminism. On the contrary, being a feminist myself and often dealing with the subject within my work. The reason I mention this is because the feminist subject is blatantly forced upon female artists.

In her brilliant and influential analysis of the question, “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Cultivate?” the anthropologist Sherry Ortner notes that in every society “the psychic mode associated with women seems to stand at both the bottom and the top of the scale of human modes of relating.” Attempting to account for this “symbolic ambiguity,” Ortner claims “both the subversive feminine symbols (witches, evil eye, menstrual pollution, castrating mothers) and the feminine symbols of transcendence (mother, goddesses, merciful dispensers of salvation. Female symbols of justice)” by pointing out that women “can appear from certain points of view to stand both under and over (but really simply outside of) the sphere of culture’s hegemony.”

In search of the miraculous

My works are perhaps personal in the sense that I let the viewer in quite close by literally putting myself out there often in a somewhat vulnerable or even humiliating way. Then again they’re not so personal since I’m not referring to specific personal matters. All these feelings and thoughts, which are existential to a certain degree, at some point suddenly come together in an action or an object. Sometimes accidentally and sometimes after a long obsession of trying to make things fit together. When thinking of the relationship between the creation of my works and then how they are eventually presented to the viewer, or how they appear, I could perhaps explain it as something that has been zoomed into extremely, and then before being put back together. It is focused and serious, but at the same time it seems to have taken a step to reconsider itself. It is as if the artwork has stepped out of itself and then stood still there among the viewers while being presented, watching itself and the viewers can sense it. The work is therefore in a way self-aware and open to self-criticism. It reveals its imperfection and accepts its ignorance. Its intention is not to guide the viewer but to present different contemplations that could be interpreted in various ways.

In the year 2007 we decided to take a road trip only the two of us and bathe in one of those hot springs but we never found it. Instead we found a whale, a dead whale. We had never come close to such a big creature before. It felt unreal. I placed my camera on a stone and pressed the timer. We stripped and barbied in the moment, the surroundings and in nature. The photograph I later titled, I Hate Goodbyes is a video work that I made in 2012. An abandoned amusement park in east Berlin is the scenario for the work. In this two minute video loop I am seen running into the frame, crying and acting hysterically, towards a big plastic dinosaur that is lying there. I start touching, hugging and pushing it in a dramatic way as if I’m grieving or trying to bring it back to life. The atmosphere feels lonely and the only recognizable sound in the video is my crying. The dinosaur, the park, and my behaviour are all factors that could be interpreted in different ways. The feeling of desperation screams from the piece and I look so helpless and pathetic. The Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader once made a work where crying also played a big part, except that unlike my video, where the sound of the crying...
was audible, there was no sound. The piece, which is titled I am too sad to tell you, is a three-minute close-up video of him crying (the piece was also presented as postcards and a photograph) where you can see tears running down his face. There is something about this contrast between taking one’s own existence seriously and not doing so. To admit to our head in these repeated seaside or canal walks, we find different and perhaps better ways to represent the questions and contemplations that go through the open ocean, on a small boat by himself, supposedly attempting to cross the Atlantic (but probably knowing he would never manage it). A couple of months after his departure the wreckage of his boat was found by a Spanish traveller about 150 miles west of the coast of Ireland.

We have no idea what time it is or where in the world I am. The self is empty and there is nothing to grab hold of. I am a child and an adult at the same time. The darkness is timeless. I am dead. I can be shaped.

When deep makes itself impossible. A timeless-ness occurs. I have no idea what time it is or where in the world I am. The self is empty and there is nothing to grab hold of. I am a child and an adult at the same time. The darkness is timeless. I am dead. I can be shaped.

A meeting between the vertical and the horizontal. In this condition, an image of a division and a union occur at the same time. The division consists of two triangles that intersect each other. As when the sun hits the horizon. The triangles change shape, but still retain three angles. At times, they are the same shape and are thus composed of six edges. A polygon, a hexagon. As the edge of a landscape, Nothing exists behind it. It’s clearing at the last stop.

As constituents of architectural possibilities and explanations, they require a natural realization. Architecture describes the world’s skeleton, the beginning before the origin. The authoritarian hides death (the skeleton) and emptiness, replaced with life and continuity. Seriality – loss.

Visualizing through sensory layers

Connections squeezed in between life, against the material. It lies between the sketches of something new – something easier – against a brick wall. The feeling of finding notes about foreign descriptions of the world. A world consists of many images and images consist of many worlds. Four seasons, four seasons’ sounds. The impossibility of escape.

Francis Bacon

Flesh and nerves (Body, flesh and soul)

He started out as an interior designer, perhaps because he could not manage customary interior (interior as in the interest of something psychatically material, psychomatter). He designed his functional objects with closeness in mind and

body. As if his thoughts and contempt incarnated the shapes. This developed his diagram, his roughness in the painterly sense. His balanced and dynamic paintings constitute a dualistic piety consisting of intuitive and shape-based decisions. Often, they are in a relation between the abstract and the figurative. A division and a point of total juxtaposition by small decisions, ruled the process. The margin of chance, the change emphasized. The memory of the image, as a place for decisions and looking back. His works give the feeling of an inner bodily state, the body’s decay and its relation to nature. The steadfast loyalty of desire.

“I like, you may say, the glitter and colour that comes from the mouth, and I’ve always hoped in a sense to be able to paint the mouth like Monet painted a sunset."

To me, Bacon’s images show an almost pathological religiosity. In a way, they are sick. Egomaniac, hence almost devout. He paints the human flesh and body. Situated spaces in images as if he was staging life’s scream at death (as Deleuze writes in Logic of Sensation2).

He shows heads, not portrayed faces or refined figurations, but a relation to muscle structure and internal mechanism that gives the images weight.

Bacon worked freely and in advance he had no solution for the outcome. He collected photographs (in a non-linear historical way) of body movement and they served as models for his work. What he completes without refinement are the picturesque possibilities of rawness. The span between the figurative and the abstract can be reached in a holistic quest for sensations, moments and just about clean-cut humanity.

He has the same relation to the slaughterhouse and photography as religious people have to their holy house. His works describe something extraordinary and nearly elevated, although Bacon said that he worked toward a nothing. Perhaps
this gap, this nothing, is like cracks in a language that allows images to take over and lead sensations forward. Limitations in language are maybe present at all time and follow a gradual process of ideas and their inter-spatial possibilities. Something new can be detected, an interest ruled by language. Invisible sensations that he possesses and shows with tangent mastery and will in his paintings. Nothing can be shown with simplified materials – the tractableness of limitations.

Georges Bataille

Death and repetition – the avoidance and the breakdown of the project. The project is the end. It must be broken down in order to find survival. To find openings without fixed rules. So that not everything consists of the same act, repetition and being. To project oneself in everything where nothing is sufficient (Allow the idea of something sublime). The need for oblivion and eternal dry moments. To win oneself and place oneself in the world before anything egomaniac (sick) takes over. Where images and stories belong. The outside of the prevailing discourse. Regarding discourse, there is a lot of talk about trend and not discourse. There is no trend in the moment, only discourses and continuations – they are developed and become a trend. Eat all meals backwards.

New fields, thoughts and spaces for change are opened when images can’t be accepted. This forms a new type of project that must be shaken in order to bring clarity. I like that images sneak into the world and present their openings, their offshoots. Metonyms, maps and attributes of life’s existence need intermissions and overview. I see images in a format based on the negation (of time) and the silence it shares. Consider sharing silence. It is usually done in the memory of the dead.

My practice should consist of throwing fresh fish into the river, hoping that my buddy farther down the stream will catch it. Coincidence, disclosure and acceptance of chaos are a necessity. A dialogue needs several pages. Images focus and fragment reality.

There has by the way been observed new events in the atomic world. Generally speaking. Atoms apparently also live on a line of time. They also have an undeniable journey through life, as when a glass is shattered and can’t be reversed into its original form. A time game. It can also decide which page/life cycle that should be exposed to the observer. Atoms are like people; they live the moment. History is flexible. The atom distances itself from the moment in order to be protected from collisions. Thoughts will have a new shape and continuation, and this is in a constant flux.3

The consideration of images may be a common experience. It is about a genuine interest in conveying something, creating connections and referring to these experiences. Everyone is present; no one can escape. One should not escape from one’s neighbour unless he is dangerous and threatens one’s life. Only then can one escape for a little while. Until he one day catches up with you again. Images and poetry have an overlapping economic effect in society (they are resourceful in terms of ideas and communication). They generate ideas and refer to structures that have a power beyond hierarchy. They have no head and can easily be knocked off the table. They float along the side and through the nooks, balancing walls and creating life. The immediate is in the center. Misunderstandings are ultra.
result being eloquent and further developing machines. They infiltrate, and in the end we don’t notice where we stand in relation to them (like the feeling I tried to introduce in the beginning of this essay, just a more mechanical and plastic one projected from the dark town). A loss and a no man’s land. One has to be able to take care of this and let it out differently.

A tool for a cause – and a cause has to be promoted. The hiding place is transparent and invisible, but still more than present. It’s removed from the vocabulary and the notions’ already dust-filled and stagnant lives are forgotten and can’t be explained. New shape – new continuation.

Fairly Dark

I want to linguistically unite an artistic gesticulating space with the world. Oh boy, what does that really mean? It might mean that I have to use the pendulums that are already running and swing back. It is perhaps a resistance and an abstract language that dominates nowadays, and I want to see the necessity of it. It’s like detours are needed in order to move in on the center with experiences other than having kept one’s nose to the grindstone, only to cook the goal in its own broth. There’s a lot I’ve left out of this text, it requires its own logic. Overreaction must be tamed – neutralized – sanded.

Many times I have tried to paint a special space, a general descriptive model, in my work. Because the unattractive attracts me, I want to conjure up a model and a concept that can explain this field almost without using a word. Scare. However, this general descriptive space keeps changing and it is the impossibility and limitation of my medium that becomes the result and the abstracted. The space alternates from one manifestation to another. The simplicity of the decisions gives the power and capacity I look for in images. As if the images follow the transformation of this space over time. A personal schedule of thought patterns, moments and influences.

Literary insight

An isolated form of work that I also see as relevant to my practice. To me, authors’ media-
vague. By this I mean the desire to express something in images and text. It is the hunt that satisfies me, not the outcome. The act of jumping in time and history provides curious results. Along with written concepts I get the feeling that it’s like drawing up a grid pattern, so that I can measure and make contact.

Often there are two images – that I like – and think about. It is a type case and a bookshelf. Not any bookshelf, but one where the faces and portraits of the authors come floating out of the books like smoke. Even after death, they leave their own ideas and go looking for something new. There is no silence in this image, nor does it move forward from the floating momentum in a silent room. It stops every time the faces have smacked out and then it starts all over again. Again, again and again! They disappear but take place.

Many of Georges Perec’s texts contain descriptions of spaces that follow one through life. One of his stories is about places where he has slept and different beds he has said. He lists them and refers to all the apartments and various alternative locations for sleep. The way he describes this is highly figurative and subtly humorous. What’s interesting is that the more clinical and strictly he lists the places and spaces, the more exciting the stories become.

His descriptions of spaces are incredibly graphic and detailed. They are made visible in his gesture of listing, and the places fluctuate and experience. I attach myself to this in a way that is perhaps absurd, but that’s what strong images feel like. As if you’ve been there, in that little loophole of time. Be what it may be. Be what it will be. I remember well when I got my first View-Master and had enormous quantities of images that could be stuffed into it. As I pressed the button over and over again, images would flash up in bright, almost fiery colors. I often aimed the stereoscope directly at a strong light source; the sun was my favorite. The images displayed everything from Norwegian fairy tales to unknown urban landscapes and people in the streets of foreign countries. This was before the ‘trouble’ began. That was when I reached a particular image – it’s hard to remember exactly which image it was, as I was not very old, but it may have been from Ivo Caprino’s ‘The Fox’s Widow’ or something like that.

The image made such a huge impression on me that I immediately had to go there – as soon as humanly possible. I asked my mother if she knew where this place was and if we for God’s sake could go there immediately? Initially I think she responded that I could get more images, or that we could watch a couple of movies by Ivo Caprino. But that certainly wasn’t what I was after; I wanted to stamp around in the gorgeous, warm and intimate nature this image showed me. I had to get there, and fast!

It never happened (I was totally broken down for ages, or that we could watch a couple of movies by Ivo Caprino. But that certainly wasn’t what I was after; I wanted to stamp around in the gorgeous, warm and intimate nature this image showed me. I had to get there, and fast!)

My mother says she remembers exactly which image it was, as I was only five years old when one goes home and looks oneself in the mirror. The loopholes of an isolated time carry optimism. It’s of course not only childhood memories that inspire me, but they are certainly the oldest sources of a world I have physical access to and that I often like to think about. At least until I share them – through a long and perhaps obscure process that transforms them into something totally different. But the starting point does not really matter.

Light

I am often left with the gleams of memories. Everything from diffuse colour to more concrete contours. Cracks in walls give the same feeling, two spaces united by light and people have seen exactly the same thing before, only at different times.

Therefore, I want to combine the abused space with the everyday and banal to create a pinch of time. Humour is purely about time (timing), the right moment for the particular turn of the subject’s continuation and punch. I’m pulling this out of the drawer.

The type case is a symbol of existences and references under the same idea. The overlapping structures with their different masks outwardly. The various shelves support each other and can be filled with the occasional object. As a child, I enjoyed the feeling of seeing “houses” filled with valuable things.

Meditations – Kafka’s fire

Small texts on topics that inspire further pursuit and development. Such as his text about clothes and how they bring thoughts about already worn conditions, perhaps symbolically simulates writing itself as something decadent and already dead before one has even let it live. His humor shines through with the clothes being seen by too many so that they already feel old when one goes home and looks oneself in the mirror. Short text on short thoughts about everyday repetitive things and events. His infinite universe deals with this on the many levels of society, a certain closeness is however always present.

Perhaps a text functions as a garment, a protection and a layer that covers the body’s true expression. Text and writing has a pragmatic relation to craftsmanship that nurtures from the opportunities of the moment. It can be stripped down and rebuilt in a new figure. The possibilities are endless – well, the limitations are as well.

A writing practice – a work in wounds and scars, large and small. Memories are selective bodies, never detached from their origin. History’s scars unite slaughterhouses and museums, and they nurture from the things to come. Sneaking around in the labyrinth, everyone shares a little bit of the same rhythm. Like hell’s circus in a dark town. I am fascinated by life projects and the relations that art can initiate for the future. The scars are healed, acceptable and silent. They may be clinically designed, grown by themselves, or perhaps they originated in intoxication or oblivion.

These cracks in language are like cracks in walls. Spaces unravelled – tightly and precisely written – a life belongs to many stories and shows the opposite of a monographic singular line. This openness to possibilities in stories and images is a driving character.

A process is in constant change. It can bring forth the day in the night with deflated moons on the
DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SERIES

I begin with small paintings, made of the trails left by brushstrokes on the surface of the thick paint. They’re simple drawings, and most of them are almost non-figurative, you could hardly even call them abstract, just on the edge of being. All the same colour. It’s all about the simple brushwork, the little hints of figuration, movements, or spaces that have been scribbled into the surface of the paint. I’m looking for pictures with undeveloped potential. They mustn’t have become anything yet. All of this is drawn on a thick, monochromatic mass of oil paint.

The second phase involves placing the paintings in front of lights, and arranging them so that the shadows highlight the mass of paint, before photographing it. The photograph gives the relief-like paint drawings a flat surface, so that I can use it as the starting point for the next stage in the work process, in which I turn this surface into graphite sketches. Next, I use the photographs to work over the drawing that I etched into the paint, except on paper this time. I draw the materiality of the mass of paint, the way the light and shadows play over the protrusions and tracks that appear along the slippery brushstrokes.

I’m trying to achieve the potential that I thought I saw in the oil painted sketches. On one level, I’m treating them as a still life, without any interest in their physical presence. I’m trying to create a drawing that is close to the material aspect of the painting.

At the same time, I want to go beyond studying the mass of paint itself, or the painting, and draw some of the potential that I saw in those scribbles to begin with. The graphite drawing of the painting becomes a landscape, with a variable scale. But the scribbly shapes in the paint-based drawing are also made more vivid when they are suspended in an image space other than that of the landscape drawing. By making small focal adjustments, I then allow the shape I drew in the paint earlier to extend into a three-dimensional space within the image. I use various techniques to move different parts of the lines in and out of the drawing’s depth plane.

The drawings begin as investigations of my own hand’s brushwork, and bring it to the fore. But rather than use the brushstrokes as tools to create worlds and images, I let them become images in themselves. Further to this, they contain all of the spatial ambiguities that exist in painting, and in its ability to create worlds inside a sheet of paper. Allowing something to become real, or become several realities at once.

When I look at Jonathan Lasker’s paintings, I am struck by his ability to give a simple sketch such an enormous sense of presence. He often uses smaller paintings as sketches, which he magnifies to give the brush strokes sculptural qualities. Here, the simple brushstrokes are given an entirely different form and presence, and a more tangible relationship to the image surface. They also become pictures of themselves, much like my drawings. Jonathan Lasker talks about using the signature of the brush as a starting point.1 The brushstrokes become the subject of the painting.

Robert Ryman is another painter that I relate to. He has the ability to use the substance of paint as the foundation for his paintings, and uses a brushstroke that is entirely non-representative, only referring back to the substance of paint itself. But whereas Robert Ryman negates all figuration and depiction, I turn directly to the paint, approaching it like a still life.

Unlike both Jonathan Lasker and Robert Ryman, I want to inject the signature and the mass ground. It can solve difficulties and create space for concentration when solutions are needed. Some processes can be saved – shown – hidden.

After Images

“Metaphor, linking distant things, fractures that double rigidity. At length we exhausted it, in sleepless, assiduous nights at the shuttle of its loom, stringing colored threads from horizon to horizon. Today metaphor is a facile in any style, and its glitter-star of interior epiphanies, our gaze-multiplies in mirrors. But I do not want us to rest on our laurels; I hope our art can forget, and plunge into untouched seas, as adventurous night leaps from the beaches of day.”

of paint into the picture, make it the object of the fiction, or rather, to give the mass of paint a physical reality within the image space of the drawings. I’m interested in the ways that painters can create depth and inner spaces using simple methods. In the drawings, I’m trying to make the pictures both figurative and abstract at the same time. A dual state, where the boundaries have been dissolved.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SERIES OF PAINTINGS

Beginning on paintings

I begin with a simple landscape. I have some basic ideas, a vision of a landscape that’s close, a certain tactile sensation I want to include, and a mirror image within the subject. My vision of the subject is quite vague, but it’s important that I have a basic sense of the mood I want, and a workable playing field for later exploration.

Before I began the actual paintings, I moulded six fibreglass sheets to paint on. I’m making a series of paintings, where each painting is a remake of the first one. The material of the sheets has its own defining characteristics. The surfaces are smooth, but not perfect. There are cavities in them, and the structure of the fibreglass weave shows through. When I paint on them, the paint doesn’t behave the same way that it does on canvas. It can be rubbed off, and smeared around in a different way. The transparency of the first layer of paint doesn’t mix with a base coat, like it does on a canvas. Rather, it lets the viewer’s gaze through the material, to optically blend with the colour of the wall and shadows behind the painting. This material opens up to other kinds of expression, in the effect it has on the paint, but also in the associations triggered by its irregularities, fluidity, and artificiality.

I sketch the landscape, and begin to work my way through it in a fairly intuitive way. There’s no original, just my memories of experiencing nature and pictures that I’ve created or seen. Photographs and other direct connections to the objects I’m studying have always seemed to inhibit my attempts to make something come across in the painting. So, I work from vague visions, and use the results of accidents that happen on the surface of the painting, as well as performing experiments on the surface and reacting to their results. I’m not looking for the core essence of the picture at this point, just trying to keep my interest in it going. I work quickly, and follow my impulses, suspending judgment for now.

In *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation*, Gilles Deleuze writes of the role played by chance and randomness in Bacon’s paintings. It’s a good way of avoiding clichés, and the likely image that exists within the painting from the very beginning, when the painter has that first vision of what to paint. These markings, which are non-representative at first, just expressions of the painter’s hand, can be picked up again later, and used to make the figure stand out.

Deleuze states that the painter’s empty canvas is always full from the beginning. There’s already figuration there. Everything in the painter’s mind, and everything around him, already exists on the canvas before he begins to paint. The painting is full of clichés that the painter has to remove.

“The painter’s problem is not how to enter into the canvas, since he is already there (the pre-pictorial task), but how to get out of it, thereby getting out of the cliché, getting out of probability (the pictorial task).”

I do something similar in my own work, when I hurl meaningless motions at the canvas during the early stages of the painting. These are non-representative markings that have no connection to the whole of the painting, and have no meaning in themselves. It’s not until afterwards that I pick them up again and work on turning them into meaningful parts of the picture. Even though these little impulses of mine are not as random as Bacon’s, they’re still a way of unbalancing habitual perceptions, and trying to reach beyond yourself and the baggage you’re carrying.

In other paintings, I’ve used materials that I’m not used to, or that pose challenges of their own, to bring about new possibilities that I couldn’t have predicted.
Martin Berring
followers/searchers
2013
Oil on fiberglass
165 × 65 cm each
Articulating a Subject

For the second painting, I go back to the first one to look at what I’ve done, and try to paint a new painting using the first one as the original. This isn’t an attempt to copy what I’ve done in the first painting, it’s an attempt to repair the subject that is visible through the image surface. I try to see the image I saw, or rather anticipated, in the paintings, by painting it over again. I want to explore what the image shows, so that I can articulate it even better in the new painting. I’m trying to see the things the material showed me the first time more clearly. It’s a relationship to the image you can see through the painting.

I’m trying to bring out the attributes of the object, whatever is unique to them. I’m looking for their physicality, for a way of amplifying their presence in the picture. It’s a question of how to emphasize the weight of the tree even more, bringing out the wetness in the grass, or making the background seem even more distant. I try to discover the invisible forces at work in the painting, and bring them into play.

The goal is to make the object in the picture speak directly to the viewer, not take a detour past the intellect, as Deleuze writes. The pictures are intended to be felt rather than seen. And I don’t want them to be decoded in too figurative terms, referring to an object (reference): if they resemble something it is with a resemblance produced for their physicality, for a way of referring to the subject that is visible through the image surface. It’s a question of how to emphasize the weight of the tree even more, bringing out the wetness in the grass, or making the background seem even more distant. I try to discover the invisible forces at work in the painting, and bring them into play.

But what I’m looking for is the ways the objects in the space appear, not their discernible categorizable objects. Gilles Deleuze speaks of the sensation as a way of going beyond the figural and the abstract. By painting the sensation, the artist can make the viewer enter the painting with their body.

“The Figure is the sensible form related to a sensation; it acts immediately upon the nervous system, which is of the flesh, whereas abstract form is addressed to the head, and acts through the intermediary of the brain, which is closer to the bone.”

What interests me is a physical relationship to the pictures and the paintings as objects. Finding a space to work it into in the paintings, and they claim that it can be seen through the painting. The Image Surface and the Painting’s Attitude

And at the same time, while I’m painting the second painting, I’m also turning my eyes to the picture that exists on the surface of the painting, and that consists of markings and their configurations of pigments, and meetings and collisions between these various parts. The image surface has its own expression, halfway detached from the subject. It tells the story of its own origins in its own layers of brushstrokes, neatly ordered in time. It’s the image surface that shows you that the painting is an extension of the body and the eyesight. One part of the surface is an important feature of the subject, while other parts are more independent, more concerned with the painting as an object, with its attitudes and appearance.

Christian Lotz writes that painting cannot be understood purely as a matter of the creation of images, it’s also “an effect of the material and bodily expressiveness of the painting, which makes it impossible to understand paintings as simple realizations of intentions on the side of the painter.” He goes on to say the following:

“A painting, in other words, comes with a specific character that is produced by the expressiveness of how the materiality appears in the painting. It is not simply the paint or the stretcher that give way the painter paints; rather, the expressiveness and bodily quality of a painting is visible in how the materiality shows up and brings itself to presence within the whole of the painting, i.e., the whole of a world attitude.”

The shapes in my paintings live their own lives too, intersected together. The line indicating the horizon bends the outline of the tree back. Points that seem distant in the image space are intentionally made to collide with its surface, where they begin to struggle against each other. The painting lives its own life in the image surface, an object with its own logic and life force. When I repaint the second painting, I try to look inside that picture as well, to see how to make it more expressive and how to strengthen its connection to the subject in the image space on a deeper level than...
Martin Berring

clay painting
(khm gallery)
2013
Clay on floor
360 x 640 cm
as a group of shapes trying to represent the objects within the essence of the image. The whole of the surface plays against the whole of the subject.

As I try to repaint the subject in each painting, I also try to repaint the surface of the preceding painting. A brush gesture in the first painting, a movement attempting to imitate a branch, for instance, becomes a shape that depicts that brush gesture in the second painting. The line in the painting, then, is more than just a representation of the object in the image space; it’s also a mass of paint in the earlier painting. The form is dually figured, similar to the series of drawings I previously described above where the drawings were depictions of the paint depicting the image space while the drawing also describes its own image space.

Each step away from the first painting is a move away from its directness and gestures. In the example above, where the line represented a branch, it was quick and flowing in the first painting, more expressive than descriptive. The shape was created by the speed of my own hand, and was painted on the spur of a moment. In the other painting, I’m looking both at how to relate the figuration to the object in the picture and how to represent the line. Here, the brushstrokes become more precise and descriptive, and withdraw a little into their physical expressivity. What was a physical expression in the painting has become a fictionalized physical expression here. The painting exists in a borderland, where it tries to describe a space and a nature while also trying to describe the illusion of the same.

However, this is an attitude I only hold to certain parts of the picture. In other contexts, I try to recreate the lighter touch of a hand that relates more directly to the subject.

As the image surface is a description of the subject, the subject is a description of the image surface, and of the painting as an object. The trees follow and underline the rectangle of the fiberglass. The humid and damp earth of the forest is echoed in the materiality of the paint, and the vegetation in the growing image surface.

After the second painting, I begin on a third, to follow on from its predecessors. Repainting a painting always means painting a new painting. It’s unavoidable. Each improved detail alters the whole expression of the painting, both in the visual whole on the image surface and in the relationships between all of the objects in the image space. But even though each painting must find its own system, I want each painting to depict the same subject, the same imagined reality that was hinted at in the first painting.

And so, a fourth painting begins. My understanding of the subject and the image surface is deepened and altered by each reworking.

Time in the Paintings

When the paintings are shown side by side and compared, a temporal progression arises between them. On one level, there’s the time I spent working in the studio. The paintings were made at different times, and are connected by a causal link. Each one leads to another. This chronology is also included in the reading of the image, because if a shape or an object changes between two paintings, it’s easy to interpret that as movement over time. Even though I want the place shown in each painting to be the same, I can’t avoid the fact that each picture is a moment in time in itself. All I can do is resist any linearity between the images, which could otherwise have reduced the suite of images to a sequence of events, which would have turned the paintings into a film short no more than a few frames long, showing some trees and bushes move.

Traditionally, painting relates differently to time than photography does. A photograph records a moment, an event that once took place in front of the camera. The length of this moment may have varied, and it may have been divided into several spatio-temporalities, but it refers to and consists of a real event. The moment of a painting is all of the time that went into creating it. The time during which all of the brush strokes, evidence of retakes, and drying times occurred. You can sense the time of its creation as an imprint on the painting. But the painting also contains another time: the time of the image space. Like the camera’s image, this can be a frozen moment or a continuous present. Even though a photograph can contain this frozen present,
there is still an awareness of the fact that it refers back to a real moment that occurred in the real world. The tree in the photograph will eventually die and decompose. Time passes outside of the frozen sphere of the photograph.

Time is preserved in the artwork. As Deleuze writes: “The air still has the turbulence, the gust of wind, and the light that it had that last year, and it no longer depends on whoever was breathing it that morning.”

Paintings without any references to real, individual objects are disconnected from the passage of time. They contain a permanent present, bound into the matter of the painting. I also have difficulties seeing paintings as snapshots of moments in time. Images that have a before and an after prevent the body from entering them to walk around. I mean, how can you move through frozen time? This makes me very doubtful about the fleeting and short-lived. How do we experience and read information or narratives that don’t relate a whole story, that are fractured, non-linear?

In conclusion

In both series of works described above, I’ve taken an interest in the materials of painting, and in the mass of paint. Both of them are investments into ways of creating pictures based on the materials and the working processes themselves. In both series, I investigate fleeting image spaces, that aren’t fully defined. In the drawings it’s a dual space, and in the paintings it’s the image surface going back and forth from being a description of itself to being an image space. An unstable and artificial world for the viewer to enter.

JOHAN ELDROT

Ephemeral Narratives

“Our fantasies and daydreams are stories. Our night dreams are experienced as stories, often with mythic undertones. Rituals of daily life are organized to tell stories. The pageants of special occasions are fashioned along story lines. The plans we make, our remembering, even our loving and hating, are all guided by narrative plots. Survival in a world of meanings would be problematic in the absence of skill to make up and interpret stories about interweaving lives.”

A man. He’s 36 years old, and works as a taxi driver. He lives alone in an apartment in a suburb of Stockholm. When he’s not driving his taxi he’s making plans; reading, drawing, building, and consuming literature and films. In his apartment, he has a fully equipped command center, with a mimeograph, communications equipment, a typewriter, and a notepad. He writes letter after letter to the police, demanding that they collect more than a billion Swedish Kronor’s worth of diamonds and hand them over to him. He had been dreaming of a new life, and now he’s living it.

A woman. Her age is unknown. She’s lying on her back in a plain bed at the St. Joseph Provincial Hospital in Quebec. The hospital is her home, not for health reasons, but by choice. She’s been secretly living in the hospital for almost ten years. She’s worn the staff uniforms, moved freely through the underpasses and corridors, and eaten the patients’ food. In 1993, she discovered, and taken to an undisclosed location by the authorities.

These two scenarios are, roughly speaking, the underlying narrative structures of two of my works: Remember Me When the Sun Sets (2010) and Astral Projection, Into the Expanse (2011).

My practice is centered on exploration of and experimentation with spatial narrative forms, and most of my works are installations where a number of different parts and techniques are combined to give rise to one or more narrative paths. Many of my works could be considered case studies that start with a certain event or character, but where I make a point of remaining open to potential subjective associations and interpretations.

Shards / Narrative Potentials

“As makers and thinkers of new things, many artists today consider part of their responsibility to be the disorganization of knowledge and information. In the traditional diagram of information theory, for instance, a transmitter sends a signal – information – over a channel to a receiver. On its way, however, it encounters ‘noise’, or ‘entropy’, which is considered a natural inevitability.

Communication science is essentially an exercise in noise-management, and engineers strive to design transmission channels that prevent noise from obstructing the messages. In the field of information disorganization, however, noise is a friend, not a foe. Art that inserts noise into a system of knowledge will, hopefully, succeed in breaking up its ready-made ideas and in reshuffling its pieces. What emerges is a noisy kind of knowledge, one that embraces the playful unruliness of the world.”

I regard my own practice as a growing collection of short stories, that don’t necessarily conform to a logical or linear structure, but whose form and execution latch onto each other to contribute new perspectives to an ongoing discourse. My interest in the narrative form of the short story is also connected to my interest in the fragment, the fleeting and short-lived. How do we experience and read information or narratives that don’t relate a whole story, that are fractured, fleeting, and non-linear?
of information as reliable, or be skeptical about it. However, in their book Svensom och svenskan, writers Jana Holsanova and Andreas Nord claim that reading and interpretation of text and information today is becoming more characterized by multimodality than by a single modality. As the prefix suggests, both the information itself and the ways in which we partake of it, by means of things like digital media, have become more and more fragmented, which has made the reader’s understanding even more dependent on the interpretative options open to her.

Theories of multimodality don’t play an important role in the practice you can see in the face, with my hope for, and trust in, the viewer’s ability to compile, associate and create meaning through my works. In this way, my works can be likened to prisms, the subjective experience and understanding (images, text, constructions, objects) in order to provide the viewer with potential directions for further interpretation. Of course, initially, it’s my responsibility as an artist to shape these prisms, making them appealing to the viewer and ensure that they offer suitable entry points. It is in the next stage, after the work and the viewer have met, that the content and context of the piece becomes meaningful to the viewer. Therefore, my works can be likened to a potential reality today. The theory of a multiverse gained traction in 1967, when quantum physicist Hugh Everett III published his doctoral thesis on the topic, which would come to inspire artists, film makers and scientists to incorporate the theories in their work. Even since it was first expressed by Bruno, the idea of a multiverse has been a matter of some controversy. Even Everett was faced with a wall of skepticism from the scientific community when he presented his ideas in 1957. But atoms, electromagnetic radiation and the theory of relativity were all considered speculative fantasy at one point, and they are all part of mainstream physics today. Everett’s theory is concerned with phenomena and events that lie outside the domain of established science. Just as the theories of the multiverse have been the subject of skepticism and scorn from established science, the relationship between the field of parapsychology and the classical sciences has been (and remains) somewhat frosty.

In 2005, a professorship in psychology including hypercognition and parapsychology was launched at Lund University. This professorship has been held by Ezel Carderta from the start. Since acquiring it, Carderta has had to spend much of his time defending the methods and existence of parapsychology against a hail of criticism from colleagues and students who claim that a pseudo-science like parapsychology doesn’t belong in the university, a seat of higher learning like Lund University. Criticism against the study of the supernatural or paranormal is also raised by non-profit organizations such as Vetenskap och folkvårdning (VoF), who explain their attitude as follows on their website:

“There are those who consider it a waste of time to oppose irrationalism, as rational arguments seem to have no effect. We do not share this judgment. We believe that people can be made more resistant to irrationalism by learning about scientific methods and results.”

Of course, the methods of parapsychology need to be reviewed and evaluated, such as any other scientific methods and results. Scientific methods and results are not necessarily a priori established science, the relationship between the field of parapsychology and the classical sciences has been (and remains) somewhat frosty.

In the year 2010, I was asked to take part in an exhibition at Linnéum, which is located in the botanical gardens in Uppsala, in close proximity to several of the university’s departments. As I was given more or less total freedom regarding the content of the exhibition, I invited two of my previous fellow students, Siri Leira and Halvor Rønning, to take part. Eventually, the exhibition came to focus on the specific conditions of the site, which was nothing like a white cube. The approach I developed was to focus on the historical and architectural context within which the show would take place.
Linnéanum was planned by Olof Tempelman and Jean Luis Dreppe, and built to honor Carl Linnaeus. The building, which is done in a neo-classical style, was opened in 1809 to commemorate Linnaeus’s one hundredth birthday. To me, Linnéanum seemed like a celebration of and a monument to not just Linnaeus as a person, but to the whole enlightenment that banished delusion, irrational beliefs and faith from our lives in favor of evidence-based science and common sense. This may in turn have contributed to the secularized and rational identity that I feel has taken hold in Sweden today. Because of my interest in subjective and irrational experiences of the world, and in questions concerning the ownership of the definitions of truth and reality, I chose to focus my work on the relationship between established science and the so-called pseudo-sciences, like parapsychology and astrology. A number of queries became central to the working process: How and by whom are terms like truth and reality defined today? How does science influence our ideas about what is true or false, real or unreal, or right or wrong? Has science, ever since the enlightenment, been granting itself, and by extension large parts of Swedish society, a kind of monopoly of explanations concerning how the world works?

My idea was to use the exhibition to bring irrationalism into the academic context, and thus bring these two related, yet ideologically opposed, forces together in order to create a context for a discussion about how the right to define our existence is distributed in our society. I did this through the works Ganzfeld Experiment, RSPK Series, and Obey Apophenia.

Ganzfeld Experiment was a performance work where I performed a parapsychological experiment designed to screen for telepathic abilities. Two twin brothers were placed in different rooms, about 50 meters apart. Brother 1 was shown a picture that he was then asked to spend 30 minutes attempting to telepathically communicate to brother 2, who was in a similar room, listening to brown noise in headphones with a red light shining in his face. After thirty minutes, brother 2 got up and drew the image he felt he had received on a sheet of paper. The result of the experiment, which was beside the point as far as I was concerned, was a failure. My purpose was rather the actual performance of the experiment in that specific environment.

RSPK Series was a series of four paintings, 150 × 200 cm, ink on canvas. The paintings depict enlarged messages written by Recurrent Spontaneous Psychokinesis (RSPK), phenomena more often referred to as poltergeists in the mainstream. The messages, which were originally jotted down on little slips of paper, came from two different experiments, performed more than a hundred years apart. One of the experiments was performed in the 1850’s by a group of French spiritualists led by Ludwig von Guldenstubbe. The other experiment was performed by the American parapsychologist William E. Cox in the 1970’s.

In the third work, Obey Apophenia, I allowed myself to wander freely through the territories of irrationalism. The piece consisted of four display cases and a four meter sculpture of the Roman numeral two, which is also a symbol for the Gemini star sign. The display cases contained spreads from books, photographs, newspaper clippings, various objects, and an interview with my mother. Obey Apophenia can be described as a non-linear, personal, and associative map, where free, perhaps even illogical, connections are made between my own history, astrological theories about the meanings of star signs, and research into telepathic communication between twins.

Psychological Spaces

Never say die
I must never die
Let me out of here
I belong out there

One of my main areas of interest in my work is the division between our subjective experiences of the world and the collective or social reality that we all share. I am deeply fascinated by the human psyche’s great ability to produce full experiences in the organism, of both the wonderful and the terrifying varieties. A human who enjoys total external liberty and good prospects for a happy life can still become trapped by the concepts within her own mind, which can cause a total separation between the subjective and the...
Johan Eldrot
This and opposite page:
Viscous Currents,
Inky Folds
2013
Painted wood, MDF and broadloom
Dimensions variable
Rätt att vara själv: unik i en pluralistisk värld

Johan Eldrot

When the Sun Sets, 2010. The book is based on Swedish true sexual investigation that is both well-known and well-documented, and occurred between 1983 and 1985 in Stockholm, when the terrorist group COBRA, sometimes just referred to as C, demanded that the police authorities collect more than 1.55 billion Swedish kronor from 80 or so businesses and hand them over to the organization. If the money wasn’t delivered, C threatened an extensive and detailed document detailing how to attack and destroy the Swedish state to active cells of terrorists. During the two years that this case was under investigation, C sent more than 1,200 empty C5 envelopes, and a fragmented sunset (clothes, gadgets, books and so on), 1,200 empty C5 envelopes, and a fragmented sunset (clothes, gadgets, books and so on), 1,200 empty C5 envelopes, and a fragmented sunset (clothes, gadgets, books and so on). My approach to this material wasn’t to reproduce the various performances of interrogations.


And Might-he begins with an investigation of the phenomenon of prepping. The people involved in this movement prepare meticulously for all kinds of disaster scenarios, from nuclear war to social collapse or home invasions. So the chest of drawers that looks so insignificant from the outside is really a potential lifesaver, a hole for you to hide away in, where sealing yourself in becomes necessary for your survival. However, the chest of drawers can also be regarded as a materialized, constant reminder of the ever-present threat of the unknown, a manifestation of paranoia, and thus in essence a mental cage.

In his book The Poetics of Space, Gaston Bachelard describes what he considers the main virtue of the house or home: its role as a shelter for the daydreamer. The house, says Bachelard, is our first world, the cradle of security in which we learn to daydream. It’s to these safety zones within the house we return in our memories to re-experience the warm light of childhood. If the house creates memories of security, that we are happy to keep returning to, and if it allows us to daydream and fantasize, it would seem reasonable to expect that it should also be able to create the opposite; memories we never want to return to, involuntary but recurring moments of discomfort.

Mike Kelley used Gaston Bachelard’s ideas about the safety zones in the house (under staircases, inside wardrobes, and cupboards etc.) as part of the basis for his work Educational Complexity (1995). 22 After reading the Poetics of Space, Kelley was wondering how Bachelard had been able to represent the fact that these safety zones were so tightly connected to traumas, and that this is why they occur so often in films and literature in the horror genre. 23 For Kelley, it’s the repressed parts of our psychology that are relevant to the idea of the sheltering house. Educational Complexity consists of a physical architectural model of all of the schools Kelley ever attended, as well as his childhood home and the church he belonged to as a child. The model is based entirely on Kelley’s memories of these spaces, and therefore contains gaps and empty spaces representing the parts of buildings that he no longer remembers. 24 In the work, Kelley connects these physical spaces to the theories of Repressed Memory Syndrome, which claim that early traumatic events are mentally blocked to make them inaccessible to the memory. Instead of viewing his childhood through a shimer of family nostalgia, he assumes that all the buildings and rooms he doesn’t remember are places where he experienced traumatic events. By filling these voids with dramatic fictions, Kelley inverts the traditional idea of the idealized childhood memory, and replaces it with something much worse. 25

Gregor Schneider’s Tötes Haus u r (1986-8) is another example of a work that involves and fragilely intervenes the conceptual pairings of architecture/psychology and architecture/memory. Since 1985, Schneider has been continuously altering and rebuilding his family’s house in Rheydt, Germany. 26 Schneider’s labors have converted what used to be an ordinary home into a maze-like nest of spaces. Walls have been moved, rooms have been erected within rooms, doors and windows have traded places. The pale sunlight that filters in between the curtains really comes from hidden fluorescent lights, and the breeze moving through the rooms is actually caused by fans. No two visits to the house are the same. Paul Schimmel describes how Schneider’s entire practice revolves around places with memories of events. Like the protagonist of Edgar Allan Poe’s short story The Tell-Tale Heart, who hides the hearts of his victims under the floorboards of his house, Schneider hides parts of the story inside the walls of his own, such as photographs of deceased relatives. 27

But what exactly is Schneider doing by continuously disturbing the house in Rheydt? The Japa- lise have a spatial concept, ma, that has no exact counterpart in western languages. Ma is simply the essence of a space, its value in itself and its unity. 28 It is the ma, the personality and essence of the house and the memories that go with them that Schneider is gradually eliminating? Is the character Tötes Haus u r slowly becoming a place with no memories, or in Kelley’s view, a space full of nothing but trauma? 29

Fiction and Space

“I am not observing the history that an object has; I am creating the history that the object has.” 30

Art spaces aren’t neutral. Whether we’re profes- sionally involved or just interested visitors, we enter art spaces with our own sets of preconcep- tions, opinions, and expectations. Of course, my work can never be presented in absolute isola- tion from historical or contextual references. Nor can they achieve some kind of absolute social accessibility within the art spaces. However, my work is founded on the conviction that the art space has the potential to play a relation to the works, has a potential role to play in the creation of meaning, just like the spaces that are created in or by the pages of a novel, or when a piece of music is played. The thing I have to accept, and seek to promote, is the viewer’s entitlement to her own experience.

JASON DODGE regards his own works in a way that I find to be consistent with my own conception of art, and that this is why they occur so often in films and art works. Dodge perceives an obvious con- nection between his sculptures and the written word, especially with the forms of poetry. Re- garding poetry as a reduced form of storytelling that uses existing words in succession to generate its own meaning, he claims that his sculptures and objects function similarly, but with physical objects instead of words. 31

A suite of art works that has become very impor- tant for my own work is Sten Eklund’s Kullahu- sets hemlighet. 32 A suite of art works that has become very impor- tant for my own work is Sten Eklund’s Kullahu- sets hemlighet. The suite consists of 52 color etchings and a number of objects, which together relate the story of the fictional Swedish artist Totes Haus u r, who hides the hearts of his victims under the floorboards of his house, Schneider hides parts of the story inside the walls of his own, such as photographs of deceased relatives. 33

But what exactly is Schneider doing by continuously disturbing the house in Rheydt? The Japa- nese have a spatial concept, ma, that has no exact counterpart in western languages. Ma is simply the essence of a space, its value in itself and its unity. 28 It is the ma, the personality and essence of the house and the memories that go with them that Schneider is gradually eliminating? Is the character Tötes Haus u r slowly becoming a place with no memories, or in Kelley’s view, a space full of nothing but trauma? 29

Fiction and Space

“I am not observing the history that an object has; I am creating the history that the object has.” 30

The work is a critique of the fixation with rational and measurable arguments that sometimes arises within the academic sciences. 31 My experience of Kullahuets hemlighet gave me an insight into physical space, objects, and im- ages as potential elements of fictional narratives, a kind of storytelling that I associate with literary or cinematic narration.

Narration, fiction, and space are also relevant aspects of the practices of Ilya Kabakov and Mike Nelson. However, I feel that both of these artists relate more directly to the iconographical aspects, and to the unitary, than do Dodge or Eklund. Despite the fact that Kabakov’s works often show a very strong political influence, un- like my own, his method involves presenting contro- versial biographies by means of physical cut-outs, which makes it a useful reference for my work.

Like Kabakov, Mike Nelson often works with spatial and dramatized narration. In the site-specific work A Psychic Vacuum (2007), Nelson turned a whole building on Essex Street in New York into a labyrinthine structure of rooms and corridors where the user was free to wander around. By relating the spaces to each other in various ways, and by varying their dimensions, textures and props, Nelson creates a complete architectural fiction that involves the viewer in a concrete and physical fashion.

My pieces, like Kabakov’s and Nelson’s, have points of contact with film and theatre sets. But my short stories don’t surround the viewer in the physical sense, they are the expressions of unfinished sentences, ephemeral narratives given in the hope that the viewer will elect to partici- pate and trust in their own subjective reading and understanding.

Johan Eldrot / Master of Fine Arts 2

Johan Eldrot / Master of Fine Arts 2
A friend moves

The bed provides a place where you can lie down, try to remember and understand what happened, wait for traces to appear so that you can pass them on.

When eyes are closed, the pupils try to keep up with you racing around in your dreams, without a stomach and back muscles. Falling from one thing to the next, with a force and logic that resemble your little sister on rollerblades. You may think that the bedroom is a private room, since you are always alone in your sleep, but the bedroom was the center of the house in the Middle Ages and now it seems to return as the center of habitation. In your neighborhood, several people have begun to stay in bed for socializing. The beds are large and there is room for more people who can lie and watch TV. You might not have a large bed, your apartment is too small, and that is why your bedroom is also the living room. You have built a wall of four bookshelves, which allows you to pretend that you are in a separate room while you sleep, and there are only streaks of light entering from the living room, through a new type of modern wall with holes. The bed can be very lively, and give the impression of being in motion, but that does not have to be the case. Provisions for sleeping have been arranged around bonfires and in shared communal rooms to save energy. Young Jae Lih tells you that in Korea it is still common to heat up only one room in the house. There is a stove on one side of the room, likely an oven, and pipes lead the smoke and heat underneath the floor, and eventually upwards, and out on the other side. It is common to lie on the warm floor, and sleep on beds, which are thin mats.

There is nothing worse for the morality than to occupy oneself with morality.

You move into an apartment where the previous tenant has forgotten to clean. You sweep, and several small objects lie on the dustpan. You do not know where they belong, so you stack them on top of each other. One accident leads to the next. You copy the objects. They become larger clay figures, which you cast into plaster molds. Into the molds, you pour a mix of lye and grease. The soap might look like powder, but expands when mixed with water. It can penetrate enzymes and cleanse fabrics you may have thought were flat and one-dimensional.

Soap is also called milk and can then straighten out wrinkles and pain from the skin.

On the nightstand you keep a piece of paper and a pencil so that you can stretch out an arm and draw sketches of beds. In the daylight you build, paint and cut wood. In the dark you evaluate whether the beds are good enough, bending your head like a painter, nodding and thinking, but without seeing much.
Bed

Even the most unfortunate finds, or improves a bed. The majority decides which beds are popular, and it influences your expectations for the bed. You think you can describe it from its functional qualities. Usefulness is rarely underestimated. Money wants to measure it, but here is nothing to count. There is no fancy or ergonomic matters. The bed is simply there. Made out of wood. And the trees do not bother with you. They grow completely regardless of you. For maybe thirty years the tree was growing together with several other trees. Before you were born it panicked when the trees nearby started to fall, as it knew that its time would come. Now, there are parts of that tree here, or maybe it is several trees, involuntarily compressed into a bed. If it stops being a bed, it will probably go back to being wood, and nobody knows what happens to all the wood. You are going to move together, and apart from others, from houses to apartments, to a small wooden box that someone will bury, but you can only imagine what has happened and will happen to the bed.

Things

It is not possible to find the essence of a thing, even if you describe it as thoroughly as you can. Words do not represent one thing, but groups of things and qualities of things. Words are also things. There is always something about the thing that has to be experienced and cannot be experienced and therefore it is also some humor in the attempt to catch it. This becomes clear to Iris when she is about to describe things on tape. She tries to listen to what the thing is saying, without analyzing it.

Drinking wine and water from the same glass

To Iris it is harder to describe the useless cotton ball half than the still usable glove “… And when I tried metaphors, the object sank so completely into the other thing that I abandoned making comparisons.” She puts the task aside. It can seem meaningless to describe something, when you are not coming closer, but what is the meaning in the meaningful?

In Need Some Meaning I Can Memorialize (The Invisible Pull) (2012) by Ryan Gander, you can see the wind in the hair and clothes of the spectators. The air is colourless and only visible when it moves a guest. The man who hires Iris in Hustvedt’s novel refuses to tell Iris anything about the life of the deceased. Iris should have as little information as possible about her, so that she will be able to describe and not interpret the thing. She tries to listen to what the thing is saying, without analyzing it.

Paul Valéry names the things he finds on the beach. He finds them as objects Ambigu. “These objects have shapes unlike any other. They seem natural, but at the same time constructed. They are concrete and manageable compared with the vague sea.”

John in Virginia Woolf’s short story Solid Objects (1920) notices a small object along the beach. He slips it into a pocket in his pants. He studies and admires the object, puts it on the fireplace shelf, and abandons everything else that he is doing. There are enough challenges in the new discovery, which are concrete and manageable compared with the vague sea.


2. Ibid., p. 21.

3. “...pleased him; it puzzled him; it was so hard, so concentrated, so definite an object compared with the vague sea and the hazy shore.” Virginia Woolf, Solid Objects (London, 1920).

4. Paul Valéry, Objets Ambigu, ou l’Architecte Invisible Pull (2012) by Ryan Gander, you can see the wind in the hair and clothes of the spectators. The air is colourless and only visible when it moves a guest. The man who hires Iris in Hustvedt’s novel refuses to tell Iris anything about the life of the deceased. Iris should have as little information as possible about her, so that she will be able to describe and not interpret the thing. She tries to listen to what the thing is saying, without analyzing it.

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what Valéry dramatically calls a graveyard. There is also an accumulation of broken bits and pieces along roads and railways, in trashcans, and inside vacuum cleaner bags.

People looking over the ocean, rarely have something to say, but then they pick up one of these things and walk on. Valéry thinks that poetry first of all should have a sudden, unusual, and overwhelming emotional effect on the reader. He is interested in a mathematical formula that he believes exists within the objects, and which can be used to create new works with the same effect. He prefers Wagner’s calculated emotional buildup to Bach, who just continues endlessly. But is it not the vain in things that make them seem ambiguous. Something you cannot pass on. You copy heartlessly, wear out the soap forms, but you do not despair until you glimpse the outcome of the actions you are repeating. In Mrs. Dalloway (1925) by Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dallowy describes “… a wonderful play about a man who scratched on the wall of his cell, and she had felt that was true of life – one scratched on the wall…” It is in the moment you find a purpose for the motion that the activity turns unnecessary again or when you think you know the wall and what is behind it.

Cells (1991) by Absalon looks like magnified bits and pieces. The sculptures are logical, yet difficult to place. They do not seem monumental although some of them are quite large. They are white and the surface of the item is neutralized by the color, and makes the angles distinct. Things consist of atoms, which consist of many empty spaces where electrons orbit a nucleus. It gets difficult and too theoretical for you to grasp, but when you see the sculptures of Absalon, it seems quite logical that all things possess a great amount of empty space. John and Charles look at the same thing, but see different things, and it is the things’ ability to transform that makes them solid.

Divan

There are a lot of paintings of women on divans. Painters have loved to study women together with divans, and contributed to the objectification of both. It is not possible to understand another, or how it generally feels to lie on a divan. Sigmund Freud describes the value of the individual relationship between patient and therapist. He discovers that the ego grows when you identify with someone. Freud’s patients lie on a divan, and may talk about what they want, when they want, by what he calls free association. The memory leaks into the dreams, but seldom vice versa. What you have dreamed almost always disappears immediately after you wake up. Some rare and uncomfortable dreams stay with you throughout the day. Others you want to remember and therefore you draw them down. But when you look at the paper a few days later the drawing seems alien, the dream has escaped from your memory. Freud describes how someone who is lying halfway stretched, can more easily open up to the subconscious, while simultaneously being conscious enough to describe what they may access. Also Marcel Proust went to bed (early) to compose what he remembered from his life. The realistic and sincere stories are as true as the absurd and unrealistic you can experience while dreaming.

Sol LeWitt also proposes a kind of free association in the fifth sentence of Sentences on Conceptual Art, which says that irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically. Your ideas do not have to be carried out, but can be fulfilled in your mind or by someone else. The artist is a mystic and the mystic shows us the absurd quality in the world. Sentences on Conceptual Art is not an easy manual for making. The sentences confuse you. The artist leaps to conclusions that logic cannot reach.

Chairs

You sit on chairs. But you can also have your legs laying on one, or stand on top of it. Most chairs are standing indoors, often in front of a table. Chairs have been presented in exhibition spaces to be viewed, but also to sit on for the visitors in a museum and for the guard in a private gallery. In the Kunsthalle you have visited, or private galleries there is usually only chairs if there is also a video work on display. There are games related to chairs, where they are located and who are allowed to sit and rise. A sick person is often tied to a bed. But if you are sentenced to death, you are forced to sit up and take the penalty.
One of the chairs in the studio is firm and has a long straight back that makes it very comfortable to rest your back against, but the seat is a bit too low. You have a chair in light leather, which is too smooth, and you always slip out of it without noticing, and thus become uneasy as soon as you sit down. You have another leather chair that has soft leather, and some very good, soft pillows that you can sink into. Most leather furniture is cold, but this is not cold, the leather resembles fabric, the back is long, and your head positions itself close to the top of the chair's back. One of the chairs in the kitchen has a loose connection between the back and the seat. You do not understand why you have not fixed, or burned it. Everyone hates sitting on it, still it is placed by the table as any other chair. 

About keeping the erotic excitement in bureaucratic situations

You place the beds on the floor alongside the walls of a gallery, as the most primitive form of interior design. You stack the soaps on top of each other in a pile. You turn off the neon lights in the exhibition room to keep track of time with help from the light outside… everything is the same except composition and time, composition and the time of the composition and the time in the composition.14

Beds do not communicate, but they make it easier to interact. It is where you feel at rest. Beds do not communicate, but they make it possible to immerse oneself in something. Criticism to see what something might signify in a larger context and structure.16

You lie down in bed if you feel sick, tired, or due to resignation, in cases of acute panic, or despair. You lie down to demonstrate. You lie down your work. You lie down and hope that someone cares for you. You are not one of those who run or drink when you feel upset. You lie down, and if it is really bad, you are not able to get up again. Hospitals are filled with beds. This is perhaps when the world will die. You end every day in the bed, and it is the first place you encounter when you wake up. It is also the first place you leave each morning. Mostly it feels like a riot.

The bed is a horizon when viewed from the side, and the duvet forms mountains and valleys. You tend to stay horizontally in bed, beneath white sheets, with a clear view to the ceiling, which is also an empty surface. On a sheet of paper by the bed, lies a pile of sketches. You may wish that your bed could speak to you, and you are pretty quiet, and therefore it also continues to arrest your attention.

The sculpture mediates with gravity. It is a long lasting love affair. An engagement. The sculpture is anchored into this sphere, much like the greek warrior Sophanes who in the battle of Plataea in 479 B.C. fought a battle with an iron anchor fastened with chain to his cuirass. 2

Other accounts say that he bore the anchor on his shield which he perpetually kept whirling around at his enemies. A sculpture is something that if it falls on your foot, it will break it.3

A sculpture is a little private garden. It was never invited and it is always in the way. The sculpture is never seen alone. It is not like other mediums which can be contained within its own size. The sculpture, much related to architecture, reaches as far as sight as it is always a composition. A moving image as one moves, a steady landscape seen in waves. A sculpture does not exist in a vacuum. An artist who does sculpture is always collaborating. It is a series of gestures. Nature being the first collaborator, a blanket of new and ancient gestures. Then the architect makes his moves on top of nature, and human nature wear them in Behavioral strokes. Then the artist comes in last, does the last gesture; the sculpture, the art work. Due to its specificity it is inherently connected to its surroundings, unlike the painting which can exist in its own autonomy. The world seeps into the sculpture. The world is inseparable from the sculpture. There is a transaction between the sculpture and the world. If the sculpture is large enough you don’t need a pedestal. The world is the pedestal. Without the sculpture it is empty.

TIRIL HASSELKNIPPE
Sculpture

“A sculpture is something that if it falls on your foot, it will break it.”

John Chamberlain

A sculpture is an invasive act, a persistent stranger. It was never invited and it is always in the way.

The relationship with the sculpture is like a marriage. The initial stages of production and exhibiting is like dating. A courtship. Prancing. The report gets told and documented. But the afterlife is substantial. And storage is marriage.

The sculptures are most often dependent upon joints and installation methods based on gravity and the pull of gravity. They balance by their own weight and at times the balance is so delicate the sculpture might fall down or deact at any point during the exhibition period. Especially, of course, if a viewer were to get frisky with it. I always imagine the sculpture falling down at someones feet, its collapse, its crash. There is a joy in the instability that someone would destroy it, and thereby change its agency. A strange sense of relief. Installation and construction means steel entering wood, steel supporting weight, vinyl stretched foam, sand on a welded steel. The gravity of the sculpture marries the solidity of the physical. The sculpture is a thing. A being with autonomy.

The sculptures are obviously by hugging the architecture. It is standing there leaning on everything. The sculpture has a longing. It longs to stand upright. It craves the sculpture might fall down or deact at any point during the exhibition period. Especially, of course, if a viewer were to get frisky with it. I always imagine the sculpture falling down at someones feet, its collapse, its crash. There is a joy in the instability that someone would destroy it, and thereby change its agency. A strange sense of relief. Installation and construction means steel entering wood, steel supporting weight, vinyl stretched foam, sand on a welded steel. The gravity of the sculpture marries the solidity of the physical. The sculpture is a thing. A being with autonomy.

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Tiril Hasselknippe / Master of Fine Arts 2

Couches series
2013
Installation view
Dimension variable
There are notions here that nature is evil, and culture is mad, yet it remains a sense of belonging to motion picture optimism. A filmic beauty as a still life. A composition that was superimposed by the use of flash in low-light conditions, as if through all existence comes a separate sense of normalcy. Revelatory ocean colors next to the flat wall paper and spray paint offers an experience of the ocean breeze within the vacuum. The repetitious patterns are done fast, mixing expressions of utmost esoteric symbolism via vandalism, and abstract painting. Though the works negate the three-dimensional in many ways, the gestures themselves hold on to their sculptural presence.

The series continues through the course of a few years where the Los Angeles Fire Department uses the former Life Guard house for fire drills, making the canvas ever more decrpt and darkened. New paintings composed together with new sunsets in an early decay very much paints the changing nature of infrastructure in California. Houses never built for history and history seemingly never going too far back in time. The film set is closer to reality than unreality. Cardboard boxes isolated with paper. Production and destruction intertwined. The pull between the eternity of the ocean and the vacuum of the desert keeps the energy in a specific mode where color is fugitive and structures who rest for too long die. Never presented as an installation the process forever remains within the photographs. It is a secret, a mystic memory that was never yours but now is ours. Eternal love.

I made camouflaged patterned parkas based on a landscape sculpture of inverted mountains. A white cavernous landscape. I made a landscape model of the inverted mountains, providing an aerial view, an abstraction. A sculpture as a painting by the eye. A sculpture as a walk-in painting. A revolving collage of art, work, and space. Jacques Tati’s movies extensively used models and temporary architecture as collages. Moving models around, and moving around models. He had much affection for the set. The objects and surroundings are actors. The lighting and color plays in your retina. This is the dialogue.

It was an extensive process of casting and getting the negative and then the positive of the mold, as...
Tiril Hasselknippe

Creation is more like an ever growing pyramid

Going rouge.

camouflage patterns in clothing as a genuine

So the camouflage parkas is a double hide, a

The jacket is the screen, a surface to project the

to silk screen the white Gore-Tex and assemble

photos of the landscape sculpture. I proceeded

The camouflage pattern was drawn from the

mid of innovations. All the bad and all the good

selection comes after. we all try to make good of

were not created in a sphere of greatness. The

If you cannot feel it, it isn’t there.

move its physicality it is hard to assess what it is.

A sculpture is a physical thing. w hen you re-

isn’t made alone. No new is an island. New is

exist. Perhaps we need to realize that the new

on the individual. So we ridicule its meaning

that creates the drama. It puts too much pressure

But all this end up in a game of words. Until the

isn’t something else.

Polyester resin is a cross linked material, and

when casting larger pieces it is a scary process

because of an enormous hydraulic pressure. It is big

and it is heavy. Storage is the ultimate marriage.

But it is also fragile. With tender, love and care

the surface starts to disappear, you are suddenly

looking right into the being. Into the core and

past it. A painting of air. A love affair between

the sea and the sky. A gradient giant.

I welded a car steel sculpture.10 A model car and

proposal. A sculpture with two sides mirroring

each other, where the mid section is missing. I

of recreation, a social piece of furniture, and the

to a language of a furniture fair than that of the

posals for couches, perhaps rather in con nection

was later removed when the sand had set and the

structure base bolted into the the concrete floor,

made a caryatid sculpture consisting of a steel

strength of the body was the sculpture, and the

strength of the sculpture became the pillar. I

of protection and transport. But it also carries

protection. Shielded limbs moving fast forward.

of the body, a vessel. Its aesthetic is one of

was dropped all pedals at the very last moment.

and Louise canyon cruise.

road from the steep vertical decline of the hazy

foot on the gas pedal and thought I was about

rental the GMC ended up off angle. I decided to

rectify the car. I put the gear stick in reverse yet

it somehow still stayed in drive. So as I put my

foot on the gas pedal and thought I was about
to back away from the ledge the truck sprang up

on the curb like a buck and straight into the low

brick wall. It was all that divided the road from

the steep vertical decline of the hazy

basin. We jumped. Jolted. Bricks flew.

The car and I were about to do a full-on Thelma

and Louise canyon cruise.

A ballet of certain endings. A flight. A crash.

I dropped all pedals at the very last moment.

The car is the ultimate sculpture. The car could

be the ultimate sculpture. It is a thing that works

sculpturally very well. But it is also an exten-

sion of the body, a v eil. Its aesthetic is one of

protection. Shielded limbs moving fast forward.

It is a coexistence, a merger of bodies. An agent

of protection and transport. But it also carries

the agency of death. A possible weapon. In few

objects are life and death so casually intertwined.

An armor that becomes a shield that becomes a

spear. A sword cutting through air, an axe crush-

ing gravity. A pendulum between light hearted

travel and death in a ditch. Once inside it you

emotional and visceral ecstasy and a sense of

total oneness. To have the experience of awe is to

let go of yourself. Escaping the sense of separa-

Corporal translucence. This interactivity

is not something new, but it is however very important.

A manifestation of the whole. This is what it takes to build a civilization.

The reverse

A refuse of use. Look at the couch as a sculpture

where the intent is function, and the function is an

act of devotion. When intent and function finally

disintegrates you are left with a formal being that

is itself and possess its specific presence and output.

We are searching for their astral bodies. The

sculpture has a surplus value that exceeds the materials

and context. The sculpture is as alien as it is fami-

iliar. A sculpture knows how it feels to be alien.

The couches series is an exercise in sculpture, form and construction.13 They are individual pro-

posals for couches, perhaps rather in connection to a language of a furniture fair than that of the

white cube. we meet the couch, the sculpture of recreation, a social piece of furniture, and the

extension of the corporeal body.

The fake leather skin, the steel and wood

skeleton, and foam muscles. It is modular, rest-

ing temporal. But the humanization of the

sculptures is not the destination. We are questing

for their inner beings.

The sculpture is not the artist. The sculpture is

something else.

Slab by De Wain Valentine is a tall wedge shaped

sculpture cast in a transparent purple with beige

undertones.14 Because of its form it is quite clear at

the top and more heavily pigmented at the bottom.

Much like the sky where it was cast in Venice Beach, California, its transparency appears to be clouded by the smog, creating an attractive effect of light and air diffusion. This smog is a substance within the polyester resin

Valentine developed, it is the duality of lumino-

sity and opacity being present at the same time

that creates a floating effect. It is the air and the

sky mixed with personalized surfboards and

customized cars. A sculpture with a relationship with the body, a presence. An aura. A being.
The body
A body without the body, without a photo of it, one can imagine the eye behind it, follow with the eyes and see the different foci. Angles, the eyes move everywhere—up-, down- across- along-close. Anselm Kiefer at Hamburger Bahnhof, his imposing works that overwhelm me with all that body in the works. It gives me presence and shows how even the serious work is made beautiful by size.

When one cannot discern the demarcation or sense the body, where it stops or its size—like a ghost—only eyes. Treatment by body therapy consists of exercises allowing one to feel the body, pat—notice—touch, articulate it, genuinely basic, get to know the body and acknowledge it.

When everything howls and storms, when the hell of psychosis turns up, weight can generate calm, even on a mind-numbing February day without clarity, just foggy and misty. The weight of the ball blanket at night distributes itself and calms the body, which can then surrender to sleep.

In ‘Kroppens fortællinger’ (‘Tales of the body’), Tove Hvid speaks about the body being marked in the same way as the mind, which does not either continue unaffected following traumatic experiences. The body remembers our stories. Hvid gives concise descriptions of what the body looks like before a given treatment: “The body has protected itself in a suit made of muscle [...]; the head is held high by the neck muscles, because it won’t do to lose it”.

In my degree exhibition, Sweet Sixteen—“kunneellers være sjovt” (“Sweet sixteen—could have been fun”), one of the components was an 11-metre long salon style exhibition containing a variety of pictures, but without people in them. There are a dog and a cat, a dead hare, a spinal column, and legs that stick out of a body of water. This made up one of the two rooms of the exhibition.

The primary story of the exhibition is from my teenage years but it has many threads leading to today; there are stories of different kinds and lengths. The stories are told in titles that can be read in the survey overview.

In summary, I was a political activist and my focus was on politics— I shared this with my friends, socially and in school.

The schism for me is the rape in Amsterdam and a few months later a violent assault, outside the political sphere—the autonomous invincibility could be broken and I became like many other young people, a victim of abuse and I didn’t dare tell anyone about it.

The time afterwards was like being on a bender, my confidence (in myself) was broken and I became rootless in earnest. Twenty years later, these violations are a generator for starting up my production of works and provide a point of reference for my graduation exhibition.

Image 3, Easter 1994: We were dropped off, it had taken 24 hours to hitchhike, it was a fun trip in many different cars.

Image 4, Amsterdam Central Station, where we, all five of us, had agreed to meet. Mobile phones

A sculpture is always dying. Gravity is the promise of the ground. The slow hunch builds over time. Time is the veil and the ocean. Art is the promise of gods. Divinity and devotion goes together. The balance between expansion and termination is subtle still.

A car is stuck at the bottom.
and email, social media were not at our disposal, so there was nothing for it but to wait until we were all assembled.

Image 10, We went out to the house occupied by squatters and waited until someone came home. A picture of the street sign on the wall of a house.

In a project like mine I have several times thought about the staged action artwork (det iscenesatte handlingsværk), which Susan Hinnum’s Ph.D. thesis from 2002 used as a catalyst to examine the Danish art scene in the 1990s. She makes connections to Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics, which, in brief, is about the need for seeing an art work in relation to its time and surroundings, such as its social space. Hinnum goes further and puts the artist’s use of his or her own experiences into a concept that she terms ‘the staged action artwork’. Hinnum speaks of “an artistic expression that can be confused with our own everyday existence, and where we are confronted with various aspects of everyday life, staged within an artistic discourse”.

“A particular artistic expression, in which a documentation of the artist’s own life functions as an emphasised element in the artistic statement.”

For this reason it is suggested that the staged action artwork should not be understood in relation to experimenting with the concept of art, but rather in searching among topics for art, inclusive of the artist’s own private sphere.”

After having resumed my studies, after a leave of absence of several years, I received encouragement to search for possible works in my own history. I started by examining madness, other mad people, and working-class artists. Exactly how I discovered my own abuse stories I cannot remember but I wrote about them. I have written them through characters in order to in this manner provide various views, viewpoints on the story.

“Staged action artworks cannot be characterised by any particular form, because it is their content that is important. The content determines the form. They are works that rather than adhering to formal aspects explore our different life contexts and challenge our social and cultural self-understanding. Here the exhibition locale becomes a laboratory for the creation of experience.”

At first I sent the texts to one of my best friends, who is also an artist, unedited and without sections. It was exactly like some authors speak of; I couldn’t wait. There were heart poundings – uh, it was transgressive; it ended by my calling her. I asked if she had any comments; the first thing she said was that it was difficult to read because I am her friend, but she thought it could provide good material for works.

“The works often take as their point of departure the personal world of experiences of the artists, and in the same way they also address the viewers’ own worlds.”

The texts are written in different voices. This takes place in Amsterdam, where I was raped when I was sixteen years old. I have tried to set up the premise by writing like two young men, creating a prose and using the power of dramaturgy. In the text some of the story is told by a young man who lives in the house occupied by squatters where we stayed during our trip. He is the observer:

It’s been a pretty regular day, we have been out putting up posters. All across Amsterdam, but tonight we’ll have a drink and some loud music. At our last house meeting we decided to clean up a bit around here, not so many old beer bottles all over the place.

When we got back from putting up posters there were five people outside the house, four guys and a girl. They have hitchhiked from Copenhagen; they sat outside in the old furniture we’ve chucked out by the road. They seem very nice, they glow with the readiness to have one wild trip. They went on to Barcelona this morning.

When we get back from putting up posters there were five people outside the house, four guys and a girl. They have hitchhiked from Copenhagen; they sat outside in the old furniture we’ve chucked out by the road. They seem very nice, they glow with the readiness to have one wild trip. Jesus had written down our address in their house, Børnehuset (’the Children’s House’, a house for squatters and anti-authoritarian activism) in Copenhagen.
They smoke a lot; all the time one of them, who is American, rolls cigarettes – he’s a cool guy. Then there are three dark-haired boys who all look alike – could they be siblings? The girl looks like a circus, she’s full of colour, has tolerant and curious eyes.

Tonight we’ll have a party and get to know our new friends. Andreas, Christian, and Ray want to go out and get some shrooms, Thure and I will stay for the party in the house. Today the house is gone; the picture shows a view from the street in 2012.

We put some punk on the stereo, loud and noisy – that’s the only way to listen to music. I sit and watch the girl, there are only two people sitting there, the others have gone in to town for some techno and whatever is on offer there. It’s the tallest of them who’s together with the girl. They laugh, smoke, and drink pure alcohol – nice people, they offer me some. The music is raw, we all sit in a circle, the others from the house are also here.

The other voice in the text is the rapist’s. He talks about how he raped:

It’s hard to say why I did it, did I ruin her evening? No way, I gave her an unforgettable evening. I just felt like it, and then I don’t give a damn about what she wants. One of the others shows her the bathroom, I go down there and wait until she comes out.

I can see she’s very drunk, so it will be easy. I grab her when she gets out of the bathroom. She said, No, I want to go back to the others. I’ll show you something, no she said again I want to go back to the others. Grabbed her hard, so that she realized that I meant it.

My archive is modest in comparison, yet still usable. It has suffered from my lack of stability, my not having my own home, water damage, and holes, as P.S. Krøyer called his depressions. It will be interesting to get the archive together and be master in my own house; it has been a very long time since I have dared to do that.

Image 16. The jacket from my youth as an autonomous Marxist. The jacket is authentic, I almost always wore it. It was a fun reunion; for me time means a great deal, it gives me security and makes fear go to hell, to speak candidly.

Image 14. Security. My archive is not just made up of paper, there are a few things left, among them the wall clock from my graduation exhibition. Earlier the clock chimed every half hour in my godmother’s and godfather’s flat; we lived on the ground floor and they on the first floor, so that sound is old and very soothing.
The clock was part of the salon style exhibition and it helped greatly in allowing me to dare to watch over the exhibition alone. In addition there was someone who said that not a living soul would come to the exhibition; that helped with my courage and it ended up being rather nice – new encounters – I chatted with several people.

Mod mut courage 12

Image 19, Fear-suppressing tools, like a cannonball in the stomach. Oatmeal porridge gives me weight so that I stand more firmly when I’m going forth to fight windmills.

Image 23, A lack of focus gives me room to manoeuvre, especially outside. I often make use of the technique of coming out, so that the impersonal relationship is maintained. It’s friendly to great people everywhere, but for me it becomes that much harder to be out on a bad day.

Image 13, A terror-suppressing tool, it can only make a single journey at a time. The elevator in the school is slow, but it is a more fearless way of reaching my studios.

Image 2, Pigs. Last summer I was on my way out to hang up the laundry; our little dog that wants to get there first and wham – knocks over the basket of pegs on the lawn. I went in first to get the camera and hung up the laundry afterwards.

Image 12, Nectarine. Yet another summer scene taken at the same time as the picture of the cat Katter out in my office in the garden room. A visual point of reference.

Image 29, Cat and dog – Cove, actually. I get a good deal of security and stability from keeping pets; my therapist tells me that I must fight the anxiety with each unmanageable task. I don’t always succeed, but the animals are taken care of.

Image 30, A handstand in the Norwegian countryside, again I try to defy the depth of my mind. This is from 2008, during a wilderness trek taken after I had lost two people who gave me security. We walked and walked; I was completely wasted, so when we reached the cabins there wasn’t much opportunity for card games or cabin cosiness. One of the evenings I saw on the list of supplies that one could get reindeer; I envisioned it a la Ousobuco – it was not, it was a big can of dog food – bon appétit!

Image 24, Loft. In my presentation after the summer to my graduation advisor I had a picture of a large deserted house near here. Here I envisioned a good image of a loft, perhaps with a single light source and cobwebs, etc. It wasn’t a good image – it wasn’t exciting. I had even taken the dog and my mother with me, because I didn’t dare to go in alone. I took several pictures of the two of them; they are also curious, you see. The photo ended up being taken in the attic at home, filled with all things under the sun and a single light source. The detour was again necessary.

Pictures of flowers are immortal gardens 16

In Sweet Sixteen – “know ellsers save jest”. I had four titles with floral subject matter. There were forty-four different-sized pictures of flowers, ready to be displayed in the salon style exhibition. The purpose was to give me the necessary security and thus the courage to exhibit my works. When all the pictures had been hung it became clear that there was no need for additional flowers other than the four previously mentioned.

Image 1, Hibiscus, from when I turned 30 in Hawaii. The oldest picture in the exhibition, taken in April 2007. I was an exchange student at the Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver. I stayed together with six young men who were not students of the visual arts like I thought, but volleyball players who studied at the University of British Columbia. They thought I was a man, so the confusion was total. It was a good experience and interesting to see a world that has a view of the Pacific Ocean and to take a little side trip to Hawaii in the middle of it all.

Image 8, Chicory – my granddad often called coffee ‘chicory’. Chicory was used as a coffee substitute during the German occupation. Chicory is an attractive blue flower that can often be found in roadside ditches in Lolland.

Image 9, Livingroom can be put into the cracks, to ensure that one has a long life. I read that in a biography of Hans Christian Andersen; it gave my intuitive use of flowers more backbone. Based on pure superstition, his mother put livingroom into the cracks of rafters, because if they kept growing there, one could count on living for a long time. 13 I looked at the helpfulness of some of the other flowers and the superstition surrounding them, borrowed a load of books from the library, and after a few pages noted dryly that it is not there that I have my interest in flowers.

Image 17, Anemone – in Lolland I picked it. I took the pictures out here in the nearby forest. Kai Munk14 wrote ‘Den blå anemone’ (‘The blue anemone’) in 1943. A good spring song that I often sing matches of.

Image 22, The quiet calm of the forest, a paraphrase of the song ‘I skovens dybe stille re’ ‘In the deep quiet calm of the forest’, which continues, “where dwell the singing hosts, where my soul listened many a time”. Living in Lolland, out in the country, close to the forest, is one of the healthiest things I have done.

When I inherited a collection of flowers that had been used as an inspiration for painting porcelain, I hung many of the flowers up in the studio. That was in 2005.

Another aspect of the flowers is the tradition that floral pictures are a part of; they were counted as women’s art. In pictorial art we have had several important artworks dealing with floral subject matter; in the nineteenth century especially, several artists have gone down in art history, albeit often accompanied by sarcastic, condescending comments. Flowers were formerly considered to be on the lowest rung in the hierarchy of subjects and they constituted a sanctuary for women’s creativity, that they were not begrudged – after all, it was the only thing that was not beyond them. 17 Anna Syberg’s brother contemporary called her, Alhed Larsen, and Christine Larsen Swane ‘the flower ladies’. 18 One of the other prominent women artists, Miss Christine M. Lawmand, painted floral pictures between 1827 and 1872, she participated in the spring exhibition approximately yearly. 19

Winter’s Child

“There is magic in role models.” 20 That is also why the task of dusting off the work of female artists is important. The understanding of the individua in the wide and the wider context. 21

Dea Trier Mørch has always been with me; her graphic art hung at home and her books are still in the bookcase; she valued creating works for the majority of the people. Her lines are crude but precise and figurative; she illustrated the books herself. She studied at the ‘Copenhagenagacademy’ [the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts]; later she continued her studies in academies in countries that were members of the Warsaw Pact; Warsaw, Krakow, Belgrade, Prague, and Leningrad, 22 which was not a common route to take. I admire her drive and her faith in socialism, which subsequently has been denounced. 23

In the book Winter’s Child, which takes place in a maternity ward and is written in riveting prose, she relates through several characters how anxiety-ridden the waiting time is in the pregnancy section prior to delivery. Everyone hopes for the best and supports each other. Admissions to a psychiatric ward have several times given me associations to Winter’s Child. 24 The book was groundbreaking when it was originally published in 1976; it was made into a film in 1978, directed by Astrid Henning-Jensen.

We are all standing on the shoulders of great forerunner women and men; in two years from now women will have had the right to vote for the Folketing, the Danish national parliament, for a century. It is of value to me that there are three leading women in the government – that is well
Sweet Sixteen – “kunne
ellers være sjovt”
2012
Installation view
Dimensions variable
done for a relatively short time. In personal terms, I will be, hopefully, the first academic in my immediate family; as in Lisbeth S. Andersen’s book, we can write our own history in parallel to ‘History’.25

Margrethe Vestager, the Danish Finance Minister, said on the radio when she was asked about women in power that there were very few women present when she attended a meeting at the Copenhagen Stock Exchange, and that men are still in control of the money. When she, later the same day, visited a fashion fair, the reverse was the case.

“Wouldn’t it be great if there (in general) simply was a mixture of men and women?” 26

Quite recently there was a headline in an online newspaper:

“I felt guilt about having been raped.” 28

The article is about a young woman on her way home, who takes a shortcut through a park. Afterwards she was so anxious and shattered by the rape that she cut off her hair in order to protect herself.

Before my educational trip around Europe I had shaved my head, because I sought a position without too much romantic attention. Now I claim that people with shaved heads aren’t romantic, but that’s not really true; when it comes down to it we probably all are, but to me it felt easier to travel alone with my head shaved.

Out on the Lido, my head shaved and facing the Grand Hotel des Bains,30 Eva Hjorth photographed me while I waved. The other photos we took during that period were also pictures of waving. In 2002 she and I received grants for young artists. 31 The work was entitled, Vi ser/ Vi ses (‘we see/See you’) and was an installation consisting of water pipes and four 1:1 pictures of me waving; one could make it swing, so movement was added – a festive touch.

It was a powerful symbol and demanded strength to have a shaved head, but it also gave me space to be, when I was at the beginning of my twenties. Now I am ‘hundred’ and luckily I don’t get the same attention in discreet clothes and hair.

The horror of the assault, that produces emptiness inside and fuels the fear. Being human and being humane after an assault is very difficult, but from my perspective time is an important element. In most wars rape has been a weapon. There are horrible descriptions of this following the Second World War. Women were also targets and were raped as part of the punishment for being belligerents. The amazing thing was that they all got over it and were able to look ahead, in spite of traumas. Afterwards they continued rebuilding their countries and for that I feel an eternal admiration.

In a paper about rape as a weapon of war the topic is the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. This paper is absolutely horrible – all that hardship and those terrible events. It gives a completely different perspective than does the abuse I have experienced and know of.

In the paper it says that rape creates a feeling that one is a pariah: “She becomes an outcast, a ‘piece of shit’.” 33 At the same time, rapists in the Yugoslav Wars were also forced many times to humiliate other people in order to remain part of the military force; a Brotherhood of Guilt. This war between neighbours, family members, and coreligionists makes it topical to focus on negotiations and diplomacy. This was around twenty years ago – we still have similar conflicts: Tahrir Square, Syria, Libya, India, Mali, and many other places.

I think of Hannah Arendt’s ‘banality of evil’,34 about all those of us who are not role models in conflicts, we who are the silent majority, we who let things happen, wash our hands, and hope for peace. Here we forget that we as a community are just as much a part of the attacking force as the soldiers we send ahead to the trenches/bastions.

If I disappear 35

Earphones on, thirty-five years old – see you later, my Danish flag! 36

A room of sound establishes a premise, calm–security–concentration, and limits my thoughts
to the topic. I am wearing earphones and am that thirty-five years old, in my ears blares Zaki Youssef’s ‘Hvis jeg forsvinder’ at the same time that this text is being written. A view over the fields, the pets within two square meters. I live in the house that has a dog lying in the window.

Sound in works created with my own hands began with a conceptual text video, where the text “Tænk selv engang” (‘Just think for yourself!’) had been written. The sound was a recording of a person typing on a typewriter.

For my graduation exhibition Sweet Sixteen – “Kvane elleve male ejer” the sound didn’t merely produce a space, but called forth in the refrain an oppositional relationship between the seen and the heard. The sound aspect was a recording from a computer with songs about sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds. The recording was done by an old analogue mixed tape method, where the radio plays and the tape recorder records the sounds in the room – in this way one can hear both the songs and my presence in the room on the CD. Its insistence on the text “‘Tænk selv engang’ had been written. The sound was a recording of a person typing on a typewriter.

1. ‘Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen’ – Neil Sedaka
2. ‘Sixteen’ – Iggy Pop
3. ‘Sweet Little Sixteen’ – Chuck Berry
4. ‘Only Sixteen’ – Dr. Hook
5. ‘Sweet Sixteen’ – Buddy Holly
6. ‘When you were Sweet Sixteen’ – The Fureys
7. ‘Bare seksten år’ (‘only sixteen years old’) – & davie Art
8. ‘Sixteen’ – The Fureys

In contrast to these characters, the salon style exhibition in the other room is about the after-math that follows when, as a young teenager, one finds oneself in situations over which one has no control. Situations one cannot get out of. It could have been fun. It just wasn’t. ‘The images are as neutral and impersonal as can be imagined – any bookkeeper could have been behind the camera’ 20

In 2000 I got my own analogue single-lens reflex camera. The first, not yet shown, photographic work I did was in connection with reading the Danish edition of The Second Sex by Simone de Beauvoir. The book ends with the statement that “men and women unequivocally affirm their brotherhood.” 21 The last four words were printed onto bed-clothes and photographed in a bedroom environment; at the same time I photographed the last page of the book.

My gaze homes in on the little events of the immediate environment. I have taken to heart the aesthetics of the German artist Wolfgang Tillmans, 22 but we have a different range of subjects. He travels around the world partying; you can’t say that I do that – is there a more boring picture than that of the elevator or the ferry port at Tårn? I answer myself and say no, here I differ from Wolfgang Tillmans, because I insist on the significance of a title. He sticks to terse titles; I don’t. I have not yet shown a picture when they threw me out, beaten and violated, at the ferry landing at Tårn. At the same time I photographed the last page of the book.

The picture is an illustration of the dNA molecule, spiralling and entangled. The face of madness wrapping itself around my spine like a row and a voluminous title: The face of madness wrapping itself around my spine like an illustration of the DNA molecule, spiralling and entangled. I answer myself and say no, here I differ from Wolfgang Tillmans, because I insist on the significance of a title. He sticks to terse titles; I don’t. I have not yet shown a picture when they threw me out, beaten and violated, at the ferry landing at Tårn. At the same time I photographed the last page of the book.

Image 15, from my graduation exhibition was photographed during a walk with the dog across the fields, down here in Lolland in 2010, and has then been put in the archive. This picture could probably be accounted for as a mark of my academic training – some symbols are more powerful than others.

Image 20, The day after: have probably never before this, had such a bad day – raped – don’t dare tell anyone about it. The boys want to see the sights and have a good time – enjoy life – Flah!

The picture is an illustration of the dNA molecule, spiralling and entangled. The face of madness wrapping itself around my spine like an illustration of the DNA molecule, spiralling and entangled. I answer myself and say no, here I differ from Wolfgang Tillmans, because I insist on the significance of a title. He sticks to terse titles; I don’t. I have not yet shown a picture when they threw me out, beaten and violated, at the ferry landing at Tårn. At the same time I photographed the last page of the book.

There was a visitor who asked about my method. I had time to think about it while she saw the exhibition. I have one method, I take many pictures of the same subject and select accordingly. For that reason it has a decisive look about it, I think. They appear finished and they are to some extent.

Image 6, A hand that grasps up and down my side. It gave the revenues new fuel, 2008. This picture is from the regional train, the Øresundståg, after having experienced an assault. My defence was to take a photo of the place where the hand ran up and down my side, between the seat and the window ledge. Today I prefer to sit up against the wall or scan the compartment for the, in my view, ‘harmless’ fellow passenger.

Image 27, On my return from the trip I come home to a family party – it is my birthday – honey… I took this picture last year on my thirty-fifth birthday, the only photo I have in the archive with a flag and presents.

Image 26, We hitchhike to Odense, where the boys remains behind. ‘I am going home.’ A gross man stops the car before the ferry landing and begins to grasp me – I run out of the car and ride home with a truck driver. A picture from the ferry landing at Tårn. That also I got a Kodak moment out of the effort is surely a win-win situation.

When, in 2006, I was in Seyðisfjörður on a course 25 given under the auspices of KUNO [a Nordic Baltic network of institutions within art education] and taught by Björn Roth, I welded together three sun loungers at the local shipyard using cords from the fishnet factory as seats and placed them in public spaces, because one doesn’t lie down in public spaces unless one is deaf, drunk, sick, or homeless.

Image 25, Devastated by experiences and time, it can be hard to look forward. The picture shows a rifle hidden by our dog’s tail. At first I had a picture of the rifle leaning up against a chair; this seemed too caricatured and dramatic, like a climax – and it isn’t – rather the reverse. A desire to shoot oneself is shameful and worthy of suppression. Devastated by experiences and time, it can be hard to look forward, to quote my own title.

Image 28, Havet 1990 from my graduation exhibition was photographed during a walk with the dog across the fields, down here in Lolland in 2010, and has then been put in the archive. This picture could probably be accounted for as a mark of my academic training – some symbols are more powerful than others.
In Sweet Sixteen — ‘kunne ellers være sporet’ I had created a survey overview. In it there is an overview of the different works and their titles. The survey overview functioned as an invitation to the exhibition and could be found in hold- ers in the exhibition hall. On the first page I provided an explanation of the subtitle.

The title of the exhibition refers to assaults I suf- fered during my teenage years as an autonomous left-wing political activist. The subtitle comes from my having written to one of my travel companions, asking him if he had any photos from our trip. He didn’t and wrote, ignorant of the rape, ‘could have been fun’.

Because I was nervous about the wide range of sharps in my pictures for the exhibition, I learned that not everything in life is in focus but that rattle in our closets. They shape us, but never before, from idyll to weapon.

The exhibition there is a return to the everyday situa- tion. We all have skeletons of different kinds that rattle in our closets. They shape us, but we move on, and that is the significance of my graduation exhibition.

Mette Bagh Jensen from the Skagen Painters’ Museum says this about salons:

“It was in the salons that intellectuals met and discussed things. Many were hosted by women, so-called salon hostesses, who decided which guests would be invited and what political, artistic, and literary topics would be debated, and the women also functioned as moderators.

In the salons the women were able to function as participants, moderators, and critics on the same terms as men, which was singular at this point in time, just as it was unusual that many salons were hosted by women.”

In a salon style exhibition it is easier to cross-reference the works. The time and the gaze remain on the wall and not all around the room. In a salon style exhibition one’s focus can be concentrated and one is given the opportunity to dwell on the works. A piece of furniture in the middle of the room, the titles at hand, and the works before you on the wall. The chronology is erased; the whole thing is collected in one place across time and drama.

Image 31. Last summer three children were crushed to death by straw bales among which they were playing. This picture refers to an event that struck a chord out here in the countryside. Three siblings played in a barn among large rectangular bales; the bales fell on them. Large rectangular bales can weigh up to 500 kilogrammes each. The kids I know down here have completely stopped playing in barns. One of them told me that the youngest of the children had survived the longest because she had the most limber limbs. The view of straw bales has changed forever, from idyll to weapon.

The exhibition Sweet Sixteen — ‘kunne ellers være sporet’ is just pictorial art, quite simply — works and titles. The first pictures of the exhibition have an everyday ordinariness about them. The body of the exhibition, on the other hand, is both dramatic and pulsating. At the end of the exhibition there is a return to the everyday situation. We all have skeletons of different kinds that rattle in our closets. They shape us, but we move on, and that is the significance of my graduation exhibition.

NOTES

1. Bamboozled: confounded or perplexed. In the television series Friends, ‘Bamboozled’ is a game show for which Joey auditions to become the host. Because he thinks that the rules are hard to understand, Ross and Chandler offer him to practise with them as contestants. When the game show is later discovered to be too complicated and is therefore not to be aired, Chandler, Ross, and Joey are allotted ‘drinks’. Season 6, episode 20. It’s a piece of cake.


3. Tove Hvid, Krippens forfærdelighed [‘Tales of the body’] (Viborg: Modtryk, 1999), p. 64.

4. Le Visite Guilde, the title of a work by Sophie Calle that Malene Vest Hansen uses, among other things, to write about representation of the self and about subjectivity in Sophie Calle. Periskop [‘Periscope’] no. 7 (1999), p. 93.


6. Susan Hinnum, ‘Kamper om virkeligheden’ [‘The struggle for reality’]. This picture refers to an event that could be observed in the Danish pictorial art scene in the 1990s, put into perspective against the background of the international art tradition of the previous thirty years’, pp. 347–9. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, defended at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, 15 March 2002.


8. Ibid.


12. An old work on paper with text in the shape of a cross, which says ‘vove’ (bow-wow), ‘vow’ (dare), ‘vow’ yields a dog, to ‘vove’ (dare) is to be brave. Under- neath it says, ‘mod mut courage’, that is courage in three languages, but also being against depressing ‘voredix’ (audacity). Fear and courage are the two dualists in my life.


15. Kaj Munk (1893–1954), born in Lolland, author and parish priest in Vedersø, pioneer in a national literary context and known in particular as a hero during the German occupation. Whereas he earlier wrote about the strong leader, he changed his views at the beginning of the occupation, which he resisted. He was killed by the german terror-group ‘Piter-Gruppen’ in 1944.


18. Lisbeth Smedegaard Andersen, Det begyndte med Jomfru Sørensen: Kvindeskabbar gennem 200 år [‘It began with Miss Sørensen: Women’s destinies through 200 years’], (Copenhagen: Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, 2012). This book de- scribes the history of Denmark seen through the women in Andersen’s family and linked through art historical references.


23. Recently Ole Sohn had to resign as the Secre­ tary of State for Business because he had been the chairman of the Communist Party of Denmark and presumably was paid in part by the Soviet Union.


25. Lisbeth S. Andersen, Ibid., p. 15. "Ike a quiet undercurrent under the larger history of men".


27. Chant for demonstrations; the chorus continues: "it is something they have made us believe, so that we won't rebel and will keep quiet". http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/171/bio/1254/ Accessed: 3 March 2013.


29. It was an educational journey, during which I looked at art history. I saw Michaelangelo's "One day left" ["En dag tilbage"] from the album 2 (2004).

30. Malene Vest Hansen about Sophie Call's photographic technique in Rædct Autobiographies, "La Visite Guides, En guidet tur: Noter om repræsen­ tation af Selv og subjektivitet hos Sophie Calle" ["The visitor's guide, a guided tour: Notes on the representation of the self and subjectivity in Sophie Calle"] in Periskop ["Periscope"] no. 7 (1999), pp. 98–99. She writes about the "autobiographical" photograph, which is often connected to the family album and its subjects, such as memorable mo­ ments and pictures of boyfriends and girlfriends. Situations in which one typically strikes a pose for the photographic pageantry and enters into a particular social game.


32. A paraphrase of Nik and Jay's "En dag tilbage" ["One day left"] from the album 2 (2004).

33. Ibid.

34. Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (New York: Penguin Books, 2006). Hannah Arendt's concept of the "banality of evil" is based on her coverage of the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. Eichmann's guilt consisted of his being a logistics perfectionist; he dealt with the logistics of the rail transportation to the concentration camps. His ambition became apparent during questioning in the courtroom, and he collapsed like a balloon. He was a pawn in a totalitarian social system, but his tenacity led to the greatest evil, the Holocaust.


37. Malene Vest Hansen about Sophie Call's photographic technique in Rædct Autobiographies, "La Visite Guides, En guidet tur: Noter om repræsen­ tation af Selv og subjektivitet hos Sophie Calle" ["The visitor's guide, a guided tour: Notes on the representation of the self and subjectivity in Sophie Calle"] in Periskop ["Periscope"] no. 7 (1999), pp. 98–99. She writes about the "autobiographical" photograph, which is often connected to the family album and its subjects, such as memorable mo­ ments and pictures of boyfriends and girlfriends. Situations in which one typically strikes a pose for the photographic pageantry and enters into a particular social game.

38. Cécile Vicente, "One day left" ["En dag tilbage"] from the album 2 (2004).


45. Other references


Marc Chagall, Mit liv og min kunst ["My life and my art"]. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1965.


These are collections of moments. Moments when something occurs and the moments in between that are filled with silence and suspense. The distance is bridged between the gaps. These moments are what make the process continue, as if of its own accord.

“Something is a permanent part of every change.”

To search for stability is to seek a centre. The centre, however, is constantly moving. It follows a compass that takes account of place and time, culture and nature. Every decision made, conscious or unconscious, contributes to building that which we may call reality. Every decision leads to a constantly changing conclusion – a point that becomes the material world.

Whatever place we look to; whatever time we examine. No one is merely an on-looker. By our very existence we are at once witness to and creators of reality. Human society consists of the decisions that have already been taken. Nonetheless, most people live by unwritten rules within a predetermined system, ruled by people who work tirelessly to maintain the status quo. Power is used to rule and take decisions; people rule and people are ruled. Evidence of this state of things can be seen at every level of society. Yet, the operations of power can take varied forms. Most people seek the centre. Some seek the periphery.

“The reality and reliability of the human world rest primarily on the fact that we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity by which they were produced, and potentially even more permanent than the lives of their authors.”

In The Human Condition Hannah Arendt speaks of the active life or vita activa. According to her, all human physical effort can be defined in three ways: labour, work and action. Labour, in this context, is the biological process through which we utilise nature and its fruits to secure the continuation and regeneration of mankind. Work involves not only constant regeneration and renewal but the production of a man-made world of things which humans inhabit and which is more permanent than human life itself. Action is the only aspect of the active life that does not involve human interaction with the physical and objective world, building instead on the idea that we do not create our environment alone but as a group. To be alive is to be among others. Human multiplicity lies in the fact that while all humans belong to the same species, none of them are the same, were the same or will ever become the same.

“Because of the end product, tools are designed and implements invented, and the same end product organizes the work process itself ...”

In addition to what nature provides, that which fills the vacuum, becomes reality and floods our senses with information, is man-made things. Homo Faber is the being that uses tools and technology to work the materials of the Earth. Labour is organized with an end in mind, how the product or object being made looks and what
In the piece Process: Water, Life is a Sofa (my BA graduation project in 2011) I used my own labour and physical capacity. I started a two-month process where I collected objects from homes around Reykjavík. The objects had been advertised as free on collection and I collected them using a van bought from an advertisement in the same place where the free objects were advertised. The van became a tool in the process and was filled with the music of Louis Armstrong’s melancholy recording and later in a song about loss and grieving, ‘James Infirmary’, a song the van itself became an important part of the whole project. 7 It was not easy to determine the value of the different objects collected, financially or otherwise. As the objects were being given away, they were not assigned a monetary value. On the other hand, they were not being thrown away, which means that they were not seen as being without value. They have acquired a kind of spiritual value through their association with their former owners. This association could be seen in the objects themselves, a kind of memory recorded in signs of wear and tear. This gives the objects a sort of indeterminate value and there was an obvious desire to secure its continuation, to grant the objects continued life with a new owner.

With my own labour, these objects were given a different kind of significance in relation to each other and in relation to the space where they were installed in the Reykjavík Art Museum. There, the function and properties of each object were examined and transformed as I worked them into an installation and combined them with their physical properties. By continuing to work in real time throughout the exhibition period, I made the process itself a prominent part of the piece. This diverted the focus from the idea on a single conclusion, a final decision. The transformation continued and I myself and my body became the tools for constant change and development. The objects were removed from context with themselves and formed new connections with each other instead of referring inward to their own properties. If we assume that change is the only reality, this period was an attempt to connect up to it as fully as possible.

In accordance with this idea of the third table, I have been thinking about the table in front of me. How is it a common wooden table such as this one made? In the production process, man’s closest association is with the tool. Using the tool, man works the timber that has itself been harvested from nature. Neither the work expended in making the table nor the man who is its creator are in a strong relationship to the table, even though the table is the product of this work and has determined the process and design from beginning to end. For me as a consumer or user, the table is, however, more permanent and proximal than the work that went into making it. The production continues, creating more work and more tables that disappear as soon as they have left the production line.

As I sit here and write this text I have been thinking about the table in front of me. How is it a common wooden table such as this one made? In the production process, man’s closest association is with the tool. Using the tool, man works the timber that has itself been harvested from nature. Neither the work expended in making the table nor the man who is its creator are in a strong relationship to the table, even though the table is the product of this work and has determined the process and design from beginning to end. For me as a consumer or user, the table is, however, more permanent and proximal than the work that went into making it. The production continues, creating more work and more tables that disappear as soon as they have left the production line. In The Third Table, Graham Harman speaks of the invalid approach that has been used to define the reality value of things. 8 He discusses the two approaches defined by the British scientist Sir Arthur Eddington for finding the truth of the table – Eddington’s well-known two tables argument. The first table is defined as the everyday table based on the effect that the table with its specific properties has on man. The second table, which Eddington takes to be the only real table, is defined by its physical properties, down to the smallest atomic level where the emptiness between particles takes up more space than the physical particles themselves, i.e., there is more emptiness than there is matter. Eddington describes the idea of the constructed world in a strong relationship with nature. 10 Here he uses entropy as a tool to understand objects that are already built into the site in a different way than the everyday passes-by would. At times the material can be used as a way of transformation, a way of intervention with architecture. Tadashi Kawamata adds wooden structures in and around buildings while Gordon Matta-Clark removes large parts of abandoned buildings in a variety of ways. Another way of materiality in a different context is using material that is unprocessed, straight from the factory, to create an installation, combining a space with the material in a situation such as Jason Rhoades’s big installations entailing a heap of material and often some form of performative action.

Projects that deal with the value of material by means of materiality itself have been intriguing to me for some time. One way is to work with material that already exists with a function of its own. Here, structures are used in a process of transformation at their original location. Robert Smithson’s A tour of the monuments of Passaic, New Jersey (1967) is a clear example of how he views the constructed world in a strong relationship with nature. 11 He uses entropy as a tool to understand objects that are already built into the site in a different way than the everyday passes-by would. At times the material can be used as a way of transformation, a way of intervention with architecture. Tadashi Kawamata adds wooden structures in and around buildings while Gordon Matta-Clark removes large parts of abandoned buildings in a variety of ways. Another way of materiality in a different context is using material that is unprocessed, straight from the factory, to create an installation, combining a space with the material in a situation such as Jason Rhoades’s big installations entailing a heap of material and often some form of performative action.

My approach to a mass of material is a bodily experience. There has been an element of performance in the approach to different materials and objects. This would typically be done using physical labour to bind the materials together in an installation. In the process towards Sawyer 12 there has been a plan for physical presence of a performer involved in the realization of the production line.

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work. Materials were found around the city, mainly outside apartments, it was documented and then moved into the studio. This material has a specific function as interior in private homes, used for an unknown amount of time before being thrown out for renovation. The found material was supposed to be transformed within the walls of the exhibition in an on-going process, using different tools but mainly some form of a saw. When the end result or a finished product has been removed from the process, the labour becomes a repeated action without a sense of meaning. Rather than working for the sake of work itself in a meaningless cycle of using tools, the materials were removed from the equation just as the end result had been removed before. When the material, the labour and the final product itself have all been removed, the only thing that remains is the tool. This tool is the saw. An assortment of saws that have no material to saw and no human to be used by, but the potential of both. Every saw in sawyer is made with an imagined function in mind and is loosely based on technological information from a history of the saw. Saga saga.12

In what context can one approach the physical aspect of works? Is it possible that the artist serves the same purpose as the man who creates useful things where the thing itself is the object of the process, in effect directing the process while remaining distant from its creator? Is it possible that the artist’s connection to the thing (which is primarily a side product of the process) is actually much stronger? Perhaps the things produced by the artist carry with them some kind of knowledge and remain inseparably connected to their author. The art object should not be seen as directing the process as the final conclusion is constantly shifting. The process of making the artwork is more about the work than the object produced, unlike the production of useful things. This issue becomes a little complicated when we speak of ready-mades, objects and materials that have had another use and are repurposed as art. How can a process claim to produce something where it did not result from the process but has merely been put in a new context?

The process is a back garden that the gardener has to tend and nurture, making decisions without being in complete control of every detail. There are always elements of chance and arbitrariness that remain outside the creator’s control. Everyone creates within and for a pre-existing context.

"In the creative act, the artist goes from intention to realization through a chain of totally subjective reactions. His struggle toward the realization is a series of efforts, pains, satisfactions, refusals, decisions, which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious, at least on the aesthetic plane."13

To maintain the permanence of man-made reality we need constant renewal. Heraclitus maintained that only change was real. The grass always pushes up through the pavement and plants take over abandoned structures. The street is constantly changing, not only because of human production, but also as a result of natural processes that no one can control, however much we try to resist them.

12. Icelandic translation on “history of saws”.
Sindri Leifsson

Process: Water,
life is a sofa
2011
Installation view
Soon, I won’t be able to tell what’s a tool and what’s a material, what's a structural blueprint and what's a description of my artwork. There’s just me, standing around in the middle, trying to determine what's what. But by what method remains unclear, and the work itself will have the last word anyway.

The Duality of Work

I exist in between two individuals, like a split personality. One of them is an engineer, and the other one is an artist. The innovations that define the first are what you might call rational acts, which result in solutions to problems within a structure that performs more concrete functions for society. The other individual stands for something else, but borrows his tools from the first one. He questions and problematizes almost everything, and doesn’t perform his actions in neat succession, in line with the progression of socio-technological solutions, but in the backwoods of irrationality.

The domain of the engineer, i.e. science and technology, is a social construct, a resource that is adapted for specific purposes. A social negotiation where knowledge and action work in collusion. The history of scientific and technological innovations follows a pattern, a rational path, as though today’s world were the planned destination all along.
abstraction and the references to reality are, all jumbled together.

Magic is the act of making nature behave the way you want it to. Intentionally caused distortions of reality.

Work Journal 121014

The Practician and the Occultist are two individuals who might seem completely separated. The Practician repairs, fixes, and builds things with his hands, aided by his knowledge of technology. An applied profession, basically. The Occultist, on the other hand, is a student and seeker of magic as knowledge. They seem like total opposites but they are strongly related, historically speaking.

For a hard-working shoemaker in the 16th century Florence, half the day’s work still remains to be done when the sun sets. He lights a wax candle, and to make sure that the reddish yellow flame won’t just dissipate around the room, he directs the light with a crystal ball. The beam conventionally illuminates his cobbler’s anvil. The entry of the light with a crystal ball. The beam convincingly introduced. This can give rise to paradoxical, altern, or reduced situations. Combining two familiar objects can create a pictorially wild third object, and a shift in scale can give rise to absurdities, visual puns, delicately balanced opposites, modified times and places – experiences of anachronisms. An actual imposibility suddenly made possible.

Here, judgment and balance lie in the tasks that the object can perform in relation to the unreasonable, which is actually reasonable in a picture.

A sculpture’s attributes: the fact that it’s both a representation of and an object within this world.

Work Journal 121127

An object in its own context, like a brick at a building site or a streetlight next to a bike path, belongs in its specific place in an entirely unconditional way. It’s a trivial object in our world, and in our linguistic experiences.

Relocating this object to a very different context is the quality of the readymade. The object brings the place of its origin along with it, and acquires new possible interpretations in its new location. In such a state of alienation, the object’s framework is changed. If you return the same object to its original context, it becomes camouflaged once again to the less unexpected. Thus, it becomes a kind of unreadymade, an anti-monument, that has passed through the whole cycle to finally be returned to where it belongs. Here though, the object has been transferred to the image space. This geographical relocation is partly metaphorical, however, and this state can be regarded as performative.

1. David Nilson / Master of Fine Arts 2
2. A more established comparison is the lens. In the Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering Lost Techniques of the Old Masters, Thames & Hudson, 2006, David Hockney relates the historical importance of the lens for painting: it was the tool used for optical illusions.
4. This metaphorical state of motion is illustrated by Jorge Luis Borges’ short story ‘On Exactitude in Science’. In it, Borges describes a map so detailed that it is as big as the world itself. In the end, it’s not big enough, “but you can still see its ruins”. A state of ambivalence over what’s real and what’s just an image.
Directed: creating specific places from existing materials and facts. Personifying the object like a character in this context.

Work Journal 120913
It’s the situation that makes the place, the fickleness of the place. A place is never “notable” without some variation and change, and these changes are the situations that never stop showing up, even on the most subtle of levels. This means, then, that the alternated place exists at the time when our image of the place is changed. The use of existing tools, such as physical materials, cold facts, historical tall tales and so on, affects you enough to make you stick to one notion of reality.

Consciously imitating the context by sculpturally manufacturing a version of an existing object creates a space that can seem unarranged at first. But if it were really unarranged, it would be able to create itself, without a director. And after a closer look, you begin to discover other things that are out of the ordinary in this particular space. The director adds more than an object. He or she imports a theatrically staged situation that alters the image without destroying it.

If I can control the light and the water, I can determine the time and place. The contrast to the rest of the sculpture’s materials will determine its belonging and permanence.

Work Journal 121128
Darkness and light are the contrasts that make up an image, and they play an essential role for our visual abilities. In their different forms, they can be connected: darkness as past, absent and unknown, and light as current, present, and visible. Water fluctuates and perpetually returns in an abstract flow.

These two elements have been used to bring images to life for centuries. The lamp, and its expressive potential as an object, has two contrasting attributes: the physical materials of its casing and wiring, and the transparent light that it emits to veil the room in a different mood. Although more tactile, water, in all its transience, has similar characteristics in relation to the materials that bound or direct its flow and shape.

These fleeting phenomena activate the persistent materials, both in contact with and in contrast with them. Perhaps they do this as some kind of auratic life forms, absences that are by their very nature always nearby in the present.

Recapitulation
The duality of work consists of a collision of the material and the intellectual. Both of them must be included in any complete description, but neither of them is a complete whole in itself. The work’s authenticity fluctuates. Awareness that it’s fake, along with the captivating image, creates a situation where there really isn’t any choice. You have to accept that it’s a technique for elevating the natural, and that the work is cloaked in connections that extend far beyond itself, a status quo.

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The place Smithson wanders through is an area going through changes, a muddy field full of piping, machines, unfinished roads, and so on. He makes a number of allusions to photography and fountains. Smithson describes the elements as situated within an allegorical landscape, nature.

7. Walter Benjamin, The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1936): My works are pictorially related to the aura, but that too, after reading Walter Benjamin’s text, descends from Benjamin’s assumption of the aura that could be described as “a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you”.

David Nilson / Master of Fine Arts
Between the 6th and 9th of September 2012, I participated in a reenactment of the battle of Murfreesboro, which took place on December 4th through 6th of 1864, during the American Civil War. Reenactment of the battles and camp life of the war is a popular hobby, especially in the eastern parts of the USA, where reenactment battles are staged on the actual historical battlefields.

However, the battle I took part in wasn’t recreated on the site where the real struggle once played out, but in Sweden. The role of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was played by a field next to a campsite in Bräkne-Hoby, Blekinge. On the way there, my head was buzzing with questions. I was particularly curious to know why a group of Scandinavians would choose to spend their free time reenacting an American war, and why it was that participating as a Confederate soldier seemed to be the more popular option.

I also portrayed a Confederate infantryman, because I wanted to explore the challenge of playing a role on the losing side rather than indulge in the heroic connotations of the Unionist side. History has labelled the Confederates the bad guys, since they were fighting to defend their economic system, which was largely based on slave labour.

"But for a war to break out of its immediate constituency and become a subject of international attention, it must be regarded as something of an exception, as wars go, and represent more than the clashing interest of the belligerents themselves."

The USA as we know it today is largely a product of the Civil War. In its day, the war was already being portrayed as heroic and romantic, and this practice would be continued by the movie and entertainment industries. The movie version of Gone with the Wind has played an important part in spreading this popular image of the war, and of the Confederate states in particular, around the world.

Women in Civil War reenactments

Me: "Why are you taking part as a man?"
Woman in uniform: "It’s more fun that way. You get to shoot."

Participating in reenactments as a woman by cross-dressing is accepted, even encouraged. This practice is justified by pointing out that women actually did the same thing in order to take part in the war. 250 or so female soldiers disguised as men have been identified, but many were never outed, and took their secrets to their graves. Assuming a male identity was a way for these women to appropriate the patriarchal power in Victorian society, and claim full rights as citizens of their nation. For hundreds of women, the war became an opportunity to escape the constraints of their gender.

I participated in the battles, playing by the rules of the game. I learned how to load a musket with a blank round and fire it. During both battles that I took part in, I chose to have my character become a casualty and capture it on video, as this is such an absurd, yet integral part of simulating a war. The actual moment of death was very much up to the individual to decide, you could do so whenever it felt “logical” to “die.”

I also took part in a ball in Denmark, in November of 2012. Unlike a reenactment...
As is common in hobbies that relate to specific historical eras, Civil War reenactors take great interest in the clothing and other items of the period, as well as their use and care. The participants inspected each other’s clothes and accessories, helped other guild members correctly sewed buttons back on, and bought items from the camp sutlery, a specialist shop on site.

One reenactor told me that the Confederates had less money to spend on manufacturing standardized uniforms for their soldiers, so they would often have to go to battle in the clothes they joined up in. For this reason, reenactors often find it more challenging to create a Confederate character, as there are more options for making the clothing distinct than there would be for a Unionist. A Confederate’s clothes don’t need to be whole and clean either, it’s almost better if they show signs of wear and tear.

That symbol
“I doubt that German knew a thing about the Confederacy... but he knew what that flag stood for. Being a rebel, raising hell.”

The Confederate flag flew over the camp at “Murfreesboro” in Blekinge. The northernners flew the Union’s “Stars and Stripes”, and the southerners had the rebel flag, the “Stars and Bars”. It was used as a prop in historical context, to show the location of the Confederate side’s group of tents, and a standard bearer carried it into battle to identify the unit.

I came to understand that the participants didn’t put any more thought into their choice of which side to play beyond things like “it’s more fun to be a Confederate”, or “I’ve always felt more like a Unionist, more neat and tidy or something”. Many reenactors own uniforms for both sides, so they can switch over if one side turns out to be short-staffed. Another reenactor said: “I hope nobody in this hobby is going to join the Klan instead.”

The closest the participants get to an authentic experience of a real war, such as anxiety, violation, death, and chaos. Instead, reenactments are characterized by security, control, playfulness, joy, and entertainment. The closest the participants get to an authentic experience of the historical war is freezing in their tents at night, or slipping on the wet grass, just like the real soldiers did. For this reason, reenactors call their experiences and characters “impressions,” since they neither can nor desire to come any closer to the real thing than this.

The Magic is Gone
When the time came to break camp and go home, I felt as though the magic that held life in the camp together was being dispelled.
Many of the participants changed out of their uniforms and into their ordinary clothes. A man who wore beautifully ornamented coat sleeves and matching accessories in his role as a captain became just some old man in jeans and a t-shirt. I noticed that many of them seemed to be very comfortable in their uniforms, and looked good in them, and that they seemed a little dejected at having to return home.

For me, changing back into my own ordinary clothes felt like changing into another body. I ceased to be a "soldier" among others, at least visually, and returned to appearing as a feminine persona, which is how I usually identify myself. Releasing my long red hair, which had been concealed by my cap, changed my appearance radically, and drew looks of surprise from many of my co-reenactors.

Reenactment as Artistic Strategy

A well-known example of the use of reenactment in an art project is Jeremy Deller’s piece The Battle of Orgreave (2001). He recreated a clash between the police and workers on strike in the town of Orgreave, 17 years after the actual event took place. Many of the participants in the piece were involved in the original event. All of the parties involved are given their say in reenactments and interviews, which results in a new and deeper understanding.

However, the participants at "Murfreesboro" definitely never experienced the events they’re recreating, and they aren’t looking to resolve some lasting conflict. What they’re doing is immersing themselves in an imaginary representation of a moment in history. Their main source of inspiration is movies about the war, and their online presentations and assembly halls are decorated with depictions of the war by contemporary historical artists. They have a certain reverence for the image of the war, and they also play a part in maintaining it.

Eva Kingsgpepp explains people’s interest in historical reenactment as driven by a desire to re-enchant the world – in the west, which is growing ever more secular, we use “myths” from history to make the world temporarily “magical.”

Vaginal Davis is an African-American drag queen, artist, DJ, actress, director, curator, and musician. This bombastic genderqueer Los Angeles has adopted Vanessa Beecroft’s performance methods, and has performed remakes of her pieces. Beecroft is famous for using fashion models as objects in performances where they’re instructed to stand still, act indifferently and avoid people’s eyes. They’re often nude, or barely dressed. All of the pieces are named with her initials, “VB,” and numbered.

In Davis’ piece VD as VB – Erdgeist, Earth spirit #27-29 10027 (2007) she takes on the role of Beecroft, employing her persona to critique the way that artists are gradually being turned into brand names. She pokes fun at Beecroft’s use of model’s bodies by using volunteers in underwear, and by encouraging them to be themselves throughout the performance. Davis’ strategy is to use Beecroft’s own methods against her, and parody them in an indirect critique of a system that promotes the commercialization of the artist.

Some artists, like Deller and Davis, actually arrange their reinterpretations, but Omer Fast’s video work Godville (2005) from the Colonial Williamsburg museum, and Liz Magor’s photo series Military through the ages (1995), which depict an event that various reenactment groups participated in, are studies of the people who perform reenactments of historic eras. The main purpose of reenactment is to achieve a deeper understanding of the event, era, or person in question, whereas artistic examinations of recreated history often strive to give a deeper understanding for the participants, for why they selected the specific era they have chosen to reenact, and the different ways in which the present time can interfere with the experience they want to create.

In studies of reenactments, the emphasis is often on its “flaws”, such as medieval reenactors in trainers, Civil War reenactors carrying cameras, and so on. To be a reenactor is to be ever searching for authenticity; for more knowledge, for a more accurate way of representing the era, even though compromises...
are usually necessary. This reminds me of how artists are always hunting for more knowledge to help them realize their ideas or find the best way to present their work, and the painful but often unavoidable compromises they face along the way.

Camp

When I was young, my favourite TV show was *Sikta mot stjärnorna*12, a show where the contestants imitated famous performers, and were judged based on the similarity of their singing to the original artist. The participants used to walk through a doorway cloaked in artificial fog on screen, and then appear on stage magically transformed into the artist they were imitating. I experienced it as though the imitators literally became the real performers they were imitating when they passed through that doorway, even though I had in many cases never had heard or seen the original artist before.

In later years, I’ve come to realize that this extravagant transformation and imitation act is an element of the aesthetic of camp, which has interested me for a long time. However, camp is more than simply an aesthetic style, it’s a sensibility, and a way of relating to the world around you. In her text *Notes on Camp*, Susan Sontag writes:

“10: Camp sees everything in quotation marks. It’s not a lamp, but a “lamp”, not a woman, but a “woman”. To perceive Camp in objects and persons is to understand Being-as-Playing-a-Role. It is the farthest extension, in sensibility, of the metaphor of life as theater...”

Indeed the essence of Camp is its love for the unnatural, of artifice and exaggeration...”13

31: ‘Thus, things are campy, not when they become old - but when we become less involved in them, and can enjoy, instead of be frustrated by, the failure of the attempt.”

Sontag describes this concept as an apolitical, aesthetic sensibility, and this has attracted some criticism. Her text was written in 1964, in the early days of gay liberation, before AIDS had taken its toll on the community that is such a proponent of all things camp. Later interpreters of the concept have incorporated the struggles of queer politics, and have defined it as a way of expressing a specifically queer critique.14 Camp has also been criticized as a way of attempting to elevate something void of content, an excuse for something that is really only bad and tacky.

“19: The pure examples of camp are unintentional: they are dead serious. ‘The Art Nouveau craftsman who makes a lamp with a snake coiled around it is not kidding, nor is he trying to be charming. He is saying, in all earnestness: Voilà, the Orient!’”

The drag queen is one of the more familiar camp characters. She, who is really a he, has taken the image of a “woman,” twisted it around, turned it into an alter ego, and adopted it. It’s a character I’ve looked up to, and even envied to some extent. Drag queens get away with reveling in excessively feminine clothing and accessories that most people would find vulgar, tacky, or “too much”, without ever being questioned over it. At least, that is, so long as they remain within their own world, the gay community. They appropriate an exaggerated image of women and turn it into a viable role, in which it’s expected of them that they be a little too much, and push some boundaries.

**Millennium Star**

“To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it.”15

“‘Drag acts’ I believe, are not confined to the declassed sexes. Garbo ‘got in drag’ whenever she took on some heavy glamour part...”16

I wanted to investigate what would happen if a woman impersonated a drag queen, i.e. dressed up as a man who was dressed up as an image of a woman. I wanted to explore these layers of identity and how femininity can be used as a role. Therefore I chose the drag queen instead of the drag king character.
"Do you feel different?"

"You're maybe too beautiful."

"I've named her after an eyeshadow: "Millennium Star.""
I gave the task of styling me to a drag artist and makeup stylist. I named the resulting character, who could pass as a drag queen in the company of a real one, Millennium Star. However, the lines between a Las Vegas showgirl, an expensive escort, and a very feminine drag queen are very fine. In the video Millennium Star, I show the character having her makeup removed, as the video is played back in reverse, revealing me to be a “real” woman. Millennium Star imitates the drag queen who styled her by wearing the required extravagant attributes you need to be perceived as a man in drag: Lots of pink, lots of makeup, large wigs, a red corset with gold trimmings and multi-coloured plastic beads, and a pink feather boa. These clothes, when worn out of context, would be indications of poor taste, or attributes of a woman of “poor morals”. My faux queen character recodes an aesthetic that is often scorned, but ironically enough, in order to do so I had to make a detour through a male role (which is, after all, what the drag queen really is).

A future continuation of this project involves placing the Millennium Star character in a gay pride parade or on stage in a gay bar, to see how she is received.

An Afternoon

In *Imitation and gender in subordination*, Judith Butler writes that drag reveals “the mundane way in which genders are appropriated, theatricalized, worn and done.” Gender is a game of imitation where there is no original to imitate. Butler claims that our gender roles are constructs that we perform. This is obviously true in the case of the roles of drag king or queen, but in her view heterosexuality is also a role that we perform, to the exact same extent.24

The woman who participated in my video work *An Afternoon* claimed that she was a prostitute by choice, and referred to it as her “hobby”. In the piece, we recreated client meetings, mainly the conversations before the actual sexual act. I played the part of the clients. She wore high black boots and black underwear, the classic look of a prostitute. What didn’t fit the picture was her mature age of sixty something.

The silent video shows us preparing to perform the initial meetings. The woman takes over the director’s role, as I ask her to tell me how her meetings happen and to give me directions on how to move and what to say. Our conversations are related in the subtitles.

Her stories and her personality come across in the video, even though she remains in her role as a prostitute the whole time. She describes this role as a combination of several different roles, and explains how the different needs of the men dictate which one she will adopt. A little further into the video, she reveals that she has a day job as a therapist, and that this can sometimes be helpful in her meetings with clients.

In *An Afternoon*, it feels as though the dialogue is only meant for the ears of the two of us, despite the camera being in the room. Conversations often play important roles in my video pieces, often as the central element of a piece. There’s something more relaxed and spontaneous about an “ordinary” conversation, as opposed to a more TV-oriented interview style with questions and answers.

The 19th Century as Material

In many of my projects, I use the 19th century as a vantage point, as working material or as a place in itself, a place that no longer exists outside of the collective consciousness. I used this place as a refuge during a certain period of my life. Today, I use my own experiences to further investigate what the 19th century means to people, how it’s used as a symbol, and how we project our dreams onto this period in history.

For me, the 19th century is the perfect era to fantasize about and mythologize. It’s been photographed, is well covered in writing, and has been charted in great detail, but uncharted territories still remain to be explored by the imagination. Photographs and moving images that are “missing”, and that we have to fabricate for ourselves. The 19th century has a certain aura about it that invites romanticizing, although most people are happy that it’s an era long in the past.

To a great extent, the behaviour I’m describing originated in this era. Certainly, people have always dreamed about, fantasized about, and looked back on history, but daydreaming and leisure only found its way into ordinary peoples’ lives in the 19th century. For the first time, people could spare the time and money to indulge in amusements like circuses, panoramas, department stores, museums, and eventually cinemas. These places offered the audiences the experience of excitement from a safe distance. Excitement itself seems to be the main indulgence of the modern way of life.25

Another person who used the 19th century as working material is Marcel Proust, who did so in his novel *In Search of Lost Time*, in which, lying in bed in the 1910s, he reminisces about his life in high society at the turn of the century. He’s one of the first to look back on the 19th century and use it as material for writing. Actor and screenwriter Mae West, who set her 30s movies in the 1890s, the time of her childhood and early youth, is another good example. She wrote the scripts for her own movies, and cast herself in a series of roles as a courtesan in an over-the-top outfit. As it happens, West has been referred to as the “queen of camp”.

I often work on several projects and trains of thought simultaneously, experimenting with new ideas in between my work on the more developed ones. One of my future projects concerns broken dreams, what might remain when one’s expectations aren’t met, and how to make something out of the disappointment.

My work is often located on the boundary of art and documentary films. It is tricky to place one’s work in between two genres, since the work may, if one is not careful, slide over to either side. But it is also something I feel gives the work something crucial – both genres can be used together as tools to tell an interesting story.
Jessica Sanderheim / Master of Fine Arts 2

JESSICA SANDERHEIM

With the past against the rapid stream of everything, with the rapid stream of everything against the past

A long ride among paths, creation and maintenance of worlds and values constituting them. What kind of activity is thinking? Something that I mean that I discern is that thinking is a much more social activity than I thought.

I am well aware of my limitations and inability to become a horse. The language learned, speech and sight, I lead and you follow. A balance where fences and steel bits always give me great advantages. Is the horse the absolute construction, the truly Other? Looking back at humans from a position between the rider and the ground.

Half halt: a general equestrian command to get a horse’s attention before a new task
Suspension: a kind of harmonic dissonance

How is it that horses are hyper-sensitive to us? and their things? By means of tools, things, or stories? With needles or electricity? Can one say that animals embody aesthetics? do humans embody aesthetics too?

Electricity?

The pattern of doing the same things in the same sequence or order is probably experienced by the horse as reality, as something inviolable, as something against which one’s body with all its decisive cells becomes an object that falls, the structure of the world seems less evident. Subject becomes object in a stumble.

The first of these two sentences came to have the past against the rapid stream of everything, with the rapid stream of everything against the past. Stage thoughts, stage performances

Sometimes it is as if my works were made to be written. A performance becomes like field research, like an action by a character from a text. With these experiences I can continue my writing. Sometimes a work reveals itself in words that demand another form, the physical, but often I find a work piece by piece, like chores on the street.

Hanging at the end of the leash, the puppy’s owner stumbles around the street corners deterred to not make the leash stretch at any point, so that a pressure around the puppy’s neck would break the spell. ‘The owner seems to want to utter the words, ‘You are free. I follow you, twice a day. ‘This is a leash called love’.

Cigarette episode:

‘Do you have a couple of crowns?’
‘No sorry, I don’t have any.’
‘Do you have a cigarette?’
‘No, unfortunately not that either.’
‘I do. You want one?’
‘OK, thanks.’

What happens when someone falls? That which in thought seems physically impossible, but at the moment when one’s body with all its decisive cells becomes an object that falls, the structure of the world seems less evident. Subject becomes object in a stumble.

The pattern of doing the same things in the same sequence or order is probably experienced by the horse as reality, as something inviolable, as something against which one’s body with all its decisive cells becomes an object that falls, the structure of the world seems less evident. Subject becomes object in a stumble.

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In Lisbon I found myself in a capital in political and economic crisis. Almost all of the streets are paved with cube-shaped stones made from limestone, approximately ten centimetres on each edge. Loose paving stones lay in several places; I turned them into dice by painting pips on their sides.

It is said that several important decisions in history have found closure by rolling the dice; the gods were given an opportunity to decide difficult issues, but often dice readers, priests, or diviners had interpretative preference. It is said that Caligula’s horse Incitatus was considered a medium that was consulted at every crisis. I imagine Jiri Kovanda’s stare as he turns around in a lift in the subway in Prague 1961. By the way, Jiri Kovanda seems to want to utter the words, ‘You are free. I follow you, twice a day. ‘This is a leash called love’.

The pattern of doing the same things in the same sequence or order is probably experienced by the horse as reality, as something inviolable, as something against which one’s body with all its decisive cells becomes an object that falls, the structure of the world seems less evident. Subject becomes object in a stumble.

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A radical choice secured behind radical walls around a radical self-deprivation, a radical independence, in radical isolation.

In Gender and Material Culture, in a chapter entitled ‘The Meanings of Nunnery Architecture’, Roberta Gilchrist describes sexual segregation in sacred spaces like nunneries and churches. As the plurality in the name of the chapter suggests, the status of nuns seems to have changed over time. The author traces historical divisions where women were placed to the north and claims that north/moon/Old Testament/fe- male and south/sun/New Testament/male seem to be patterns of association. She suggests that nunneries situated in the north and southern- situated monasteries may have been established.
TRAKTERNA
2013
Installation run day by day
Plaster, salt, textiles, ice,
metal, wood, buckets,
fern plants, sticks, con-
struction paper, various
found materials

7. The child had just got its first favourite article of clothing.


11. Piano is short for Italian pianoforte, ‘soft and strong’. It was invented around 1700 by Bartolomeo Cristofori for a wealthy patron, Ferdinando de Medici. It was a very expensive item. For some time after its invention the piano was largely owned by the royalty of Portugal and Prussia.

me that I look for notes, sometimes consisting of things, in a similar way. I think that in the spirit of Cixous I could make up a word like ‘withagainst’, comprising duality in motion within and against itself. I see a vibrating language unfold before me.

There is a certain kind of fascination in finding a stick in the forest. Prepared, finished, just as it should be by the forest’s ‘it’. Gravity has made it fall from life to death with a crack, perhaps not heard by anyone, but the fall meant nothing but a transfer from one biosphere to another, a movement from high vegetation to low (ground) vegetation. The sticks in the forest become the remains in a system of survival under the law of gravity.

In Marguerite Duras’s novel *Destroy, She Said*, the story is set in what seems to be a recreational area that is surrounded by forest. This forest seems to symbolise the unknown, something frightening where one should not set one’s foot; but the question is whether the unknown is the forest’s ‘it’ or whether it is the corridors of the hotel that are unknown, or whether the characters who inhabit the rooms are unknown, even to themselves, as though it is not in the forest alone that ‘it’ rules.

**Found harp, human nature**

In front of me, at a height of about twenty metres, one of all the suspiciously straight fir trees had split into two near its top, so as to make a swaying bow. I saw a huge harp. These kinds of trees are most often taken away. Is this the human way of imitating some idea of nature? How come brutality is so often justified by referring to certain laws of nature, as if it were something unavoidable and for a greater good? What or whose kind of order is it really that is confirmed and strengthened by these actions? The crooked trees have to be taken away in the same way that a cat is said to kill her kittens if they smell unfamiliar (like humans). Writings, scenes, things, works, and the state of being a reader. A human being stumbles through her memories and fumbles about in the landscapes of her associations. The invisible operations of vision might look for the narrative elements that create meaning for the living in the same way that the construction of identity, common to human beings, does in its attempts to create meaning in the lives of individuals.

A hand-forged sign in the churchyard, engraved on a worn dark metal cross where the moss has begun to listen on the corner:

Here rests the blacksmith X.**

A print of Hokusai’s *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* on a textile bag has accompanied me on the walls of different rooms. The image is today very familiar, a thing, a thought condensed into form. Aesthetically it still appeals to me, light and compact at the same time, but my fascination with the image also has to do with the knowledge that it is the first of thirty-six prints of Mount Fuji that Hokusai made.

**Mejdé Mayday**

A series of textiles selected by fingers searching for the natural material silk. Its gloss is hard to separate from that of other materials. The word carries a road within it; today the route is scattered, but might be traceable by way of remains in markets and around the corners of cities. I look for lines in the creases that the fabrics have accumulated when they were stored or transported. The most intricate thing is to unfold the lustrous fabrics and see what has been done; then I draw a composition from the lines that have left an impression. The only way to find out if the fabrics are made of real natural silk may be by doing a burning test; it is said that silk disappears without a trace when burnt, eaten by the fire.

“Eventually she gets the horse back on its feet and they can return to the stable where she is told that it is rumoured that there is electrical current in the ground at the location in question. The riding club has earlier pointed out to the landowners and the electricity company that horses react at the same location, but measurements have not yielded any results. However, after the accident on the weekend, it has been possible to locate the problem and disconnect the cable.”**

The touching human being, the principles of doing

Collecting, more like gathering up, dragging a necessity from the old days into the light, something like a prehistoric method into the future. But it has little to do with the past, not
directly, but a little more with the future. The topography for the living is different. A chosen restriction, like wanting to turn oneself into a filter. Picking up the shards of something that has broken leads to questions regarding the social context in which someone has found a specific plan of action, of reflections of the self in the moment has been turned into a parking lot.17

Sensations and half-halts in an era of active things

A ‘thing’ is not exactly the same as an ‘object’. A thing consists of familiar parts; it has been specifically planned task, or the status assigned by the owner takes the leash down from the hook. To me, the very basic economy in keeping, or putting together things one has found, can be important. I want to see if it’s possible to come to understand something about human beings by testing half-halts among our things.

A girl threw herself under the nose of a lighter aircraft suspended just above the stone floor of the Tate Britain. I wonder if the installation demanded this? A gesture so strongly exhortative that it could not be resisted.18

The stable, the forest, the cave, the story, the studio, the sacred space; there is perhaps no other place that does not see in. Utopia and dystopia as right and left foot in the steps of the dance.

Two forces rule the universe: light and gravity

What Simone Weil says consists of given facts, but in an anthropocentric society the turn of thought, a shift in focus from power to force may be of significance. The power is somewhere under the control of the human mind and intention, the force is somewhere in the physical world, elsewhere (locus).

The photoautotrophic organisms of plants, chlorophyll, and processes via which light energy is converted into chemical energy in the stoma; their subtle changes speak of adaptation, of a way to find nourishment in their environment. They cannot be separated from the earth in which they live; they have complex systems of interdependency that a strict belief in autonomy cannot count as movement. Systems that are so fundamentally Other to me, but on which I remain uncompromisingly dependent.

The brim of the self

I sit shuddering on a stone by the end of the lake called H. I see children play on the well-tended beaches on the other side. The wetness makes my skin feel unfamiliar and my heartbeat is faster and harder than it is most of the time.

As I set out to swim across, beautiful trees, clouds, and sky all surround me, but as I move, gliding ahead, the water ripples, the sky opens for a deep darkness, beginning at my hands and reaching across the surface of the lake. My body is getting cooler, and somewhere, halfway out from the beach, a howling fear takes hold of me as if it were pumping in my very own veins. The surface is gone; I neither see nor feel either the earth or the sky. I see something that I can only call nothing. I am surrounded by Otherness. Iumble familiar words, lisp in a digging motion at the brim of the water; there are no monsters, there is nothing to fear in this kind of idyllic landscape; here there has probably been nothing but shimmering calmness for generations of my kind.

Precisely because I cannot justify this fear there is no one, or no specific thing, to trust or distrust; this fear is of an abstract or non-existent opponent; it might be easy for someone to claim it cannot be real. Would defining such fear as highly real be something like one step towards madness? Perhaps not regarding a fear of deep water, perhaps not today. I guess fear of something unseen residing on the other side of the reflection on the surface of a lake is a fear of a rather common kind. When the sun sets, I’m still sitting there. I know I have to swim back.

Water, often in the form of ice, has been employed in several of my works. Lakes or puddles possess qualities like surface tension and electrical conductivity that excites me. Magnetism, surface tension, liquid metals, and heating waves. Things in play with each other. Systems and cycles; circular thoughts with parallel meanings. Once a biologist told me, in connection with the Environmental Health Clinic project in Reykjavik, that Iceland is the only place where the water one drinks hasn’t passed through someone else’s kidneys.19

Sometimes I’m reminded of the fact that the works are inevitably dying. They are not here to coddle anyone. I wonder if there is something called genuine integrity? Any day of the week arrives and the owner takes the leash down from the hook.

It is true that we do not often move outside of our own bodies, but what is it that determines the boundaries of the body; what about other things? Energetic? Sustenance? Substances? Thoughts? When Weil continues her argument, I read it as though she believes that these forces, due to our position of dependence, also work via contact between humans (perhaps also between species) and perhaps also influence thinking. Regarding...
traktorna
2013
Installation run day by day
Details
skyamma
2013
Oil paint, horse hair,
copper nails
Installation view
(50 x 50 cm each glass)

Jessica Sanderheim

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man’s basic human physical need to feed on what is outside the body she says, ‘he generally finds it, and that is why he has the illusion – as on the physical plane – that his being carries the principle of its preservation within itself.’

In Eva Hesse’s work materials seem to shift between sculpture and painting, tone and texture. The parts slowly change colour, a kind of painting in space and time.

I believe that fantasy lives in reality, or that reality is not in opposition to illusion.

Bioregionalism: we move, we travel, and we understand that truths have been created in different places and extend over varying distances. Can truths be moved, translated? If so, what would be in the desire to do so? Is there something good in wanting to negotiate one’s truths with someone else? Truth meaning reality, meaning regional, meaning inner and outer, meaning situated in flux?

A skeleton of a horse mounted in the garage of the riding school. On at least one occasion during each theory lesson the room grew dark around drowsy students who had hauled hay and carried water buckets. The skeleton, which was otherwise lit with a bright humming light, became in the darkness a fragile silhouette that drew a map. In our minds we where supposed to hang the flesh on these bones, the fragile silhouette that drew a map. In our minds we where supposed to hang the flesh on these bones, the antagonistic muscle pairs, in order to understand the musculoskeletal system that forms the basis of the activities in the stable. We all want to become better riders, more sensitive, more qualified to understand how we can affect the horse’s movements.

The purpose of turning one’s head, locus

The horse reaches out its long neck to look around the corner; a fly walks across its flank. The purpose of turning one’s head, locus

The horse reaches out its long neck to look around the corner; a fly walks across its flank. I am the blind one.

J. M. Coetzee lets Elizabeth Costello talk about animals in his novel The Lives of Animals. For a moment we can feel what it is like to be dead, she says, and suggests that in the same way we can feel what it is like to be an animal. She also talks about that which we do not consider because it is alien to us and therefore we cannot see it; or does she rather mean that which we choose to call alien and choose not to see? Do we have any chance of understanding another existence, in dreams, in a novel, in theory? Can we understand ourselves through others? It seems as though the only thing I can be completely sure of is that there is something in the activity surrounding the works that can become a discussion. At any chosen moment when one decides to make a statement, there will probably immediately exist equally many counter-arguments to the advantage of something else. Word against word and to words, expanding oppositions, any direction or none.

How few resources are needed to provoke the mirror world that unfolds inside a person? A way of making a place in the world, where I can easily be any stone. That which someone would call the non-political ceases to be so at the moment when the words are uttered. A displacement of the values of things occur. Invisible signals control the movements of the body, by naming and defining we see invisible particles, nerves, fibres, or the otoliths in the semicircular canals of the ear that affect balance. The so-called kristallsjukan,13 benign paroxysmal positional vertigo. Interoceptors control the levels of several substances in the blood system, among others the levels of salt; they are involved in sensations such as interosensation; another rarely spoken-of human sensation is that of fear. A sense of electroception is attributed to neither humans nor horses.24

Presumably one can mirror oneself in language; this means that I cannot ignore words. Words fill in, they might make visible that which we never saw, they easily stand in and attain a thing-like character. Some things, like words, admonish: sweep, broom, comb, brush. It might be impossible for anyone to say how worlds of words and things crumble and arise? Does one feel akin to a specific thing when encountering it? I believe that even the word ‘thing’ rolls differently off of the tongue in the mouths of different people. Do we really see something with words, or do we see our own bodies again and again?

When I see a table I see my legs and arms, my back and torso; perhaps the table is also looking at me, asking how long my back is in relation to my legs?
Binocular vision to kaleidoscopic sight. The left and right eyes cooperate to create depth perception (in negotiation with thoughts and ideas). Different descriptions can provide a deeper understanding of that which is described, an additional dimension. Art ensures its value as the right or left eye or as kaleidoscopic sight.

I know that the only thing I may know is that I usually change my mind. When it comes to speaking about my works, I might say other things when I look at them again. This has little to do with their having changed. It happens relatively often that I immediately fall into the thoughts that informed the making of a work. Language falls apart in the attempt to convey that for which there are no words, and thereby displays exactly the weakness and limitations that brought it down: the words fell in among themselves.

In the French cave of Pergouset, there is an engraved horse head that even the artist never saw, since one cannot insert one’s head into the niche where it was drawn. Catching sight

It often seems to me as if the artworks are created in the periphery of my working process. At some point I started considering additional raw materials such as water, wet paint, and clay as important characters; they had something unconstrained about them. The characteristics of adhesive tape, or porcelain, but also their echoes from belonging to a particular environment are elements that carried the potential to say something about the scenes in the stories of our lives. Negotiations over power in materials and things become like exercises in seeing a thing at dusk. The Icelandic lava desert, swaying grass, aircraft interiors, or anuncanny advertising sign outside a shop can reveal or become host to my ghosts at any time. Processes generated by actions, the collecting of stories, and attempts such as making a path into the forest or wearing a jacket long enough, might humble the Otherness.

To a certain extent I have spent my time navigating myself toward the edges of the habits that make up this skin. Always back in the voice, in stories told in the storyteller’s body. We have flown out of ourselves.beginning on the outside that desirable skin where it was drawn.

We are turned inside out. Your cities lie digesting in our stomachs. Street lights footle in our ocular darkness. We are turned inside out.

For the Next Millennium

Six Memos

Calvino, Italo.

Röda Bokförlaget, 1988

A Necessary Unity

Mind and Nature:
The unsurpassable openness of the circle of a thousand

Hesse, Eva.

Repetition

(1968).

The shattering tremors of the static

The unsurpassable openness of the circle

Lagardeomain of God.

The far-shore of an instant

Birth-Breaths and orgasms

Our connection to an amniotic

In our busy ashbins

Our tissue is of that which escapes you

Among the refuse of unborn centuries

In one impalpable

Stirring the remorses of your tomorrow

Our shadow lengths

In your feet

You are so old

Born in our immortality

Stuck fast as Life

In one impalpable

Omniprevalent Dimension

You are so old

In your fear

Our shadow lengths

Fixing the extension of your reactions

Our shadow lengths

Barder

2013

Word, plaster, metal, wall paint

176 x 282 cm

Svepa MalA

Rulla Rita

2013

Concrete, plaster, horse hair

103 x 103 x 5 cm


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Jessica Sanderheim / Master of Fine Arts 2

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Collected fabrics various sizes, folded fitting into a standard envelope
1. The titles of the graduation show 2013.
OCH ÖVERLEVNAD

All that you see

Spräng vargen
snake:y road-yea whatta ride (with James Baljo)

Nowhere-going

Spjuth-Anders Johansson

Trevor Lee Larson-Lukas Juretko-Andreas

Had to cry today-no song tomorrow

Haunting your mind you set out to haunt him
dog and dragon

I trust something I can carry

is

Friday

things needed

Stars said drink
I trust something I can carry
Dog and Dragon
Leva tirvane bland poeter together with Makkon
Haunting your mind you set out to haunt him down
Had to cry today-no song tomorrow

I7:00 pm end together with Urna, Gomm-Trevor Lee Larson-Lukas Jurektos-Andreas
Spjuth-Anders Johansson
Nowhere-going
Munsår
19:00-13:00 Detroit-time: this has been a snakey road-eya whatta ride (with James Baljo)
Culture is not your friend
Spring vargen
All what you see

LINDA SPJUT
There's an I in team

In his Essays On The Blurring Of Art And Life, Allan Kaprow writes:

"Happenings were fresh. But soon, even the experimental Happenings appeared saddled with the art history they would replace. I'm not referring to the traditional topics of genre, style, and subject matter which occupy historians and critics. I'm talking about unquestioned beliefs associated with all the arts. For example, belief in objects that can be possessed; belief in eternity; belief in control and skill; belief in creativity; belief in publicity and fame; belief in marketability. (...) I took a cue from stories of monastic practices in which dissatisfied persons, seeking the proverbial meaning of life, give up the real world and its temptations for a presumed spiritual, and better, one. Could this be done in art without physically going into a monk's cell for life? I thought it could and called it 'un-art'. Essentially, this was accomplished by taking the art out of art, which in practical terms meant discarding art's characteristics."

The framework of my graduation exhibition ÄVENTYR OCH ÖVERLEVNAD (translated ADVENTURE AND SURVIVAL) at gallery KHM included two weeks of entitled time in a programme occupied with the uncertainty of expectations circling around the imperative of representing modern art in a fixed environment. Some of the days in the programme were planned with happenings, actions and activities; other days were deliberately left unplanned as to make sure that an interchange of attendance is provided. On some days a lot of people came by, whereas on others not a single person would show up. The participation of people would shift from day to day. The gallery was filled with objects of varying significance, rearranged, reshaped, re-used every day. The programme was sent out by post and email, printed in four different flyer-versions and handed out some days before the happening occurred. It was presented as an event on Facebook to join in, with a reminder posted every day on the wall of the event of what actual day it was (today; SPRING VÄRGEN etc). It was also projected onto the wall at the gallery space in the form of a movie trailer, like the closing credits at the end of a film. The projection was looped. No end. On a continuous end. The titles would scroll upwards and into a moving black square.

In this text I will try to dwell on the essentials of my practice: How not to lose your work and doing but rather yourself in order to be together and to give some thing.

In DADA-manifesto Hugo Ball calls out:

"I shall be reading poems that are meant to dispense with conventional language, no less, and to have done with it. (...) It will serve to show how articulated language comes into being. I let the vowels fool around. I let the vowels quite simply occur, as a cat meows... Words emerge... shoulders of words, legs, arms, hands of words. Au, oi, uh."

Text is rhythm, there are melodies in sentences and talking requires a great deal of improvisation.

Failure of communication. In some cases I just don't get through. In the other case I'm verbally run over. I retreat to a house in the forest. I'm sick of words and people. It's a grey day and I dress in my camouflage uniform and set out with the canoe. The water level in the pond is rather low. The pond was emptied of water for generating electric power. In some places the level is so low that the belly of the canoe touches the muddy bottom of the pond and I have to pole myself forward. It's not silent but an autumn fog makes all sounds soft. There is nobody to talk or listen to. Lay down in the canoe and drift onto the wall at the gallery space in the form of a movie trailer, like the closing credits at the end of a film. The projection was looped. No end. On a continuous end. The titles would scroll upwards and into a moving black square.

I have consciously deprived myself of a certain use of words during the years. Even though text and words have always been central to my practice. I sometimes had the feeling that words in proper order were a threat to my doing. I have a love-hate relationship with words and it has kept me productive. In 2006 I decided to stop reading books for educational purposes. Not forever but for an undefined amount of time. I wanted to become dependent on other people and see what it would do with me. I think these years of neglecting some reading has affected my practice today; they were years of building up a vocabulary as well as collecting knowledge based on what's said by whom and where in what situation.

THINGS NEEDED

"Naïve realism. In English, I can add a single letter to 'word' and get 'world'. I put a small 1 between the e and the d and close the chasm between the two, and the game gives me some satisfaction."

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There’s another grey day and I dress in my
father’s green raincoat and set out in the forest
with a plastic tube to swing and make a sound
in order to scare away the wild boars. I have
my camera with me, I take pictures of a tree that
has been growing in a full circle, then growing
straight upwards again. I take a photo of a dead
dry juniper bush, using the flash. The picture ap-
pears on the display. A foggy mist is covering the
juniper and the juniper only but there is no fog
today. I hurry up and take another photo using
the flash. No cloud. So I take another picture
and another and another and another and no
cloud appears. My pulse is racing. Sit down on
the ground, I think for myself and I think; Ok,
there might be time for some veneration, here and
now. I kneel down on the ground and feel like
my mother. Veneration time. Dear potential spirit
of the forest, beloved Mother Earth. I think for
myself and I think: Joy.....and I breathe in and I
breathe out and take a photo using the flash,
and there’s my breath. Solitude. After five days I email pictures and vid-
eos and songs from the forest to various people.
Erika Landström introduces me to Graziano
Caprita and emails me her text Birdmen as well
as pictures of spirals and sketches of an echo-
chamber. Graziano emails me mini bananas and
smiley’s and plastic balls and we decide to col-
laborate in an exhibition in Hamburg. The title
When Is Itself is decided upon. Two weeks later
I dig up two small pine tree plants on the paint-
ball area, take a plane to Germany and mount
the plants on the speakers in the gallery, drag in
a tree stump to sit on and perform the song All
What You See, Darkness and Fingers Deeper on an
acoustic guitar with the shell of an old PC-hard
drive as a drum.

I TRUST SOMETHING I CAN CARRY

“Anything we haven’t experienced for ourselves
sounds like a story. All we can ever do is sift the
evidence.”

In the text Doing Research-Writings from the
Finnish Academy of Fine Arts on 3 Jeremiah’s Day
describes helping a friend shooting Super 8 foot-
age while his friend is digging holes in Berlin in
search of buried ruins that he plans to make casts
of. The idea is to decant a positive of the space as
a sculpture. At some point his friend discovers
a staircase leading downwards. Jeremiah asks
him if he knows the history of this discovered
structure; what kind of space was it, a home? An
office? Who lived there, what happened to them?
His friend replies that he plans to go to the state
archive to find out but keeps on digging and
delaying his visit there. Day suggests: “Perhaps
Smith’s decision not to go to the archive (yet)
is what Nietzsche called the choice of a ‘limited
horizon’ in which not all questions have to be
faced, in which one does not need to be respon-
sible to all perspectives, to preserve the space for
‘becoming.’”

STARS SAID DRINK

“(…) the tyranny of time – the feeling of being
trapped in a forward-moving sequence of
moments – must be banished. Intoxication is,
among other things, the destruction of the
timekeeper, a release into the duration state.”

Keep the blood-sugar steady, the head high,
coffee banana nose is bleeding.

I am working with formal structure and emotion-
al material. “Losing oneself” and how to do this is
of my interest, for me I as I know, has boundaries,
I am limited. How to get to anything beyond
myself, as in new forms and ideas? Throughout
cultural history intoxication and the use of stimu-
lants (such as alcohol, poetry, music, caffeine, art,
drugs) has been a method for ravishing the intel-
lect. With a certain dose of responsibility and with
the dream of longing for access/public power/unii-
versal understanding, the action of intoxication is
not to be called escapism. Wishing for new forms
and ideas, in the Lettre du Voyant Rimbaud wrote:

“The poet makes himself a seer by a long, prodig-
iouss, and rational disordering of all the senses.
Every form of love, of suffering, of madness; he
searches himself, he consumes all the poisons in
him, and keeps only their quintessences. This is
17:00 Open and together with Ulrika Gomem, Tra-
vor Lee Larson, Lukas
Juretko, Andreas Spjuth,
Anders Johansson
2013
Mixer, cardbox, Roland
Sampler, cables, candle,
Mac Book, sleeping
mat, fiddle stick,
Andreas and Mattias
17:00 Open and together
with Ulrika Gomem, Tra-
vor Lee Larson, Lukas
Juretko, Andreas Spjuth,
Anders Johansson
2013
Speakers, black plastic
bags, cardbox, cables,
taco buffet, black plates,
ruler, power cords, beer,
duct tape, trash can, paper, wine

Linda Spjut / Master of Fine Arts 2

4. Mary Norton,
The Borrowers

5. Sven Birkerts, Fabled
The Borrowers
p. 196.
Linda Spjut / Master of Fine Arts 2

Culture is not your friend 2013
A tree on the graveyard in Malmö is still alive during the walk to the sea.


an unspeakable torture during which he needs all his faith and superhuman strength, and during which he becomes the great patient, the great criminal, the great accursed – and the great learned one! – among men. – For he arrives at the unknown! Because he cultivated his own soul – which was rich to begin with – more than any other man! He reaches the unknown, and even if, crazed, he ends up by losing the understanding of his visions, at least he has seen them! Let him die charging through those unutterable, unnameable things(...)”

The word monument comes from the Latin ‘monère’ which means ‘to remind’ or ‘to warn’. Inside of Kunst-Werke in Berlin a pyramid was built up and drunk down in 2013. The installation Recovery of Discovery by French artist Cyprien Gaillard consisted of 72 000 Efes beer bottles imported from Turkey piled up in cardboard boxes in the form of a pyramid. This piece of art was completed by the process of its destruction enabled by interaction; people gathered, drank and deconstructed, in momentum, the monument.


In both ÖVERLEVNAD and ÄVENTYR OCH BLÅNDR POETER

when we enter the space. In a plastic bag with the dishes once a week equals a new track. we are told he knows what we do. we add the music for it. He was editing it while it was shot outdoors. “watch a movie being filmed the way it is being written.”

HAD TO CRY TODAY
NO SONG TOMORROW

The Artist Formally Known As Prince also named The Artist abandoned his name Prince in 1993 and took on the Love Symbol instead. In the trial with Warner Bros concerning the artistic and financial output of Prince he showed up with slave written on his cheek.

Jack Smith released and lost his movie Flaming Creatures in 1963. He lost it not only one time but twice. It was taken away from him. The first time the New York police seized it at the very premiere and it was determined by the Criminal Court to be obscene and banned in 22 states in the United States. It caused riots at universities all over America. However, due to Jonas Mekas Flaming Creatures began to circle around in underground movie societies and was being screened without Smith’s approval. “His work was only taken away from me in order to support something I never meant to support”, said Smith. “To support” namely: the morality of America, the students whose riots turned the movie into a case-study, the personal career climbing of Mekas. This experience sucked the journey out of Smith. So he continued making movies, taking a long time for it, preparing his suits and the costumes of his actors. Normal Love was shot outdoors. “Watch a movie being filmed in the sunlight!” Smith called out and when the time came for screening it, he was there himself to add the music for it. He was editing it while it was played. This, a sort of refusal of a final product, reassured him not to ever lose his work again.

EXPLORE MY MIND YOU SET OUT TO HAUNT HIM DOWN

The neck
Where the head ends and the body begins.

In the poster for a recent Fra Angelico exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, saints are being decapitated. They are kneeling in a circle, the swords follow this circle, and blood is gushing from the open holes of their necks. It’s remarkable that, even chopped off, the heads keep their golden halos. The bystanders and kings on the left side of the composition seem to notice this too, but it’s too late. Now, the heads are like gold coins rolling in the painting, like presidents’ heads on a money bill (...)”

In both écriture féminine and improvisation, invention is linked to singularity which is linked to alterity. Improvisation is defying codes, risking the unknown, all while running the risk of being fully codified itself since the improvised act can only be analysed or understood through pre-existing or prevailing laws of language, music and temporality. It can never be completely out of time or beyond the law of the musical text. It exists only in relation to an original timeline, melody, theme or musical tradition.

HAUNTING YOUR MIND YOU SET OUT TO HAUNT HIM DOWN

LeVA RÖVARE BLAND POETER

What is Michael Gira doing??
He is for sure not putting me in a trance in May 2012 at the Roter Salon, Volksbühne, Berlin. I know he is not god, he appears pretty real up there in his cowboy hat. Gira is rolling, on and on and on, on three, maximum four chords on his acoustic guitar as he sings. A sequence I can grasp and follow. Three, maximum four chords and the music I can absolutely not prepare myself for the fourth chord. Not a single time it appears. Even though I can follow and I know exactly when it’s about to appear. Exactly when hitting the fourth chord all the air in the room is sucked out and into the guitar or his fingers playing the guitar. I don’t know, but I am able to feel this and for even less than a millennium it’s absolutely still. Then it hits, a massive compact spooling blast that runs back into the room.

Linda Spjut / Master of Fine Arts 2

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A tree on the graveyard in Malmö is still alive during the walk to the sea.


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Emotion turns to motion, and that’s the truth.’’

“If we subtract human perception, everything moves. Any static is so only at the level of perceptibility. At the molecular or quantum level, everything is in motion, is vibrating. Equally, objecthood, that which gives an entity duration in time, makes it endure; is an event irrelevant of human perception. All that is required is that an entity be felt as an object by another entity. All entities are potential media that can feel or whose vibrations can be felt by other entities. This is a realism, albeit a weird, agitated, and nervous one.”

Working and doing is a way of being with people. Creating short-lived platforms and involving other people in those is part of my artistic practice.


NOWHERE-GOING

I am at home. While walking into the kitchen and reaching for a bowl on the shelf, a lid falls down with the edge landing on the cable of my fridge, cutting it in half. My fridge is dead. I think: “Really?” Neither intention, nor plan nor idea is necessary for things to “go strikingly wrong”.

“It is obvious that there are principles and causes which are generable and destructible apart from the actual processes of generation and destruction; for if this is not true, everything will be of necessity: that is, if there must necessarily be some cause, other than accidental, of that which is generated and destroyed. Will this be, or not? The distance between our words and thoughts equals the distance between our minds and thoughts.”

In the performance Keep Calm, It’s a Gravity Comedy (2011) there was the situation with the balloons. I got some helium balloons during the day of the performance. The setting for the performance was a small amphitheatre where I was close to the spectators, we all were sitting on the stairs leaving the stage empty. I had the idea of putting the balloons in a big plastic bag and at the peak of the song A gravity Comedy, when the rhythm kicks in, I was going to release them ascending into the sky. But at the actual moment they had lost so much gas that they simply pooled out. Christmas balls, to dress up in neon-coloured grass skirts and to tattoo “PK for life” on their bellies in black gothic letters, to make themselves maximally visible and until they lose their voices: “defend all idiots’ rights to be an idiot”. Suggesting flamboyant subjectivity for the destruction of an exclusive unity and for avoiding an imputed otherness, Jan Verwoert writes: “At the heart of an artistic subjectivity of any depth, there is a collective capable of free creative action, will form itself, unbound from ideologies, most likely through sharing subjectivity: in an act of sharing what cannot be shared, but only performed in a mode of synchronous asynchronicity. This is about acts, ideas and emotions that constitute community in a different manner, through enacted difference, through the motion of standing apart together.”

12. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book IV, 1027a29,
This land is your land

“... It was not possible to think except with one’s brain, no one could stand outside himself in order to check the functioning of his inner processes...”
– Stanisław Lem, Solaris

My aim in this text is to describe how I, as an artist, navigate the dividing lines between some of the following dichotomies:

- Restriction and Release/Order and Chance/Inner and Outer
- System and Anarchy/Idea and Object/Nature and Culture
- Person and Person

To simplify things and gain an overview of the challenges I face in this endeavour, I distinguish between the outer world and my inner world. These two worlds are inextricably linked to each other and are perhaps even essentially one and the same, even as they operate individually in accordance with their separate sets of rules. Though they are symbiotic, my goal is to separate them, so that I can unify them.

When I am alone with the world, everything is possible; I can define what I see and assess its validity as I please. In a society that is governed by a common consensus of what is true and not, it becomes more difficult to think in alternative ways. This does of course not mean that the alternatives are less true.

In my art I strive to liberate myself from this common consensus, so that I can equate the outer world with the inner world, or at least move more readily between them. Though I yearn to understand what I focus on from a perspective that is detached from empirical rationality, such a task is virtually impossible to carry out. What constantly thwarts me from opening up this perspective is an inherently reductionist method of navigation that governs how I experience the present. This method establishes logical truths by building and developing systems that exclude the unknown. By understanding the genesis and functions of these systems, however, I may finally be able to transcend them and come closer to some kind of freedom.

But what does freedom consist of? Is freedom the temporary absence of control, or is it nothing other than the diametrical opposite of control? Is freedom a routine? Does freedom only apply in captivity?

We see our own mirror images in everything that surrounds us, in clouds, in rocks, in the behaviour of animals, but how difficult it is to understand something that is fundamentally different from ourselves. In his screenplay for Solaris, Stanisław Lem wrote, “We don’t want to conquer the cosmos, we simply want to extend the boundaries of Earth to the frontiers of the cosmos.”

I experience that we lack the ability to conquer the so-called cosmos, not because of technical limitations, but because of our inability to fathom it. We perform at our best when we comprehend our immediate surroundings. If the world were suddenly to seem alien and unfamiliar, we would all instantly curl up into the foetal position while waiting for the moment to pass.

I believe that it is possible to open up to the unknown, however, but it is challenging and frightening and requires an uncommonly open mind to do so.

The inner world

Our perception of reality is shaped when our sense impressions become assimilated in our memories. Reacting with what already exists on
Scopic Apprehension of the After-image and the Sina,
complex image brimming with the history of its retained, but is now a temporalized, unstable, leaves behind the imaginary. The image is fully image', however, the concept of after-image supersession, and engagement. Unlike 'post-
of 'image' to a cluster of theoretical possibilities provoked it has disappeared, and opens the idea "The term 'after-image' (…) denotes a visual as follows:
Joan ramon resina understands after-images cumulated and stored as the result of my being fragments from the outer world that are ac-
images I see when I close my eyes: visual As I know it.
images' unfamiliarity in itself proof that they are created somewhere outside of my personal realm! There is undoubtedly a wealth of hidden images inside our mind, and perhaps the foreign after-images originate from something you have forgotten that you even registered. As mentioned above, I believe that after-images lead their own lives after being included in the inner archive. But this does not mean that the images are no longer unrecognisable, nor does it prove that the world is easy to comprehend. On the contrary, that the images are unrecognisable confirms that shapelessness is a shape. It is like saying that since something doesn’t exist, it does exist. The unknown exists, and it is difficult to understand what it is because it is impossible to see what it represents.
Fear and prejudice are of course inseparable. As I understand it, fear arises when you are unsure for the other reason to get rid of any preju-
ings, for example when you are in the dark and prevented from seeing your surroundings. This can occur both inside the mind as well as in the outer, physical world, and the unknown thereby becomes threatening and unfamiliar.
The unfamiliar images can occur in recurring flashes. But no matter how terrifying they might seem, they are also the unpredictable that sparks off new ideas; they expand the universe as I know it. Where do they come from, these impassive and indifferent images, as though created by some immaterial, age-old substance? What exactly are they an after-image of? Or as the surrealist André Breton asked in one of his manifestos:
"Must these beings be convinced that they result from a mirage or must they be given a chance to show themselves?"
The outer world
An assertion: a work of art cannot reproduce the contents of the inner world. Regardless of how strongly I want to unify the inner and outer worlds, I am forever incapable of exactly repro-
ducing what I see on the inside. This is because when I try to express a visual image I have in my mind’s eye, the very line that is to define this image becomes an object itself entirely detached from the after-image. This also means that the work of art is in itself a totally unpredictable universe that functions in accordance with its own laws and rules. Anything can happen in a work of art, just as it is in our imagination, and this might mean that dream and reality merge in some fashion after all.
Even though the work of art is its own world, I can recognise the inside in the outer world, and vice versa: through empirical understanding, through association and feeling, we can arrive at a state that is familiar. It is this function that explains why we often prefer, however unconsciously, to read books that describe experiences we have had ourselves but that we are unable to articulate.
Ideally, our empathy enables us to approach the other and to create a new reality in our encour-
ter with the other, independent of any preju-
des that might lie between them. When two cultures meet, a third culture arises. Meaning is created in the encounter between the work of art and the viewer, just as the world derives its meaning from associative empathy.
Does this mean that compassion, association, and comparison are what we can expect from the anthropogenic perspective, and are we even capable of approaching such forms of information?
I hope that it is possible to really understand another person at any given time. My world in-
teracts with the worlds of others; as a result, we become more similar, we exchange emotions, and we even dare to claim that we know what’s going on in one another’s lives. It is neverthe-
less less the problems of approaching the other that interests me, because such problems constitute the difference between being restricted and being free in how the world is experienced. Unfortunately, we develop even more restric-
tive strategies to keep things within a certain structure, to make the world comprehensible. It is for that very reason that I think we see only what we want to see, so that most things remain hidden regardless of whether we shut our eyes or keep them open.
Nature vs. culture
For me, being alone with nature is directly related to both the logic and the freedom I find in the inner world. This is because I am relatively free to decide things for myself, even as I am myself subject to a larger system, which because of the absence of human rationality always teaches me more about what it means to be human. Quite a paradox, isn’t it?
A culture as such can seem restrictive for hu-
manity’s understanding of itself or of nature as such, and it is apparent that my own undeniable need to reveal another kind of truth outside of the anthropocentric one is symptomatic of growing up in a religious, industrial culture that denies the values of the unknown in order to fulfil its purpose: progress.
In my travels to the US and in reading about the historical development of how the country relates to its wilderness, I have seen examples of how the anthropocentric perspective can in fact obscure anything that does not throw back the reflection of its own image.
As the settlers moved across the fantastical wilderness of America to plant flags of conquest, while violently clearing out whatever they came across along the way, the artworks that illustrat-
ed this landscape consequently became the pre-
dominant subject matter and form of expression of visual art in nineteenth-century America. Contemporary pioneers of photography and

painting introduced frozen waterfalls and gargantuan trees to a fast expanding tourist industry. Upon considering the numerous confirmations of how holy their land was, I am hardly surprised to learn that a national park in Utah was granted the name of ZION.

The glorification of the wilderness must have been a parallel consequence to the industrial extraction of natural resources. In fact, as I found myself looking out over Yosemite, or Grand or Bryce or Glen Canyon, I too had escaped my own industrial background, to grant myself the opportunity to face the spectacle of wild natural beauty. However, as I stood gazing from legendary designated viewpoints like Vista Point, Inspiration Point and Grand View, I started to suspect that what I was looking at was far from wild.

In 1816 the American politician and president of the American Academy of Fine Arts, DeWitt Clinton, described America’s nature as follows:

“And can there be a country in the world better calculated than ours to exercise and exalt the imagination — to call into activity the creative powers of the mind, and to afford just views of the beautiful, the wonderful and the sublime. Here Nature has conducted her operations on a magnificent scale: extensive and elevated mountains – lakes of oceanic size – rivers of prodigious magnitude – cataracts unequalled for volume of water – and boundless forests filled with wild beasts and savage men, and covered with the towering oak and the aspiring pine. This wild, romantic, and awful scenery is calculated to produce a correspondent impression in the imagination – to elevate all the faculties of the mind, and to exalt all the feelings of the heart. But when cultivation has exerted its power – when the forest is converted into fertile fields, blooming with beauty and smiling with plenty, then the mind of the artist derives a correspondent color from the scenes with which he is conversant; and the sublime, the wondrous, the ornamental and the beautiful thus become, in turn, familiar to his imagination.”

Simon Schama has written a lot about how Western civilization has related to nature, and in his book Landscape and Memory he pointed out that the word “landscape” is of Germanic origin and means to shape the land. When I read this, it struck me that the word has become so incorporated in the English language that I hardly ever consider its original meaning.

I find the tourist’s eye to be just as non-inquisitive as it eyeballs the biggest tree in the world through the lens of an iPhone. The reflected image of the tree was generated so long ago that the person receiving the image doesn’t even recognise that it is a reflection. And in this case it is the aesthetic image of nature that was defined a long time ago, so that the person looking at it sees nothing but a preconceived image. The interaction with nature is limited to the act of recognising an already defined image, sometimes as though nature was created for this purpose only. This goes for artists, as well as tourists.

Constantly encircled by hundreds of cars and buses, Yosemite Valley is a city, a temple of consumption, a disguised mall in the woods guarded by Saint Ansel Adams on his high horse of copyrights to truth.
The work

In my work I operate on two main levels:
1. I want to familiarise myself with my inner visual experience with the world by attempting to channel and organise it in the outer world, and thereby understand and learn from the workings of the unknown – existing both in the outer and the inner world.
2. As I am concerned with the ramifications of humanity’s tendency to define its surroundings according to predefined measures, the second level pertains to a more generalised analytical perspective of culture and politics rather than an intimate personal point of view.

The painting

I work primarily with painting in a highly practical manner, where I use technical mastery for example to get colours on a surface to represent or convey the inner after-images.

For me, a painting is a field of exploration whereby I can understand what it’s all about. By “all” I mean my own worldview in the form of everything inside me and everything I see around me, and by “understand” I mean developing and organising the picture plane. In a state of intense concentration, and using a variety of automatic processes combined with a highly analytical approach to the idiom of painting, the painting becomes a way of understanding the world – when you’re on your own in an ongoing investigative process, the world crystallises itself. This is an ideal, a romantic and spiritual way of relating to the function of the painting. There are obviously many obstacles to the process that prevent it from evolving as smoothly as I described above. But every goal has its obstacle, and the goal of painting, as I have chosen to articulate it, is based on a foundation of obstacles. It should be difficult; the difficulty makes it that more interesting. For example, in my inquisitive desire to come closer to the ocean of information in my inner world, it’s my experience that the very technique of painting restricts me when trying to express myself.

Techniques are established systems that can be perceived as restrictive because even as you use and practise them, you incorporate them as physical patterns of movement that tend to constitute so much in themselves that they hinder the direct contact with the original after-image. Taking this challenge as my starting point, I have experimented with a variety of methods in an attempt to steer clear of the habit-forming nature of techniques. Thus, I will paint in the dark without seeing what I’m doing; listen to loud music so as to let a musical trance determine the idiom; let rhythm and the shape of sound set the tone, rather than the fiction/friction of the line; use sheer stubbornness to deliberately avoid assessing the quality of the work; or try to follow, and avoid censoring, the associations that spring forth from the painting.

These methods are akin to the automatic techniques that the surrealists defined and examined nearly a century ago in order to approach the unrestrictive inner universe. During his years as a surrealist, André Masson (1886–1987) worked exclusively with such automatic techniques, whereby the artist lets his or her hand randomly guide the given tool over the paper. This haphazard movement was a way of liberating the self from rational control, and it could thereby reveal something that would otherwise have remained hidden in the so-called subconscious. Later on in life, however, after having abandoned the Surrealists – who he believed had stopped renewing themselves – Masson reformulated the technique as follows:

“...the tendency to allow oneself to be invaded by objects, of making the self into a vase to be filled by objects, indicates an absorption with things which represents a very low stage of consciousness. (...) Does that mean one must give precedence to reflection over instinct, or to intelligence over what is commonly called “inspiration”? I think not. (...) Intuition and understanding, the unconscious and the conscious must work out the transmutation in the superconsciousness, in the exfoliating unity.”

What André Masson was trying to say was of course that the unconscious should be combined with the conscious so as to make the art interesting. After experimenting with these techniques, I have concluded that I must combine them.

The painting as installation

I want to spark off a public conversation about the formal and mental space that separate the observer from the image; I want to know more about what this space potentially consists of, and I want to know why the distance is experienced as so far.

I strive deliberately to expand the concept of the painting to incorporate new forms beyond the traditional two-dimensional format. I have done this on various scales by analysing landscape paintings: I first divide their depth into a number of layers, and then re-assemble these layers with a certain distance that separates them from one another. I thereby demonstrate in an educational way how depth is both built and generated in a painting.

Figure 1 shows my adaptation of a painting from 1837 of a tempest on the Norwegian coast. The original was made by the German artist Andreas Achenbach, who himself had never been to Norway.

Art can transport the viewer to another world, to the illusion of a place that is something other than physical, spatial reality. I want to exploit the formal duality of the work of art to underscore the duality of the story it is narrating. In other words, I want to create an illusion without concealing its artificiality. I construct a theatre where you can see both sides of the illusion, both the stage itself and the backstage — that is, the artificial message itself and its reverse side, which in a purely physical sense keeps the idea in place. Blending the illusion and the construction is a way of allowing the inner and outer worlds to meet.

In my MFA exhibition I worked from a small found etching of an alpine landscape reminiscent of nineteenth-century national-romantic paintings of Norwegian nature. Upon closer inspection I noticed that the landscape was of a man-made tin mine in Cornwall from 1830. This Land Is Your Land is a time-based installation that basically consists of the found print of a mine, a two-metre-tall scenographic painting/model of the print, and a video of a gigantic excavating machine projected on a screen, making it look like the machine was eating itself into the model of the mine. You could walk in between the layers of the landscape and become the miner, the geologist, the painter, the actor, or the audience. But you had to find your own way, by climbing over fake mountains to one specific viewpoint for the arrangement of flats to resemble the original print. Or you could see it from behind, where the aesthetics of the woodwork was more prominent than the illusory painting on the front, and instead put yourself on a stage in front of the audience as a part of the illusion.

Since the illusion is created by means of artificial sets with fronts and backs, the perception of reality will of course change according to where the spectator moves relative to what he or she is looking at. This may be understood as the fundamental relation between a sentient being and the environment, as described by Henri Bergson in Matter and Memory from 1896:

“I note that the size, shape, even the colour, of outer objects is modified as my body approaches or recedes from them; that the strength of an odour, the intensity of a sound, increases or diminishes with distance; finally, that this very distance represents, above all, the measure in which the surrounding bodies are insured, in some way, against the immediate action of my body. To the degree that my horizon widens, the images which surround me seem to be painted on a more uniform background and become to me more indifferent. The more I narrow this horizon, the more the objects which it circumscribes space themselves out distinctly according to the greater or lesser ease with which my body can touch and move them. They send back, then, to my body, as would a mirror, its eventual influence; they take rank in an order corresponding to the growing or decreasing powers of my body. The objects which surround my body reflect its possible action upon them.”

Bergson describes how we navigate between the objects in our environs, and simultaneously explains how shifts in perspective entail that we notice one particular thing more clearly than other things. What is in direct contact with our bodies is perceived as reality; things...
that are farther away, and that produce less of a physical reaction, are more superficial. This explains the sensation of fear that arises when we lose our ability to get our bearings.

Conclusion

Through the process of transforming the small etching into the large-scale painting of the print, I understood more, not only about the conceptual potential of making paintings into scenographic installations, but had finally put my finger on thoughts and feelings that had occupied my mind for a long time. The fact that the image of the old mine reminded me of the wilderness shows that industry has been using nature to legitimise its own cynical interference with it; by falsely portraying and glorifying a mine to look like a mountainous version of paradise, and by exercising the authority to present this image as the truth, industry manages to remove its guilt and avoid all potential criticism. Reality is of course not on the flipside of the image, as it perhaps should be, but rather projected into the future, where we understand when looking back at history that the illustrations looked the way they did because they showed ideas rather than the material truth.

Can we ever show anything that is in the outer, material world? Can we ever copy anything by using our human mind or body? For my part, I don’t think we can. We cannot copy the outer world, any more than we can copy our inner after-images onto a piece of paper. This is why all our attempts to represent what we perceive are limited to exactly that: representations. Not a copy, not the real thing, but always an association, always something in between. The more open the understanding of a subject is, the more room is left to read it according to our own personal sense of logic. Ideally, we should practise to represent something and simultaneously ask how we are representing it, and perhaps discuss the reading of what we are trying to copy – not to decide on a consensus, but to consciously leave the possibility open for us all to interpret the world as we please.

The Line and the Support

In my dream words were floating in a stream before my eyes. I was reading what I have just written, what you have just read. This was how this text was supposed to begin.

The following paragraph started just like this. It seemed as if the only thing I had to do to write about my work was to read, since the text had already been written. All thoughts could now be traced, clearer than ever before.

Now I am awake. I no longer know for whom I am writing. Before finding its form the text is a monster. Its contours are unclear and it is difficult to tell what it really is. This undefined status is the primary characteristic of a monster and also what makes it so frightening.

“Monstrosity is the combining of two or more types of being in a single entity, which we call a monster. It is the image or embodiment of transformation, a reminder of the process itself, forever incomplete, preserving both the beginning and the end. Transformation and monstrosity are central to the fascination of ornament as well as to the prejudice against it. Ornament transforms materials by concealing them. [...] It transforms two dimensions into three by any combination of illusionism and actual relief. It turns an object into something that is no longer just that object. And ornament takes transformation as its subject matter. It revels in the creation of monsters. Animals emerge from plants, flowers turn into geometric shapes, with an ease that belies their unnaturalness.”

In my work I primarily deal with drawing. I am interested in what it means to be intimately involved with a certain medium, such as drawing, using that as an interface. How does drawing form and inform my relation to the world? Art is a threshold where the world spills into art and art spills into the world. The presupposed distinction or boundary between art and world (or art and life) is perhaps sometimes useful, but it does not, for that reason, necessarily exist. Still, I would appreciate it if this text would not be read as a text about my work, since my work is not mainly based in writing. The words want to warn you, or save me, attempting to hide something that has not yet been told, even though I realise that the text is not written only by the one who writes it. Maybe this ambiguity, when it comes to writing, has to do with a fear of laying down thoughts and freezing them in the form of a text. Because I know they will certainly change, the text will not. On the other hand, no thinking and no actions are disconnected from the world and from words.

My notebooks are black holes and they swallow everything I want to know and remember. By now there are over fifty of them, of various sizes, but all of them filled with what I have heard and read. There is something peculiar about them, though. The books themselves remain as physical objects and thereby keep the recorded thoughts stored, but they also make them vanish out of reach. Perhaps my brain is relaying too heavily on the possibility of reading this again, later, and therefore it does not have to remember, and, as a consequence, the things recorded are forgotten and lost.

“The notebook is actually an extension of oneself, if not more self than oneself, like an entirely new organ alongside one’s heart and brain, to name but the more evocative organs of our inner self. What this new organ does is incorporate other worlds into one’s own. Is this not obvious when Benjamin himself states that the genuine collector’s objects do not come alive in him, but rather it is he who lives in them?”

In his book, I Swear I Saw This, Michael Taussig meditates on the relationship between the
Technology we use to make sense of existence are constantly changing. They are inevitably shaping and changing our thinking and actions and thereby our relation to the world. What happens when the technical reproduction of images and texts once again has taken a gigantic leap and our mere object of paper (and its smart leather) can write in your notebook, making of it – this mere object of paper (and its smart leather cover) – a keenly receptive human being, thirte for more.”

Part of the interior of the house are elaborately mechanised in order to inspire heightened sensory experiences and daydreams. In the relationship between place and resident, borders are transgressed through his vivid experiences, and everyday life are altered and additional pleasures are triggered by memorabilia and extremely precious objects placed all over the house. There is a wish to be devoured by one’s environment and every detail is designed to change and enhance sensations. His collection of plants consists of specimens that look extremely artificial, but are real living plants. Artificial creations are superior to those of nature, and the Baron constantly wants to tickle his hyperrealistic senses in the most complex and curiously twisted ways. Electricity turns day to night and night to day, every connection to the world outside is interrupted. The bar is a museum or a living synaesthetic symphonies in the Baron’s mouth.

After being for some time a flâneur in this virtual world and physically reality, he eventually has to come back to the city. Eager attempts to control every aspect of perception have unfortunately started to disturb his bodily functions. Weak nerves and digestive problems force him to return to Paris.

Present

My images used to explain themselves to me at once. Like a very strong memory overwhelming the images is one, and the time spent between them and the people who will see them in the exhibition is another. But the performative aspects of drawing somehow tie these spaces together.

The drawings take me to a slowed-down rhythm, a certain pace of their own. Now and then, an enormous physical effort is required. Hours of sitting, extremely concentrated during long, long working days. Sometimes this is a toilsome time, other days more of a dance. I am in the content. Work and prayer. longing for being bound to existence, wanting to be tied to something, A prayer without an addressee. A pictorial manifesto where I am simulating a calling, which then becomes a calling. The meditative and the repetitious aspects of the act of drawing have effects on body and mind. Sometimes these mind-altering qualities appear as mere side effects, but in other works they are of great importance, also in terms of subject matter.

The Lip

“The plant may indeed conform to her own purpose, but an other has to certify this. And that other must speak, and speak, moreover, as a philosopher. She may be fully herself and in herself, but an other has to declare that this is the case. Thus, ‘her development is subject to definitions coming from an other. And if, in the unforeseeable future, she happened to undevelop a some nameless potency, it would not be up to her to judge whether or not this unpredictable event had occurred.”

We charged ourselves with their powers, their sensual shimmer. We used feathers to decorate ourselves. The feathers of the males adorn the hats of the ladies. A woman dances in a cloud of pink feathers and male dancers control the movements of the plumage so that they become hers. The plant, disguised as an insect, attracts through colours and scents. The name of the orchid comes from the Greek word for testicle. Orchis was torn apart as a punish- ment after an attempted rape during a Dionysian festival in the forest. His father begged for the Gods to heal him again, but instead they turned him into a flower.

“Dance and language, gestures of body and lips, are the earliest manifestations of mimics. – The
mimesis presents his subject as a semblance [...]. One could also say that he plays his subject. Thus we encounter the polarity informing mimesis. In mimesis, tightly interfolded like corydals, slumber the two aspects of art: semblance and play.7

The motif strikes me at first as very banal, but I have courted it, asked it to appear through my hand movements, written in body language. An act of seduction and the images slowly emerge. When he suddenly turns around, he is hoping for her to follow him to the other side. This is how he will know whether his territorial dance and his beauty have managed to capture her.

Is it all possible to relate to an animal like this through a drawing? So overloaded with symbolism, clichés, and associations. To start drawing in contours, trying to encounter whatever it might be and establish a relationship, an interesting one. To what extent will this drawing convey the presence of an animal, the feeling of an entity claiming existence? Not very much, it seems. Rather it is the materiality of the mark, the corporeality of the surface, the swirling surface that capture me. The focus is in the colours (fairly grey and white tones, I have to admit), and in the rhythms and patterns that appear. Drawing as invocation, slowly conjuring an image where the resonances in the pencil lines attract, but the subject, or the motif perhaps, repulse? It sometimes resembles embroidery, slowly filling the surface with stitches, but the image will forget this labour: all of a sudden it is there.

Semblance

“It is this that is frightening & existing in the midst of my profound gloom, depression, boredom, whatever it is. One sees a fin passing far out. What image can I reach to convey what I mean? [...] The interesting thing is that in all my feeling & thinking I have never come up against this before. Life is, soberly & accurately, the oddest affair; has in it the essence of reality. I used to feel this as a child—couldn’t step across a puddle once I remember, for thinking, how strange—what am I? &c. But by writing I dont [sic] reach anything. All I mean to make is a note of a curious state of mind. I hazard the guess that it may be the impulsion behind another book.”

In the quote above from Virginia Woolf’s diary, the vision of a fin in the water conveys the strange sensation of a new book approaching. The text she was beginning to sense was The Waves. I read it while working on a drawing depicting packages containing my diaries. Her language, a fluid force through each page, carried me away while I was resting from the drawing. This ‘play-poem’, as she called this text, strangely captures that which slips from depiction, how it comes into being. To become a person in the mind of another — a recursion which is already happening. How deeply dissolved, fragmented, and helplessly involved we are.

It is not clear who is speaking. After a couple of pages the voices of six children begin to crystallise and gradually become more and more delineated. Percival does not have a voice of his own, but he is present through being talked about and longed for by the others, and remembered by them. The different tones of their thinking flow over the pages in synchronised rhythms, as the characters start to see themselves in relation to each other. The monologues are linked and merged through shared experiences, filtered through each individual.

“And I have no face... I am swathed down, cavered, and float like paper against endless corridors, and must press myself against endless corridors, and must press my hand against the wall to draw myself back.”

Objects and events blend. How the light falls on the furniture. This very chair. Red petals. Nature is a prevailing force, present especially in the nine little scenes from a garden facing the sea, appearing in intervals throughout the text. The horizon tries to merge with the sky, the sky and the sea merge with the horizon. The boundaries between self and others are made visible, yet at the same time made impossible. Daily life experiences blend with deeply personal emotions that are perhaps impossible to share. It is the symphonic, collective character of identity that is investigated rather than the individual aspects of human existence. A strange sensation of sharpness and clarity is present in the language. The endless mystery of the human condition is reflected upon while the lives of the six characters pass through childhood, youth, and adult life.

“And now, said Neville, let Bernard begin. Let him puff out, telling us stories, while we lie recumbent. Let him describe what we have all seen so that it becomes a sequence.”

Bernard is constantly transforming what he sees into narratives told to the others as stories. Like Bernard, Woolf turns life into words, not only because she is a writer but also because her novel The Waves can be seen as a fictional autobiography: At some places in the text her own voice appears suddenly and self-reflexively, merging with Bernard’s. The six characters can be seen as facets of herself, being several at the same time, but they are simultaneously also careful portraits of her dear friends.

“And now I ask, ‘Who am I?’. I have been talking of Bernard, Neville, Jinny, Susan, Rhoda and Louis. Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct? I do not know. We are all here together. But now Percival is dead; we are divided; we are not here. Yet I cannot find any obstacle separating us. There is no division between me and them. As I talked I felt, ‘I am you’.”

The diary is a type of text intimately bound to the time of its creation. It carries time within itself. A common belief about diaries and a reason for keeping one is that these internal dialogues between one part of the self and another will result in clarity concerning how life is lived. Things left out are often as present as the things written down. And memory can be awakened and re-constructed when, or if, the books are ever read again, even though the afterlife of these objects is most likely to be spent in drawers, attics, or in the basement.

Faith in writing as a tool, to keep track of life and time, prevails but is continuously shifting and evolving. Early astrological records and farmers’ notes on weather and sowing traced recurring phenomena and could thus be used to make predictions about the future. And the more internal and self-examining writings of recent centuries carefully searched the remotest corners of the soul. These confessions could serve as a cure, but also become a poison.

There were six packages. They had lain hidden and forgotten for years, on the floor of my father’s office under a large machine used for copying architectural drawings. Fumes from the developing liquids had made pink and pale blue.
nuances appear on the surfaces of the packages. The folds of the paper were filled with dust and the tape had turned fragile and yellow. The physical changes in the objects attracted me, even though it felt like an eerie return. These packages could neither be kept nor read, nor thrown away. Instead I started to make careful portraits of each of the packages. I chose to draw them on a long scroll of paper, similar to the paper the books were once wrapped in. The portraits depicted another kind of portraying device in a slightly narcissistic loop. But the content of the packages soon became less important as I lost myself in all the folds on the surfaces. My concentrated eye/hand observed and recorded. A gaze from the outside looking at the enclosed. A gaze turned inwards connected to an active hand that transformed and recharged the character of the objects through their reappearance as images on the scroll.

"Is the secret in the content or in the form? And the answer is already apparent: neither."

They have been rewritten and altered, but still the question somehow lingers: what is the relationship between the depicted and the depiction? What is this version, this completely other but still somehow similar image-entity? Other, but still tied with various links to what it is an image of. But how? An alchemical transformation? A transference of energy through depiction.

These questions have been present throughout the history of humanity. In the cave allegory, Plato turns the cave into a scenographic stage, used as the image of a place where his thinking on images could unfold in writing – the ban on mimetic images spoken through the voice of Socrates. But the inside of the surface of the earth carried inscriptions and marks already. Here the human capacity to think through images materialised. Since then, and probably for a long time previously, this ability has grown as an unstoppable force and gift that floods all human actions and thinking.

The Cave Renders the Cave

He searched for traces of artefacts and pieces of portable art. His eyes were firmly fixed on the ground. Maria, his daughter, was not looking for anything in particular. Therefore she could let her gaze wander, and suddenly she discovered the images in the ceiling.

We wanted to see these images with our own eyes. But our desire eventually jeopardised the delicate climate of the cave. Unknowingly we consumed the images not only with our eyes: as a consequence of our countless inhaling and exhaling the paintings started to disintegrate and the cave had to be closed down. Another version now exists, not very far away. The cave renders the cave and the enigmatic paintings were doubled in a replica. We are here now, but we were not there. Time has altered the images and we can no longer know their meanings with certainty. I think this is why we have come here. They have waited us out, they last longer than all human decay. Are they shamanic reports from realities experienced in trance states? Or are the various kinds of animals depicted, the bison and the horses, some kind of code or index? Elaborate languages we can no longer read, residing beyond our ideas of hunters’ magic, fertility rites, and trip reports. They apparently insist on having meaning, even though the content may be lost to us. And the strong attraction that these images hold is evident, not least based on the administrative and museological apparatus surrounding the caves. This is another, equally interesting factor, to see how we interact with places like this, how they exist for us.

I am sitting close to a hologram of a hunter-gatherer family, while working on one of my drawings. The hunter-gatherers are radiating in yellowish tones, the hologram is starting to decay. For two days I hear the family speaking softly. The little child leaves the cave and returns after a while with some shells to eat. Again and again. I am working in the part of the cave where the fire was, where they are and their daily lives were lived. I listen to their voices but they fade from my attention span when I concentrate on a crevice in the roof. I am trying to learn some Spanish phrases from them. "Vuele, what does that really mean?" Someone in the museum staff tells me that it is not Spanish at all. It is an Inuit language.

For six days I perform a kind of pseudo-scientific, poetical investigation. The cave is constantly...
Opposite page:
Altamira 01.03.2013 – 06.03.2013
2013
Drawings, wooden frame.
59 × 138 cm
Detail
Altamira 01.03.2013 – 06.03.2013
2013
Drawings in wooden frame, tent
Installation view
guarded by security and surveillance cameras. The weather is a factor that is constantly present. I register what I see through my drawing. But I do not draw as well, and certainly not as fast as I planned. And not in a trance. Something is captured, a residue after an act, carried out in a place where a similar activity happened a very long time ago. There are no motifs like mine in the cave paintings. No surroundings are depicted, no settlements, no trees, and no horizons. If humans occur they are hybrids of humans and animals.

An Emergence

I am floating above the surface of the sea. When I come closer I see that the waves are lines drawn in pencil. The wave formations have been compressed like the zigzag stitches of a sewing machine where the width of the stitches has been reduced. But the pencil shines like metal and I soar and see the lines flicker from the light, when the wind rises and the currents underneath become stronger.

An image has revealed its will and my own has been slowed down to the speed of drawing. Wanting to become something but what? The non-figurative element in desire before it is obeyed. The desire lacks form. Looking at something with borrowed eyes for a moment, letting oneself fall into an image that takes one somewhere. Landing occasionally where it is unpleasant to stay and sometimes where life opens up its amazing strangeness.

When following an impulse you do not necessarily know what is going to happen. Laying yourself in the arms of something uncertain, following a sequence of actions that perhaps takes you nowhere. In strictly evolutionary terms this could be a foolish thing, but after having gone through the procedure a couple of times, experience tells you that it does not cease to be interesting. The work places before you completely new pleasures and familiar problems. The feeling of looking around in the studio after a couple of months of work, to see the things that were not there before.

In this process I am thinking about how dissolved subjecthood and objecthood are, how indistinct and fluid the boundaries are. Where we end, where we begin, and where we float in between. I want to investigate this muddy area without a predetermined method. How we gravitate to sacred and everyday objects, plants, animals, other materials, and artistic artefacts that we constantly intermingle with. In this, the drawing is the interface. What can hardly be articulated becomes partly visible. The drawing is a perforated shield, a membrane, a vehicle, and a passage, capturing what is constantly chafing against it from the outside and from the inside.
“Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman – a rope over an abyss”

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

When light travels through an empty space it becomes invisible. It disappears from sight and it is not at all certain that one will ever see it again. It is quite possible that the light goes somewhere else when it disappears, taking the opportunity. Yet it will clearly end up somewhere, however far in the future that may be. It is inevitable. Unless you cast it straight into the mouth of dark, complete nothingness, then you can be certain that you will never see it again. Not even in a dream. There is no light in a dream.

It arrives, collides with matter and instantly becomes a memory. It is not because the dream is especially interesting that you notice it. It is because it comes to you so often and seems always, in all essential ways, to be the same. Having studied this dream and its meaning again and again, I finally realized that there were certain variations. Small discrepancies that do not necessarily change the bigger picture but are all that distinguishes these dreams. Now I ponder the discrepancies and assume that they contain clues. Where everything is the same, the discrepancies must be all-important. Memories seem to change with time. Not only our understanding of them. The details, the insignificant minutiae, even the main points can simply be transformed. Sometimes something is added to the memory; something is given less weight or pushed aside. A memory is never the same when we recall it. Moments of trauma stay with us and have to be recalled again and again until we have adjusted them and, in some sense, come to terms with them. Whatever it is that hides in the back rooms it is not altogether underestimable. The adjustments, the discrepancies and the details reveal how our subconscious is tuning itself, possibly leaving itself open to error, even opening up gaps. One who despairs looking in a mirror can take medicine, just as a bad smell can be masked by a stronger one. Petting the domestic cat extremely tender will not help if it is really ill. Whatever might be wrong with it, it is not hunger. It has never starved. It gets plenty of food and doesn’t have to do anything at all. When it goes hunting it is primarily driven by instinct. It creates its own sensory stimuli, a kind of an imaginary project, like sporting fishermen who kill their prey but do not eat it. They hunt because they are not hungry, they are full. They want to re-establish their ties to nature, to the old reality. It is, at the very least, an attempt to re-enter former reality, to have a moment of epiphany or revelation. Possibly it is just a form of nostalgia, not a real need. We may even have very little need for the old, natural reality anymore. Perhaps there was a reason why we were at some point cast out from it but our image of it now is filled with knowledge, not gained from experience. An idea without a source. We might ask whether real knowledge must stem from experience and, then, what exactly we might mean by “unreal” knowledge.

A zoo is an interesting place to study discrepancies in relatively complex, yet manageable mini-natures. Access is usually easy and well-managed. As if food were just to lie down and die in front of you. Small, repeated scenes on
A sea in which one could drown
2012–2013
17 short video fragments of an artificially staged sea. Projected on a matt, black painted surface. Installation view

hypothetical stages imitate the natural habitat of each animal but are way too small to encompass the story being told. These mini-natures are specifically designed in order for visitors to get as much from a short visit as possible. Zoos are filled with terrifying, repeated sequences; a kind of institutionalized attention-deficit disorder. An 11-year old desert lynx paces the same 15 metre diameter all day, every day, its whole life. A short but endless circle that encompasses all time. Only slight deviations in its journey remind us that what we are seeing is always a new moment, even though it looks just the same as the last one. The lynx travels through the vast dimensions of a single place – a condensed existence – like someone caught on a treadmill, a machine that allows you to run forever without moving. Movement is disengaged from the space in which it takes place. The body covers the distance but leaves the mind behind. There is, at best, something sad about all the little, specially designed stages set up in a zoo, though with real characters on board. In a zoo, only part of the scene – the staged event – is real. The rest is mostly faked. As I face the gorilla, I am nothing less than a god, a demigod at least, and I feel that I have unlimited, god-given control over its destiny. By standing in front of the gorilla’s cage all day, I invade its private life so much that its own scent, not knowing what it would do if it has, again and again, ignored its attempts to shoo me away, the situation has gradually grown quite personal. When the gorilla finally becomes enraged and starts hitting the ten cm thick, unbreakable glass between us I experience my staged death in the thundering noise. But I am not at all frightened. Kant pointed out that “we cannot pass judgment at all on the sublime in nature if we are afraid. We flee from the sight of an object that scares us, and it is impossible to like terror that we take seriously.” Our lives should be out of any imminent hazard before we can take a delight in the sufferings of others, real or imaginary.1 Everything happens in its own time and obeys natural rules unless you really are on a stage – a stage being outside of time and space. The desert lynx has been transformed from an animal into potent metaphor. It is stuck in a nightmare where it is continually stalking its prey but it is itself the prey. Forever following its own scent, not knowing what it would do if it finally caught up with the source. We no longer eat the animals but they have taken our place in the limbo. There are many myths about how the gods punish those who try to go against the laws of nature: they are condemned to repeat the same tragic event or impossible tasks again and again for eternity. In the myth of Prometheus, he is punished for stealing fire and bringing it to humans by having his liver eaten by an eagle every day. Spyrophus’ punishment for trying to cheat Death was to push a rock uphill, only to have it roll back down as he neared the top, repeatedly for eternity.2

To repeatedly dream of being totally alone in a deserted shopping mall, is not an encouraging thing. It is peculiar why the fairy tale resolves its plot in such a tediously safe place. But why should the dream take place in a magical forest if you have never been in one? Devoid of mythology, the dream probably adjusts itself to whatever is really taking place, to the real fears you need to face. The shopping mall is a blend of nature and the theatrical, or, at any rate, of two distinct realities. It is completely familiar but at the same time unnatural, an uncanny place. It exists on this thinly drawn boundary between fiction and reality. On the surface, there is nothing especially terrifying about a shopping mall when it is full of people. It is only after closing time, in the total silence that we can really connect to it, experience it and breathe it in. The artificial plants are so realistic that not even the awful fluorescent lighting penetrates the illusion of reality. Their secret is only revealed on closer inspection, when it can be seen that they are all exactly the same, with no deviation, no discrepancies. Though they are in no way alive, they are completely realistic. The fear that grips you in a shopping mall does not spring from uncertainty in the face of overwhelming multiplicity; it is the sheer sameness of it that shakes you. You realize that you know too much, which produces a strange terror. It is terrifying how nothing inside is in any old-fashioned way mysterious or even unclear. By listening to the silence in the empty shopping mall, we can try to understand how profoundly hollow it is.

Theatrical scenery is active at all times, even when everyone has gone home and the lights have been turned off. Long after all stories have been told, one can discern a murmur of what was left behind. Scenery is even active after it has been dismantled. At some definite moment, the place where scenery is being assembled or disassembled takes place between two worlds. In the middle of this transformation there is a momentary pause where we sense a gap between these two worlds, or between the world and the non-world. In my artwork, I have experimented with this strange, precise moment when the gap is revealed. This gap, which in my work most often appears as the option of a tragic or a non-tragic conclusion, can reveal a dangerous and demanding question, or perhaps just a feeling or a suspicion. It is a gap that voids the contract we have made with reality: that we are given resolution, that there is one true answer or decision. Instead, as the gap is revealed, the world starts to shake beneath our feet. That is an untenable position. You stare into a world that has its own laws and structures. If you shift the perspective even slightly you risk its falling apart. The slower and more pronounced this moment, the more terrifying and confusing it is. You change the perspective slightly and your existence falls apart.

"True sublimity occurs at 'the point' where the distinctions between categories, such as cause and effect, word and thing, object and idea, begin to break down. The moment is religious because it also marks the limits of human conception, the point at which reason gives way to madness, certainty to uncertainty, and security to destruction." 4

The demons, the toads, and all the prehistoric beings lie completely still but their tails twitch every now and then, knocking against the framework that supports the whole world which then shakes and trembles. What is clear at one moment may be invalid at the next. A historical, tragic feeling is in many ways more clearly seen in our time when so much that was beyond questioning is in deep crisis. This historical optimism, the idea that man will control his future, that man is the master of his own history, the ruler and owner of the natural world, is in the end as Descartes put it, the founding idea of modernity. 9

"As Freud has shown, blunders are not the merest chance. They are the result of suppressed desires and conflicts. They are ripples on the surface of life, produced by unsuspected springs. And these may be very deep – as deep as the soul itself. The blunder may amount to the opening of a destiny." 6

"…the rejected one, is the representative of that unconscious deep ('so deep that the bottom cannot be seen')." 7

The actor who has been strutting about the stage inexplicably loses his concentration on his role for a moment and looks out into the audience. He freezes when he realizes that the theatre is empty, only darkness and empty seats. The tail which had been used in the first act tears a hole in his costume and swings freely between his legs. The silence is endless. He does not care. In The Will to Power manuscript, Nietzsche refers to nihilism as the uncanniest of all guests. 8 At the end of the Middle Ages sceptical nihilism gradually eroded the accepted and apparently immutable world view espoused by the church. The tiny crack which Copernicus stumbled on in the great dome of the sky soon grew wider, helped by other troublemakers such as Galileo and Newton, until the world eventually came apart and collapsed. Emptiness came to rule history – the void. It arose inescapably and was apparent to every human being. When the dome of the heavens broke apart, mankind was confronted with the eternal and all-encompassing emptiness. Heidegger maintains that we are not frightened by this or that but by the emptiness from which we emerged and which awaits us: "The angst reveals the void!" 9 This new understanding, this altered perspective, was so ideologically overwhelming that the dust it swirled up has yet to settle. The confrontation is so problematic that it can be said to have entered a kind of philosophico-statement. The ruins appear too fragile to be tampered with. The new ideology could not be much simpler. The moment we emerge from the void and into the world we are confronted by a space that waits patiently to destroy us, to return us to the void. The place where you will be destroyed was waiting for you long before you entered. This place where you will be transformed from matter to nothing. Everything emerges from the void unsullied. Our convictions wave,
It is a fundamental question: How do human beings position themselves vis-à-vis the emptiness? How our ideas admit or reject it. Whether we see ourselves as having emerged from emptiness and returning to it or, conversely, believe it to be an illusion, a demonic trick to distract us from the almighty, from the gods. In light of the clearly delineated opposition between atheism and belief, Joseph Campbell points out that the trouble nowadays is that half the people regard religious myths as literal truth while the other half sees them as lies. The result is a world of fundamentalists and atheists, all of whom misunderstand the original idea behind.

It only takes a few elements to make a tragedy but taken separately they mean nothing. Step by step, an incomprehensible phenomenon can be approached and faced up to. Tragedy can be dismantled and opposed. The void engenders tragedy and tragedy returns our gaze to the darkness. The two are entirely interdependent. Whether looked at up close or from a distance, the void has a clear and overwhelming significance, right up to where it dissolves in the idea of itself. This is not so much a question of the void itself but of that which is revealed in the original idea behind.

I have wondered whether we have stepped so far into a world of simulacra that it is now in every sense more appropriate to speak of a simulated void that is even more terrifying than the real one. It is so much closer to the superficial world of our experience – the shopping mall – that the authentic void simply cannot get through; perhaps it does not come close enough to our modern understanding of the world. We might also wonder if, in the end, it makes any difference whether we are confronted by a real or a simulated void as long as it provokes the same response in our mind. What are the deviations, the discrepancies? Whether we must endure it as a simulated barrier or a real emptiness, the boundary is unclear. The real and the unreal might be, in this case, simply two sides of the same coin, at least as far as experience goes. The idea and the thing itself are becoming one and the same.

In my films I have created, consciously or unconsciously, scenes that in some way illuminate the idea of the void. I use matt, black scenery panels to demarcate my subjects. I had been using this theatrical darkness for years, like any other tool, before I began to think about it specifically and finally realized its importance. It became clear to me that certain scenes literally demand the use of this theatrical darkness for years, like any other tool, before I began to think about it specifically and finally realized its importance. It became clear to me that certain scenes literally demand the use of this theatrical darkness for years.
The panels’ primary purpose is to direct the gaze to something else, to create new dimensions in the mind. They stand for that which is not. It is not in their nature to be the subject of attention. It is like trying to listen to silence. When we direct our attention to them they become vulnerable. The mask falls and the void emerges. Something very unsettling happens when the veil between the worlds is removed. Not because the panels somehow stand outside the contract that separates the worlds but because they themselves are that contract. They are, simply, neither everyday reality nor fiction. In order to break the spell and execute the contract I first need to transform the material, charge it with meaning.

I need to perform a kind of theatrical ritual; to transpose that which never appears in fiction into everyday reality. In order for it to retain at least some of its meaning I must imbue it with something that is tragic, or is at least on the boundary of the tragic. Where they stand in the familiar exhibition space, they must retain some of the fiction. It is not enough to simply paint the panels and look at them in an exhibition space. They must be a real, simulated darkness. The mask falls and the void emerges. Something very unsettling happens when the veil between the worlds is removed. Not because the panels somehow stand outside the contract that separates the worlds but because they themselves are that contract. They are, simply, neither everyday reality nor fiction. In order to break the spell and execute the contract I first need to transform the material, charge it with meaning.

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“Synonyms for ‘novelty’ are ‘degree of connectedness’ or ‘complexity’.

As fate had it, just before enrolling for the MFA program, I inherited a collection of curious objects from my great aunt, who lived here in Malmö. Among other things, I received a number of stuffed animals that nobody else had room for. I did not really have room for them either, so I put them in my studio, where they have kept me company these last two years. Three pigeons, a flamingo, two birds of species unknown to me, a hare, and most importantly, a cock-eyed lynx with gaping jaws. I also received some small mass-produced religious figurines of Hindu and Catholic origins, and some books. One of the books, which I had not heard of previously, has taken on an important role in my work. It caught my eye on the bookshelf because of its unusual design and its complicated title: The ABOMINATIONS of DESOLATIONS: Anti-Christ Is Here NOW! Vol. 2 by Brother Vincent de Paul, T.O.S.F. The book was self-published in 1975, and consists of a jumble of topics, the common thread being various conspiracy theories involving the Catholic Church. Here are some examples of its headings: FIERY HAND FROM PURGATORY IMPRINTS CONVENT DOOR, EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF SATAN, DETAILED COUNT OF WOUNDS INFlicted ON JESUS, THE TRUTH AT LAST ABOUT FLYING SAUCERS.

I have leafed through it from time to time, because its chaos and randomness can be very refreshing in times of stagnation. On one of these occasions, I began to look closer at the poor reproductions of black-and-white photographs that are mainly located in the latter half of the book. I found myself being drawn to a little picture with ‘Jacinta 1972’ written on it in what looked to be some kind of graffiti style. The picture is claimed to be one of a number of ‘miraculous Polaroid photographs’, taken in the presence of a religious visionary called Veronica Lueken. de Paul’s book doesn’t state clearly how and when these pictures were taken, but after some Google research I have come to understand that Veronica Lueken was a devoutly religious Catholic housewife, who was born in New York in 1923, and remained there until her death in 1995. Around 1970, she began to have visions of the Virgin Mary and Jesus, and word soon spread that miracles were happening in her presence, and in places that she had visited. The photograph on which the writing ‘Jacinta 1972’ had magically appeared was taken by an acquaintance of Veronica, a Mr. Robert Franzenberger. When Robert told her about the photograph, Veronica confirmed that she had experienced a vision where she had seen Jacinta Maeto, one of the three children who had witnessed the apparitions of the blessed Virgin Mary in Fátima, Portugal, and had died just three years later in 1920.

Veronica’s claims regarding this photograph went beyond considering it tangible evidence of the supernatural. This particular Polaroid photograph was supposedly precognitive, and able to answer many of the questions it was asked. My work Jacinta 1972 is based on 14 interpretations, or ‘clues’ by the catholic group Our Lady of the Roses. By marking certain areas within the image in what seems to be an arbitrary fashion, they claim to be revealing the holographic and multidimensional nature of the photograph. The numbers and letters
My interest here does not concern the question of whether or not this group's claims are factual; I am far more intrigued by the search for meaning as such, and the Rorschach methods they employ.

I have been approaching this theme of the search for hidden meaning in various ways for some time. It is largely a matter of some more or less paranoid activity of this kind giving rise to a disconnection between the rational and the irrational, which reveals mechanisms that I suspect are constantly at work in the mind, perhaps even performing a central role in the artistic creative process.

However, I also suspect that if I could fully express the reasons why this interests me so, I would not be so concerned with creating art about it. Not everything can be captured by verbal systems, and any attempt to do so exposes one to the risk of telling a lie. For example, this happens when we distort an experience by trying to put it into words, and then confuse this representation with what 'really' happened. This means that the translation, rather than being a source of clarity, is a source of confusion.

At the same time, one must not forget the fact that a translation is often a necessity. For instance, are not the supposed symbolic meanings of dreams extracted by means of verbalization? Since I often use a method of appropriation, you could say that my work is largely a labour of translation. From one medium to another, or from one cultural sphere to another. Another way to put it is to say that my work is all about searching. I search for unexpected images that resonate with the ideas that I am preoccupied with. Not really illustrations, since my work is not didactic, but rather embodiments. I am trying to communicate mainly on an affective level. That is to say, my hope is that the viewer will be as fascinated by what I have found as I am.

Synchromysticism

“How do we know we are understanding the messages from these syncs or signs? Because the ultimate ever-present reality is total perfection, the greater the amount of joy one obtains from their interpretations of sync, the more accurate and aligned the reading of its meaning is.”

“The explosive mythology of cyberspace is also a symptom of the digital animism that is creeping into the technocultural border zones of the scientific paradigm.”

In Erik Davis’ book Technognosis from 1998, which concerns the relationship between magic and technology, he points out that the computer is literally a piece of psychedelic technology, and that the personal computer was born out of an environment where the counterculture mingled with the world of technology. Davis’ larger claim is that a large portion of technological growth is driven by mythological ideas, often more or less unconsciously so. He argues that the gradual digitalization of our culture can be regarded as an attempt to re-establish our connection with the imaginal7 dimensions. One quite recent trend that ties in with this digital animism Davis describes is Synchromysticism. Synchromysticism, a term coined by blogger and conspiracy theorist Jake Kotze, is a composite of two concepts: the Jungian concept of synchronicity8 and the more generic concept of mysticism. It is not entirely clear what this really adds to the rather unintelligible concept of synchronicity, and Kotze’s own explanations on this point are somewhat evasive. But perhaps the notion is one of searching for meaningful coincidences as a lifestyle, something that comes closer to a more conventional religious or mystical practice. This practice connects a wide range of media and discourses, and has no clear boundaries either in relation to the material underlying interpretation or to the overall structure.

As I see it, it is simply a constant search for coincidences, where the Internet acts as an endless source of references and information for these associative trains of thought to run with. A short example of such a chain follows (based on the discoveries Kotze has published on his blog, The Bild8):

Kurt Russell stars in the movie *Escape from New York* (1981). In it, there is a scene where Russell’s character Snake Plisskin lands a plane on top of one of the World Trade Center skyscrapers.
Russell’s character wears an eye patch, which ‘resonates’ with the Egyptian god Horus (the Eye of Horus). Russell also stars in the movie Stargate (1994), where his character is the first to walk through the alien portal, which the movie’s plot locates in the vicinity of the Pyramids of Giza. According to Kotze’s logic, the Pyramids of Giza, pillars, mountains, and skyscrapers are all connected by virtue of their shape. The three pillars of the Freemasons are, Kotze claims, based on the three Pyramids of Giza, and can in turn be connected to towers. Synchronistic thinking would then allow us to say that:

The Pyramids of Giza = The WTC skyscrapers  
Kurt Russell = Horus = The God of Rebirth

Kotze also claims that any event that has consequences on a global scale (such as a terrorist plot, natural disaster etc.) has a retro-causal effect that projects backwards through time, which means you can seek explanations for these events in any place or time. They ‘resonate’ backwards through time, and are incorporated as hidden messages, e.g. in Hollywood movies. The movie stars are like the physical stars in astrology, metaphors for something else, whether it is an internal or an external process. These ideas are presented in YouTube videos that feature brief clips from the movies in question, and stills of occult symbols or special effects. Kotze’s rapid, matter-of-fact voice-overs alternate with lines from the movies, and there is often a trip hop track being played in the background.

Ever since I first came across Kotze’s blog, I have had a strong feeling that his practice reflects and illuminates something important. It is a metaphor for something, perhaps for the consciousness that is arising from our constant interactions with contemporary information technology. Of course, you could say his ideas belong to an older esoteric tradition, and that none of the individual elements are really new, but the web has enabled him to take things to a new level. Kotze tries to create meaning out of chaotic fragments of pop culture, and he claims to have discovered connections to very real and tragic events, such as the 9/11 attacks. It is easy to find fault with his reasoning, both in terms of his factual accuracy and his sometimes very problematic base assumptions. But to my mind his vision also holds a kind of beauty, something that belongs in the domain of art. An intuition that might hold some kind of truth. However, Kotze has lost himself in this truth, not discovered it. Synchronism has obvious similarities with the worldview of a schizophrenic, but it could also be considered a symptom of a schizophrenic world. This system can also be perceived as a kind of ‘soul-making’ in the post-Jungian sense of psychological commitment to and vivification of cultural materials. It is no coincidence that so much synchronistic exploration takes film as its starting point. As others have pointed out, the cinema is (or rather was) a kind of secular church, and the feature film is literally a projection of our collective dreams, an externalization of the dream spaces and visionary states that the ‘rational’ western culture lost touch with a long time ago.

I based my animation After Jake Kotze (akhenaten.jpg) on an image that relates to Kotze’s materials and theories. The picture shows a sculpture of the Pharaoh Akhenaten’s head. Apart from playing an important part in several different conspiracy theories, Akhenaten was also, according to Egyptologist Erik Hornung and others, the first person to identify the divine with light. I find it interesting to combine the ancient with new technology, to blend different times together, and feel that it aligns neatly with Kotze’s theory.

This animation is connected to my experiments involving feedback loops, where I duplicate images and put them through a recursive process to generate moiré patterns that trigger the viewer’s own internal imagery. As Lars Bang Larsen points out, feedback is also emblematic of psychedelia, especially in music:

“It was typically used in controlled ways, to give the sound texture and spatial volume; that is, as a synaesthetic effect in which sound touches on space and tactility, nudging the whole system of the senses into play.”

Interestingly enough, a similar result occurs if the process is inverted. That is to say, if the original input is an image, and it goes through a feedback loop, it turns into rhythms and music. This was explored early on by the likes of John Whitney, and in a way it is also relevant to one of my favourite pieces, *Dreammachine* by Brion Gysin and Ian Sommerville, which leaves creation of imagery entirely to the viewer.

The Shining

*The Shining*, directed by Stanley Kubrick, is important to me in several ways, and has been a constant source of inspiration. When the movie hit the screens in 1980, it managed to alienate both the fans of Stephen King’s novel and the fans of Kubrick’s films, as it did not meet the expectations of either group. But now, 30 or so years later, it is considered by many to be one of the defining films of the 1980s, and one of the best horror films of all time.

Besides the suggestive force the movie exerts, it also interests me because of the growing number of more or less far-fetched interpretations of its subtext it has inspired. The beginning of all this is paid to them while watching the film. Since Blakemore’s article, others have discovered entirely different hidden subtexts in the film. For instance, blogger Jonny53 has analyzed the time code of the film, i.e. the timing of the various cuts, and has noticed that certain numbers keep appearing (in clothing, hotel room numbers, photographs etc.). Jonny53’s claim is that these numbers, after some clever adding and subtraction, reveal that the hidden message of the film is numerological, and is connected to dates from various doomsday prophecies. Another blogger claims that the film is a secret confession by Kubrick regarding his participation in the staging of the moon landing in 1969. A vast number of theories have been suggested besides those mentioned above, and online forums dedicated to *The Shining* provide opportunities to share results and insights. There is even an acclaimed documentary from 2012, *Room 237*, in which some of these interpretations are discussed.

What interests me about these theories is not some hope that I will find the definitive ‘key’, which seems to me to be a rather trite idea of film, or of art in the wider sense. But it is fascinating to me that *The Shining* in particular has been used for this kind of search for hidden meanings to what is probably a greater extent than any other film. Apparently, it has become something of a Kabbalistic text to many, a seemingly never-ending source of meaning. It is as though the structure of *The Shining* were fractal, in the sense that no matter what train of thought the viewer is following, and no matter how unjustified it may seem, the film invites this kind of creation of meaning. These theories would never have existed without people’s access to videotapes, DVDs, and digital copies, as well as to modern communications technology.

During my work involving *The Shining*, I began to feel like the photographer Thomas in Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Blow-Up* from 1966. In one of the key scenes of the movie, Thomas creates a montage of a series of pictures he took in a park earlier that day. He enlarges and crops them, and discovers a murder in his seemingly peaceful pictures: a dead body and a killer with a gun. During this scene,
the sound of the wind from the park gradually returns, and when the black-and-white images are shown in sequence, a new cinematic reality is created. Although *Blow-Up* and *The Shining* differ in many respects, they also have something in common: the stories cover up as much as they disclose, and they both end in riddles. Thomas disappears, and Jack returns from the dead (in a photograph!). Like *The Shining*, *Blow-Up* contains a number of meta-narratives, points of view that are not obvious to a first-time viewer. For these reasons, it felt natural to make an artwork that combined the two. I photographed my screen while viewing *The Shining*, and magnified details. I chose to make the images black and white in order to establish a connection to the photographs in *Blow-Up*. The titles indicate the time codes of the captured images.

Surface and Information

The role of references in conceptual work is an issue that has occupied many artists. A recurring discussion I have had with my mentor and fellow students has concerned how, when, where, or even if I should present the information that I have. How important is it for the viewer to know the things I know? I am not looking to indulge in obscurantism, but at the same time I can’t deny that my own fascination for a certain piece is probably more often caused by lack of knowledge than by abundance. Ulf Linde’s lifelong passion for Duchamp’s works would probably never have lasted if the artist had been entirely transparent about his intentions, and declared the exact meanings that the various formats, materials, and so on held for him. Through his interest, Linde has taken Duchamp’s challenge seriously and become an active co-creator of the works.

Dutch artist Melvin Moti often offers reflections on these issues in his films and installations. Many of Moti’s works are based on specific events or phenomena, but he generally chooses to reduce the amount of information given to a minimum. Perhaps the best example of this is the film *The Prisoner’s Cinema*, which is a static 35 mm film of a multicoloured piece of lead glass that is slowly shifting colours, while a female voice describes internal imagery brought about by spending extended periods of time in the dark. I have a predecessor and role model in sculptor John McCracken as regards my interest in the dissolution and fusion of the tactile and the virtual. His sculptures look like something between holograms and objects, which to my mind makes them feel like 3D animations. Unlike his contemporaries in the 60s, McCracken did not want to create autonomous non-referential objects. He was passionately interested in UFOs, and had a typical Californian New Agey outlook. His sculptures are narrative, to some extent, and resemble objects from another dimension, perhaps the imaginal dimension mentioned above.

“That things exist in more than one dimension at one time is something that's more than a fascination for me, it's relevant to the human world. I think that humans exist in more than one dimension at once.”

Another proto-cyber artist who has been important to me for some time is Paul Laffoley. Laffoley travels the same liminal world of facts, fiction, rationality and irrationality that McCracken does, but he portrays it differently. He conveys his grand cosmic vision — a complex, metaphysical cocktail of world views, religion, and technology — in diagrams and intricate maps, which seem remarkably similar to the interface of a personal computer, despite the fact that they were made long before there was any such thing. Another connection to McCracken is Laffoley’s interest in UFOs and alien influences. He maintains that his paintings are channeled messages from another civilization.

Epilogue

“non-knowledge attained”

My works are united by the fact that they often originate in some individual’s perceived insights. These insights are generally based on experiences that are difficult or perhaps even impossible to communicate. Most people have glimpses of these kinds of experiences from time to time, but they rarely result in anything beyond a fear of losing one’s footing. My work is an effort to bring these moments to life, to extend these brief times and give them a material form. While this ambition is doomed to failure, it produces something else along the way.
Preface

This paper is concerned mainly with the positioning and identity of the artist, in particular within the situation experienced as she steps into a territory of pedagogy. The issue is viewed from reflections on art teaching models, pedagogical theory, art practices and the role of educational institutions. The learning-teaching situation is considered from its performative potential (as it makes-happen), present both in art and pedagogy and a key aspect for addressing the artistic identity of the student, teacher and artist bodies.

I am an artist. I have also been a student. I received my initial art education in the University of Chile, during the 1990s, where I studied Fine Arts. I belong to one of the first generations of artists to study after the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. I spent most of my time during the first years of art school as an activist, working collectively in dismantled student organizations, trying to challenge and reactivate what most of us considered a dormant educational system after the public universities had been intervened by the military government for over a decade. I did not consider our work as part of an artistic practice. Activism and art were perceived as separate realms and though we were addressing relevant and critical issues in our political work they did not make their way into our studio work. Looking back at the curriculum of the art school, demanding and anachronistic, with a grading system and compulsory assistance, it seems that the place where we learned how to conceptualize our thoughts and proposals, that place for questioning and connecting to society was not the art class, but the street, the assembly, the parties and every other place of meeting, discussion and expression.

Discomfort

An artist stepping into the terrain of a teacher is feeling uncomfortable. Considering, thinking about, practicing, feeling the teaching might take something away from her. There is a dissonance embedded in the situation, it comes into the body. She smiles, greets, trying to read the looks and find a place in the room, a place in her body, but the situation makes her wish for a rabbit to pull out of her hat: the expectations placed on the educator strip her of her artist identity. Pedagogical theory, as well as critical theory, has signified terms for those who take part in the learning-teaching situation as speaker, learner, master, student, teacher, participant and subject. However, the role of the artist who teaches is elusive to definition.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, art education in the West, specifically higher education has been placing the teacher in an array of different roles. The traditional master-apprentice relationship has been declared authoritative and obsolete and, although the artist educator has been peer, friend, observer, guest, lecturer, listener, jury, joker, supporter, reference or competition, the position of the artist as mentor to the artist-to-be has not leveled significantly.

A question in mind is how artists position themselves towards teaching, and in turn, how art education has been positioning itself towards theory of education. Is it possible for artists who teach at higher educational level to disregard pedagogical theory?

Teacher

Towards the end of the sixties the writings of pedagogues like Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich are being published widely and will revolutionize theory of education, questioning the roles of students and teachers alike. As humanist thinkers working in North and South America they view the potential of education as an emancipatory tool against the pressure of the economic model. Education is seen as a tool for emancipation from the confinement of class and the power to make
this shift is in the hands of those who are being educated. ‘The role of the student is reflected as an active, problem-posing person and the function of the school as an institution is questioned altogether. While in political exile from Brazil, Freire’s fieldwork is made in workers’ unions and rural areas of South America, pointing out the conditions of oppression in and outside of the classroom, exposing what he will call the banking system of education. Illich, researching mainly the public school system in Mexico and the United States is critical of the way resource allocation influences the hidden agenda of the school system. In his research he explores how to break it down: de-school society in order to allow room for a diversity of alternative educational means.

Also in the late sixties at Cal Arts in the United States, a diverse curriculum is provided for art education in a school where individual student work, group critiques and a strong connection to the contemporary art scene are encouraged. Luis Camnitzer moves to New York defining teaching at the core of his artistic practice as he states that he will never again sell a work but will only live from teaching, in his pedagogy he uses the concept of education in a new way. 

In the American continent, fine art academies have been imported from Europe, implemented since the 18th century as educational institutions and developed in many singular ways, affected by the local contexts. Though identified as W(z)estern Art Academies they have been in fact hybrid machines, different in every region, reflecting both the source of the academic models and the way these models have been translated into the new republics. Fholds is also the first colonial fine arts academy, Academia de San Carlos, was established in Mexico in 1781 in the name of the Spanish King Carlos III.

The position of The West also determined a place for the art academies established in America. Based on an East-West opposition and superimposed over a basic four-way division of the world where Asia, Africa, America and Europe are main bodies of land arranged geopolitically from “bottom up”, the hierarchy established by the West is strengthened by the (modern) idea that any region not speaking modern (colonial) Europe does not fit in the same category as West (North-West). As Walter Mignoné has pointed out, geographical divisions are not only continental divides but also hierarchical categories. These categories will also define a position and identity that is produced in those artistic institutions in America. 

In America, the development of western art academies since their integration as art departments in the early academic models and the way these models have been hybridized in various new republics is not only as educator within art, but also of the artist as educator for society. On another side of the spectrum, Ligya Clark’s works since the mid-sixties explore cognition through participatory projects that incorporate notions of learning through sensory experience in collective situations; in her case, the artist is a facilitator for an experience. Art as service provision and art as collaboration is some of the practices that continue to reflect on pedagogical aspects. The element of performativity found in some of these artistic practices, might be a key aspect for addressing position and identity and roles within the art school environment.

One possible point of departure for this discussion is the educational discourse implicit in recent research that Cal Arts developed in its beginnings. Stating that art cannot be taught, the newly appointed Dean, artist John Baldessari, defined teaching art as a means of creating an environment where art might happen. Stating that the realm of art education lays outside of the pedagogical domain is also a pedagogical strategy; taking the teaching function away from the institution opens up for a space of (possible) freedom within, while at the same time allows the tutor to withdraw, turning his role into something vague or unnecessary, handing him a different kind of responsibility as educator. If the transformative power of the artistic environment enables us to disregard a connection with pedagogical theory because art “just happens”, we can also say that art happens in school and whatever kind of learning and teaching that goes on inside is art. How does the work of radical pedagogues affect the development of art education from the early 1970s onwards?

School

“When we occupy a space, we must immediately make it ours. We should inhabit it and turn it to our own ends, because an occupied space is not that of work or protest, nor is it anything like the isolated spaces to which we’ve grown so accustomed; it is autonomous, collective and open for our own use. What makes this space different from all others, all the commodified, surveilled spaces of the city? – this is the primary question to ask when we take a space.”

The new school Occupation, Anonymous (Jenny and Wayne), 2009.

Art school represents the world as a set of rules, practices, traditions and habits about art, within a social order. Seen in general terms as the institution that delivers art education at higher level, art school is a representation of a world, one of the possible art worlds that students perceive through this order and construct. According to Joseph Kosuth, an art school is representative of the institutionalization of art. No matter how flexible the curriculum, there is a structure and a set of rules that the student follows in order to take part. Ivan Illich, defines school as “…the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum.” He refers to school in general terms, as the place where instruction takes place. School is inhabited, used, endured.

Art school is school after all. To put it in Illich’s terms, it is the place where a curriculum is delivered to the art student. Though there is rarely age limit there is an average age group and even if attendance is not usually compulsory, a demand is made to attend workshops, seminars, lectures and especially to produce. Entering the labor market rarely motivates the choice to study fine arts; many consider it an exercise of free will and a leap into economic instability. But since art has become normalized into the higher education system, artists are professionals and there is an expectation of young artists to have a degree in order to gain access to exposure, to the market and to the funding systems.
Art school, as any school, is also a limited networking space, it is the place where young artists are socialized and ritualized into art. Earlier I mentioned the repercussions for the role of the artist teacher at the art school environment, which is provided for, but not lead by a tutor. If we can imagine such a school, such an institution would apparently fulfill an expectation of freedom that is associated to the creative fields today. But this imaginary environment is not without authority; it is simply a different kind of authority whose presence might not be made evident. The school still functions because there are rules. The imaginary student left to work individually has to make decisions concerning when and how to work in a space and structure that are provided for, managing her own freedom. The given environment consists of a building, studios, rooms where art can be hung, facilities, teachers and a peer group selected by the school through a standardized procedure, it is in fact a small, protected, tailor-made art scene. For the sake of assessment, at some point an authority decides if the objects and the knowledge produced by the students are art.

But what happens inside the art school is not only what is produced and considered art. In the imaginary environment-institution, the student only what is produced and considered art. In the imaginary school environment where art is happening! To Paulo Freire, education is an act of cognition not (only) for content, but also because it triggers the tension of the existing social, economical, political and historical facts, therefore creating the conditions for the students to formulate the why question. This is essential to the theory of education by Freire. Freire considers critical consciousness in education as a reflex to the reality of the oppressed. The reality of people living in oppression, understood by Freire is not only repression of the exploited classes, but also the reality of any person who attends an education based on a model that, due to the hierarchy that has traditionally ruled schooling, expects the teacher to transfer knowledge into the student as an essential part of the learning-teaching situation. The student is an empty vessel, the teacher is the one who will FILL it with information; this is the Banking System in education, concept developed by Freire over fifty years ago. Subsequent critical contributions to the problem posed by Freire, especially by Henry Giroux and Aráujo, have developed further the discussion of the responsibility that economic, social, and political actors have in undermining the promise of democratic schooling in both public and higher educational venues.

"Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits that the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the ‘banking’ concept of education, in which the scope of action allows the teacher to consider the student only as a ‘receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.’ “ In the banking concept, "...the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher. “... The situation departs from the assumption that the student is not capable of acting by her own initiative and that by the end of an education she will reach the level of knowledge of the teacher. In this situation, only then could a conversation start.

Why You don’t need to think, he thinks for you! You don’t need to act, he acts for you! Walking in the city, one humid afternoon, a publicity poster for a politician during elections decorates a bus with arrows pointing to the head, the eyes, the mouth and the hands.

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As a theorist and educator situated initially in South America, Freire analyzes the problem of knowledge transfer from the perspective of a schooling model that has traditionally been a set of prohibitions. His work on alphabetization in Brazil, developed in collaboration with his colleague Ana Maria Araújo responds to the “ideology of the interdict of the body”, a context in which education is traditionally a series of sanctions imposed on the student. The educational model inherited from the Jesuit education in colonial South America based itself on interdicts and prohibitions as tools for obedience, submission, hierarchy, imitation and oppression. Freire states that this ideology has remained in the structure of the educational system in post-colonial Brazil and is well rooted inside the structure of the school system. Freire’s strategy to break the banking concept, is to turn to problem-proposing education, a way of rejecting knowledge transferance as communiqués and embodying communication. By posing problems people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. What kinds of communiqués are being issued in that imaginary school environment where art is happening? Deschooling society

A close collaborator of Freire until the early sixties, Ivan Illich published Deschooling society in 1971, proposing that not only that schooling, but also society is in need of deschooling. School is seen as an obstacle for the development of society, it appropriates, communicates a limited set of skills for education and discourages other institutions from performing educational tasks.

Under the assumption that “...most learning happens casually” and that “...learning is not a result of programmed instruction, Illich defends alternatives like self-directed education, arguing that most knowledge is acquired outside of the school. Looking at knowledge transferance in the school system, Illich considers that schooling is in itself a ritual that constitutes a hidden curriculum for rich and poor alike in order to institute its participants into a growth-oriented consumer society.

Criticizing the way that educational institutions transfer knowledge, Illich points out that skill learning is opposed to education for inventive or creative behavior. “…schooling is to confuse salvation with the church.”, he writes, school is viewed as a new religion for the modernized proletarian, making promises to save the poor by ushering them through a series of rituals that will result in escalating diplomas as a kind of hieratic promotion of former times. According to Illich, discrimination takes place when a person’s education is considered for his possible performance in a skill or job, given that schooling is assessed on a combination of length of attendance and amount of public funds spent. Like the separation of church and state, society needs a disestablishment of the monopoly that school holds over education.

Another point Illich makes is that classroom attendance removes children from the everyday world of Western culture and plunges them into an environment “...far more primitive, magical, and deadly serious.” A protected arena, school is a world in its own, a tool for estrangement from reality. School is a serious game.

Allan Kaprow, who was also part of the staff of artist teachers at Cal Arts in the early years, proposes the artist as an agent of unlearning for society. In “The Education of the Un-Artist”, Kaprow reviews artists practicing from the fiveties and sixties, placing them in categories such as Situational, Operational, Structural or Learning Models. Using examples of works by Joseph Beuys, John Cage, Vito Acconci or Hans Haacke, he therefore establishes constellations of practices that he values for their ability to connect to the “…real world, rather than the Art World.” What he is trying to propose in his brief reflection is that he finds himself at a turning point where artists are starting to turn to life instead of making art about art, as opposed to “…an artist [who] went to school to study art, not life.” This procedure seems to be reversing at the time of his reflection; artists are going outside of their professions and working with the “source”, this is what he calls non-art. By working within “life” (making non-art) the artist gets un-educated and becomes an agent for un-educating society. In this sense, Kaprow is also arguing for a connection to the world that exists beyond school. 
Where does it happen?

We meet by chance in the kitchen. I am making soup. The work she makes in school is not going to be on her CV, she says. It seems confusing to be considered a student and an artist at the same time. What is the purpose of getting an art education if she is already an artist? The semester will start and she will sign up for some studio visits. But she will be late and maybe give up her spot in the end. She does not really want to sit in front of the artist and show her work again to get feedback. She wants to talk to people who get her work.

Teaching models in western art pedagogy changed dramatically over the course of the 20th century under the scrutinizing eye of modernism and the expectation of progress for productivity. Post Second World War, the prevailing model in the academies and university art schools was still based on imitation of the practice of a master. Similar to Freire's description of the teacher who acts for the student to imitate him, the teacher playing the role of a master would expect the student to behave like an apprentice. Through the acquisition of skills, the student would be expected to make art like her teacher. The more recognized the teacher, the better situated the student would be at the end of her education, if the expectations were fulfilled. Once the young artist would come out of the academy there would be a need to excel the teacher. A killing of a father figure would be in order if she were to be considered an artist in her own right.

In an interview made for an art magazine, Baldessari recalls his experience as dean at Cal Arts.15 departing from a radical assumption that art cannot be taught, he provides the environment where art might happen. Works are produced, some of it might be art and some of it might not. His pedagogic consists of facilitating this situation and bringing emerging artists into the school to present their work. During that period, classes at Cal Arts are mostly individual meetings where teachers make remarks about the students' work in progress. Something called The Pedagogical Model: to make by teaching art. This model that emphasizes on the exposure to and imitation of the contemporary art scene does not cater for a conversation that poses questions or challenges the institution. Today, the private system of education has grown exponentially in Chile as it did in the United States before. As a result of the demand on higher education to be economically independent from the state, students have become clients whose tuition pays the salary of teachers and school facilities. Art school today consists mostly of studio practice, followed by group critiques where a tutor is the one who provides the meanings that students do not articulate yet. The talking revolves around the students' works and is aimed at achieving them a language to verbalize discourse for the purpose of professionalizing the production in preparation for its future visibility in galleries and museums. Young artists enroll in Master's programs in fine art in order to get guidance for developing projects, to learn how to network and to be insured in the local professional art scene. Some schools also teach the necessary skills to write applications for funding.

If the tradition of art education has been teaching the "how" and the how is equivalent to the craft, the teaching of the "why", defined by Kosuth as a philosophical activity, is the central learning activity, understood as a process of thinking and asking questions, instead of a didactic system left open to the former. On the other hand, an overwhelming number of theoretical seminars were delivered at the school by visiting intellectuals from other departments, mainly from the social sciences, as part of the normalization of the academy, which had been turned into the university system in the early 20th century. The Academy of Fine Arts was imported to Chile from Italy in the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of a series of policies that viewed the creation, development and promotion of culture, sciences and art as part of the republi
can project of the young nation state.

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Traditionally the university system has incorporated positions for art teachers fol-
lowing the systems established by the norm. The teacher holding a professorship would be
employed, on a contract, expected to teach and produce or teach and research, depend-
ning on her position within the hierarchy of the school or academy. Today, the neoliberal
economic model encourages the desire of educational institutions to shift responsibility
back to individuals by outsourcing and cutting benefits. This is highly compatible with the
system of guests. Artists can teach for short periods as guests within schools, providing an
intensive experience with the students, that is welcomed as a breeze of fresh air, an injection
of intensive experience with the students, that is welcomed as a breeze of fresh air, an injection
of clean timelessness hangs in the air. The building is usually silent. Work
progresses in the language of schooling, because inside art
rising from the outside that can trigger other modes of
learning and production for the students
from one school to the other during the same
period as guests within schools, providing an
intensive experience with the students, that is welcomed as a breeze of fresh air, an injection
of clean timelessness hangs in the air. The building is usually silent. Work
progresses in the language of schooling, because inside art
of the existing world, we would need to find a
language, but not an ordinary language.

bells thinks about spirituality, and
writes "being teacher every moment of our lives" means to bring your body out to the
students, to be with them, without necessar-
ily talking, the teacher, her body and presence,
her being herself means something and triggers
something.

We could say that what is performative in art
practice is determined by action and its effects.
Austin’s understanding of the construction of
discourse and the role of language in which it trans-
forms a given reality comes to mind; perform-
itive statements are those where language and
action are connected, making it possible for
words to have an effect with a determined inten-
tionality, thus transforming aspects of the
real. But other languages, movement, gesture and
action also articulate discourse as alterna-
tive languages that reside in the body.

"Imagine that you are in a foreign country.
Since you are going to be in this place for some
time, you are trying to learn the language.
At the point of commencing to learn the new
language, just before having started to un-
derstand anything, you begin forgetting your
own. Within strangeness, you find yourself
without a language." 22

Accessing the discussion requires that we
forget language and resort to being in the
collective situation of school, moving through

If creative careers have been missing a
place in the productive world, they are now
turning into models for self-determined work. Von Osten, Kuster, Reichard and Lorey write: “…she realizes that there has to be more to it
than the ability to decide what one does and when. Rather she had to be able to decide what to do, what for, and with whom. She would
then divide her time so that she could concen-
trate on one thing, which she really wanted to
do. One that gave her what she was really involved in its social effect, rather than feeling like a cog
in an invisible machine. But she believes that
no one would pay for this. Like artists who
do what interests them, but don’t get paid for it. 23 Flexible labor encourages free-lancing
as a way to decrease unemployment at the
cost of worker’s benefits, using the creative
and cultural worker’s models as a portrayal of
independence. Maybe this is the time when everybody is becoming an artist.

Body
We are sitting in a room with high ceilings and
wooden floors. The brick building that used to be
a school now houses the art academy. The
insides are painted white, the floors are light
gray. A sense of clean timelessness hangs in
the air. The building is usually silent. Work
takes place in private spaces. Behind closed
doors we sit at a simple rectangular table.

23. Bell hooks, Teaching

to do things with words” in
The William James Lectures
delivered at Harvard University
in 1955. Second Edition,

27. Kathy Acker, Against
ordinary language: The
language of the body. In
Outlaw Bodies, p. 24.
the environment without a language might open some doors and bring us closer to being able to create our own way of communicating. Ordinary language speaks about the skills we might need to perform as an artist in an existing framework, in a given system of institutions and workers.

“But now and then, wondering in the labyrinths of my body, I come upon something. Something I can know because knowledge depends on difference. An unexpected event. For though I am only repeating certain gestures during certain time spans, my body, being material, is never the same; my body is controlled by change and chance.”

Without a language, left to their bodies, the artist, the teacher, the student and the learner speak.

Coming to terms: some outlines on pedagogy and art

STEPHEN DUPONT

Daughter: Daddy, why do things have outlines?
Father: Do they? I don’t know. What sort of things do you mean?
D: I mean when I draw things, why do they have outlines?
F: Well, what about other sorts of things—a flock of sheep or a conversation? Do they have outlines?
D: Don’t be silly. I can’t draw a conversation.
I mean things.
F: Yes. I was trying to find out just what you mean. Do you mean “Why do we give things outlines when we draw them or not?”
D: I don’t know. Daddy. You tell me. Which do I mean?
F: I don’t know, my dear. There was a very angry artist once who scribbled all sorts of things down, and after he was dead they looked in his books and in one place they found he’d written, “Wise men see outlines and therefore they draw them” but in another place he’d written, “Mad men see outlines and therefore they draw them.”3

It might well have been a good idea to use a ‘metalogue’ as a method in order to try and articulate a few words on pedagogy in relation to, or, through art, or vice versa in order to map out what forms the pedagogue or pedagogics might take on and how might it operate.

In attempting to confront what pedagogy might be, could be, or how it is being activated, or described within the fields of art, education, or described in a paragraph from Janna Graham’s essay Spanners in the Spectacle: Radical Research at the front lines:

“...this turn to education can be read as simply another in a string of long-term social and political projects that are routinely ‘discovered’ (like Columbus ‘discovered’ America) by the contemporary art world to satiate an endless demand for circulation of the ‘new’.”2

Here we are presented with two worrying emphases—the ‘new’ and the ‘reshuffling’ to confront it; to provide answers, new methodologies, and resolutions, as well as in the sense of ignoring and overlook the fact of pre-existing practices and their engagement with pedagogy.

The ‘new’ in this sense is the ‘buzz’ of the role of ‘education’ within art, and can possibly be located in connection with a series of events, which could be described as ‘site’ or ‘situations’ from which we might excavate some images in order to create a kind of diorama of the terrain.

The flurry of writings around the discussion of pedagogy, education and art, would suggest an increased activity or focus and the presence of a particular event within its history. As is often the case with the dust and noise created by such activity, idealistic formulations are invoked, and ensuing labels created—such as a ‘turn’—or in its full description the ‘educational turn’ denoting a specific turn in relation to curating. However the term curating here in the context of the educational turn under an even broader panoply of overlapping concerns, between artistic practice, research, art education, and education more widely and its philosophies. Nevertheless there is a sense in which one approaches the discussion with a feeling of apprehension. Is the noise or cloud of dust just a ‘screen’ or ‘distraction.’ A sentiment aptly described in a paragraph from Janna Graham’s essay Spanners in the Spectacle: Radical Research at the front lines:

“This turn to education can be read as simply another in a string of long-term social and political projects that are routinely ‘discovered’ (like Columbus ‘discovered’ America) by the contemporary art world to satiate an endless demand for circulation of the ‘new’.”2

Some existing outlines, on gallery education.

Instead of trying to find direct answers or the hope of resolution to them we should perhaps take a little detour. This detour will try to map out the terrain and the kind of topography from which this essay organizes the discussions around education and art.

blurry, rush, new.

Outlines.
What is an outline? An outline might be said brings into play two zones or areas—an area that is un-encompassed and that is disclosed. If pedagogy had an outline what would it look like? What might such an outline achieve through the process of delineation? If the ‘pedagogical’ or pedagogics is the line, it then clearly demarcates two fields, yet these fields share the same material support of the paper and as such are connected; therefore it is the nature of this line one that could say is of particular interest. Nevertheless there has also been a lot of shading—in going on at the same time, within these two fields.

As the purpose of this essay is an attempt to begin to map pedagogics and its tropes in relation to art and artistic practices then we might find it useful to consider the paper, the material support as the plane of education/learning/pedagogy, and as such, it could be said that these shaded forms are those of the pedagogue and the learner. Or to extend these relations a little further, the teacher—pupil, master—apprentice, artist—audience.

By setting out these identities, within the simple syntactical construction of a sentence we have also created a number of outlines—but do we really know what these terms or positions mean, or could mean? Why are these names important? What is learning? How do we learn? What does it mean then to name, place, situate—thereby providing points of reference linked.


So what might this diorama of the terrain look like? The first site we might highlight is ‘art education,’ its on-going pedagogical debates regarding the teaching of art – from the situation of Academy education – via the Bauhaus – to the current Art School/Universities today. Each situating representing their respective pedagogical formulas and structures, at times seen as a radical challenge to the previous system, but each one focusing in as a response to the social and political topographies of their time. Next we might plot the role of education and pedagogy within the Institutions of Art and here it might be wise to formulize, or recognize two strands in the mediation of these sites and their contents – the curatorial – here I am referring to the organisation of themes and the selection of objects for display – which in some cases has developed outside the museum or gallery setting in what might be thought of as radical curating, often by freelance curators. This site of curating adopts a more temporally conscious structure, and sense of mobility that appears in the forms of Biennales Art fairs, projects, labs, and symposia – to name but a few from the ever emerging repertoire. The second strand is the activities of gallery educators, which equally is divided along similar lines to the curatorial structures. Lastly we have the site of artistic practice in which it is quite possible to chart the educational and pedagogical elements in relation to artistic practice along the lines of ‘institutional criticism,’ and ‘site-specificity’ as outlined by Miwon Kwon in her text “From one site to another; location as identity.” Here Kwon traces an outline of the changing nature of artistic practices beginning with the avant-garde and onward through the emergence of ‘site-specific art’ – and by extension ‘institutional critique’ – in a movement which the artist and writer Dave Beech describes as a re-positioning of the focus of art, from the ‘artist to the audience, from the focus on process, from production to reception,’ that aimed for a direct and unmediated engagement with their audience. In addition one might also consider that the criticality towards the institution and its attempts to expose its role, and or function within art was in itself an educative process.

Historically it would appear that the cross over and effects of artistic practices and the changing nature and structure of the art institution and curatorial practices are more closely en-twined though the development of institutional critique, but this must not be read as co-option as the art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson reminds us. The significant changes that have taken place within museum structures and curatorial prac- tices are not only a reaction of the art institutions to “institutional critique” but as a ‘syntax’ that continues to evolve in multiple directions. However this is not to say that the practice of art education has not influenced the museums and galleries, whilst at the same time we should be mindful in not neglecting or perhaps forgetting the impact artists have had upon educational institutions seen particularly in the figures and practices of Joseph Beuys, Mary Kelly, Michael Asher who directly impacted upon the pedagogies in their classrooms and to the point of the creation of ‘Free Universitess.’ So however much one might want to abbreviate, cut short, mark out specific relations, as is the case here, only goes to show how art has had a major impact on educational institutions and activities for schools, and individuals.

The consequence of this has resulted in museums and galleries being required to implement curricular, and strategies for developed as well as social and communal spaces for creative learning – in which the museologist and artist Eileen Hooper-Greenhill defines as ‘edutainment’ – in order to separate education within cultural institutions from school and university. So in keeping with the tradition of institutional critique – let’s take a look at the museum – the institution itself.

On my recent trips to local cultural institutions, in the oresund region, whilst thinking about the mediations of ‘museums, the expectation is not a surprise. In fact they where there might be a sense for the nostal- gic here, that also might indicate a certain thrill of privilege of access to such a space, along the axes of gendered perspectives, or knowledges – is not so much the point here. The point being that the display mechanisms or the advanced mechanisms of pedagogies and curatorial structures that aim to include, entertain, understand their audience also confronts us with a problem of the display – or ‘user interface,’ which as we know in relation to our computers hides a more complex and abstract system. What for me is troubling – although this should not be seen as an attempt to cover all elitism – is the way the educational space and programs of museums are being mainstreamed towards the public – along problematic ideas of different situations. However within the context of the Miwon Kwon essay “One place after another…” the emergence and trajectory of gallery education seems more closely connected, but it is perhaps within the writings regarding gallery education within the UK that the differences between gallery education and gallery educators is brought more sharply into focus.

Art Institutions, generally within the Western or European context have seen the expansion of ‘gallery education’ through governmental poli- cies to develop cultural institutions into sites of learning, thus offering a wide range of courses and activities for schools, and individuals. The consequence of this has resulted in museums and galleries being required to implement curricular, and strategies for developed as well as social and communal spaces for creative learning – in which the museologist and artist Eileen Hooper-Greenhill defines as ‘edutainment’ – in order to separate education within cultural institutions from school and university. So in keeping with the tradition of institutional critique – let’s take a look at the museum – the institution itself.

Museums and...
and a desire to define gallery education as both a ‘strategy and a practice’. These strategies and practices whose lineage might be traced through the influence and inspiration of the avant-garde and radical artistic practices at the time as well as the liberation movements and theories developing from social sciences and education of the 1960’s and 70’s. The efforts were seen as an attempt to ‘move art from the monolithic and narrow museum education into a dialogic, open and pluralist set of tendencies’.13

What might be interesting to note here briefly is the implication by Felicity Allen of the role of the ‘novice.’ What Felicity Allen remarks on that gallery education within museums has tended to require or insist on professional teaching qualifications, thus leaving women artists to go into the education sector within galleries and engage in the teaching of workshops, or short-term projects.14 This situation of precarity, occupied by artists, is interesting in that it should have not been considered as part of institutional critique, and it is only in the recent years after Documenta 12, that a full frontal exploration is made, into what the art educator and researcher Carmen Mörsch describes as a site of radical research for “un-learning” as part of institutional critique.15

A problem arises, the names, positions, attitudes and hierarchies within the art system become somewhat blurred as boundaries are traversed, and territories are determinantalized through the emphasis on pedagogy or the pedagogical. As part of my current investigations and project, which will involve creating an installation within the Verken – which is the learning space in the art space of the Moderna Museet in Malmo, the very position of the gallery educator, hovering on the sidelines of determinant is an interesting point. For example, the gallery educator is an active space provider – ranging from the taste buds to the finger tips gained through a two feet on the ground five feet in the air visual perspective.16

While this reflects a certain reality, a practice and target group of the museum Carmen Mörsch outlines four other pedagogical functions belonging to gallery education – the educative, reflective, deconstructive and transformative functions. The analysis, and identification of these four different pedagogical functions of gallery education is undertaken against the backdrop of an exhibition, which was insightful, accessible and playful.

In returning to our discussion on gallery education within the UK context, it is interesting to track its emergence, which is also connected to what Andrea Fraser would define as the first wave of institutional critique. That list of changes from which gallery education emerged can be prescribed to the wave of institutional critique. In returning to our discussion on gallery education, Felicity Allen, a multi-disciplinary educator, was set up as a model but to indicate the possibilities and value of the ‘amateur’, or the viewpoint of the ‘novice’. Such positions have been often activated by artists as a relevant and important strategy or position for artistic practice in their critique of institutions. One such example being Andrea Fraser in her parodic performances as the ‘Boob’ in her “Museum Highlighting: A Gallery Talk” (1989).17 Fraser in her performance not only engages the institution, but through her extensive research and activism, attempts from gallery and archival publications; engages in critical art as research.18

As per the above, the intention of this form of pedagogy or the function that Mörsch outlines is to introduce children, youths and those less accustomed to art ‘to a “positive experience within institutions” and a “sense of learning to love art.”19 Whilst on some levels this may seems to be a positive approach, but for whom? The institution visitor numbers? The museum coffers? The casual tourist numbers? The museums coffers? The casual day-outer? Is art supposed to be affirmative? It is perhaps some of these attitudes that address pedagogical functions, or set out in direct opposition to the existing discourse within the ‘modem’ institution, were now unwittingly involved in the consistent and unequal demands of the gallery system, through the wooden stick of funding, to play a central role in society providing an educational service as Eileen Hooper-Greenhill references in her book Museums and Education: Purpose, Pedagogy, Performance, 2005, pp. 654–677.

14. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
"What is to be done?" asked Roger Buergel and Dath Noack, the directors of Documenta XII, when they introduced the event. They wanted to challenge the conventional roles of art in society and museum, and to question the traditional authority of the gallery educator.

The appearance of pedagogical arguments within the history of the Documenta is not new, as Roger explains in "Education Tent", "exhibition as education" is not an innovation but a professional response to new modes of engagement with the art of the time.

"Documenta 12 Education" provided a space for engaging audiences, opening institutions that developed a number of strategies and methods to achieve this.

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What seems to be confronted with is a situation for explanation, provided for by the ongoing exhibition as a background to the discussion -- the follow-up of various pedagogical tools or methods in relation to the transformation of the visitor to a different degree of inclusion or participation, and to inform the public of the possibility of "political-aesthetic exhibition" to documenta 12. That directly engaged itself with the question of education and pedagogies and in particular gallery education.

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in “Magic and Happiness,” 35. Giorgio Agamben 2007. New York, Zone Books, used to explore the other, through each other, Phillip Guston. each fragment, in a sense was Warburg Institute, which cited the writings of in turn was described by a lecture given at the Project), Aby Warburg (Mnemosyne Atlas), who view the work of Walter Benjamin (The Arcades Project) then put alongside or into reference to bring into – structure that would be open and free flowing – Whose Salon. the time other conceptual research project being run at gallery space. In addition, my presentation was however the space itself presented a few challenges – Whose Salon, an ‘image’ a space that would propose a text. necessary, to return to my own practice, and explorative archeology – that always in a sense is – Whose Salon was it participation or collaboration? How does one separate or demarcate the two when the ‘potentiality’ of the situation could give space for both experiences? In a sense the registers of participation are not so clear, and in particular to art practices that move away from the product to the process – in a way that lays bare practice – its method in all its uncertainties as the situation, presents a type of Delusional understanding of the event. It is not an object created by a subject for other pre-existing subjectivities, but a subject which comes before and generates the human subject out of ‘larval’ selves, and as such does not happen to someone but through them. This seems to highlight or draw attention to practice or practices that understand the paradox of the situation that this put shibam addressing in which one might, mobilise themselves as “an extension of the other, where alterity is mutually reinforced.” As such whilst the image has its frame, or boundary it is one that is not appearing and disappearing – disclosed in an exteriority towards one another. In returning to the installation in Whose Salon at Vyalnd Art Academy the same might be said of the situation of authorship. This felt quite clear – in which it points felt quite hopeless – or ridiculous – in which any authorial position is what might be best described as the appearance of the ruins of pedagogy but at the same time this hopelessness is a becoming or an appearing for new meanings or terms for the author, teacher, learner, in which the domain of these facilitator, artist, and learner. As the project ebbed and flowed, it felt uncertain as to what my position might be, as individuals within the space participated of their own accord, or brought in by the works – and some new inflections whilst at the same point trying to maintain some resemblance of an outline or genealogy within the discussion! It was possible due to being aware of this situation that it became important not to ‘explore’, or begin upon this – Whose Salon itself a proposal – From the book Profanations, an ‘image’ a space that would propose a text. Itself a proposal – From the book Profanations, an ‘image’ a space that would propose a text. Itself a proposal – From the book Profanations, an ‘image’ a space that would propose a text. Itself a proposal – From the book Profanations, an ‘image’ a space that would propose a text. Itself a proposal – From the book Profanations, an ‘image’ a space that would propose a text.
So in returning to the project at Moderna Museet it is necessary maybe in this situation in working, or exploring pedagogical concepts, within the pedagogical space to ask – is this spectacle? Edu-tainment? And to paraphrase Andrea Fraser – What do I as an (artist/gallery educator / curator / organizer) providing?

In considering the expansion of terms, activities, and structural vagaries, that have emerged through different art practices, and will continue to emerge through the infliction of the pedagogical it felt necessary to explore the figure of the pedagogue, and teaching and formulate this through and within physical structures, not only buildings, architecture outside of the body – but their connection to the body and as such extend the mentality and structures of the mind within these relations. Whilst at Valand Art Academy pedagogy took place in its most traditional understanding as human-to-human relations, at the Moderna Museum I want to explore these relations through processual structures, in this case through the simple b/w photo process of making photograms.

These concerns led me to delve into other pedagogical interventions with Moderna Museet’s history, and the playground exhibit by the Danish artist Palle Nielsen, who installed an adventure playground in the main exhibition space, as a study, an experiment, or what he called “The Model – A Model for a Qualitative Society,” 1968, which also explored structures, through structures in order to draw attention to other possibilities for society. However it is not my intention through the installation to think towards the future, but maybe to try to activate a sense of presentness. A presentness that is felt, through the intra-action with a structure and its process that would bring into play new experiences similar to a kind of mental parkour. An encounter similar to the description mentioned earlier of the attendant becoming gallery educator that is waiting to pour forth, in the vitality of the event – through which new subjectivities might emerge, and genealogies mapped out.

(Epilogue – a part journey)

In returning to the project at the Verkstan at Moderna Museet Malmö there is a sign upon the wall that reads “darkroom.” Deadpan, somewhat scientific, referring to what it possibly is — a darkroom (we are not invited but may Drop-in).

For the regular visitor – who is familiary enough not familiar with art – possibly a parent – it is not the first time they have been here (reproductive pedagogy). It is usually the colourful and novel space of the Verkstan, a space filled with a large turbine an object of its past use – and for the institutional critically aware – the former experimental institutional site of “Rosseum” run by Charles Esche. Upon reaching this sign, outside the Verkstan, may or may not have been through a direct route form the coffee shop, it might be the final stop, or the middle stop in a kind of activation of an improvised créche, where it is the parent that ends up being creative, or the child is already engaged in early ‘fordist’ forms of creative production. The room is not what it was. There are figures in the darkness, frames. Movement, pace – is no longer easy, steps become a shuffle. Seeing has left the retina, scurrying to find its points of focus on the surface of the skin, through which distances are now sensitive; perspective has become a network of tentacles – the nervous system.

An alien to one self – should I be here.

Moving between the frames, one encounters a structure, structures frames extended forms, reaching out, and partially attempting to divide somewhat similar to playground, but incomplete in its circuit or logic. These surround a central table, upon which various light sources are placed, frames marking empty spaces under them – gestures in A4…
The New Studio Visit – Alternative Feedback Session

Summary

This project aims to explore alternative modes for handling the traditional form of the studio visit, with the goal to both constructively intervene as well as perform research. Specifically, the project offers three alternative models that can be performed and experimented with, and explores these models through a series of workshops that teach and perform them.

Background / Context

The studio visit is a commonplace practice in art education. According to Svensson and Edström’s study they considered the most important by a majority of students. However, given the structural importance of the studio visit, there is very little critical work on it. This project does not aim to either negate the existing tradition, nor to offer some global alternative, but is a more common method in art education. According to Svensson and Edström’s study they considered the most important by a majority of students. However, given the structural importance of the studio visit, there is very little critical work on it. This project does not aim to either negate the existing tradition, nor to offer some global alternative, but is a more common method in art education.

Methodology

The project explicitly outlines three concrete, theoretical models. To even offer a new model, or try one out, requires a self-aware practice of experimentation on the part of anyone undertaking it. This issue – trying out explicit models of feedback and presentation – is not typical for the visual arts, but is a more common method in acting, poetry and other modes of cultural practice. This unusual quality means that this project is not for everyone, and is available only to the self-selecting group of those interested in undertaking a new mode. This self-selecting group could come from any of the contexts in which studio visits are typically performed – the academy and post-academic art institutions; amongst peers; and even in professional contexts (although that would also require an additional type of commitment, that of shifting typical professional roles).

The Three Models are:

1) The Spectator Studio Visit
2) The Structured Studio Visit
3) The Personal Studio Visit

Note: see appendix for full descriptions of the models.

The method of disseminating them, and thus offering them as possible models for others to use, is done via two workshops at the UdK (Berlin University of the Arts) in Berlin.

Personal Motivation

In essence the project consists of experimental attempts to establish new ways of discussing art with each other, and offering them to other people. This love/hate relationship with and experience of studio visits has occurred throughout my own art education and experience of professional practice in both Europe and the US.

Results of the Two Workshops

1) A new text reflecting on the studio visit itself and the New Studio Visit in relationship to it. This also includes feedback from participants.
2) Dissemination of the models as part of an expanding, ripple-effect practice of intervening in contemporary art.

Lay of the Land / How My Project Relates

Dr. Ann-Mari Edström’s, Malmö University Ph.D. thesis Learning in Visual Art Practice (2008) consists of four articles. In article III “Art Students Making Use of Studio Conversations” she explores how student-artists use the studio visit, and what qualities they develop by doing so. Her empirical study analyses how students use studio conversations, within the context of a Master of Fine Arts programme in visual arts in Sweden, specifically from the perspective of the artist-student. In her analysis she situates five aspects: A) Who to talk to? B) When to talk. C) Expanding the student-artist’s options concerning ways of doing something. D) Testing the artistic expression, to see how others receive the artwork (How am I communicating?) E) Context of the student’s work, relating to the artwork in a wider context. Where am I communicating?

In Edström’s study the student-artists in aspect D are testing their artistic expression by using the studio visit as a way to find out how others interpret and receive their work. In aspect E they explore how their work is situated in a wider (art) context, or practical-professional context in which the student-artist works. They are doing this as a form of ‘reality-check’ by sharing their work in order to see how their artwork is received.

Edström’s results show that for aspect D (the testing of their artistic expression), the students next to the studio conversations occasionally use fellow students and friends for this purpose as well. What interests the students here is the discrepancy between how they themselves look upon their artwork, and how others experience it. Inviting someone in to interpret the artwork is a way for the students to gain access to this discrepancy, and work on it if they want to. In aspect E student-artists widen their perspective of where in the art world their work would sit. The visiting artist can give (theoretical) references, locate the work in the wider (art) context or practical-professional context, or refer to the closest and related traditions to the student’s work.

In the Spectator Studio Visit model, the ‘reality-check’ aspect is specifically extracted from the traditionally practiced studio visit. Both visiting and student-artist agree beforehand that the Spectator Studio Visit model will be used for the studio visit.

The Spectator Studio Visit is a mix of uttering the formal aspect of the presented work, and interpretation of it by the visiting artist. The visiting artist keeps silent. The moment of choosing this model is most likely when the work has reached its final form, when the work is installed, during an exhibition, or other forms of presentation. For a full description of the Spectator Studio Visit model see: Appendix A, Model 1 The Spectator Studio Visit

This is a way for the visiting artist to witness how a singular spectator sees and interprets his/her work. The visited artist can choose this model when s/he wants to know how the visiting artist interprets, examines and assesses the work.

Christian Widberg’s, Göteborgs University Doctoral thesis Åteljésamtalets utmaning – ett bildningsperspektiv (‘The Call for a Studio Challenge – An Educational Perspective’ (2011)) is an investigation of the studio critique i.e., the teacher/student studio interactions that take place as part of two higher education programmes in the Fine Arts in Sweden. In his thesis he tries to explore what is essential to the student-artist’s intention, and how to understand its context and integrity. He examines how a teacher captures the opportunities and challenges that occur within the force field of the student-artist’s intention, and how to understand its context and integrity. He examines how a teacher captures the opportunities and challenges that occur within the force field of the student-artist’s intention, and how to understand its context and integrity.

Widberg’s paper offers an historical overview of the studio visit, transcribed interviews, a logbook and studio critiques. His core theme is the process of the student-artist, which, he writes, embraces the potential of the studio critique to nurture and attain quality.

In my MFA thesis The New Studio Visit – Alternative Feedback Session I don’t use the word studio critique as I think that there should be the opportunity to create a situation where there could be peer-to-peer, and teacher-artist to student-artist studio visits, in which there is
a process of cooperation within the best interests of the visited student-artist. This at least at the moment when the studio visit takes place. The word critique also implies that the student-artist is being evaluated. In my opinion this is not an aspect that should be brought into the studio visit situation, since it dilutes the feeling of autonomy and thus freedom and possibility to experiment with the actual studio visit by the visited artist should s/he want to. The trialling of the studio visit is what I try to investigate through The New Studio Visit at the UdK in Berlin with student-artists who are interested in trying out new models for undertaking a studio visit.

Wideberg observed the behaviour and attitudes within the studio visit, in which both student and teacher were so busy with their own thoughts that they failed to reach each other. When the studio visit is over the teacher does not know the student’s need or concerns. Other scenarios included studio visits where the teacher either took control, or on the contrary remained too far in the background. The teacher can be rigid, self-absorbed and inattentive, or so busy with processing the information that s/he missed the essence of what is being said. Such situations often occur even though the intention of the studio visit is to nurture the student’s artistic expression, and to contribute to the their process of growth. This is the main result of Wideberg’s study: to embrace the potential of the studio visits with ideas and demands, even if these come with great drive and initiative.

In article II of Edström’s research she focuses on changes in the student-artist and their work as part of their artistic development. The connection between self-direction and ‘testing-assured’ is regarded as the main result of the study. She describes the notion of ‘rest assured’ to draw on the relation between the work and the student-artist as an experience of confidence and trust, within three aspects: the intimate, uncertainty and the working process. The student-artists themselves indicated that they tend to attribute the alienation they experienced with their work to the strong influence of others, i.e. their supervisors. This delays their capacity to ‘rest assured’ in the intimate and the working process. The Structured Studio Visit model the visiting artist feeds back what s/he has received from the artist. The visiting artist verbally repeats what s/he has understood from what the visited artist communicated about his/her work. For a full description of the Structured Studio Visit see: Appendix B, Model 2 ‘The Structured Studio Visit’.

This model aims to provide the visited artist with a ‘tool’ which is the repeating/rever the visited artist utterings, in order to help the visited artist to further develop how to present his/ her work by articulating his/her thoughts, areas of interest, processes, techniques, ideas, challenges, questions, objectives, concepts and other possible topics that the visited artist unconsciously tells the visiting artist in a manner in which the visiting artist understands him/her. The intention is that by doing so the visited artist will gain a better understanding of what the labour/artistic process is really about; that is, what is important about the work for him/herself. The moment of choosing this model can be when the visiting and visited artist meet for the first time, or when the visited artist is not yet familiar with the visited artist’s new work.

In relation to the Personal Studio Visit model, I want to highlight Katrine Hjelde’s Ph.D. thesis Between Fine Art and Teaching: Reflecting Creative Passion (2008) from Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Art London.6 Here she explores the role of creative passion in relation to fine art teaching. Creative passion is described as a cluster emotion: an emotional resonance that contains a collection of emotions such as obsession, love, jealousy, confusion, and fervour. The emotion of creative passion according to Hjelde can be used as a powerful tool in learning in fine art. Students need to undergo learning shifts to obtain competence and confidence. These shifts need emotion. Chapter 11 of bell hooks’ Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope’s starts with the sentence: “To speak of love in relation to teaching is already to engage a dialogue that is taboo.” hooks talks about the teacher-student relationship. When professors care deeply about the subject matter, teach this with love, and love the process of teaching this is regarded as something good. But loving the students is not regarded as something favourable. Emotional connections tend to be suspect in a world where objectiveness and the mind are valued above all else. According to hooks, in teaching and learning in a humanistic situation objectivism can’t serve as useful basis. Teachers who fear to get too close to students may objectify them in order to maintain objectivity. They could see the students as empty vessels, with no opinions, thoughts, personal problems and such. Conversely, students don’t learn from teachers who are disconnected, dissociated or self-obsessed. According to the dictionary, to educate means giving intellectual, moral, and social instruction to someone, typically at a school or university. According to hooks, caring teachers know the root meaning of the word to educate: to draw out. They nurture emotional growth both emotionally and academically, which is the context where love flourishes. Furthermore she writes about competition in the educational setting, which disrupts connection, making it impossible for students and teacher to connect. According to hooks the insistence on objectivism negates community. Students are thought to see each other as competition rather than comrades. She goes on to argue that a student-teacher relationship is contrary to mutual partnership, promoting calculated objectivism that is essentially dehumanising. The focus on a love-ethic, not to confuse with romantic love, is defined as a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust. With the basic principles of love as interaction, the mutual pursuit of knowledge that is therapeutic makes it possible for optimal learning. Teachers are then learning while teaching, and students while learning and sharing. “When students are encouraged to trust in their capacity to learn they can meet difficult challenges with a spirit of resilience and competence.”7 When there is no care or no recognition of their inner conflicts, students shut down, and the status quo is upheld. When students open up so that students can address their worries openly, they can offer affirmation and support.

Teachers don’t want to become therapists, and do not want to respond to emotional feelings. However if the student is shut down teaching becomes impossible. Therefore hooks argues the need for consciousness teaching, teaching with love, and becoming aware of psychological conflicts a student might have that may block the student’s capacity to learn. This could mean that the teacher steers the student towards therapeutic care. When the teacher establishes appropriate boundaries s/he doesn’t need to fear becoming engulfed or entangled in the student’s dilemmas. If teachers want students that are fully and compassionately engaged learning they can’t ignore emotional feelings. The Personal Studio Visit takes its point of departure from the idea that the visited artist specifically chooses this model in order to talk with the visiting artist about personal matters that may be worrying or occupying his/her mind, and perhaps even hindering him/her to
work as an artist. This model could also be called upon when the visited artist has difficulty articulating anything else anymore by enduring emotional stress, and needs aid, guidance or support to start/continue to work again. But it could also be employed in less intense cases where the visited artist simply needs acknowledgment, or as a way of sharing their experience as learner-teachers and such. For a full description of the Personal Studio Visit see Appendix C, Model 3: The Personal Studio Visit.

This model contributes to the human aspect of the art making profession. For some artists the immediacy of certain experiences creates an imperative to engage in dialogue. The Personal Studio Visit models it an attempt to articulate the traumatic or distressing character of being a human-artist with a disruption, problem or situation.

Personal / Autobiographical Narrative

At the moment of writing (March 2012 – May 2013) there is no official standard or parameter on how to conduct a studio visit. To make an informed and clear distinction in the rest of this text I call the current practiced studio visit “The Traditional Studio Visit” and its constructed and experimental models “The New Studio Visit.” In the rest of this text, and in the description of the models, I will call the student-artist the visited artist and the teacher-artist the visiting artist, since I prefer to think that they have a collaboration together instead of a hierarchical appropriation moment at the moment of the studio visit.

The name the New Studio Visit might imply that the studio visit should take place inside a studio. This is not the case: it can take place at any location chosen by the visited artist, in agreement with the visiting artist.

The foundation of the new Studio Visit is mainly based on empirical knowledge drawing on my own experience as an educated artist (in the Netherlands, USA and Sweden) and fourteen years of autonomous studio practice as a lens-based performance artist. This has been supplemented with knowledge gained from interviews conducted with student-artists on the Traditional Studio Visit during my 100-day stay at DOCU-MENTA (13); the direct action festival during the Month of Performance Art in Berlin; and two workshops carried out at the UDK (Berlin University of the Arts).

In my work as a visual artist the human plays the central role in my work, with the focus on the intrinsic thinking world and the inner strength of the individual. I want to see if I can play with the artist as a work in progress, in the sense that I trial the ethical borders in the production of the work. People keep learning, recreating and repositioning themselves. I find this process of change and growth of the individual interesting. It is my belief that any person is able to discover, investigate and shape their being through contact with others. We are all alike, and yet so different. In meeting with the other, through reflection development can take place. Rescuing themes in my work are personal development, communication, authorship, ethics, and memory (see: www.kimengelen.com).

Background

In 1999 I graduated from the Academy of Art and Design (AKV St. Joost) in the Netherlands, under the guidance of Alex de Vries, with teachers Hans van der Broek, Paul Goede, Yvo de Graayer, George Korsmit, and Toon Teeken. More than ten years later I studied for four months at the Graduate Program in Fine Arts at CCA in San Francisco, California, with Associate Professor on how to see, and under whom it is with people who I have talked to before and I can talk to them again, then I prefer people that give a lot of feedback, I don’t like it when they are advising me or giving me tips on how I can work. I want people to discuss my concern in my work with, more like the theme, the idea or my method of working, or my thoughts around my work that I am struggling with, people that give from their own work and experience, so that it is more a conversation, to see my work in the context of their work, then it is not an anonymous teacher. Artists, curators and writers have good experience with.

A studio visit to me is a conversation with one person about concerns that I have in my work. I have questions and I expect to discuss these questions. I expect to discuss my work, or their work or other artist’s work. A studio visit can’t really fail. I don’t think of fail. The most important factor to have a studio visit is that it is nice to have someone who freely talks with me about my questions and concerns for one hour. That feels very luxurious to have that opportunity. To ask someone out on whatever my concern is. Also to get out of my head. Once a month is good for me. I want to receive references, I have conversations with other artists, not only artists but also public and it is difficult to find people to talk to, this way could give suggestion of people’s work to look at, also as suggestion to talk to. It makes my ears open for the name, so when I read something in a magazine I remember this artist. Because the pictures I see when Googling does not always give a lot. References can be interesting because they might see something in my work that I haven’t recognized in my work. And that can tell me more about my own work, or tell me what I am doing. A different name could be: work conversation, but the name should contain that you get to choose to whom you talk to and that the talk is about your work. With the studio visit it is nice, because they visit you. But it could also be a walk in the park.

Whilst doing these interviews I realised that one perfect studio visit model for all artists, at all times, working with different media, was difficult to maintain. By thinking about the student-artists I believed would be helpful for the student-artists. My primary and initial interest in this was language. At this stage I looked for conversations with fellow student-artists and started to interview student-artists on the topic.

With the help of Rob Prunten we created an online questionnaire in order to get feedback from student-artists to understand what they desire from a studio visit, and to shape the Studio Visit Manifesto accordingly (see: www.kimengelen.com/sv). Almost no one filled in the questionnaire, so I learnt that I wanted to know the answers I had to ask and interview the student-artists personally. Here is an excerpt of one interview conducted during DOCUMENTA (13) which has been transcribed:

On the Studio Visit and the perfect tutor (June 5, 2012/student MFA/Kassel, Germany):

"Someone that is doing stuff that I find interesting, someone I can learn from, when it is with people I have talked to before and I can talk to them again, then I prefer people that give a lot of feedback, I don’t like it when they are advising me or giving me tips on how I can work. I want people to discuss my concern in my work with, more like the theme, the idea or my method of working, or my thoughts around my work that I am struggling with, people that give from their own work and experience, so that it is more a conversation, to see my work in the context of their work, then it is not an anonymous teacher. Artists, curators and writers have good experience with.

A studio visit to me is a conversation with one person about concerns that I have in my work. I have questions and I expect to discuss these questions. I expect to discuss my work, or their work or other artist’s work. A studio visit can’t really fail. I don’t think of fail. The most important factor to have a studio visit is that it is nice to have someone who freely talks with me about my questions and
ten from the perspective of the artist with the focus on the artist’s advantage, and structured by interviews and talks with student-artists on art, the art world and the studio visit. I thought that the five models would help to develop the artist’s work and their rhetoric skills, and as a result that it would empower the artist, particularly in feeling more at ease with their work, and their role or situation as artist. In the studio visit context both artists (the student-artist and the teacher-artist) would agree beforehand on which of the five models would be chosen, and thus in what manner the studio visit would take place. The student-artist would be the one to choose the model since s/he is the one who invited the other artist to aim/herself in the process of development, thus making it clear that it is actually the student-artist him/herself that is, or at best should be, self-directing. Which is the current student-artist in a large extent as well; the only difference being that s/he cannot choose between different formats to conduct a studio visit.

During the process I discovered that a lot has been written on the studio, but not so much on the studio visit. As such I wanted to delve deeper into the definition of the studio visit, and talk about preparation, location, time/timing, reiteration, expectations, references and evaluations. The Studio Visit Manifesto: 5 Pedagogical Models was an investigation into the potential of the studio visit for the student-artist, and it defended the right of any person to discover or learn something for themselves a “hands-on,” or interactive heuristic approach to learning by five new ways of exploring the topic the studio visit.

In our Critical and Pedagogical Studies programme we had the opportunity to do an internship, and I could make use of this possibility to independently look for an internship in Berlin. So I contacted art academies and universities to find out if I could run a workshop to introduce the five models to participants and let them experience them. In November 2012 I managed to run a workshop at the UdK (Universität der Künste Berlin), which was an introduction to the three models. If there is a higher ideal connected to the three models, it is that the New Studio Visit expects equality between the student-artist and the teacher-artist, commitment and determination from both sides, and that it helps to develop the student’s work and increase the vocabulary, rhetorical skills, and the knowledge of their position as artists.

This text does not imply that the models offered should be the only applicable ones; nor does it suggest that they are the best models for all artists, or even models that are suited to all student-artists. The New Studio Visit is not a routine or almost mechanical device for sharing the ‘suchness’ of the artist’s experience with others, or for the artist to achieve greater perspective or clarity about their process or future plans. But as we were saying at the end of Sunday’s session, the very expectation of vulnerability that rears its head as soon as a studio visit is suggested or proposed makes the psychological dimensions of vulnerability/fear/dependence the first hurdle to overcome. You didn’t suggest it, but it wouldn’t surprise me if the missing participants for the workshop of both days could have been due to nerves for a few of them. Just a guess. It takes a certain self-assurance to put oneself in the middle of a lab experiment with complete strangers.

In the beginning of the workshop there was a brief explanation of how the day would look: the models were practiced in two roles, and the models, in both roles, would be practiced for 30 minutes. In both of the workshops the participants practiced the models in two roles: as artist and visiting artist. In both the first and second workshop only one student of UdK was present, and not all of the participants were able to attend both days. For the first workshop nine people had initially signed up and five of them participated, of which one was a student. For the second workshop in the preliminary signing-up ten students had shown interest. Again nine people had signed up, of which five participated. And again, one was a student. Interestingly most of the participants in both workshops were not student-artists, but professional artists who found out about the workshop through different channels.

The workshop in November 2012, the participants practiced five studio visit models. In the second workshop in April 2013 the participants practiced three studio visit models which are described in this text: 1) The Spectator Studio Visit, 2) The Structured Studio Visit, and 3) The Personal Studio Visit. The workshop on the first day of the second workshop started with the Structured Studio Visit, followed by the Personal Studio Visit Model. The second day started again with the Spectator Studio Visit and was followed by the Structured Studio Visit. The models were practiced for 30 minutes. In both of the workshops the participants practiced the models in two roles: as artist and visiting artist. In both the first and second workshop only one student of UdK was present, and not all of the participants were able to attend both days. For the first workshop nine people had initially signed up and five of them participated, of which one was a student. For the second workshop in the preliminary signing-up ten students had shown interest. Again nine people had signed up, of which five participated. And again, one was a student. Interestingly most of the participants in both workshops were not student-artists, but professional artists who found out about the workshop through different channels.

The quotes in the following part are:

K.B.: “Very well organized, managed and directed which not even low attendance could deter. It is easy to imagine another presenter with less assurance and calm method setting a very different tone for the participants and restricting the space or sense of ‘spaciousness’ that is so vital for discovery, risk and exploration.”

Kim Engelen / Critical and Pedagogical Studies MFA 2
These 3 models of *The New Studio Visit – Alternative Feedback Sessions* are constructed and experimental models, and were offered in the form of a workshop in which there was no grading or evaluating by the school administration or tutor. Taking part in the workshop was entirely on a voluntary basis without gaining credits.

K.B.: “The studio visit models were overall an excellent revelation. Including: that a studio visit could be seen to have models and methods of approach and direction, that naming studio visit models instantly alters the experience from one of amorphous and uncertain chemistry resulting from an encounter to an event that has boundaries and controllable directionality. That the studio visit models therefore have different advantages from the point of view of either artist or visitor. That entering or applying a particular model creates specific terms of engagement that, though contrived, provide opportunities for greater insight and discovery. That the proactive choice inherent in any model would allow for the possibility of greater comfort for the visitor and in cases some reduction of anxiety for the artist.”

K.B.: “I think they are all effective and powerful approaches. The naming of the studio visit models instantly alters the experience from one of amorphous and uncertain chemistry resulting from an encounter to an event that has boundaries and controllable directionality. The personal one I’m leaving to the side since I didn’t experience it and also because I suspect, perhaps wrongly, that it’s more difficult to develop as a method since its boundaries are harder to maintain. But with some changes to the packaging or naming of it, perhaps not. It’s interesting territory.”

In the information email I had sent out before the workshop took place, I had asked the participants: “Please bring artwork of yourself. Make sure that you can make a believable person not more than 5 pictures, or in case of video/audio/performance max. 10 minutes. The room will be open 1 hour before the workshop. This is in order to place, hang or install your work if desired.” Only the UdK student came in earlier to hang and install her works.

The reaction during the workshop was that for the conceptual artist one could then see my own prejudices, basically. What I’m interested in when practicing the Spectator Studio Visit became quite explicit to me; the parts that I was interested in thinking about versus the parts that I was not interested in thinking about. There were certain things that were very obvious that I didn’t even think about until almost towards the end, because they were not real priorities for me, so I just addressed the priorities for me. I find that very constructive, to see my own prejudices or my own priorities made clear like that.

P.S.: “I think one already plays models. When we make a presentation for other students at the University then that is also a model. How we think that it should be. But it is good to be consciously dealing with these models, because we want to get different sorts of results. And when we receive information from the other person then we can be conscious, and consciously choose this first model for example. So that one knows, okay how many models are there and then one can also personalize it somehow, one doesn’t need to exactly follow the models. One could do a mix of two models for example, depending on the situation.”

K.B.: “I think the very expectation of vulnerability as soon as a studio visit is suggested makes the psychological dimensions the first hurdle to consider. As a result, the missing participants for the workshop on both days could have been due to nervous. The New Studio Visit constructed models were seen as constructive, and by consciously dealing with them addressed the priorities and helped generate different results. This made the studio visit by proactive choice an event with controllable directionality for both visiting and visited artist.

The Spectator Studio Visit Model

The first model practiced in both workshops was the Spectator Studio Visit model. In the explanation of the model it is mentioned that this model can be used to see how the finished work functions, and how a singular spectator sees and/or interprets their work. The visited artist can choose this model when she wants to know where the work is at, and what it communicates. In the workshop the feedback received on the visited artist artwork was generously accepted and heard with all ears by the visited artist. That the visited artist in this instance couldn’t say anything, she perceived as interesting and positive, while the participants could see how their work functioned, or for experience for themselves what should be changed in order to make it work. Another aspect was also raised: in this model the role of the visiting artist took on a performative dimension.

P.S.: “One comes in a scene and one has to talk for half an hour as visiting artist in the Spectator Studio Visit. And that is very performative really. Everything that has to do with roles is performative. J.D.: “So it’s very good to also get the sense of how people respond. Some of the feedback, even on the video part, was super-helpful. To get a sense of how things look in that quick take is also very helpful, because it’s easier for people to give feedback on intention than on materiality.” There was also discussion on who the visiting artist is, and what one wants to come in and talk about the work.

M.S.: “Well, it was working, but I think it really depends on who you are doing this with. Because if you are talking to someone whose work you don’t like, there might not be that much to say, actually. So it might be less interesting. And in that sense, again, it depends on who you are with. And also to accept what the person would say. For instance, a traditional painter. I’m not interested in traditional painting, so I would have difficulties in accepting what this person would say, even also about my work, because he or she has such a different perspective on art. And in that sense the person I was talking to J.D. We have a similar approach, reflecting, working with all sorts of media and space also. That was really interesting.”

P.S.: “Because when a person comes and looks at my work. And doesn’t have clue what it is about, and starts to talk about something completely different. Then I think; does my work really don’t function or is it that the person really doesn’t have a clue of aesthetics, while that is also possible. […] I would like to know beforehand who is this person. Because as I said, for me it is very depending on what she is. While there could be a person, who works in a slightly different area and give me his opinion on art, on my work, and maybe I take this very seriously. […] So professional deforming someone who paints, this first things that comes to their mind is the visual aspect and the colourfulness, the materiality. And this she had said in the beginning. And someone who makes conceptual art, however it is, it’s a conceptual painting, but someone who is a pure conceptual artist would perhaps have looked at the letters in the beginning and not the other way around. I was with her work very focussed on thinking what is the concept of that? I tried to get this, the meaning or something like this.”

One of the participants thought it was also a good model for work-in-progress. So on the one hand she said:

P.S.: “I couldn’t say anything and I found that interesting while because of this I noticed what functions in my work and what does not work and what should I change in order to make it work and that was for me very positive to see that. Because when you create an exhibition
later you cannot talk with every visitor. And it is very important that the people when they see your work understand what it is about and tell their opinion."

And on the other hand:

P.S.: "This model is exactly right when I have a problem with the artwork. When I am there and think: "Oh god, oh god, how do I continue this idea?" Or when I am not sure in something then I think this model is perfect. Because when the work is ready and I like it and think that is a good project then I sort of don't care what others think. But when I don't know exactly where to go, then it is really good to hear what the others think."

In the role of the visiting artist in the Spectator Studio Visit participants reacted slightly differently regarding the amount of time for this model:

M.S.: "I had to concentrate quite a lot, finding the right words and the right English. I noticed that, every now and then, you took the pen and made some notes, that's what I realised."

P.S.: "I couldn't do it. There are people who like to talk a lot and very long, and those have these skills somehow. And for them perhaps it would be easier to do that. And there are people who are very shy and can't talk that long."

In both workshops the presentation of the work was discussed again after the Spectator Studio Visit was carried out. During discussion of the first workshop some artists said that this model is preferred when the work is presented in the right way. B.B. said that she didn't like to show her documentary work on a computer. Also K.B. said that he didn't think that PowerPoint was the best way to present his environmental installation.

J.D.: pointed out in the second workshop: "People are working in kind of a post-medium way, there's this emphasis, on more almost on a PowerPoint model of presentation, rather than the classical studio visit which would be like the finished work or the work in process in this kind of silence contemplation thing. And I think it trains people very badly, the PowerPoint. I think because it trains us to think that our intentions and our motivations are actually communicated along with the work when they're really not."

Some participants pointed out that it depends on what it is that you want to get out of it:

P.S.: "While perhaps there are artists who want to know if their paintings in a pdf on the computer function the same as they would in the space. And maybe they want to show a pdf. Depending on what the artist wants to know. I wouldn't set specific rules for this. I wouldn't specifically say, just your name or only the title of the work, but a little bit free but only what they want to know from the visitor. And play a little bit as well."

J.D.: "And that it is becoming the new convention. I was looking at some pictures on Facebook, on the one hand that's not optimal, but on the other hand, while it's not optimal it's actually now kind of a convention, so a lot of people actually look at work on Facebook now, and a lot of people are on Facebook in order to show their work. So it seems like a fair way to look at things, to me. There are of course consequences to it. It's also related to the emphasis on the event over the object in contemporary art, so the emphasis on the opening over the exhibition on this everything becoming part of an event as opposed to seeing what the status of the object is for a long time, because if you had brought in a single painting then the details of whether or not it's satisfying or not are unavoidable on a kind of a material level, whether or not it's nice to look at. I think looking at the screen skips some of that."

In the Spectator Studio Visit model the visited artist keeps silent. The visited artist introduces
him/herself and the work with merely one sentence. For example: “Hello, my name is Kim Engelen, and I work as a lens-based performance artist.” This verbal introduction of the work by just one sentence was questioned.

On the one hand it was said:

P.S.: “I wouldn’t set specific rules for this. I wouldn’t specifically say, just your name or only the title of the work, but a little bit free but only what they want to know from the visitor. And play a little bit as well. […] I believe it is important that every artist decides, so that I decide what I say to the others, what do I want to know from the others. And then I can decide for example that I give the title and my name and that is it. While I want to know if the work functions with the title. Or someone else wants to say the context. In what context the works is presented. And then each can decide what information they give and with a particular purpose.

And on the other hand:

P.S.: “However I did it like this with my works, because my drawings somehow didn’t function the way I wanted them to function together with the other works. But I want them to function and I had to see that in the space, all together, to know why it didn’t work and what the others say. And exactly the visiting artist said it didn’t work, and had noticed this immediately. And did say some things I had not expected, for example in the beginning she only talked about the drawings and did not read the letters. Only later she read the letters, and for me the letters are the most important. And so I noticed, okay when the visiting artist reacts like this, that means I must present it differently.”

Three different things happened in the workshop regarding time: 1) On the second day of the second workshop two participants stopped while practicing the model together. One participant in the role of the visiting artist stopped after fifteen minutes. 2) Some participants expressed that they would have actually liked more time than the fifteen minutes. and that they were all-ears to hear what was said. In the role of the visiting artists. 3) In the role of the visiting artist the participant said that they were in the role of the visiting artist stopped after fifteen minutes. then for me it was too long. Because I didn’t know the work and I had little information in order to understand what it was about, and it was too long for me.”

M.S.: “Now, it was very intense and interesting, half an hour to listen […] this flow of words and reflections and other relations […] it’s definitely very interesting. You coming from another, I wouldn’t say another culture, but another context, this work is reflecting certain cultural contexts, it’s very interesting. Useful.”

There was one divergent opinion regarding the moment to use the Spectator Studio Visit model:

P.S.: “Well I think this model is for a work-in-progress and not when the work is finished. Because when the visiting artist says from the beginning she only talked about the drawings and did not read the letters. Only later she read the letters, and for me the letters are the most important. And so I noticed, okay when the visiting artist reacts like this, that means I must present it differently.”

The Structured Studio Visit Model

In the Structured Studio Visit model, the visited artist must learn to present his/her work and articulate his/her thoughts/ideas/problems/questions/work and such. The visiting artist must verbally repeat what the s/he has understood from what the visited artist is showing, telling or asking. This s/he must do until s/he has understood the artist correctly.

This model was practised very differently: in the first workshop some people where very concentrated and some people couldn’t really carry out the model. They slipped back into the normal way of having a studio visit: in particular they did not repeat what the visited artist was saying. Instead, they started asking questions to the visited artist, and in this manner then also led the studio visit.

On the second day of the second workshop two participants tried out the model, but partially aborted the exercise all together. For those who really engaged the outcome was successful. Those who really did engage the outcome was successful: J.D. said: “For me it was very valuable to have a first impression as with someone’s face or something. Which I was in a way the Spectator Studio Visit. So that is very interesting and that the same insight was actually confirmed during the Structured Studio Visit model. It is just what I remember the most was when became clear to me that performing outside was somehow fundamental to my work. Actually, and at that what I was getting something from performing outside. That I wasn’t getting in other ways or getting me somewhere else. And that really came out about through the process of repetition and hearing my own babbling, I guess forced to not set down in writing but to be repeated back to me like that was definitely a confrontation which was jarring but also clarified some things in terms of what my own priorities were. So it was a very constructed moment of self-consciousness and actually I think it really let me to, it had a concrete effect on the next piece that I began and in which I decided that the piece to make to and to sort of dramatis this issue of performing outside, or inside, even more that the piece would have wanted that one part was outside and one part was outside. That is the thing I remember best about it, was just my own experience of reflecting my own work and then there I was guess secondarily a little bit of other discussion about other people’s work and also a sort of that the whole thing in general. But I had a pretty substantive kind of thinking through on that day. It was substantive for me, and so my own experiences of myself was what I remember best really.”

The Personal Studio Visit Model

In this model the visited artist had the freedom to talk about any topic of choice that may be causing a problem or struggle, either an issue that directly or indirectly connects with their work as an artist or a problem or struggle in their life as an artist. This was the model that generated the longest conversation as part of the group discussion in the second workshop. One of the
participants did not practice the model because of a language barrier with his training partner. Nevertheless he tried the model, and reflected on whether for him trust is an important factor in the Personal Studio Visit model:

K.B.: “As an artist, each model had valuable qualities but some seemed more likely to be realistically embarked on than others. For instance the Personal Studio Visit model, though I didn’t have the opportunity to experience it, in practice is one that for me would depend on a great deal of trust. To be truly listened to with focus and attention allows one to externalise and therefore own and experience one’s thoughts for their having been spoken, but the speaker must know that these thoughts, listened for with great attention, are entrusted safely.”

J.D.: “The real difference between this model and other ones might be that it gives you the liberty to assert what you want the framework to be. The way you describe it is incredibly broad. But in practice maybe you have to say it’s that broad in order to really give the licence to do something. I think I’m kind of frustrated by this problem. And sometimes also having a problem is a good thing in art; this thing you’re turning around over and over again is a good thing. And I was thinking; I have ever been saying I would like to have studio visits before where I took the liberty to assert that I was asking for someone to come and help me with my problem. And I have. But what is different is that, when I’ve done that before, I’ve kind of got the feeling like it didn’t really work that well, and I’m trying to think why? I felt like what ended up happening was people wanted to reassure me. So when I would ask a friend to come and say for instance, like with this exact project I had showed this to people, I’m like, I’m swimming in this and I have no idea what to do. And they’ll be like: “Oh, it’s all good,” they want to reassure. They want the problem to go away, as opposed to walking through the substance of the issue: […] And that’s something I have thought about and never looked at so clearly and crisply so often.”

The framing and naming of the Personal Studio Visit model was discussed in length. Many alternative names were suggested, such as the Problems, Open, Issue, Free-, Knot and Strugggle Studio Visit model. Some thought it should be problem solving, others said no, just a place where you need to address issues. What I am actually in this model is a space for the acknowledgement and verbalisation of the artist’s personal struggle. I don’t expect this model to untie the knot or solve the problem. But I do believe that it could help to have a second artist look at the issue, since a peer-artist can relate to this in a different way than a friend who wants to be friendly or a therapist who doesn’t necessarily know the art context of the problem. With the Personal Studio Visit model I specifically lifted that element out of the current traditional practised studio visit, in order for the visited artist to verbalise the problem and to directly address it. That is, to enable the visited artist by letting him/her verbalise, expose, identify, and address their problem:

J.D.: “A therapist does in general not really know that much about the relationship between video and installation and local memory. So the other one is very clear how it works in a way, the first one we did. How it works and why it works? So the Spectator Studio Visit model works because you refrain from […] you make space for someone to give you a very focussed reception of the work in a very direct way, in a very content oriented manner means to do this. It was said that usually we don’t do that: The problem was addressed and then we had half an hour to talk about it, which was very straightforward. Finally it was also mentioned that having a problem is a good thing in art.

Vulnerable Position

Before and after the workshop short, interesting discussions took place. When the first workshop started one of the participants arrived earlier and we charted a little bit about the mystery of a studio visit, and that it differs enormously depending on the person you are meeting. One never really knows what is going to happen. And one definitely knows if it is going to be helpful or not. As the visited artist you and your work are largely in the hands of the visiting artist, which requires a certain amount of surrender:

K.B.: “We spoke briefly about the mercurial subjects of vulnerability and mystery and that’s hard since there is a lot to unpick where art is concerned. Each person’s philosophy of art or making art or seeing is so distinct and that’s half the magic right there. And everyone has different goals — some to push the rest, others for wide recognition, some to just explore as they can. It’s boring to generalise but as I see it the goal of most artists could be said to touch and name ineffable experiences through their art. To do so successfully, whatever that may mean, requires tolerance of uncertainty or an openness to the constant flow of change. Defensiveness, anxiety over outcomes and fear in general might be said to be the antithesis of such an open or vulnerable state whether from a creative or receptive point of view. These are all rituals of a sort, but ones that get to the nitty-gritty of studio activity.”

Hierarchy

With these models and the structure of the workshops I am striving for a situation where artists have a form of collaboration with each other and thus avoiding strong hierarchy. All sorts of other issues can slip into a studio visit, so it was good to hear that all the participants were focussed, and really tried to interpret the work, and were truly looking into the material:

J.D.: “So on the one hand the craziness level all the emotional content of presenting oneself goes down as you work a bit longer. The other thing that happens though is the professionalism goes up. So then, the presentation of vulnerability is a little bit different. I think one of the participants said that the person presenting the work is always in a vulnerable position, even when you suddenly think that issue first, to whom when we were doing the Spectator Studio Visit model: “What if one of us was Anselm Kiefer?” Would the hierarchy really change if you were showing your work to Anselm Kiefer? Would you feel more vulnerable because he’s someone who is very widely acknowledged, or would you feel special because he is paying special attention? Or if I was Anselm Kiefer, would I feel extra vulnerable? In theory, why would I need critical feedback? Why would I be interested in what anybody thinks? Then it starts to go out into this other territory. Maybe that would be a limitation of this model.”

M.S.: “I think the presenting artist is always in a vulnerable position, as long as they take it personal. But as soon as they get rid of this thing, vulnerability is not there anymore. This I
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Don’t Take it Personally

There was a slightly different atmosphere on the second day of the first workshop compared with the first day of the second workshop. This could have to do with how the visiting artist approached the work and how the visited artist mutually reacted. It could have been the chemistry of two different generations coming together. Or the different mediums the artists worked in.

Or a different cultural approach to the studio visit conversation: polite or very direct:

M.S.: “Because I don’t know you, I try to be polite. But I know as an artist it is very helpful. I’m an artist too, and I like to know what other people think. I remember, ten years ago, I took it very personally and it offended me personally when someone said: ‘This is weird,’ or ‘why did you do that?’”

J.D.: “It takes to learn how to not take it personally. But for me, it’s almost more like the volume level and not about my own craziness has gone down significantly. […] ‘Oh my god, it’s all terrible, I’m falling apart. Oh, I’m still here.’”

P.S.: “I said everything that I thought, although that I didn’t know the other person. So it was a bit risky. But I don’t think it was vicious, it is a professional business. I don’t care if I know the other person or not. One should really say it, or else it doesn’t function. When everybody is polite, then this intimacy doesn’t work. While then people say only things that one wants to hear. And that is a problem in this model. While with this model you really have to tell the truth, also when it doesn’t go well with the other person. It is just an opinion and that should one accept. So as a professional and not take it personal. That is also a cultural difference. People from other cultures react differently. In my culture we always just say it.”

Who is it for?

Some thought it could be beneficial for student-artists. However in the two workshops most of the participants where professional working artists and in both workshops these included teacher-artists.

This concurs with the arguments in Ann-Mari Edström’s article III “Art Students Making Use of Studio Conversations”11 in which she explores how student-artists use the studio visits, and what qualities they develop by doing so. I think art students are in the position where they are relatively free and where they could try out the models in a safe environment. Although I understand, when offering the models in the form of a non-graded workshop, that it would give complete freedom to explore the models. One of the students mentioned mixing up the models as well:

K.B.: “I think that working with students is very promising since those that are going to take the risk are best positioned to demonstrate to others. But then again, there were no students in our group on the second day. It might be true too, that ‘workshops’ would be a way to move it forward as well since those that show up are those that want to be there; a self-selected group.”

P.S.: “Yes I think so. I think one already plays models. Actually one always plays models. Other models. When we make a presentation for other students at the University then that is also a model. How we think that it should be. But it is good to be consciously dealing with these models, because we want to get different sorts of results. And also we receive information from the other person then we can be conscious, and consciously choose this first model for example. So that one knows, okay how many models are there. We can also personalize it somehow, one doesn’t need to exactly follow the models. One could do a mix of two models for example, depending on the situation.”

J.D.: “I said it before: ‘When you have a hammer, everything starts to look like a nail.’ And I think what that means is that in some ways the current existing studio visit structure, it has an un… I mean I could imagine having someone do studio visit on the basis of or sort of evaluating their trying to assist someone in having a very different model of being an artist, then being or trying to be a professional artist in the contemporary art world. But I think that the studio visits in schools is of course structured by the student’s assumption that that should be the goal. The goal of the art school is to encourage people to be professional artists in the contemporary art world. So the studio visit exists to help people move in that direction. Not necessarily to move into their own direction or in a direction with a different value system but very much to move in that direction. So could I imagine that the way the current studio visit works not be good for some people. Yes definitely, in two or three senses. One is, people who are too young or haven’t elaborated on their own ideas yet and so then you are in the position in the same way that makes sense to have a group critique for homework assignment some time, because a homework assignment doesn’t show who the person really is. There is no point really to spend some time talking about it. In the same way for younger artist sometimes studio visits doesn’t really makes sense in the conventional way of talking about their work. On the other hand the conversation can get quite sprawling, which is nice. The other people wouldn’t be effective for who in some way whose work is not so focused on one person judgement and I am trying to think what I mean by that. I don’t really know what I mean. The third way, some people don’t want people in their studio. And maybe the reason they don’t want people in their studio is some don’t want people to know. If you gave them the opportunity to dictate the term a little bit more, they might want people in their studio.”

The essence of the participants’ quotes: one of the participants said that the speaking person is in a powerful position. He can hurt the other or try to hurt the other person. But here I don’t feel hierarchy.”

The Spectator Studio Visit model worked for the visited artist, allowing them to get a sense of how things look in a quick take. Equally, the participants who took the role of the visited artist were keen to hear what the visiting artist had to say. However, during the interviews it was said that the identity of the visiting artist is important, in order to know if their opinion should be taken seriously or not. Professional deformation could play a role in this. Also the presentation of the work is important in this model. It is becoming a new convention to show work on a laptop, using QuickTime, Facebook, pdf or PowerPoint. Some reflected that this is an area of possibility depending on what the artist wants to know.

With the Structured Studio Visit model some participants went very concentrated whilst some dived back into the normal pattern of a studio visit. So it was also for: 1) People who are too young or haven’t elaborated on their own ideas yet. 2) Artists whose work is not so focused on one person judgement. 3) People who don’t want people in their studio. If they would have the opportunity to dictate the terms a little more they might want people in their studio.

Conclusion

Since the studio visit for the “individual session”, “one-on-one tutorial” or “one-on-one critique”) is still the predominant form and a defining trait of learning and teaching in fine art, I think it is important to define and investigate this method of critique, feedback and conversation by discussing the (new) studio visit. The New Studio Visit – Alternative Feedback Session may contribute to the discussion how artist-students learn, what the aims are of having a studio visit, and what possible benefits the studio visit can offer. This text is an explorative research into the New Studio Visit; how the New Studio Visit has been practiced, and how the participants perceived it. It is explorative in the sense that little research has been carried out within the area of the studio visit. And as far as I am aware, no new model to conduct a studio visit has been presented. ‘What happens if we in new models to undertake a studio visit from the perspective of the student-artist’ is what I marginally tested at the UdK in Berlin. And it could be interesting to further specialize the use of the studio visit by the student-artist.
The participants also reflected that the Personal Studio Visit model had to be described in broad and dramatic terms in order to really give licence to carry out something specific. This model, by its very nature, provided a way to work through the substance of the issue. And for some, by going straight to a very personal level or directly into a personal thing, they were able to move forward since those that really needed to be beneficial for student-artists. And 'workshops' were a mix of uttering the analytical aspect of the presented work and interpretation of it by the visiting artist. The work is the only "speaking" aspect. The visited artist himself/herself keeps quiet (in case s/he is not part of the work), s/he is merely a present, non-reactory body. The visited artist can make notes in case s/he wants and in case s/he doesn’t need to perform or has to activate the work somehow. The visited artist introduces him/herself and the work with one sentence. For example: "Hello, my name is Kim Engelen, and I work as a lens-based performance artist."

The visiting artist states what s/he sees, by verbally describing it. That is, what is aesthetically/ technically presented: colour, text, elements, structure, pattern; size; amount; length; style; person(s); sound; smell; and so on. This has to be spun out as wide as possible: the technique and medium that has been chosen; the style; time; the way the work is presented; the relation with the work to the location; and so on. The aesthetic/ technical verbalisation can be interwoven and has no particular order. Then the visiting artist may say something about the interpretation of the presented work. The visiting artist may give some rational, conceptual and/or emotional reactions. S/he may give some reflections and associations that s/he sees, or experiences, since this is a way for the artist to witness how a singular spectator sees and/or interprets his/her work. The visited artist can choose this model when s/he wants to know where the work locates itself, what it communicates, and how the visiting artist interprets, examines, and assesses the work. This model does not facilitate a dialogue between the two artists during this particular studio visit. When the visited artist chooses this model, s/he chooses not to converse or discuss the work so as not to influence the visiting artist other than by presenting the work and interpretation of it by the visiting artist. The moment of choosing this model is most likely during the installation of the work and/or during an exhibition in one way or the other. The visiting artist can however ask a question such as: "Can I touch the work?" Although this question, in itself, might reveal something that could be of importance to the artist. This might neither be clear to a spectator or the audience in a presentation setting where the artist is not present to answer the question. The question does not necessarily need to be answered. Thus the visited artist is allowed to remain completely silent; to just see and hear, and in this manner witness how her/his work is seen, heard and touched upon.
APPENDIX B, MODEL 2 THE STRUCTURED STUDIO VISIT

This model demands attention and mutual respect. The task of the visiting artist is to facilitate the artist as best as possible. To be able to do this s/he firstly needs to understand the artist. This understanding of the work is a shared responsibility: 1) The visited artist must understand what his/her work is, and articulate his/her thoughts/ideas/problems/questions/work and more. The visited artist starts the talk, and thus gives direction to the talk, and can communicate about any matter that is important for the artist at the very moment of their meeting. The visited artist decides if it is a talk about the idea-, process-, material-, development-, economical-, personal-, critical-, emotional part or aspect of the work or any other implication that is important for the visited artist and his/her practice. When the visiting artist feels that the visiting artist has indeed understood him/her they can move on. If not, the visited artist must repeat until s/he feels the visiting artist has understood. 2) The visiting artist must understand the visited artist. Therefore the visiting artist must verbally repeat what s/he has understood from what the visited artist is showing, telling or asking. The visiting artist must (learn to) repeat until s/he has understood the artist correctly. It is not enough for the visiting artist to say: “I have understood you.” No, the visiting artist has to repeat it again in order to give back to the visited artist what s/he has understood. This is so that the artist hears his/her own words back, and also that s/he knows and feels that the visited artist has understood him/her. This is a must in order to make sure the artist feels that s/he knows and feels that the visited artist has understood him/her. This can be easy but also difficult because of the visited artist’s practice. The visited artist needs to understand that the artist is showing, telling or asking what s/he has understood from what the visited artist is showing, telling or asking. The visiting artist can come unexpected.

APPENDIX C, MODEL 3 THE PERSONAL STUDIO VISIT

This is the model in which you have the freedom as a human-artist to talk about any topic you choose. Maybe you feel like talking about: money issues; commerciality; trends; discrimination; feminism; gender transitions issues; religion; loneliness; isolation; personal meaning in your work; the overly white male western work visible; the de-materialisation of art; nepotism; elitism; the increased level of theory and discussion in art education; the market-driven, and artist-saturated art world; and so on. Topics that indirectly, but also directly, connect with your work as an artist, your lifestyle, or simply your life as an artist. Within this model you choose to have a studio visit in which you specifically talk about your concerns, problems, hiccups, professional development, coming out, addiction/s, depression or whatever it is that worries you, or occupies your mind, and hinders your own work. Or more intensely still you notice how personal issues affect your work so much that you feel the work might even develop or is already moving in a different direction because of these issues. When choosing this model the visiting artist is well aware of the fact that personal matters are going to be discussed. This is so that s/he is not overwhelmed or bored with the studio visit since this would hinder the visited artist to speak freely and frankly. This model can be called upon at any time in the art making process; since personal matters such as sickness or even death of a loved one can come unexpected.

You can have a walk or go with your visiting artist to a certain location, exhibition, person, job, migration office and so on. The only rule or boundary is the time frame you and the visiting artist have agreed upon. Both must communicate and protect their own boundaries of what is socially, legally, and financially acceptable to them, since there are no real restrictions or rules except the agreed time frame, and the context of artistic development. This model could also be called the free model not merely because the studio visit could take place outside of the studio context but also because it addresses personal matters, and could be informal, or still be placed in a formal setting.

The picture, never included in the catalogue dedicated to Goya, shows an egg in an eggcup. If one goes along with the logic of an anthropomorphic egghead, one would have to conclude that the mouth would naturally end up just below the rim of the eggcup. Assuming that the proportions of the egghead correspond to the proportions of a human head, the mouth would naturally be muffled by the eggcup. This is shown in the lithograph ‘The egg’ in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1920 the institution purchased Redon’s collection of etchings and lithographs from his widow. He had commented on the black colour: “One must respect black. […] It does not please the eye and it awakens no sensuality. It is the agent of the mind far more than the most beautiful color of the palette or the prism. And so good engraving will likely be enjoyed in a serious country, where out-of-door nature, since it is less elegant, makes man stay at home cultivating his own thought, as in Northern lands for example, and not in those of the South, where the sun takes us out of doors and charms us.”

Between 1879 and 1899 Redon worked only in black and white. He valued printmaking for its ability to disseminate thought like printed text, yet strove to preserve an aura in the object by issuing his print portfolios in limited editions. Black was his preferred colour until the turn of the century when he returned to oils and later pastels. But it was also indicative, at least on a symbolic level, of artists’ growing dependence on the printed word, as the influence of the critics became more pronounced and artists more dependent on their production of discourse to determine and secure the status

ANA-MARIA HADJI-CULEA
Afloat on speech that is elsewhere

07/03/2015

John spoke about the other-worldliness of the Word, descending into the world as an embodiment of extraterrestrial substance, to live among but ever different from human beings.

I think of speech as an actualisation of thought that is bound to, and occurs in, the body. The speaker does not only voice, but embodies it, lends body to it. Speech needs this and is as much a part of this body as for instance a fleece- le. A speaker may catch speech as for instance simulates. But it is evident that the speaker and speech are never one – they can at best enter into and exit one other. One always runs the risk of running out of speech and never being closer in than in.

19/03/2013

To advance, speech needs the very body that traps it.

Caption: Odilon Redon, L’œuf [The Egg], Lithograph, 1885. An early state before the left eye was blackened.

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The cup is a hindrance to speech, to the ultimate actualisation of a Cartesian preconceived idea for being.

On the other hand, the cup is necessary for the egg to be upright. Hence it is necessary for making it a body. Speech demands a body. Without the eggcup, the egg would merely be a self-sufficient figure, beginning and ending in and with itself, and thus perpetuated.

Uprightness implies not only a likeness to the human body, e.g., the foot of the cup resembles a human foot, marking where the body ends and what it rests on, but more than this, it is a way to advance, as the Word was meant to be disseminated, and a body still has to eat.

The colour black

Redon struggled with realistic representation, and was unable to render form accurately. His father told him to look at clouds. He would fail the École des Beaux-Arts in an oral exam. Two versions of L’œuf, both lithographs on paper dated 1885, are in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1920 the institution purchased Redon’s collection of etchings and lithographs from his widow. He had commented on the black colour: “One must respect black. […] It does not please the eye and it awakens no sensuality. It is the agent of the mind far more than the most beautiful color of the palette or the prism. And so good engraving will likely be enjoyed in a serious country, where out-of-door nature, since it is less elegant, makes man stay at home cultivating his own thought, as in Northern lands for example, and not in those of the South, where the sun takes us out of doors and charms us.”

Between 1879 and 1899 Redon worked only in black and white. He valued printmaking for its ability to disseminate thought like printed text, yet strove to preserve an aura in the object by issuing his print portfolios in limited editions. Black was his preferred colour until the turn of the century when he returned to oils and later pastels. But it was also indicative, at least on a symbolic level, of artists’ growing dependence on the printed word, as the influence of the critics became more pronounced and artists more dependent on their production of discourse to determine and secure the status
of their work. Some visual artists might have resented the power of the critic, having just recently liberated themselves from academic authority.

But Redon saw his work as topically indebted to the written word – his image of a hot-air balloon drew on Baudelaire’s description of modernity as ‘the monster balloon of perfectibility and infinite progress’6. He also read works of other artists – for instance when commenting on Düer’s print Melancholy in his autobiography À soi-même: ‘It was thought to be incoherent. No, it is written. It is written along the line and its mighty power alone.’7

At first, Redon was grateful for the support of critics, such as Joris-Karl Huysmans. Huysmans would later be known for epitomising self-indulgence and the ‘art for art’s sake’ ethos that came to be associated with the Symbolist movement. The protagonist Des Esseintes is an avid collector of Redon and finds himself caught up in the “horror of a nightmare dream”8 upon examining his collection. But the friendship between Redon and Huysmans came to an end, and in retrospect Redon considered that his support for Huysmans was not reciprocated.9 Redon typified modern artists who experienced an increasing urgency to defend themselves from being misrepresented in print, as artists became more present in the public realm through an external voice.

In 1885 Redon made two lithographs for the album Hommage à Goya. One of these appears to be a study, and was not included in the album. The second is a variation of the first picture. As in Goya’s Los Caprichos, the figure in both pictures seems haunted, but not as much by extraneous horrors, as by the realisation of the condition that it finds itself in: of having a body that is trapped by way of itself, one that is as such bereft of speech. I returned to the caption of the first picture, and a comment that I found in the online catalogue of the British Museum: “before the left eye was blackened.” If this was a ‘before picture’, then what came after? Would Redon find a way into speech?10 Weeks later, having found the second picture in

the online archive of the Art Institute of Chicago, I noticed changes in the second picture:

On the right side of the egg, Redon added an edge to the table that the eggcup is placed on. The edge provides an end to roll off of, a possibility to tip over. Then, in the background, just behind the left eye, a cluster of heads has been added.

Problem

Aside from standing in for a body, the eggcup is also a mode of display. Or, the same device that muffles speech also creates an expectation to perform. This scene echoes the look on the face of Andy Kaufman in 1980 on the Late Night show with David Letterman. Sitting on a high chair with a painted expression but an honest tone in his voice, Kaufman speaks about his recent divorce and his failed career, while the audience bursts out in bursts of laughter. ‘I’d rather if you don’t laugh, because I’m not trying to be funny right now,’11 he says, right before walking off into the audience asking for spare change.

No matter how honest speech may be, being delivered on stage it cannot be accepted as anything other than distanced. Kaufman’s insistence on speaking what he claims to be the truth unveils an audience that is a product of the entertainment industry, where real life and the frailty of real flesh is eradicated, and replaced by scenarios and characters, and speech has no other function than to entertain. These must be the badlands of critique, where anything spoken is met with the same eroding sound. The audience creates the expectation to speak and dissolves speech by way of its expectation. As the audience blooms in the background of Redon’s picture, the left eye was blackened in a way that makes the eggcup more fully visible. ‘The trapped figure of the egg neither implodes nor is assaulted by the artist, but in fact becomes transparent. By the time of his death in 1916, Redon had started to write an account of his life that would be published years later as À soi-même: notes sur la vie, l’art et les artistes (To Myself: Notes on Life, Art, and Artists): taking speech into his own hands.
To extend the question of speech beyond my commissioned writing assignment, I asked
Örn Alexander Ámundason
Kah Bee Chow
Henning Lundkvist
Jeuno JE Kim
Kah Bee Chow
Megan Francis Sullivan
- Can the artist speak?

The artists could use their own voice to record an answer and I promised to lip-sync this in front of a live audience. They received no further instructions. The following were received.

Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea / Critical and Pedagogical Studies MFA 2

Andy Kaufman died of lung cancer in 1984 and his talent for merging biographical reality with fiction in his performances pushed a conspiratorial theory among a group of fans of him staging his own death. It may seem absurd, although not surprising, that a one-day program was recently dedicated to Kaufman at MoMA PS1, with the title The Andy Kaufman Effect – Comedy in the Expanded Field. Whether or not one might want to go into detail about the nature of the expanded field of comedy, the field of art does seem sufficiently expanded so as to neutralise voices of dissent by way of its expansion into entertainment. The integration of critical voices serves the purpose of solidifying the credibility of the institution, transforming any potential discomfort into likely amusement. It is a voice that erodes, whether it is delivered by a Late Show studio audience, or the educated, self-conscious public of PS1.

13/03/2013 The voice speaks of an incident abroad: a condition that was diagnosed, one that is predicted to reappear at a later unknown moment. The sun. The sun. The sun.”11 or, a voice that is veiled and unveiled. 13

11. Audio track of Mike Kelley’s Areesal installation at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, viewed in March 2013.


Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea / Critical and Pedagogical Studies MFA 2

20/02/2013 In Japanese, the word "ma" is one that, instead of elucidating, marks a gap or a space between two structural parts. It means "space" or "pause", but also suggests an experience of form and non-form as simultaneous and interdependent. A high-school friend who moved to Tokyo to study architecture would often insert "ma" in our conversations, as he would reflect on what had just been said, before being sure of what would follow. I was impressed by how he would stretch the word to various lengths and pitches, but often wondered if he in fact had misunderstood and was using the word to fill in silences, just as modern architecture had filled in Japan with concrete.

The Kanji symbol for the word "ma" pictures an entrance through a double door. Through the split one can see the sun.

Fig. 1 Picture of and the word "ma"

Potentization

"[... ] it is such a marvellous and fruitful mystery," Novalis writes in 1798. "For if someone merely speaks for the sake of speaking, he utters the most splendid, original truths. But if he wants to talk about something definite, the whims of language make him say the most ridiculous false stuff. Hence the hatred that most serious people have for language." Novalis spoke through the voice of romanticism. At that time he was working with fragments towards a new literary form of art. Through fragments, Novalis was seeking to find a larger picture, a connection between human and natural sciences. In the large volume of notes carrying the working title "Das allgemeine Brouillon" – "Brouillon" meaning a rough draft for a notebook - he tried out ways of using fragments to make an ideal body.

Novalis was seeking to bring together all the principles that underlie the arts and the sciences in one text, using the neologism "encyclopedistics" to describe this universal body. Fragments were the hallmark style of presentation during Romanticism. Friedrich Schlegel, a philosopher and contemporary of Novalis, saw fragments as something self-contained, "like a hedgehog." Novalis, in his turn, saw them as "beginnings of interesting sequences of thought – texts for thinking." In 1798, Novalis thought about writing to Schlegel with an excerpt of his writing, but was unable to make up his mind in terms of what the form of the book he was writing actually was. Was it search or research (recherche), a collection of fragments, a report, a story, a review, a monologue, a fragment of a dialogue or a speech, etc.? Novalis would appropriate ideas and tools from one discipline and use them in another. One main aspect of German Romanticism was, for instance, applying mathematical methods to poetry and literature, in a process named "potentization". Since the world was considered to have lost much of its original significance and should thus be re-presented in new and unusual ways in order to regain it, the process of potentization, borrowed from mathematics, was meant to create ways of extending meaning beyond the quantitative domain. By applying potentization to other fields, anything could potentially gain a higher power. This was the purpose of romanticising. By romanticising, the world would be able to regain meaning that had been lost:

"By giving the common a higher meaning, the everyday, a mysterious semblance, the known, the dignity of the unknown, the finite, the appearance of the infinite, I romanticize it – For what is higher, unknown, mystical, infinite, one uses the inverse operation – in this manner it becomes logarithmized – it receives a common expression." Novalis' text is structured as a system of classifications and was revised in 1798. Heading number 597 states: "The ordering of my papers is dependent on my system of science. Classification of all my thoughts, and an index of these titles. Revision of the thoughts." Each entry received a title of its own according to the category that it was assigned to, and anything that was considered unrelated, such as personal
Can the artist speak? 2015
Performance Script for Friction Frustration Fatigue Suit – a performance within the performance

Notes, was eliminated. The titles stretch from more traditional disciplines such as physics, chemistry, philosophy and medicine to more unusual topics, such as anthropo-morphic physics, musical mathematics, poetical physiology, logical dynamics, and theories of the future of life.

Impotence

It was perhaps a similar desire for regaining meaning through language that informed Roland Barthes’ lectures on the Neutral held at the Collège de France between 1977 and 1978. While Novalis sought to create a foundation for a universal theory via the categories that he constructed, Barthes was meaning to open up the very structure of language by criticizing binary oppositions that structure and determine meaning in Western thought – proposing that instead the Neutral embodies the theme of his lecture. In doing so, Barthes frames the Neutral as a personal concern, without making totalising claims, noting that the Neutral is not driven by the will to possess. The personal desire is not limited to personal experience, but opens a way into a common speech.

10/03/2013 Words are often expected to arrest and fixate. Ever since my first encounter with educational institutions, the emphasis with regard to speech was on how to use words in order to make a clear statement that would serve one’s interest. Very little concern on the other hand for the word itself – once the word has been learned, does it make a point, and may not be convincing. The connections made between the body of language and the body of the word in the traditional system of education are pragmatic – once learned, the word should serve the speaker. This utilitarian approach to words as preferably well-arranged sequences delivered to perform in a conclusive manner is not driven by the desire to explain but rather describes, in what he calls a “nonexhaustive manner.” Barthes admits that the Neutral cannot function as a philosophical concept, since philosophy does not make a point, and may not be convincing. The sequence of fragments that are the written body, he adds, creates an ongoing motion, a “fluss,” which does not point towards a final meaning or a conclusion. This form, instead of aiming for a binding narrative, remains open to re-readings – the principle of “nonexhaustivity” being to create a projective space, to imagine a space that is not determined by syntax; the dogmatic construction in which words are arranged.

Barthes withdraws the Neutral from the “dis-passionate apparatus of intellectual nature” by naming it desire. It is as a form of desire, or passion, that the Neutral embodies the theme of his lecture. In doing so, Barthes frames the Neutral as a personal concern, without making totalising claims, noting that the Neutral is not driven by the will to possess. The personal desire is not limited to personal experience, but opens a way into a common speech.

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21. Binary oppositions were avidly employed in the rhetoric of the Sophists. Around the fifth century B.C.E., with participatory democracy establishing itself in the Athenian city-state, the demand for creating opportunities for political professionalism arose. Ambitious young boys attempted careers as politicians and Sophists claimed that they were able to provide them with the necessary tools for pursuing their ambitions, against payment. They travelled around Greek cities, claiming to teach their students the necessary skills for achieving success, such as rhetoric and public speech. The Sophists did not belong to a unified organisation and did not share a common ideology, but were accused of abusing philosophy for their own benefit and for relativising language. Although no writings of the Sophists exist, and the only means for trying to understand their methods is via secondary sources, it seems that the Sophists’ use of rhetoric was not concerned with a deeper understanding of language, but rather with infecting with verbal tricks that might appeal to the public, in order to gain an advantageous position over the opponent, similar to the techniques used in contemporary political debates. The Sophists, in particular Protagoras, would often structure arguments in pairs, in favour and against, a dichotomic split that can still be found in courts of law.

23. Ibid., p. 10.
24. Ibid., p. 12.
speech gains new relevance. Barthes’ approach to the Neutral and fragmentary form formulates a possible ethos. Philosophy and other sciences demand consistency, which excludes the possibility for contradiction and requires systematic methodologies. But art is not bound by the same restrictions and should not be required to withstand logical verification. Speech needs to be considered through this very fabric of art, which has the ability to, and often benefits from being interrupted and interrupting, contradictory or contradicting.

Any minute now

In January 2011, Elke Krystufek and Chris Kraus were invited to give a joint speech at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna. The talk, entitled Where Art Belongs - the most hopeful project, promised a reading from the fresh-off-the-press collection of essays by the writer and critic Kraus, and moreover alluded to a project from 2005 that they had collaborated on at the kestnergesellschaft in Hannover. As the talk was about to begin, Krystufek was still missing. The moderator, Elisabeth von Samsonow - a philosopher, artist and professor at the AdBK in Vienna - announced that she was on her way. In fact, nobody knew where she was and what kept her. When Krystufek showed up, some forty minutes later, Kraus was reciting a passage from her new book. The artist was wearing a self-made hijab with floral patterns in bright colours. She said, “Sorry for being late. I was struggling with the dress.”

When asked if wearing a hijab is an affirmation of the patriarchal system, Krystufek claims that she was always wearing something different on her head when she was performing as a feminist. When asked if she wants to stop being identified by her work, she answers that she is very dedicated to it. When Kraus asks if she wants to show her videos, she replies that she did not bring it, since she did not think that art belonged there. Instead, she offers to show the panel pictures on her camera.

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In an attempt to identify my processes of learning, in this essay I outline my graduation project as part of the Critical and Pedagogical Studies Programme at Malmö Art Academy. The articulation of my own learning process could form the foundations on which future spaces and methods may be created where I can learn together with others. I will begin by introducing the institution where my project takes place, Skissernas Museum in Lund, as well as my ideas around the notion of site. Including sites where physical and complex forms have been an important base for my learning and thinking over the past years.

Skissernas Museum in Lund

My graduation project, entitled Considering Sites, takes place at Skissernas Museum in Lund, in the south of Sweden. Skissernas Museum’s remit is to collect sketches and models for works in public space: works that are often produced on commission for specific sites. Professor Ragnar Josephson who founded the Museum in 1934 was fascinated by the creative process of the artist and wanted to follow the artwork from “its birth” to its final stage: today the Museum’s collection holds almost 50,000 pieces by artists from all around the world. The sculpture park in front of the Museum has models for works permanently installed with specific projects also taking place here. Inside the Museum a programme of temporary exhibitions intertwine with permanent exhibitions displaying works from the collection. Once fully part of Lund University, since 1979 the Museum has its own status, directly linked to the Rector’s Office of Lund University.

My Project

The focus of my project is to look at and articulate a variety of relations between a work of art, the site, and place where an artwork is installed and presented. I do this in order to investigate the possible ways in which one – as an artist – can be specific in relation to a site. The project exists as an installation built up from sketches, archival material and models for works from the Museum’s collection. Alongside the installation my project also includes the presentation of the installation, both during the process of working on the installation and as an exhibition inside the museum. Before I start to outline the project, I will attempt to define the concept of site.

What is a Site?

The development and understanding of the concept of ‘site’ in art runs parallel with and is part of the development of institutional critique. It could be said to have had its beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s with artists making works physically bound to, relating to, or reacting against their immediate surroundings. At this time the immediate surroundings were often museums and galleries. If, as curator and critic Simon Sheikh puts it, institutional critique could be said to “indicate a direct connection between a method and an object: the method being the critique and the object the institution,” then in this first phase of institutional critique, making works that directly existed on the site where they were made and presented, could be seen as one method to exercise that critique. Writer and curator Miwon Kwon writes:

“Whether inside the white cube or out in the Nevada desert, whether architectural or landscape-oriented, site-specific art initially took the site as an actual location, a tangible reality, its identity composed of a unique combination of physical elements: length, depth, height, texture, and shape of walls and rooms; scale and proportion of plazas, buildings, or parks; existing conditions of lighting, ventilation, traffic patterns; distinctive topographical features, and so forth.”

Shifting the location of the actual artwork, so that the artwork sometimes existed entirely...
through its surrounding (including works by American artist Robert Smithson) was, in part, a reaction against much of which we today associate with modernism. Kwon argues: “If modernist sculpture absorbed its pedestal’s base to sever its connection to or express its indifference to the site, rendering itself more autonomous and self-referential, thus transporting its place to another, then site-specific works, as they first emerged in the wake of minimalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, forced a dramatic reversal of this modernist paradigm.”

Coupled with parallel developments in society such as the feminist movement, in the 1970s the notion of what actually constituted an institution, and in turn the underlying structures that constituted a site, began to include such relations as economy, culture, history and gender. With reference to works such as Mieke Lademann Ukeles’s series of ‘maintenance art’ functions as an entrance to think through and contest the complexi- ties of sites.

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The Structure of the Installation

When I first began to spend time at Skissernas Museum in January 2013 I did not know what to expect, or what form my project would take. My main interest was that I was immediately able to navigate this material, figure out where I was going with my project, and in turn be able to communicate my direction within the museum, I began to the various kinds of relations between objects and sites that I had found so far. Laterally replacing the eggshells, make-up samples and paper-clips in Kolářová’s collages with works from the Museum’s collection and archive, I began to build a grid of various relations between object and site. This grid, which I called thought pattern on relations between object and site, has become both a formal and conceptual device on which to build my installation.

The Thought Pattern

The thought pattern consists of eight groups, eight relations, between object and site. The eight groups are as follows: object placed in site, object and site integrated (becoming object-site); moving object; site changing around object; object becoming site; time; object-site as event; and the temporary. I will consider the event later in the text.

Each group is translated and abstracted into various forma- tions of symbols in three tones of grey. The darkest grey indicates object, the lightest grey indicates site, and the medium grey indicates a fusion between object and site. For each group the squares are assembled differently. Each group is given its own “symbol” or “sign” which tries to convey systemat- ical, investigative, ways of working, of how one work always seems to lead to the next.

Back at Skissernas Museum in Lund the material I had found in the archives began to pile up and no longer only included Henry Moore but also the works of Eli Hemberg, Vera Sizký, Alexander Calder and Marta Pan, amoung others. In order to be able to navigate this material, I had the opportunity to use my own system of holes and site. The use of symbols and various formations helps me to develop the installation. It is as if these symbols “appeared” in my head when I found the various materials. Placing several of them in a grid helps me to develop my thoughts. It enables me to be in-process. I will return to this towards the end of the text.

Spatial Structure of the Installation

The installation in the room at the Museum follows the structure of the thought pattern – both formally and conceptually. Each of the pedes- tals on the floor, and the objects placed on the pedestals, correspond with one of the groups in the thought pattern. Also, each group of archival

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10. In this relation between object and site I have focused on the physical site. Throughout my work the physical site functions as an entrance to think through and contest the complexi- ties of sites.


12. This is demonstrated by my series of holes which I have dug since 2004. I dig these holes with a shovel in vari- ous locations. Through the digging I reflect on the digging of the holes themselves; on how this can be art; the perfor- mative and ephemeral aspects; the importance of location; and so on. Through every hole I try to come to terms with a problem or thought, only to be confronted with another.

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Robert Smithson, the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique” Artforum Vol. 44, Iss. 1 (Sep. 2005), p. 278.

Ibid., pp. 278–279.

http://www.henry-moore.org/themi
material hung on the wall, corresponds with one of the groups in the thought pattern. In this way the thought pattern is twice repeated in the installation: once on the floor, through eight pedestals, and again on the wall, through eight groups of archival material.

Besides the archival material and models for works from the Museum’s collection I have added other things to the installation. One is a grey curtain hung from the ceiling in relation to – and in order to underline – the point in the installation where I am thinking the event. A plant is also included: this is placed on the floor in relation to the site changing around the object. Archival photographs inside the installation show both curtains and plants in relation to the two groups. The formal and conceptual choice of these items has been inspired by the material in the Museum’s collection.

The installation also includes a series of slides presented on a carousel slide projector placed on one of the pedestals. The slides consist of photographs I have made of the sculptures in the museum park and their surroundings between January and April 2013, the period during which I have been working on the installation. Also included is a book from the Museum’s library which is placed on one of the pedestals. It is a book on Henry Moore, open on a certain page that describes the works he made in the 1960s. This is the period when he worked on his three-piece reclining figures, one of which is Hill Arches, but it is also the decade when site-specific interests began.

The thought pattern, the names of the eight groups, information about the individual models and objects on the pedestals, together with a text outlining the spatial relations between thought pattern and installation are also placed on the wall inside the room next to the installation.

A Talk and Walk through the Installation

At the opening of the installation I read aloud a text in the space. With this text I shared my ideas behind the thought pattern, and particularly the fact that it had been first and foremost constructed so that I could understand what it was I was actually doing. The text also included a short introduction to the developments of sites and the site-specific and some ideas on why my installation makes a return to modernism. I will return to this later in the text. The talk ended with a walk through the installation: here I discussed why the objects or archival materials had ended up in specific parts of the installation. When I came to the seventh point in the installation – the event – I made a direct relation between the installation and what was happening right there and then – the actual opening of the exhibition:

... The seventh point in the thought pattern and the installation is object-site as event. An event for me indicates a limited amount of time where something happens, takes place. Here [pointing with my hand to the wall] are archival material with news articles from when the full-scale model for Hill Arches by Henry Moore was assembled. The Museum visitors were invited to help put it together, as an event here at the Museum. But I am also thinking of what is happening here right now, an opening. Before we all came here tonight, we were all somewhere else, doing different things. And then we come here, for a short moment of time, and then we go off and do our things again. Maybe the event is a possibility to continue thinking the site-specific? That we for a short moment can create and constitute something site-specific?... What is an Event?

When I think of an event I think of a gathering of some sort: a gathering for a limited amount of time; a gathering with a beginning and an end. One of the moments I began to think of the event in relation to site-specificity was in Amsterdam in January 2013 when I attended a seminar where one of the invited speakers was the American artist Gregg Bordowitz.13 He began his talk – Testing
In pedagogy and education there is a term called "experiential learning" which implies that one learns from experience. Several pedagogical models and educators draw upon and make variations of this. To simplify, one could say it is a method that implies that one learns by reflecting on what one has experienced. For me, to learn from experience has its consequences. One is that I find it difficult, in advance of a project, such as the recent one at Skissernas Museum, to be able to describe or say what I will do. I might be able to outline why I need to be at a certain place due to my theoretical and conceptual arguments which are based on previous experiences, but I can not know what my experiences, encounters and feelings from being in that space can lead to before I am actually there. Considering Sites has to have a large extent been carried out intuitively, and it is only now after the project is complete that a process of reflection and contextualization can begin. In relation to producing works on site it is useful to return to Miwon Kwon and her discussions of artists travelling from place to place in order to produce site-oriented works for various institutions. Mentioning the many research field trips and extensive meetings with curators and others working at a museum, which often might lead to these people collaborating and becoming part of the actual project, she concludes that, "the project will likely be time-consuming and in the end will have engaged the 'site' in a multitude of ways." Though the aim of my project at Skissernas museum is not to make a site-specific work or installation per se, its relation to the site should not be overlooked. And the process of working on the installation has taken on collaborative forms, something in this context that I want to underline as an important part of my learning process and the development of the project. The meetings at the Museum where I have continuously shared the development of the project have forced me to articulate my ideas. The many small, informal discussions over coffee and lunch with the technicians, the attendants, the archivist, the receptionists and the pedagogues of the museum have also taught me invaluable details about the history and current operations of the institution: information which in turn I have inevitably been forced to relate to, or not relate to, in my work.

Learning from experience is also something that I associate with sensitive ways of approaching the recognition of being a physical body in a certain space, and how one can learn from that experience. Last autumn when I was working with a group of eight students from the sculpture department at the preparatory art school Idun Loven in Stockholm as part of my internship for the Critical and Pedagogical Studies Program, the students and I conducted a series of site visits. With this course, which I called "Performing the (any) Site-Specific," and explored various aspects of site-specificity, I asked all to think of a place in one way or another: some were important for ways of representing, as human beings, today. As a group we went to visit all these places. At each place the person who had chosen the site gave a presentation as to why they had chosen that particular site. From my perspective this was an experiment in trying to do Miwon Kwon’s theories on sites, rather than reading about them. This was a way to think about sites and site-specificity, starting from our own individual spaces. Towards the end of our course I asked the students about their ideas on why and how site-specificity could be important to them, if important at all. The following notes were made whilst they were talking:

‘It is important to exist in some kind of context’… “to give a broader view on art”… “identity, and everything one does is so dependent on it”… “how various subjects can get shown in an artistic context”… “various people’s possibility to exist”… “time and space perspective”… “a way to tackle an idea about time”… “an individual’s position in understanding of someone else”… “freire, one person in relation to another”… “time-specificity”… “people in relation to other people”… “identity, from where”, why?”… “including/excluding,

Some Beliefs – by underlining the fact that we had all been somewhere before we came to this seminar, now we were all here, and at the end of the day we would go to different places again. In the evening after the seminar I went for some drinks with a friend of mine and we began to reflect upon the site-specific qualities of his talk. It was not only the framing of the talk, he read poems written by black gay men from the book In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology, several of them by now-deceased friends of his.” He underlined the fact that poems by gay black men were not the “regular” kind of cultural digestion within seminars such as the one we were attending. By his reference to certain sites and specificities of sites, I was inspired to make use of this framing in my opening speech at the Museum.

Throughout my installation I am suggesting the temporary and the unstable as ways to continue the critical agenda of site-specificity. As I have already mentioned, with the works of artists such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles, temporary works and performance art were already part of the movement from the outset. Allan Kaprow’s event-like gatherings called happenings, which took place around this time, might also be interesting to consider, although it is important to underline a crucial difference. As Mihails Laderman Ukeles, temporary works and performance art were already part of the movement from the outset. Allan Kaprow’s event-like gatherings called happenings, which took place around this time, might also be interesting to consider, although it is important to underline a crucial difference. As Mihails Laderman Ukeles, temporary works and performance art were already part of the movement from the outset. Allan Kaprow’s event-like gatherings called happenings, which took place around this time, might also be interesting to consider, although it is important to underline a crucial difference. As Mihails Laderman Ukeles, temporary works and performance art were already part of the movement from the outset. Allan Kaprow’s event-like gatherings called happenings, which took place around this time, might also be interesting to consider, although it is important to underline a crucial difference. As Mihails Laderman Ukeles, temporary works and performance art were already part of the movement from the outset.
...a holistic approach to learning and spiritual practice enabled me to overcome years of socialization that had taught me to believe a classroom was a small room. It is no longer black and white. And, as we know, most things are neither black and white. What we react against, it can become a bit black and white. Sometimes when one reacts against something, it can become a bit black and white. And, as we know, most things are neither black and white.

I have been talking about the site-specific as a chain-depiction of museum educators. We have also talked about communication and understanding in order for such images to appear? For a period of about two years I worked as an assistant for Dutch artist Filip Schuurman. Following her work at close distance, and our many conversations on art has encouraged me to let that flow between production and research come out. It is, as a flow, might even have some value. We have also talked about communication in relation to process: how one as an artist can share the history of a work, in relation to a work. Until recently I have often refrained from any kind of communication besides the "finished" works. Which in turn is the final step in a chain of thoughts and struggles. Given the past two years of thinking about pedagogy (which I think has a lot to do with communication and about being articulate and precise), I am beginning to now see how such processes of thinking could be shared. One example where I am trying this out in is the thought pattern: in the way it shows a development and change of several forms and relations, rather than one finished solution. In relation to his theories of constructivist learning George E. Hein writes that learning takes time and that, "if you reflect on anything you have learned, you soon realize that it is the product of repeated exposure and thought. Even, or especially, moments of profound insight, can be traced back to longer periods of preparation."

In preparing this essay I read through my writings from January this year and found some notes written in response to comments from Maj Hauger, lecturer in Critical and Pedagogical Studies and programme director at Malmö Art Academy. She had asked a question about how I would draw the actual space of the museum, particularly in relation to the sculptural elements in my thoughts around sites, into a pedagogical framework. My answer then had been: I think that this "context" and "coming into being," as in the potential of a sketch for a work of art, could also be a space for pedagogy. I will use this project as a space for me to learn in relation to the movements of the sculptural models in the space. Right now I am not exactly sure what to say about my original comment, but I think that the process of working on this project – with the need to communicate with my supervisor, other advisors at the Academy, staff and curators at the Museum, Museum visitors, colleagues and myself – has taught me to be more articulate and communicative about the often intuitive, and sometimes vague, initial ideas and their process of development.
In 1969 two Danish schoolteachers published a little red book. A book that encouraged young people to question societal norms. It encouraged them to break with traditional obedience to authority. It encouraged them to be critical towards institutional politics. The authors of The Little Red Book for Students⁴, Søren Hansen and Jesper Jensen, were both fired from their workplace as teachers as a result of the controversial content of the book. Throughout the seventies the little red book was translated into numerous languages. With its radical alternatives and ideas on the teaching situation and its call for students to confront the teacher position, along with its 50 or so pages devoted to the topics of sex and drugs, The Little Red Book for Students started quite a scandal in several countries. The book was thought to tear at the very fabric of moral society and to be an invitation to sheer madness. The Little Red Book for Students was banned in several countries, censored in others, but generally read and enjoyed by a broad international audience with a taste for alternative new methods of sharing knowledge.

“Some people believe that school cannot really be changed until the whole of society is changed. They have a point too. Society is the very notion of the future.”

The Little Red Book for Students was written at a time when new ideas sprang from an endless stream of change and hope for the future. The times were shifting and oppression, war and inequality would mercilessly be fought by the message of love, community and freedom. Ordinary people far outnumbered the few suits at the top and the stirrings in the streets, workplaces and most importantly universities, took on epic proportions. There was no chance the system could hold down the will of the people, no chance the people could lose. Thus preparations were made. Dreams were spun, viewpoints debated, strategies written down and alternative utopias crafted. Where the Futurists of the early 20th century hailed the future as an unstoppable machine of progress and development, the utopists of the sixties and seventies nurtured the idea of the future as something bringing about a radical change. The future was no less bright – it was the transformation of the machine of progress into a social organism that lit up the confident and optimistic outlook into the future.

1977 and hereafter

It was in this spirit that a new workers’ movement formed, on the factory ground of a perfected Fordist model that left the worker with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour. A movement based on the idea of refusal of work. Alongside a cultural movement that the Italian Autonomia movement shaped, on the factory ground of a critical core, they considered capitalism as the reason for alienation, exchanging humanity with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour. A movement based on the idea of refusal of work. Alongside a cultural movement that the Italian Autonomia movement shaped, on the factory ground of a critical core, they considered capitalism as the reason for alienation, exchanging humanity with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour. A movement based on the idea of refusal of work. Alongside a cultural movement that the Italian Autonomia movement shaped, on the factory ground of a critical core, they considered capitalism as the reason for alienation, exchanging humanity with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour. A movement based on the idea of refusal of work. Alongside a cultural movement that the Italian Autonomia movement shaped, on the factory ground of a critical core, they considered capitalism as the reason for alienation, exchanging humanity with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour. A movement based on the idea of refusal of work. Alongside a cultural movement that the Italian Autonomia movement shaped, on the factory ground of a critical core, they considered capitalism as the reason for alienation, exchanging humanity with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour. A movement based on the idea of refusal of work. Alongside a cultural movement that the Italian Autonomia movement shaped, on the factory ground of a critical core, they considered capitalism as the reason for alienation, exchanging humanity with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour. A movement based on the idea of refusal of work. Alongside a cultural movement that the Italian Autonomia movement shaped, on the factory ground of a critical core, they considered capitalism as the reason for alienation, exchanging humanity with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour. A movement based on the idea of refusal of work. Alongside a cultural movement that the Italian Autonomia movement shaped, on the factory ground of a critical core, they considered capitalism as the reason for alienation, exchanging humanity with a sense of estrangement from industrial labour.

According to Italian writer, theorist and media activist Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi the year 1977 was the crucial turning point in the century that believed in the future. As the punk movement cried out its self-fulfilling prophecy, ‘No Future’, utopian visions were gradually replaced by dystopian imagination.⁵ 1977 introduced a point of intersection – a moment in time where several lines of events intersected and changed the perspective on the future forever. The political environment radically shifted from an innovative wave of positive change to a more pessimistic realisation that the time of change had passed.

1977 also marked a generational shift. The generation born and raised in the following decade of the sixties and seventies nurtured the idea of the future as something bringing about a radical change. The future was no less bright – it was the transformation of the machine of progress into a social organism that lit up the confident and optimistic outlook into the future.

“The future is, simply put, all time after the pre-sent moment. It is the opposite of the past. The future holds forever. The political environment radically shifted from an innovative wave of positive change to a more pessimistic realisation that the time of change had passed... Bifo fled to Paris in the end of the seventies and came to work with Felix Guattari in the field of schizophrenia. From this perspective, closely related to the field of psychoanalysis, Bifo’s analysis and critique of the capitalist system is bound to subjectivity and desire. He proposes that a solution to an economic problem cannot be economic, since in the post-industrial society human emotions and the cognitive work is increasingly essential to the flow of capital. From a psychoanalytical position Bifo sets out to articulate the precarious relation between human subjectivity and the dehumanisation of semi-capitalism – the coexistence of the realms of sign and production. Central to Bifo’s diagnosis of the present is the very notion of the future... The Future

As a part of the 1970s movement in Italy, a period of intense class struggle and student rebellion, Bifo experienced first-hand the colourful, creative and collective power of the refusal of work. Centred around the experimental free radio station, Radio Alice in Bologna, the Italian Autonomy Movement, Autonomia Operaia, created a vast network and a public voice heard in much of Italy throughout the seventies. Playing on an absurdity and richness of ideas, inspired by the Dadaists, Radio Alice used the very public medium of radio to distribute the messages of worker autonomy, new social forms and the ideas of anarchism. The positive energy, playfulness and optimism changed drastically as government forces struck down upon the movement with growing violence and zero-tolerance. Gradually expectations for the future grew dimmer and what started as a vibrant movement for change became an underground movement of militant resistance, and many key players had to go into political exile in neighbouring countries. During the years from 1976 to 1978 Bifo was faced with a struggle that intensified, and disintegrated, and a mood that slowly changed. At some point there was a break – a shift in the perspective of time. The future that Bifo and his comrades had intended to change had passed... Bifo talking at The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Walls & Space, December 5, 2012 (Audio-recording).
proposals of future societies are often imagined as a means of reflecting the present. The utopian or dystopic vision of the future ultimately points to the present society that this imagined society originates from. In more modern futurology – the practice of postulating possible futures – it is stressed that the future is not a monolithic structure and that one must consider plural futures, focusing on the creation of preferable futures rather than the limited field of prediction and probability. The future is inseparably linked to history. ‘The rest is history’, ‘history in the making’, ‘go down in history’, all indications that the future of events is conceived in line with the trajectory of history. Francis Fukuyama has argued that history is not a coherent or intelligible process. He argues that the universalisation of Western liberal democracy constitutes the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and as such ‘the end of history’. This does not mean that events will stop happening in time or that there is no future. It is not the occurrence of events that will come to an end, but History with a capital ‘H’. “History understood as a single, coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all times.”10 Both Marx and Hegel posited an ‘end of history’. Neither of them believed that the evolution of human societies was open-ended. They both believed that evolution would end when mankind achieved a form of society that satisfied its deepest and most fundamental longings. For Hegel this meant the liberal state and for Marx a communist society.

As early as 1513 Machiavelli considers the question of the future in his treatise The Prince. Fortune, understood as the prospect of the future, is a woman and hence chaotic in nature. Based on the image of the goddess Fortuna, veiled and blind like her colleague Justitia, representing the unpredictable, Machiavelli characterises fortune as an unruly being that brings with her both good and bad luck. A prince must on one hand let fortune play its game of chance in order to gain from the good luck, and on the other hand shield and protect himself from the bad luck.

“I compare her to one of those raging rivers, which when in flood overflows the plains, sweeping away trees and buildings, bearing away the soil from place to place; everything flies before it, all yield to its violence, without being able in any way to withstand it […].”11

Machiavelli believes that the prince (as a man) is able to bring order into chaos and control the female disorder of fortune. With a strong and violent hand the male figure can rule the unruly and thus profit solely on the good fortune. This allows for a game of chance with an almost certain favourable outcome.

“For my part I consider that it is better to be adventurous than cautious, because fortune is a woman, and if you wish to keep her under it is necessary to beat and ill-use her; and it is seen that she allows herself to be mastered by the adventurous rather than by those who go to work more coldly. She is, therefore, always, woman-like, a lover of young men, because they are less cautious, more violent, and with more audacity command her.”12

Bifo notes that this male idea of bringing order into chaos constitutes the modern idea of politics and also the main view of history. History is here envisioned as a reduction of the complexity and unpredictability of life into the managed framework of power. Bifo admits that in modern times this reduction has functioned in one way or another, even if this is by the means of repression. But this violent male hand works no more.

“What we are experiencing now, in the age of infinite acceleration of the infosphere, is the following: femininity fortuna can no longer be subjected and domesticated by the masculine force of political reason, because fortuna is embodied in the chaotic flows of the overcrowded infosphere and in the chaotic flows of financial microtrading. The disproportion between the arrival rate of new information and the limited time available for conscious processing generates hypercomplexity. Therefore projects that propose to rationally change the whole social field are out of the picture.”13

The male hand of Western liberal democratisation, that would govern the chaotic flow of the global society into its framework of power and hence bring about a Fukuyamist ‘end of history’
The Soul at
Accessed 26 June 2013
hi/3372239.stm
BBC News Online 2004
"Italy's history of terror,"
15. Kathryn Westcott,
14. Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi,
, p. 113.
peak in the years after the Second world war.” 14
In the years following the critical moment of 1977,
to understand manuals than to teach them how to
teach motor mechanic students how to read and
learn to learn. Tina Helen / Critical and Pedagogical Studies MFA 2
as a global society at the end of its Western liberal
imagery is merely facilitating the chaotic
digital technology has ended
mediacy of computerised algorithms have ended
in the years after the Second world war.” 14
I am thinking, rather, of the post-industrial era of immaterial production
the human imagination is completely outpaced by the speed of calculating machines. This affects our ability to create fantasies, hopes and meaningful action. It is in another way – the crisis is inscribed in our bodies.
In his book After The Future Bifo claims the year 1977 was the turning point introducing the time after the future. This is not a direct cancellation of the future but rather a shift in the perspective of it. The future no longer exists in the form we believed it would.
"When I say 'future', I am not referring to the direction of time. I am thinking, rather, of the psychological perception, which emerged in the cultural situation of progressive modernity, the cultural expectation that was fabricated during the long period of modern civilization, reaching a peak in the years after the Second World War." 14
In the years following the critical moment of 1977, a series of decisive events upset the productive, social and cultural language. Digital technology spread rapidly. The hierarchical structure of the factory model collapsed. The systematic computerisation of working processes made way for a new intellectual worker. A new sort of totalitarianism saw the light of day – one not based on political power but rather on the slow pervasion of the social mind. “The year 1977 is generally remembered as a year of violence. In Germany the prominent businessman Hans Martin Schleyer was kidnapped and killed by the Red Army Faction, followed by the suspicious deaths of RAF members in their prison cells. And in Italy the sabotage, bank robberies, and kidnappings of the Red Brigade accompanied by massive riots in the streets have been referred to as the Years of Lead.” 15 1977 was the year of the Bologna uprisings that eventually led to the shutdown of Radio Alice. 1977 was the year of Charlie Chaplin’s death, the creation of the Apple trademark, the launch of Star Wars: A New Hope, the burst out of the American ‘No Wave’ and the year of 784 youths suicides in Japan. And finally:
“Saturday Night Fever came out in movie theatres that fall [of 1977], introducing a new working class, happily willing to be exploited during the entire work week, in order to excel in dancing with greased hair on Saturday nights.” 16
The little worker with the black bowler hat, cane and moustache, who told the story of the dehumanisation of the industrial process, was now replaced by a new working hero of the post-industrial era of immaterial production – a willingly exploited worker who found an outlet in a slick-haired consuming of the self on Saturday nights.
Bluing a blackened sky
One of the foremost goals of education is teaching students skills they will need (or are believed to be needed) in life as citizens of a society. The only problem is that we don’t know the reality of the society to come. Many of the skills we will need in the future are still unknown to us today. The manuals for building cars date so rapidly that it makes more sense to teach motor mechanic students how to read and understand manuals than to teach them how to actually bring mechanical components together. The philosophy is ‘learning to learn’. The same development has happened to knowledge. Learning by rote died with the birth of the Internet. Navigating the information jungle seems to be the learning challenge of today.
You can’t separate school from society as Hansen and Jensen point out in the beginning of this text. As The Little Red Book for Students tells us, every little change you make in society may have consequences in school – and vice versa. In this way we cannot be blind to the effect that change in society has on the reality of school, as well as the potential of changing one to improve the other.
Education seems to have become the next big answer to the challenges of modern society. Gang related crimes, public health, disturbed by the social and national ability to compete on a global market are all issues being pushed into the realm of pedagogics. Social problems that used to be solved by social politics are now turned into ‘pedagogical challenges’. A rather specific example is the name change applied to the new Danish social security reform. From now on public benefits provided to people under the age of 30 will be labelled ‘student grants’ and not ‘social security benefits’. “We are removing the demand of availability of young people for the job market. Instead one has to be available for education,” says Minister of Employment, Mette Frederiksen. 17
What used to be a social security matter is now associated with education. Education has at all times had the ability to affect the surrounding socio-political spectrum and has even proven to be a great aid in solving its problems. This role has been a side effect of education’s primary function. In the emerging expectation for education to actually solve socio-political problems, secondary benefits of citizens have become responsibilities. The catch here is that education is left solely responsible for solving problems beyond its capacity. The interrelation of society and education is unquestionable. But with a heightened level of responsibility towards a broad spectrum of social security issues, education risks changing its purpose entirely in order to live up to something else. The same predication exhibits itself in the field of contemporary art.
There is an increasing dependency on the field of art to meet the various challenges of a modern society, such as integration, national historicity, social and cultural communication, urban renovation, freedom of expression, environmentalism, sustainability and education. In the endeavour to partake in all these responsibilities the field of contemporary art jeopardises its very essence and weakens its initial role in the development of a modern society.
Pedagogics cannot turn a blackened sky blue. The field of education undoubtedly has the means to change and improve society, but of society relies too heavily on education to solve its problems, the true potential of education gets lost in the translation of responsibilities. And if education becomes the only means to solve the problems of society the student becomes its only asset. There will always be people and aspects of social life that remain impervious to the influence of pedagogics. Education should always be a palatable good, but it has increasingly become a way to make everyone contribute to the welfare of society, a circumstance which can make it difficult to accept people who don’t wish to develop their human potential through schooling, supplementary training or endless education. The direct link between engagement in education and benefiting society transforms an opportunity into a demand. Education becomes a gift that cannot be declined without sanctions.
Education as investment
In a time of crisis, the question of ‘investment’ is ubiquitous. One could argue that education is an investment in the future. Society doesn’t gain anything from education before students enter the job market and start using their acquired skills in favour of society. The fact that many years of school are considered preparation for a future life, i.e., a position in the job market of the future – a future that is always uncertain. The financial crisis has further challenged belief in the future and, in an attempt to revitalise this lost confidence, investments are made in the field of knowledge. A great effort is made to secure a future that seems disturbingly out of sight. Education is not only supposed to change
In a newspaper article from December 2012, CEO Lars Andersen and communications worker Mikkel Harboe from the Economic Council of the Labour Movement (ECLM) urge Denmark to start focusing on the competences of the future unless we want to find ourselves in a situation of lacking-educated workforce. They claim that due to high unemployment rates, at this very moment, it would be almost free of cost to increase investments in education viewed from a socio-economic perspective. Education is not free, of course, but according to Andersen & Harboe it is an investment with such profitable returns, that the socio-economic expenses mainly consist in the student’s absence from the job market.

Still, recent data shows that more than 5.5 million European citizens under the age of 25 are without work, and the number continues up the potential yield of a burst housing bubble, the post-industrial society, the strategic role of education is not free, of course, but according to Andersen & Harboe it is an investment with such profitable returns, that the socio-economic expenses mainly consist in the student’s absence from the job market.

In the wake of the economic restructuring of the post-industrial society, the strategic role of knowledge has become a key player. Having used up the potential yield of a burst housing bubble, the attempts to make education a new frontier for the capitalist crisis to invest its dwindling assets into are obvious given its investment potential. Just as the unemployment sector is a lucrative market for the buying and selling of people’s leisure time, the education sector has the potentiality of becoming an economic speculative trade – a tradable commodity that can be measured and sold. The international media corporation Bertelsmann recently sold their shares in Sony, stating that they would begin investing in education since it has become more profitable than the music industry. If knowledge becomes a commodity, what then is the role of the learner? In an ongoing documentary entitled Learning – The artist du Learning Site tries to distinguish knowledge from learning. Knowledge has the qualities of an object and can’t be separated from dominating power structures. Learning, in contrast, is linked to the persons who enact it and the places in which it is being enacted. It has the possibility of being developed, but its character resists being directed. It is a way of being rather than a possession of knowledge codified by a set of rules … nor is ‘education’ the same thing as ‘a degree’.

Departing from Foucault’s studies on ‘entrepreneurship’, Maarten Simons & Jan Masschelein claims in the essay School – A Matter of Form that our lives have become enterprises that never close. Our selves have become entrepreneurial – like products to be produced, advertised and sold. This turn might explain the increased attention to and value of education. Simons and Masschelein write: “One of the most valuable production forces of the entrepreneurial is its learning ability; a force that produces new competencies, adds value to the self and fuels the accumulation of one’s human capital.”

In the same way that the surplus time of the unemployed can be commoditised and traded (and in this way transform the unemployed into tradable goods), the time spent in the educational system can become product. And thus with an investment in the field of education the product of interest is the learner and his or her spent time. “For the entrepreneurial self, the past and the future are always virtually present in a calculative frame. Time here is productive time or, more precisely, time of investment, a permanent calculation in view of future returns and useful resources. For the entrepreneurial student, for instance, the activity of studying – or, more precisely, learning as the accumulation of human capital or building credits – is one of investment, thinking in rates of

unemployment statistics, but should also create new markets in the future. The politicians of the European Union widely agree that knowledge, and the innovation it sparks, is Europe’s most valuable asset. Education is vital for the development of the knowledge society and the economy (in the same way as the cultural and creative industries are central to the economic and social innovation of other industries.)
Bifo talking at The third session on Decem-ber 5, 2012.

The ‘knowledge economy’, as described by the neo-liberal thinker Fritz Machlup as early as the 1970s, anticipated the future of education as a business of finance and commodity. 28 As one of the major forms of investment in human resources, education becomes human capital. The cost and benefit of schooling can be measured and its return evaluated as future investment. Machlup states that most of the cost of education can unquestionably be labelled investment, whereas some will be sheer waste and other consumption. Much of these investments clearly contribute nothing to the future, neither to future flows of cognitive or emotional satisfaction nor to future production and efficiency.

"Thus, these portions of the cost of schooling are not investment, but they may be current consumption. One would regard them as consumption if they give pleasure. Such pleasures may be the immediate satisfaction derived from learning, from stories, from playing, from enjoying games, talks and friendship." 29

A fourth category is described as ‘worse than waste’. When an education is not only wasted, but actually leads to a destructive use, the cost is considered a negative investment.

"[…] [W]here school education yields neither present nor future benefits, it is waste. But it could be worse than waste, namely, if it not only did not please or help anyone now or later but actually harmed some. Harm to the schooled one and the harm to the nation could come from an educational system that turns out junk that won't stand up for useful work for the community." 30

When education is motivated by unemployment statistics and movements in the market of knowledge economy the risk of educating people to jobs that do not exist is very close to the provision of incentives. It is through incentives that students become willing and teachers have the impression they still have something to say.” 31

If education is an investment in the future, what characterises learning in a time defined as after the future? How does lacking ability to imagine the future affect our relation to learning? What reality are we bracing ourselves and coming genera-tions for? Why teach all at all? Why learn?

At a seminar at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen 34 (conducted by the urban political network openhagen) I asked Bifo how lacking ability to imagine a future was affecting our education. If education is an investment in the future, what is education in a world that doesn’t believe in the future? Bifo starts off by expressing doubt about whether or not education should be regarded as an invest-ment in the future and then slowly arrives at a somewhat hazy answer to the question:

I understand your question, ‘if you don’t believe in the future how can you invest in it?’ I answer, ‘it is not true that I don’t believe in the future. What I say is just that the price and form of capitalism is destroying any possibility of imagining a future. [...] Let’s try to understand what financial capital-is-m is. The history of modern bourgeois capitalism was the history of a system that was essentially ter-ritorialised. The industrial capitalist was someone who was producing things for a community and his property was a physical property based in a physical place. Bourgeoisie comes from the word ‘bourgeoisie’ the ‘place’ ‘territory’. Not us, we don’t talk about bourgeoisie anymore. The word has disappeared. The capitalist class has nothing to do with territory – nothing to do with the commu-nity. So the financial way to accumulation is not about investing in the future. It is about dissolving something that existed. […] Betting on the disappear-ance of something. Because territory is no more, they are not making a good return on it. Property is no longer a building. Property is a figure. Something purely virtual. This is why I say they are not invested in the future. The future is a non-existent thing in financial terms.” 35

Bifo’s claim that the new capitalist class has no interest in investing in the future seems to rely on its deterritorialisation and transformation into dealers of the purely virtual. Whereas the bourgeoisie of industrial capitalism was very closely linked to a position in society (a territory in relation to a community and therefore interest-ed in the maintenance of this) the upper class of semi-capitalism is bound only to the virtual. In semi-capitalism the general shape of com-modities are semiotic in nature and production is increasingly an elaboration of sign-information. In the market of signs production is closely interwoven with the linguistic exchange. Exchange is kept in the symbolic realm. The new capitalist class has no particular interest in the community because it invests in the virtual. Necromony is the epitome of this exchange of the virtual. The ‘economy of death’ considers death a promise of future profit. In financial speculations on life insurance the market bets on the death of the members of community. The necro-capitalist is making investments without the future in view – essentially the investments rely on the imminent end of death. ‘Death is the best future that capitalism can secure.” 36 So in this regard semi-capitalism apparently aspires to invest towards the dissolving of possible futures for the community. If education or knowledge as commodity is part of the market of signs it is also assigned to semi-capitalism, and thus it cannot be an investment in the future, since semi-capitalism solely invests in the dissolving of Futures.

Schools are like order – and a liberal society deeply appreciates order because it is systematic. But we really need boring assignments to teach us duties and all the other boring aspects of life! As schools are increasingly swamped with prescribed curriculums, the space to discuss ideas and critical perspectives is outside the scripted materials dwindles away to nothing. When things are only taught in one way we only learn to do things in one way, making it very difficult to confront unforeseen challenges later in life. Politicians and the labour market call for people who can think ‘out of the box’ (‘don’t think inside the box). Build a box’ as it says in the Swedish Pirate Bureau Manifesto) while the education system is getting streamlined under the assertion that this will create more individual options. The Bologna Process has become a symbol of this homogenisation. Through educ-ational standards of comparability the Bologna Process aims to place Europe at the forefront of the growth of competitive knowledge economy and research-based profit. Critics of the Bologna agreement claim that the basic idea behind the EU’s educational plan is economic. The Bologna Process blends into almost any form of education, promising an assimilation of the entire educational system and free mobility across borders for those who want to study further. The growing competitive knowledge economy is a fixed model no matter what the content of a curriculum may be. Even in art education the structure is chang-ing, making way for coherence with all other areas of work. Art school seems to be the perfect territory for a new model of educational markertisation.

"As the logic of neo-liberalism is based on the freedom of the individual, the artist and his/her artistic liberty perfectly fill its shoes. In fact, not only does the desire and trend of bringing artistic institutions closer to marketable creative indus-tries exist, rather art and the art school can be seen as a paradigm for neoliberal capitalism, with the artist and the cultural producer as role models for an increasingly neoliberalised job market. The flexibility and infinite creativity, teamed with self-discipline and precarious work relations, lie at the heart of the artist’s profession." 37

With the assimilation process of an all-inclusive educational model the various fields of knowl-edge production must abide by the same rules. Even educational exchange that mobilises the creative careers of unique and innovative persons, serv-ing as the perfect model for capital, seems to rely on the same old prescriptions – ‘what you plant now, you will have harvest later’. Returning to the Woman’s Own magazine interview, Thatcher continues: “there’s no such thing as entitlement, unless someone has first met an obligation.” 38 That means that our society must be willing to en-dure some kind of inconvenience or discomfort in order to achieve worthwhile goals. But does art work like that? One could argue that art is unjust. No specific number of hours invested in art will guarantee success as an artist. Diligence will not necessarily be rewarded. One of today’s challenges in art education is that there are no guarantees and it is exactly this precarious state that capitalism is speculating in.
How does one escape the trap of artistic and collective education being utilised to produce ideal precariat workers for a neoliberal knowledge-economy? If art schools have become the perfect incubator for commodities in the market of signs, is it then possible for art to create different kinds of learning environments outside the market? What would be the result of giving the educational process artwork qualities and how should one structure an artistic learning process without succumbing to the inexhaustible absorption of the neoliberal economy? Does it even make sense to engage in the imagination of future alternative educational models in a post-futuristic perspective?

**Education as situation**

Félix Guattari has noted very beautifully that psychiatrists must demonstrate that they have abandoned their white lab coats, beginning with the invisible ones they wear in their heads, in their language and in the ways they conduct themselves. One could raise the concern of what internalised lab coats are built into the Bologna Agreement and how these affect the educational system (and with regard to art schools how they affect the production of art). What restraints are put on us and what do we put on ourselves? The domain of school, with its international standardisation and educational marketing, has been declared a marketplace. The Bologna Agreement gives the impression that we can choose anything we like, while in fact it is delivering mass-produced standardised products.

In tune with ideas of anarchist and radical pedagogics – the pursuit of pedagogical processes that question and resist authoritative power structures – one must take into consideration the possibility of resistance by the teacher within the school settings. Paulo Freire, one of the ‘founding figures’ of radical pedagogy, advocates a dialogical process to transform the teaching and learning model. Dialogue is here understood as ‘an epistemological relationship’ rather than a simple technique used solely to involve students in a particular task. “I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognise the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing.”

One aim is for the teacher-learner relationship to enable new spaces of resistance against hierarchical and authoritative educational systems, another is producing learning that can relate to its surroundings without being another asset in the market of signs.

**MAUMAUS: Result by error**

Inside the dark space of a sound booth in a factory hall, on the outskirts of the Portuguese city Guimarães, the small gathering of students becomes silent and cautious. The dim light and the confined space create an awareness of intimacy of the physical body and the rationalisation of the collective audible space. The recorder is on and the students are sensitive, savouring the silences as needed pauses on tape. In the pursuit of a collectivist learning environment the dark space of the sound booth provides a divided learning situation. There is no fixed agenda for this assembly in the dark. What does it mean to produce? What does it mean to produce culture? And meaning? These questions are considered not only through the sharing of knowledge, but also through a far more bodily sharing – a collective creation of noise, rhythm and potentially music. They are waiting for answers in the dark. The sound recorder is there to pick up the meeting point between music and meaning – if this should ever occur. When the group of students at the Maumaus Independent Study Program, invited to Guimarães, the European Capital of Culture 2012, met to record any output of this shared learning situation, the recorder was somehow disconnected. It only recorded 3% of a three-hour session. ‘Not producing’ is also a commodity on the market of signs. The three audible percentages of recorded tape are the artistic product of an accidental reduction process. It becomes an artistic extract. It becomes an artistic product. The failure of the situation still manages to produce a final product. In the market of signs almost everything has the potential to be a product. Non-participation as product. Refusal as product. Failure as product.

The endeavour to ‘not produce’ is incorporated as a commodity on the market, making for
very few routes of escape in the anti-capitalist approach to art and future sharing of knowledge. In the realm of semi-capitalism even the collective approach seems to be no more than a training ground for individualist careers. Still, the shared space seems to generate a different bodily and immediate response to the learning moment, upsetting the given structure.

OPENHAGEN: Class struggle
Around 25 students sign up for the course. 12 sessions – 3 hours every Monday afternoon spread over the spring of 2011. An additional 25 new students join the class ‘The city isn’t yours – and it never will be’ (Byen er ikke jeres – og den bliver det aldrig).

The teacher is a collective. The course intends to introduce the possibility of linking production and knowledge within the university and creating social change in everyday life in the city. They meet in a classroom, pull out chairs and begin distributing the students in the space. When a rearrangement of seating is proposed a momentary discomfort spreads in the classroom. The aim is to level out the concrete spatial and relational hierarchies by spreading out in class, not teaching from one fixed position in the room, encouraging people to question, critique, interrupt. A feeling of insecurity spreads in the informal environment. Who is in charge? To whom should questions be addressed? The simple act of avoiding taking responsibility to try to diffuse power creates a heightened awareness and worry about the very position of power. By performing the subordinate the teacher collective creates a classic example of the tyranny of structures. The teacher collective on the other hand has to figure out how to deal with the fact that eight people are employed for the salary of one, as well as how to deal with a formalised regard for the classroom. The aspiration to plant a seed in this production space, that in time will grow and add to the struggle against capitalism and enable socially just, sustainable alternatives could grow – perhaps eventually into mainland.

It has always been a favourite activity of social activists and cultural workers to list all the ways in which their work can be absorbed by the capitalist venture. As much as the self-critique is vital for the reflection of a political field it can also prove to be highly unproductive. What is common can always be turned into private profit, but this should not stop one from trying. Trying to expand the common. Instead of regarding oneself as the continual loser, it is perhaps time to discover one’s power to actually change things – to choose oneself when, where and how one dances with ‘the giant’.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, DEAR. Learning as drinks with friends.

The emphasis is here on the idea of the situation, as opposed to space i.e. classroom, lecture hall, auditorium, school, university.

Islands growing into land
In a time characterised as after the future the question of new future directions for education institutions becomes awkwardly contradictory. But as already described, the time after the future does not prevent future events from happening. It is the ability to imagine the future that has passed, throughout the all-including expansion of semi-capitalism. As the learning institutions have become greenhouses for new commodities on the market of signs, the effort to dream up new possible ways of learning is needed.

Near the end of his book After the Future, Bifo opens up the possibility of an escape from the inevitable dystopia of the post-future. He situates hope in the limit of his knowledge and understanding. The possibility of a new landscape is beyond the limit of his knowledge and understanding, as the limit of his language is the limit of his world. These limits make him miss the event – miss that point in the future where overwhelming changes make reliable predictions impossible. This acceptance of his limits leads him to the conclusion that in order to continuously resist, he must live ‘as if’.

“As if the forces of labour and knowledge might overcome the forces of greed and of proprietary obsession. As if the cognitive workers might oppose the fracturing of their life – their intelligence, and give birth to the self-organization of collective knowledge. I must resist simply because I cannot know what will happen after the future, and I must preserve the consciousness and sensibility of social solidarity, of human empathy, of gratuitous activity – of freedom, equality, and fraternity. Just in case, right?”

The explorations of the pedagogical must continue ‘as if’ the islands of educational situations could grow – perhaps eventually into mainland.

In contrast, the danger of becoming mainlander is that the qualities of isolation and intimacy of the island fades out. In art education one of the main conditions of practicing resistance towards the market of signs is being an isoland.
In the essay ‘Education by Infection’, Boris Groys argues for the importance of islands. Using the metaphor of an infectious disease, he describes the importance of art educations working as isolated incubators in order to prepare students for life outside the school. “Now, as never before, education suspends the student in an environment that is meant to isolate him or her, to be exclusively a site of learning and analysis, of experimentation exempted from the urgencies of the outside world.”

Groys argues that the closed world of the art education keeps bacilli circulating and students infected, but the hermetic nature of the art school settings makes it possible to identify, analyse and breed the bacilli of art. This breeding and nurturing of art bacilli is the only way to develop a resistance to market and politics and thus keep the bacilli of art alive.

Points of intersection

Educational institutions are increasingly being run like corporations. They have become one of the central spaces for reproduction of the capitalist society. But why even concern oneself with the ways in which capitalism and the state operate within educational structures?

There should always be alternatives to state and corporate forms of distributing and producing knowledge. And there will always be a risk of being swallowed up and incorporated into the very systems against which one is reacting. It is important to look for ways to use the institutional, without being of the institution. Without making the goals of the institution one’s own. The struggle must be both external and internal. The current structure of education system should be critiqued, but the critique should not stand alone.

It could be useful to look at arguments that are outside hierarchical, authoritarian and formal state institutions, but recalling former school formats in order to improve future educations is not necessarily a solution. Classroom tables are curtailing students in half, denying them their full bodies. ‘The potential of collectivity and the introduction of tactile and bodily knowledge enable the building of learning situations. The organisation of the space of learning, this being mentally or physically, is a difficult size to revise. Even when teachers are free to use whatever teaching method they prefer it can be difficult to break with common ways of teaching. There are certain fixed relationships inside the classroom that can seem almost impossible to alter – the hierarchy between words and images to name just one. The problem is that many teaching situations become alike even though the teachers and subjects differ. In the pursuit of a perfected educational system we run the risk of preparing ourselves for a future that will not come. Instead of striving towards an ideal learning situation one should attempt to regard the learning situation as a space of several coexisting situations – coexisting learning situations, ensuring the environment of conflict and constant re-evaluation of the skills and knowledge needed. Foucault uses the term heterotopia to illustrate a space with multiple layers of meaning or connections to other spaces. In contrast with Thomas More’s idea of utopia as a constant unreliable dream of a perfected society that ultimately would not be so desirable at all, the heterotopia opens up the possibility that new versions of society can be endlessly produced within the same space. Instead of trying to bring the learning situation to perfection it could be rewarding to view it in a heterotopian perspective – a situation of many learning situations. Perhaps the ideal exists in the many.”

The situations where art and pedagogy fuse into one or the boundaries become somehow blurred and unclear are possible heterotopias. When the production and sharing of knowledge is not necessarily a solution. Classroom tables are curtailing students in half, denying them their full bodies. ‘The potential of collectivity and the introduction of tactile and bodily knowledge enable the building of learning situations. The organisation of the space of learning, this being mentally or physically, is a difficult size to revise. Even when teachers are free to use whatever teaching method they prefer it can be difficult to break with common ways of teaching. There are certain fixed relationships inside the classroom that can seem almost impossible to alter – the hierarchy between words and images to name just one. The problem is that many teaching situations become alike even though the teachers and subjects differ. In the pursuit of a perfected educational system we run the risk of preparing ourselves for a future that will not come. Instead of striving towards an ideal learning situation one should attempt to regard the learning situation as a space of several coexisting situations – coexisting learning situations, ensuring the environment of conflict and constant re-evaluation of the skills and knowledge needed. Foucault uses the term heterotopia to illustrate a space with multiple layers of meaning or connections to other spaces. In contrast with Thomas More’s idea of utopia as a constant unreliable dream of a perfected society that ultimately would not be so desirable at all, the heterotopia opens up the possibility that new versions of society can be endlessly produced within the same space. Instead of trying to bring the learning situation to perfection it could be rewarding to view it in a heterotopian perspective – a situation of many learning situations. Perhaps the ideal exists in the many.”

Finally it may be productive to stop viewing knowledge as capital or creativity as product – but rather experience learning as a life-long sharing friendship. Deleuze and Guattari considered the general philosophical project as ‘being friends of thought’. ‘What does friend mean when it becomes a conceptual persons, or a condition for the exercise of thought? Or rather, are we not talking of the love? Does not the friend reintroduce into thought a vital relationship with the Other that was supposed to have been excluded from pure thought?’

In friendship the elements of irony, play, language, history and singularity as the necessary condition of thought and action, must always somehow takes into consideration the constant transformation of the common in its multiple points of intersection.
Excuse me Mr. Baldessari, why did you start to teach?

When I attended preparatory art school I thought that all teachers were failed artists. I hope that I never said or even suggested such a stance to any of my old teachers: I don’t think I did but I can’t in case I truly apologete. With over-romanticised young dreams of what it meant to be an artist I made at least two big mistakes. First of all, I had a very unrealistic and skewed image of what it meant to be a failed, and then also a successful, artist. If needing to teach for the sake of money meant you were a failed artist, this just shows how little I knew about the practicalities of being an artist. It was not so much that I thought that in order to be a successful artist you would make a lot of money, but rather the ludicrous idea that money would not be an issue at all. The second misconception was that successful artists – if being able to one way or another build their whole lives around making art – simply could not be interested in spending their time focussed on someone else’s artistic process. Working as a teacher was a concession to the need of paying bills and eating, equivalent to any other part-time job, and at most I could understand that as such, teaching the subject is the only or at least one or two teachers teaching, if not only, to teach only for the money. Since living the life of an artist often is financially precarious there can be a real need for a more secure source of income, and teaching can be a great and rewarding way of providing for one’s own practice and personal life. And perhaps the balancing act of maintaining two professional practices – as artist and as teacher – can be difficult enough without actively enforcing a sense of shame in regards to fulfilling basic needs.

The question then is how we can work with an initial motivation that perhaps is less than ideal and develop and grow this intrinsic value towards the educational situation. In my case I had the good fortune of being invited by the European Exchange Academy (EEA), an independent educational institution, to teach at the summer academy they arrange every year in Germany. Harry Heyink, the founder and director of this academy, works consciously with a mix of more experienced artist-teachers and a few who have just started to teach. Without being formalised as a mentorship as such that was exactly what I was teaching on my own and sometimes together with one of the other artist-teachers. Every now and then I would find myself in conversation with the director about one or another teacher I had had a studio visit with, and in a seamless manner he was coaching and supporting me. This meant a great deal for my possibilities to develop an awareness of pedagogical intentions in a real teaching situation.

Mark Warnes points out that learning to teach in higher education is informed less by formal methods and more by informal means and primarily ‘simply doing the job’.
“[…] new learners are teaching to teach in higher education using a range of methods. The most widely used and most highly regarded of these is simply doing the job of teaching, with support and encouragement being obtained from informal discussions with colleagues. This ‘in the deep end’ approach has its merits but is not without potential problems, not least of which is the student experience. Experienced teaching staff do not provide a level of expertise which an increasingly discerning student body expects, particularly in the current fee-paying environment where students (have a right?) to expect value for money.”

Learning to teach is, like training to be an artist, not something that can be done solely through theoretical studies: there will always be a point where there is a risk that the quality of the student learning experience will be affected negatively by inexperienced teachers learning by doing. Edeurds argues that the development of education within visual arts has not been followed by a corresponding development of educational theories and states that:

“This turns the field of learning in visual art practices into an area of research that, from an educational theoretical perspective, is relatively underdeveloped. The lack of educational reference frames for learning within the visual arts leaves the teachers with very little besides concepts such as master-apprentice to consider.”

Besides the increased risk that the student experience is further affected this also points to difficulties for young artist-teachers to learn other than by simply jumping into ‘in the deep end’. Now, it is not an impossible situation. There is a steadily growing amount of research conducted into this area with studies and literature that can help to build a secure identity for a prospective part-time artist-teacher. But at the same time I think that there is work for educational institutions to do. All artists working as teachers at art academies are required to undertake higher education teacher certificates and being part of a faculty provides a network and forum for keeping discussions on pedagogical intentions alive and up to date. As a young artist-teacher working part-time you might not have the opportunity or the will to work regularly at only one institution and thus you run the risk of falling in-between requirements and collegial support systems which means that most part-time teachers do not have teaching qualifications.”

Warnes also warns us that this support from colleagues sometimes is restricted to ‘this is how we do it’ that can be restrictive, unaware of and even hostile to alternative ways of doing things. A good example of this is when I was doing a teaching internship at an art school within further education. When I was in the process of planning my workshop the main teacher of the class informed me that I could not expect too much from the group, that they needed to be told, almost exactly, what to do and how to do it. Although this was done with good intentions I took this information as stifling when I was told how to do it. Although this was done with good intentions I thought, and still do, that taking time to work and develop independently between the BFA and MFA studies potentially can increase the benefits of an MFA. When I was looking into different programmes I realised that what I really wanted was a program where both art making and the pedagogical side could grow. I won’t say that my search was all encompassing but I did not find any programmes to fit my description. There are plenty of programmes where you become an artist teacher and at the same time can keep a certain focus on your own art, but all of these are aimed at artists who wish to make a living. This led me to consider different institutions to inquire into the possibility of setting up a test run of an individually tailored MFA with focus on pedagogy. Malmö Art Academy sent out a call for application to all the new MFA programme Critical and Pedagogical Studies (CPS), concerned with the intersection of artistic production and pedagogy. Let’s be Frank about it.

In this text I have talked a lot about practical and especially financial motives behind artists starting to work as artist-teachers. The purpose of this is not to convey a belief that all artist-teachers work within the educational sector for the sake of making a living. Even less to say that young artists should consider pursuing a teaching career because it is a convenient way to make a living. Rather the opposite. And I even think that it might seem counterproductive I believe that it is important to talk frankly about this in order to not stigmatise teaching in relation to one’s own practice. I believe, and must believe, that a vast majority of the artists who also work as teachers (in one form or another)
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13. Though I do must admit that it rather amusing with the circular references, especially when andors cite themselves.


18. I am sorry but I really don’t want to use the word ‘exercise’ to signify art making as opposed to teaching.

art in general and that is why I love to teach. I sometimes feel my interest in art more stimulated by spending time engaging in the process of a student work which I might find a mediocre or even bad work than going to a museum to see a finished piece of work I find great.

For an artist-teacher to be able to express passion towards the educational situation there needs to be a highly and constructive relationship between the dual professional role of artist and teacher. This will give me reason to return to “Let’s be Frank about it” and my ‘story’ of when I first played the part of the teacher, as well as addressing why I have been resistant to use the word practice in this text. Through her Ph.D. research Hjelde has explored how tutors’ art practices inform their teaching. Unfortunateness this material has not yet been made publicly available and cannot be consulted here, but as I understand it (also visible in the quote above) Hjelde is interested in finding ways where the two parts of the practice could meet. On her website22 there is a section titled “Praxis with material” which “holds and relates to the teaching part of my practice”, indicating a position where there is one practice that it and that holds two parts where teaching and art making would be the other. But then she separates the two again by talking about the art making and teaching praxis relationship. I don’t know, but I can imagine that it is the sake of making it easier to talk about it: does create long and perhaps over-complicated sentences when not teaching practice to signify art making as opposed to teaching. With the definition of praxis used on the site “Praxis is the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted or practiced. [wikipedia]” I would still, for myself, opt for the longer sentences. What I praxis when I teach and when I make art is the same thing, the collected skills I have as an artist. And the difference between teaching and making art is the same difference as there is between making two different art works as well as in engaging in two different teaching situations – I have to be tentative to which skills I use for what purpose. This means that I consider myself having only one practice and that is an artist’s practice, within this practice I can be busy with a variety of activities, writing this text is one of them. Here I am, firmly, claiming a holistic position where teaching and art making lives together in perfect harmony. This is how I identify, but this perhaps too strong claim related to a belief that this is a position that has to be actively and constantly claimed.

There are different ways an artist can experience an identity where artistic production and pedagogical work is integrated in one practice. Some artists make art works where education is used as a medium; Joseph Beuys can in part stand as an example of this, as can the Copenhagen Free University.23 The whole genre, if calling it that, of activist art often has a strong pedagogical agenda incorporated in the art works. As for my art works I think they are better described as petite bourgeois than as having a character of political activism. My interest in pedagogy is clearly located within educational institutions, though not necessarily only in or with a traditional structure. I do not refer to or present my educational activities as works of art. My view of and striving for one integrated practice is better related to a question, which I view as rhetorical, than I think that my positioning rubbed off on me. When I now think of the relationship between ‘my practice’ and teaching I actually don’t – most of the time it is not an issue at all to me. This is not to say that the path has been without negotiations or that new negotiations will not be needed.

In a study concerned with identity work among part-time art and design tutors Shreeve29 identifies five ways that the tutors participating in the interview-based study experience the relationship between their teaching and their own artistic production. These are in return related to five different ways of experiencing identity as follows: I-am-a-practitioner. I am not interested in education. This is not to say that the path has been without negotiations or that new negotiations will not be needed. Within these experiences Shreeve notes key differences between relationships that she describes as asymmetrical, symmetrical and holistic. Among these categories we find, at the end of the spectrum who experience how the two roles meld together and inform and reinforce each other. Tutors only identifying as artists and not as all tutors are described as transferring knowledge from their own practice to the students, whereas the ones identifying themselves as having one, integrated practice experience a more fluid flow of knowledge between the two. Shreeve points out that though the categories in the study are clearly defined, reality allows for change between the different positions over periods of time but also temporary fluctuations. Without arranging the different identified positions in a hierarchical order where one is better than the other they can have different importance a more fluid flow of knowledge between the two. Shreeve introduces them (same as above). When I first started teaching I identified myself as an artist (full stop), with the exclusive meaning – maker of art. Shreeve notes in her study that being relatively new to teaching was characteristic for tutors identifying as practitioners only. For the individual tutor this position does not necessarily present any difficulties, but can, if continuing to teach, potentially do so in the future, especially when/if the ‘dropping in’ becomes more regular and frequent. When I realised that teaching was something that I apparently was more and more busy with and also increasingly interested in, I added ‘and I am a teacher (full stop)’ to my identification as an artist. This is the category Shreeve names ‘two camps’ and here the two roles are equally present and act as a symmetrical relationship. But there is a risk that this position leads to a situation where the tutor experiences both identities under threat and in conflict with each other. In Orr’s study on identity work in relation to assessment practice within art education we can find a worst-case scenario of this position. One participant expressed, “[…] without any separation, of this is that he would have had a career if he had not become absorbed in academic work. The career he refers to is, of course, that of an artist and he views his academic life as reducing his opportunity for his practice to be a healthy and constructive relationship towards the educational situation there needs.
to a more positive learning experience for the students – at best it will not poison it. For me it likewise never went this far. It was this that I started to identify a potential conflict in myself regarding the teaching and my artistic production that I began to look for an education including both roles. At this point I would say that my self-identification was in line with what Shereve refers to as “multi-dimensional practitioner” where there is a balance between the two worlds; separated but in harmony and with a feeling of productive exchange. Still, when I was accepted to the CPS programme I had some concerns. Crudely and honestly phrased I was asking myself if I was going for plan B. Did giving focus to the pedagogical questions mean that I gave up the Dream? I remember talking with Harvey Heynk, still functioning as a mentor to me, about these concerns. With the risk of misremembering, I think his initial answer was even more crudely formulated than my question. Heynk started to teach when already having a successful career with his art works. Rather than feeling that the teaching was infringing on him as an artist, he told me how the successes with his pedagogical work gave him a sense of fulfilling something as an artist) that was deeper, longer-lasting and more than the success from the artistic production. So if anything, it was a considered decision to gradually find a more focus to pedagogical planning and arranging educational projects like the European Exchange Academy.40

I think the fact that my first teaching experience came from within the framework of making art plays a part in that my self-identification now is fairly uncomplicated in regards to the two major sides of my practice, but evidently it did not automatically lead to it. Instead I think that there has been a combination of many different factors that has helped me to construct such an identity. Here I remember that the programme I had about to graduate from has played an important role as well, by allowing the two sides to develop in one process. A second aspect of the “Let’s be Frank about it” project has also had a big influence on my relationship to teaching; the fact that I was a student ‘playing’ the part of the teacher. This meant that I was in the mind-set of learning when teaching and that is something that Shereve, in her study, noted as a distinctive characteristic among tutors whose self-identification fell within the category of ‘artist-educators’ with a holistic relationship between art making and teaching.41 The idea that there is a kind of exchange taking place in the centre of the pedagogical situation is regarded as one of the key features in one of the pedagogies.

If a form of exchange is taking place, there is an opportunity for the teacher to learn and at the same time the teacher has to be open to learning for the exchange. In this respect the importance of the self-identification and productive relationship of the artist-teacher becomes very clear. In a paper, outlining characteristics or signature pedagogies, within art and design (e.g. Danvers,42 Shereve), the form of the teacher as being, “[…] in a position of facilitator or co-researcher and this requires the suspension of preconceived ideas and outcomes for a project and supporting a process of discovery to take place for each individual student.”43

To be open to, and actively strive for, a position where we, as teachers, are also learning corresponds with and strengthens the idea of exchange as a signature pedagogy. And at the same time it is a prerequisite for being able to fully take the position of co-researcher. Another widely argued key feature of art education is the validated competence – a teaching role that we, as teachers, are also learning for. In this respect artist-teachers could be said to be helping their students to construct an identity as a practitioner (and here I refer to all possible ways one can identify as a practitioner). Returning to the different categories found in Shereve’s study, she notes that tutors have many roles and are prone to being a single role: “One or more of the following descriptions are commonly accepted as constituting successful artists who are frequently widely recognised and appreciated for their artworks; frequently exhibiting their artworks in renowned venues; financially secure due to their artistic production. All of these can be said to be rather superficial (in the sense that they are looking for an external validation) and also have very little to do with teaching. Yet all of them have, in one way or another, been brought up in this text and its reference literature.”44

Ibid. 45. http://www.artandeducation.net/announcement/university-of-the-arts-bremen-seeks-professors-in-contemporary-art-theory-critical-and-researching-and-curating-and-research/ 46. http://www.artandeducation.net/announcement/university-of-the-arts-bremen-seeks-professors-in-contemporary-art-theory-critical-and-researching-and-curating-and-research/ 47. http://www.artandeducation.net/announcement/university-of-the-arts-bremen-seeks-professors-in-contemporary-art-theory-critical-and-researching-and-curating-and-research/ 48. Ibid. 49. http://khib.easyrent.com/vacancy/9535079#so-gb 50. Ibid. 51. Ibid. 52. Drew and Trigwell argue that “Furthermore, well-developed didactic skills will be required to thrive in this role.” Another institution is “[…] seeking an artist with a strong artistic practice and a distinct interest in art education.” Yet at least the teaching part is mentioned early on but it is not an artist with a strong teaching practice and a distinct interest in art making they are seeking. My favourite one invites “[…] visual artists with a distinguished career in contemporary art […]” to apply for the position. In the advert they also mention that “[…] to have experience in managing and developing the profile of artistic research in the field of […]” Only when following the link to their website and a good bit down there as well is the word teaching even mentioned: “Applicants should also have a strong focus on artistic research and they should demonstrate an ability for critical reflection on artistic processes that will also be integrated in teaching practice.” Strangely enough, when describing the duties of the position at the bottom, teaching is first. In that way it seems very strange that when I was young, I could have thought that only failed artists become teachers, since being a successful artist looks to be of the highest priority when teacher positions are being filled. But in a backward kind of way it might make sense: not even the institutions responsible for education portray teaching as a very important and fulfilling occupation for an artist.
To my knowledge there are no available studies concerned with art educational institution's views on the relationship between an artist-teacher's artistic production and their teaching abilities. But to think that my, here presented, conclusion of rather unscientific findings would reflect the positioning of any art academy is nothing short of ridiculous. Yet, we can compare it to the findings of Klein and Millbrandt in a survey including 100 participants working as teachers at different institutions within higher art education—again it is not the view of the institutions themselves but the teachers' perceptions of institutional values:

“When asked to rank the values held as most valuable within their institution for promotion and tenure, over half of the participants (57%) reported that Research or Written Scholarship is the activity most highly valued by the institution for promotion and tenure. Twenty-five percent of the participants ranked the role of Teacher as the second most important, followed by the role of the Exhibiting Visual Artist as the most valued activity for promotion and tenure (10%).”

The same participants were also asked to rank the activities to best describe their professional identity and how they felt they made their most important contributions to the field. Here we can see a majority ranked teaching as most important, research within the field of education only as the third most important with 18%, and exhibiting an identity as artist-teachers. From a scientific research perspective this might be a bad thing but not necessarily. Not everybody can have a tutor called Frank but maybe further studies can be made to see if more active and conscious work with peer-to-peer education can, like in my case, lead to an early and strong interest in pedagogy. Perhaps, with different ‘stories’ of how we can be and become artist-teachers, the more we can introduce new possibilities to actively seek practices where pedagogical questions and teaching is integrated in the role of the artist. In the text ‘Mind the Gap! Communication and the educational relationship’, Biesta poses a question about who actually is that educator, and answers:

“Common sense would dictate that educators educate – in a certain sense this is, of course, true. But if […] learners learn from their participation in social situations, then the conclusion has to be that it is the social situation that emerges form the interaction between the teacher and the student that actually does the teaching.”

To me, this points towards an approach to education which holds all possibilities for teaching to be every bit as rewarding and exiting (including frustrations, doubts and crisis) as the process of making an artwork.

NIKOLAJ KILSMARK
“A Voice of One’s Own”

“A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.”

So wrote Virginia Woolf in her book A Room of One’s Own. In my video project with young people in Gadehaven (GHG) – a social housing area in the suburbs of Copenhagen – similar issues are dealt with. However the context and time are different. This project is also about building creative space for the individual being. It is about creativity and identity – a voice of one’s own.

Woolf needed money and a room of her own to write fiction. The participants in this project in Gadehavenaghed may not have money and/or a room of their own – but most of the participants in the workshop have a smart-phone with a video camera and their “family photo album” on it. And they all have YouTube. The “fiction” they write is their own (life)story told through their smart-phones. The participants in the project are working with “A Voice of One’s Own” as a concept that is initiated by an outsider – an artist – me. Each participant has their own individual project/voice but the individual voices also work towards a collective (his/her)story, creating a collective voice of the group of participants from the housing area of Gadehavenaghed.

In the workshop one of the participants – a 12 year-old boy with Kurdish cultural background – talked about how his family came to Denmark and how they have strong family connections both in Denmark and Kurdish areas in Turkey. He started to talk about religion and issues around integration. At one point he showed me a video clip he had made on his smart-phone concerning some of these issues, and I told him how very interesting I found his story. I said that it would be interesting if he would go into more detail about these issues: the boy suddenly got embarrassed and said: “No it is private…” The balance between the personal and the political is one of the pedagogical and artistic concerns of this video project. Part of the concern in the project is the potential of the personal story as a political tool in representing the area.

This essay aims to exemplify a critical and analytical understanding of pedagogical perspectives in my artistic practice about representation and experiences. The essay is informed by my reflections and experiences during the process of developing the video narration project with the youth club Gadehaven. It is informed by my artistic practice more generally. My project in Gadehaven conveys the experience and relevant processes of my artistic practice since 1999 from both a theoretical and practical point of view. My project in Gadehaven is in many ways representative of these considerations – and my way of working as an artist. The project in Gadehaven is the main empirical material in this essay.

I work with art projects concerning media-representation, cross-cultural communication and sociopolitical issues in the context of post-colonialism within Danish society and its global position. I have previously worked with art projects in different social housing areas in Denmark: Vollsmose in Odense, Gellerup in Århus and Gadehavenghed (GHG) in Tårnø. Each project has had a starting point based on the different identities and perspectives in relation to Danish and global society – based particularly on individual (life)stories. In 2012 I worked with a video project mapping the possibilities and needs among various groups of youth within the GHG Area. The film Duet eller Duel – Ulydige riter #3 portrayed youth groups and their area and discussed the area from their point of view.

The youth club Gadehaven is located in the social housing area Gadehavenaghed, which is now on the official “List of Ghettos in Denmark”. This “Ghetto list” is updated each year by the Danish government. This is thought of as a tool and guideline for giving funding to so-called troubled housing areas. It is worth discussing how this “title” influences the people living in

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51. Ibid., p. 349.
52. How art educational studies are supposed to measure and compare this when hiring, and how they will solve to present it to the student learning experience, we might better ask ourselves: Do I feel fulfilled as an artist with my practice in this composition?
53. From a scientific research perspective this might be a bad thing but not necessarily.
55. The path (parts of which have been presented here) that has led me to how I identify as an artist-teacher is my path and can, of course, not be prescribed to all, if any, other artists constructing an identity as artist-teachers. From a scientific research perspective this might be a bad thing but not necessarily. Not everybody can have a tutor called Frank but maybe further studies can be made to see if more active and conscious work with peer-to-peer education can, like in my case, lead to an early and strong interest in pedagogy.
56. woolf needed money and a room of her own to write fiction. The participants in this project in Gadehavenaghed may not have money and/or a room of their own – but most of the participants in the workshop have a smart-phone with a video camera and their “family photo album” on it. And they all have YouTube. The “fiction” they write is their own (life)story told through their smart-phones. The participants in the project are working with “A Voice of One’s Own” as a concept that is initiated by an outsider – an artist – me. Each participant has their own individual project/voice but the individual voices also work towards a collective (his/her)story, creating a collective voice of the group of participants from the housing area of Gadehavenaghed.
Gadehavegård is defined by the surrounding observations about identity in the future. The youth commonly see themselves as living in a “ghetto”. Kids belonging to the same school district – both living on the other side of the street – often choose not to go to the Gadehaven youth club. This is because living on the other side of the street means living in private housing, and thereby not living in the “Ghetto”, somewhere other people distance themselves from if living in the surrounding areas of Gadehaven.

The postal code for the area plays a significant role for Gadehaven. The postal area code – 2630 is used as the symbol for living in, and belonging to the GHG area. “2630” is widely written on walls, doors – it is tagged all over the area. I find it interesting in this project considering the issue of identity in GHG, how the postal code 2630 is used as a code for identity – of belonging to a specific place. A postal code is a "thing" given by a social system, as is the label of “ghetto”. How does the construction of identity unfold between these two poles – are they poles or do they in reality mean the same thing? How does this influence the young participants in the workshop? The project is not looking for a straight answer to this – however I find it important to bear these questions in mind as potentially significant observations about identity in the area. Gadehaven is defined by the surrounding society as an “outside”. As an example of this, it is difficult to find good and affordable housing in the area and “on paper” Gadehaven is good and affordable housing. Normally such places have long waiting lists of people wanting to live there. Parents subscribe their kids to these kinds of waiting lists so that they will get a place to live before they grow up. In Gadehaven a waiting list is particularly needed. In the following pages I will describe the project that I am doing in the Gadehaven youth club both in words and conceptually. But first I will introduce some of the questions I have discussed during the concept development of the project. The project is in a field between pedagogy and art. One of my considerations concerns the degree to which it has the possibility to be both, and to what extent it can be defined if one part is of more weight. It also is concerned with whether art and pedagogy can be separated in this project. Can art practice/self-narration/self-representation be a tool in a pedagogical process – and vice versa? And how? Can the participants in the workshop in the youth club Gadehaven learn a new tool of expression, as well as experience that their own life story is important, and that it is an important part of society? That the personal story is political? That it can be representative – political – universal? Can the working method experienced in my empirical data accumulate material of artistic interest? Can it be translated into art somehow separated from its origin – or is it the process and the material aimed toward the project itself? How far can this material go into a wider phenomenon of that art?

I do not think there is a mistake hidden in any place that can unfold cultural understanding. However, I believe that there are, and can be, lessons learned in various forms of applied visual communication in cross-cultural contexts where core problematic(s) and complexities of “otherness” are addressed via contemporary artistic methods. So, I have a “naïve” idea that contemporary art might be particularly suited to challenge post-colonial discourses, without being confronted with the methodological pitfalls inherent in the self-representation of “the other”.

The main tool I examine in this project is participatory video production with smartphone video cameras. I hope to develop self-narration as a tool for society to find personal change and means of communication within the last number of years. I produce video with the participants in the project in Gadehaven and thereby create opportunities for communication that can open the possibility of cross-cultural exchange and knowledge production: tools to use in defining individual positions and social knowledge. This project in Gadehaven I try to give the participants: a “Voice of One’s Own”: tools of self-representation using their smartphone video camera.

Workshop concept
The project takes place in Fritids og ungdomsklubben Gadehaven (Klubben i Centrum) in Gadehaven. The following chapters are based upon the reflections that the project built upon from its beginning. In this youth club I am working with kids and youths from 11 years up to 19 years of age. I produce video with the participants. They will be filming (mainly on their smartphone), editing, and publishing their own stories. I will give them tools and input on how these stories can be told in videos.

How will the young people themselves tell their own stories? The shape can have many formats. These include working with a kind of video diary. Over time, the idea is that the participants build trust and a routine in relation to their camera, which opens up the personal narration. The project will be on the young people’s terms: about what concerns them and what they find important. The videos will be about their life, ideas and about the place they live: about different aspects of their identity; about being young in Denmark; about the relationship between boys and girls; about dreams of the future; about the idea of the good life – etc. Along with the participants making their own videos (in dialogue with me), all the relevant material in the project will be stored on a hard
Aesthetics

The project can be seen as an artistic experiment in relation to the artist's role as an auteur: whether a given film made within the workshop can reflect the artist's particular cinematic style or any special thematic choices in relation to the situation where the participants largely tell the story themselves (in collaboration with me). In this sense it is as important to discuss the stake of the participants in the project. In a later chapter I will discuss this from the perspective of Katrine Hjeld's term “creative passion”.

Regarding the quality and credibility of smart-phone video: a decade ago audiovisuals were largely limited to television and cinema, and filmed on heavy equipment by film professionals. The stories were told and directed by film directors and journalists. Then came the DV-camera “revolution”. Within a few years it became possible for everybody to produce video with a low budget. With digital video cameras and digital video editing facilities on fairly cheap computers there was a “floating” media that could be produced by various professions and individuals. The new possibility with DV-video still needed a platform for publication. Few DV-productions by individuals found their way to the conventional media broadcast platforms. The Internet was still too slow to show video in the form that comes from the “me”: this is the identity of the “I”, which is the active part of our self that cannot be shared. What is shared is the “I”, which is the active part of “me” – communicating other individuals and “the world”. The personal self “the I” takes a shape, a form of presentation that creates a shared history that reflects the group of participants and the area they live in.

Video does not have to be something with a big camera and lots of techniques: it may also be filmed on a smart-phone. All you need is an idea and a few tools on how a story could be told. As an artist I will discuss the material with the participants. In different ways I will facilitate, but the feeling to this kind of video material is credible and authentic. I would to a certain extent claim that this is implicit to the characteristics and the aesthetics (read bad quality) of the video material.

Process

The project considers and discusses a triangle of relationships between:

- ethos / feedback <-> self-presentation / identity
- the self (the “me”) / the personal self (the “I”).
- the media image usually seen of residential areas.

The project works through the personal voice: an opportunity to show an alternative to the media image usually seen of residential areas of this specific character.

The participants have the possibility of gaining understanding of the power of audiovisual media.

Presentation

The project will be presented through the Internet: YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Additionally, we will arrange screenings locally; with a film premiere in the Gadehaven youth club.

The workshop in Gadehaven is an experiment. It is research into using what could be called “parcipatory video” as a tool for social change. The main goal is gaining experience in this way of working. Karl Popper writes about falsifiability. Any experience in this project is falsifiable and faces the problem of demarcation. How does one move from observations to laws? However there could be some “goals” and “objectives” with a hope of gaining experiences that could be used as a possible tool to gain similar patterns and situations in a similar context in the future.

The workshop is aimed at giving potential for personal development of the participants through the triangle discussion between self <-> identity <-> ethos.
participants would experience the attention from the outside world and thereby experience the importance of their own personal stories. The project has a political potential both nationally and locally. On a national level it could possibly change the biased ideas of GHG and areas similar to it. On a local level publicity could help to change the image of “of the youth club belonging to the ‘ghetto’”.

Workshop experience

The project is in process until end of June 2013. At the time of writing this essay in April 2013 a lot of experience has been gained during this process. In January I had a meeting with pedagogue Dina Lindgren from the youth club and supervisor and psychologist Jacqueline Amholt. We discussed the possibilities in the project and shared our expectations. We discussed ways of starting the project in order to motivate the kids and youth from the club to participate in the project. We also discussed how to start the project in a way that explained the project to the participants without guiding “too much”, in the fear of keeping the participants enough for the participants to create their own voice. We all agreed that this would be a difficult and ambivalent balance. Ambivalent because the participants need to know what to do, but on the other hand very easy to be guided too much, where they tell their own story less from their own mind, leading to a situation similar to an interview format.

1st day in the workshop

We decided in this first meeting that we would present the project with an event in the youth club. We would use the event to firstly gather those interested and thereby introduce a tool such as the game “best, best, worst”: talking about the two best and worst events, and thereby understand what was important. Some of the kids tried to work with the project, but others did not fit in with the “normal” public youth club. The evening club is a place to meet because for various reasons they do not fit in with the “normal” public youth institution. The person in charge of the satellite youth club has some important issues that came up in working with the group members and practically only four young people attending on a regular basis. It was part of the plan that I should work with this satellite youth club every second week. As I had few members in the evening club I faced an unexpected problem in the project: a few months before the start of my project the youth club had started up a “satellite” youth club. This new place has a very different character. It is placed in a basement inside the social housing area. The group was described like this in the local newspaper, with the headline: “A U-turn towards a new life”.

“I can sometimes take a new turn, but sometimes this turn must be helped a bit. Hard training, guidance, group mentality and strict rules are means to the goal, which is to keep young people in Gadehavsgården from being recruited for gang crime.”

It is not a youth club in the same sense as the public department Gadehaven. There is no payment for membership. In public youth clubs you must pay for a membership. The satellite club is a place for young guys from the housing area before this project came up did not have a place to meet because for various reasons they did not fit in with the “normal” public youth institution. The person in charge of the satellite club has a story with the headline: “A U-turn towards a new life”.

“The biggest number of people I experienced was four, and they all were 12 years old, and thereby also part of the afternoon club. So practically I had no participants to work with between 12 and 19 years of age. This situation was new to the youth club. There were various reasons for this. One reason was of special interest for my project. A few months before the start of my project the youth club had started up a “satellite” youth club. This new place has a very different character. It is placed in a basement inside the social housing area. The group was described like this in the local newspaper, with the headline: “A U-turn towards a new life”.

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Taking this situation into consideration I found myself in a project that for me became a source of interesting experiences, but at the same time a process with fewer possibilities for moving forward as planned.

Finding a way forward

The basis for working with the key principles in the project had been challenged drastically. I paused the project for a couple of weeks to reconsider the concept and strategies. I have, in cooperation with artist Nynne Haugeard, made a series of art projects in similar housing areas: projects about alternative voices and representation. As explained earlier the key experiment in this project — based on the background of earlier experiences — is that the participants tell, film and edit their own stories. The concept and hope is that this way of working creates a story with a specific character. The project aims to gain material from the participants without the filter of having an interviewer and a camera that is not controlled by the participant. The idea in the project is to develop some material that could be seen as the participant’s “own voice”, and to reject the power relation of being an interviewer and talked behind a dangerous weapon (a camera) in front of a victim (the participant).
Working with art projects in the context of international “development” work in Nepal for two years I have been used to considering the dif-
ferent stakeholders in a project. Looking at this project from this same perspective it is interesting to consider what is at stake: who are the stake-
holders in this project that concerns representa-
tion? To quote my colleague Nynne Haugaard: “The things we photograph ourselves in the context of art is usually things, places and people that produce pleasure in us. The pictures are mediators of the culture of positive experiences.”

We normally use photography and video con-
cerning private issues in a way that is so private that outsiders do not understand the situation. You have to be part of the situation or you have to know the people in the photo very well to understand it. Most people have experienced other peoples’ photos from a holiday or from a wedding, etc. The positive experience is normally not passed on through the photog-
raphy. So working with the personal story in this project is different from the “family album situation”. This way of working with “a voice of one’s own” needs a different motivation. This motivation is different for me as an artist and initiator than the motivation for youth club and the participants – the kids and youth. We have different stakes.

Because of the specific character of the housing area Gadehavegård I have a political stake in the project. Even though I feel like I am studying, victimising and labelling the area of Gadehavegård and the people living there, one can argue that it is relevant to consider different aspects of otherness in this project: Gayatri C. Spivak is asking the same question in her essay from 1988: “Can the subaltern speak?”7 Hito Steyerl says about Spivak’s text that Although they can speak, we simply do not hear them.8

Spivak argues that the dynamics of “the other” is always changing between being subject and the abstract. According to Spivak self-abstrac-
tion is one of the important points. Reason and logic is not our superior according to Spivak.9 It is a significant difference from the image of the subaltern as the voiceless. There is a cor-
relation between the subaltern, feminism and the post-colonial in relation to the representa-
tion and inclusion of marginalized groups.

Therefore it is of great importance that it is not me – an outsider, white Danish male – who films, edits and presents the participants. They must do it in order to create a credible and alternative image from the area; that they have the possibility of creating a difference, politically speaking, on their own terms, with both transparency and a critical approach to contemporary prevailing hegemonic discourses. The participants are to be heard and not to be misrepresented (by me).

Being critical and self-critical in relation to the discourses that the participants are part of is a goal that I, as an artist, have on the behalf of the participants. On a professional level my personal stake is that this project may success-
fully create interesting working situations for me in the future. One could argue that it is about “credit, money and fame”, but I think that there could be an easier way to that end: the stake for me … I do not exactly know. The reasons to do it are difficult to define. I will come back to the term “creative passion” later in this essay. For me it is essentially about being a tool that makes a difference in the context it operates within. Art is a tool. The youth club itself has a stake in the project because success could attract more members to the club. For the institution the project could potentially create an opportunity for attracting members from outside the GHG social housing area. This is softer than the image of the youth club as a subaltern position the youth club’s district contains housing that is not dealing with a subaltern position. New members in the youth club from these areas could differentiate the member groups in the youth club.

If the participants in this video project were aware of this, things would look very differ-
ent. It is not the case that they are simply kids. They have grown and seen concerns connected to using a video. For me this does not mean that there are not potentials in working with the 10-12 year olds. A mapping of the various interests that the group has in the project is important to me especially because the project – at the time of writing this essay – is starting to deal with a lack of interest in the project. What can motivate an 11 year old child to make a video about her or himself? As a subaltern position the youth club’s project stands at the moment, with no other factors of motivation, a key word is relation: relation to initiator, the cooperating pedagogue, and with other members of the club. There is also the fact that the kids learn how to make videos on their smart-phones and learn how to edit the video and publish it on YouTube etc. However this is not a direct motivation – not something that makes a participant really motivated to start telling a personal story. It is also impor-
tant to look at eventual de-motivating factors.

According to Spivak it is about learning more than about knowing. We must beware of being subject and the abstract. According to Spivak self-abstrac-
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freedom and limitation. This project is no excep-
tion. The project is determined by the partici-
pants: I am the artist, the initiator and facilitator,
but I am nothing without the participants. Crea-
tive passion connected to learning can be seen as
a tool that can eventually be used more generally
than just in the context of art practice. In differ-
ent ways this influences the conversations and
any action I take in cooperation with the partic-
ipants. They are not artists— but they take part
in an art project. They are young— but they have
skills adults do not have. The key to success in
the project is finding a way to communicate with
the participants’ feelings of need, motivation and
ownership. One of the ways towards this is to
develop and consider the relation between myself
and the participants: between “the students and
the teacher.”

The work of Gert Biesta in Mind the Gap:
Communication and the Educational Relation
made me adopt the ideas of relational pedagogy
as a constructive approach in this project. My
concern is based on the limited time I have with
each person in the workshop for the building
of relations. Biesta describes “the gap” between
teachers and students as the space where interac-
tion and learning can take place. For example he
writes in the chapter “Conclusions: Teaching in
the Gap”:
“The relation is only possible because of the exist-
ence of an unrepresentable transformative gap, a
space of enunciation that cannot be controlled by
any of the partners in interaction, but at the very
same time makes communication possible.”

As an artist in a pedagogical position I am deal-
ing with more than one gap. One gap is in my
role as a teacher in relation to the participants.
The other gap is in the relation between me, as
an artist, and the pedagogues in the youth club.
This relationship influences my relation with
the participants, as they are aware of me as an
outsider. They cannot ask me about normal daily
routines in the club: for example if they need a
bat for table tennis they must go to one of the
pedagogues—not me. So being both an artist
and (some kind of) a colleague with a team of
pedagogues at the same time and in the same
place results in a double gap and thereby it could
possibly complicate things. I need to facilitate
the pedagogues as well in order to keep the
project active when I am not there. As Biesta also
writes in the same chapter: “… acknowledge the existence of the gap as a
space of enunciation that is brought into exist-
ence only as a result of the common effort of
teachers and learners, a space that exists only in
communication. To go into the gap, to “descend
into that alien territory, entails both risk and
an opportunity. The risk is clear: The space of
enunciation is in very fundamental and practical
sense unpredictable. Yet it is at the same time the
space in which speaking becomes possible; it is
the space, in other words, where people— indivi-
dual, singular beings— can reveal who they are,
can come” into presence.”

Taking this into consideration might undermine
the concern of the double gap.

If the pedagogical relation explores the
lived space between teacher and learner, such
knowledge will always be under construction
and based on who we are as singular beings,
humans, me. In the project I learn from both the
pedagogues and the participants and visa versa.
In a discussion of pedagogy as relation— or as
communication in the gap— I find it interesting
to take the concept of the project in the Gade-
haven project into consideration. To a certain
degree I would argue that the pedagogical aspect
is built into the project itself. The pedagogical
aspect is both in the project itself, “as a tool box
doing”, and in the relations this “doing” cre-
ates. The more the students “do” the more there
is to work with. The material is the voice of the
participant, but these voices do not come to the
project without pedagogical effort.

In Ann-Mari Edström’s writings, Art Stu-
dents Making use of Studio Conversations, she
describes how the teacher takes part in “expanding
the art student’s options”. In studio conversations
there is a balance between talking about the
things the student has already done, the things
the student could have done, and the things the
student could try out in the future. To which
extent “expanding the student’s options” can
potentially turn into “giving direct advice”, and
thereby taking over the creative process: taking
the creativity out of the student’s hands. How is
it possible to influence the student’s process in a
way that actually expands the student’s way of
thinking and thereby leaving the creative process
up to the student, with new options for the them to choose and self explore? One of the tools for this, according to Edström, is the student’s development of meta awareness which depends on the student’s power of initiative.37 I see this in my own terms and in this actual teaching situation: the more I get from the participants’ own initiative, the more the participants take the lead in the project, and the more the participant knows what to do. I am able to give feed back with less risk of taking over the creative process for the kids. The feeling of ownership in the process is therefore vitally important.

It is violent not to think for oneself? I see it as a tool for social change. Art is a field for challenging and stimulating free independent thinking. This freedom is bound to certain (restrictive) limitations – but without going too deeply into a discussion of freedom I claim art as a field of free independent thinking. Basically this is what the project in Gadehavn is about. There are several possible ways towards free thinking in the project. In this context I find it relevant to consider Hannah Arendt’s thoughts about violence in the context of un-critically. For Arendt, bureaucracy and the totalitarian state are not free. A society that does not reflect by himself, and therefore does not draw consequences of violence – especially in this project working with kids and youth – is not the same as freedom. Freedom is not about removing obstacles, but about learning to practice freedom positively. Freedom is not outside people, but in and in-between people.41 In this sense, Arendt’s notion of the building of trust and relation between myself and the participants is a keystone in the pedagogical approach. These relations can only be built upon true consideration of the position and reflections of the kids. It is their knowledge and thoughts and their integrity that is the material in the project. Working with this material will have to be on their territory with me as a catalyst working in their view as a guest. How to do that?

Spivak talks about “unlearning” as a tool and a way not to fall into uncritical reproduction of post-colonialism. We must make room for other systems of knowledge, and look beyond the European logic, she says. Self-abandonment is one of Spivak’s points. Common sense is not superior. The logic belongs not only to Europe and the European way of seeing. Spivak says that the Subalterns is not determined by caste, race, gender or class. It is defined by an “outside”, which contains all of the subaltern forms.21 Straight away in the youth club I am the outsider.42 I represent the group I belong to: Hetronormative middle class white man from somewhere else but GHG. My interventions are not immediately clear to the kids why am I here? I do not work in the youth club and most staff don’t act as if they invited me. To a certain extent the children know that I work with them because they are “ghetto-kids”. The more time I invest, the more we share relations in which we maybe not unlearn. I believe it is the kids and youth that have the potential to change things from a perspective of abing of difference – in the sense of human being. The hosting area is facing political trouble locally because of different groups of the population wanting the power in the board in the area. The area is in general polarised in many ways. Introducing the private spaces of art practice – in particular this project working with kids and youth under the age of 18. Somehow it would be obvious to do the same project with both adults instead of kids and youth. But the kids and youth have a special spontaneity. Adults would, in many cases, need a critical interviewer in order to get “behind the surface”. Arendt writes that absence of violence is not the same as freedom. Freedom is not about

Video as “clay”

The Indian artist KP Soman works with visual art in different subaltern contexts in India. For example, he works to educate illiterate dalit factory workers through visual expression and creativity in various workshops that thousands of workers participate in during their lunch break in New Delhi’s factory areas. One of his ways of working is through expressions in clay. Soman sees clay as one of mankind’s most basic means of expression prior to the spoken word. He invites participants in the workshop to articulate artistic expressions in clay to express issues around identity and socio-political concerns.

In the context of the video workshop with the youth in GHG I see the smart-phone camera as similar to the clay in the workshops in Delhi. It is right there in the pocket; ready to use like clay in the ground; ready to use for expression. Through visualization there may be other approaches and models of intercultural understanding and communication. Visual learning is an expression of opposition to “knowing” in a context of intercultural dynamics.

Homi K. Bhabha’s theory opens up a vision of possibilities, in relation to the understanding of “the mill” (“Ochre”) relationship(s). Bhabha focuses on ways of thinking issues of identity, sociality and national affiliations. Bhabha argues for a transcendence of binary relationships such as you/your, or west/east. Bhabha believes that there is a need for a theory of cultural hybridity to interpret social differences. Bhabha points out that diversity is often (wrongly) perceived as culturally and politically based.43 I see the knowledge gained in a place such as the youth
The youth club’s theoretical references

In the following I will introduce some of the theory of the youth club as a theoretical framework for the project. I will use it as a point of discussion of the position as an artist in this pedagogical and social context. Karin Flensborg and Kirsten Thøngsgaard in *Tid til fortælling* (2004, p. 11) state:

“...the child that there is a conclusion – that
everything ends, that the life thread cuts, that
civilizations, planets, solar systems can end, can
be unpleasant. But not nearly as scary as the
idea that there is no beginning. Without a clear
beginning, no “fate” – only indeterminacy and
meaninglessness. If life on earth is just arisen by
chance during star formation, and if our own
lives are nothing but a bit of biochemistry, it
would not be unbearable. There must be a proper
beginning, otherwise we’ll make it! And so we
do. Whether it is God or the great coincidence
that has equipped us with the ability, we create
stories. We create big and small stories of our
lives, value, revise and edit the chapters – and we
certainly do forget much. It’s pretty complicated
to keep track of the story about me and the oth-
ers, but we do not think of it. Not always. And we
fantasize: about the life we want, we would have,
or know that we cannot get, but that’s why it
means something. We create other stories, other
reality, other possible situations. This is the
imagination, this is the way we create individual
narrative. Otherwise life would just consist
of a series of strange events without head
and tail, something that befall us, without us un-
derstanding anything of what it was all about.”

The personal story in this pedagogical context of
the youth club is interesting for considering the
balance and connection between the personal
and the political. The immediate pedagogi-
cal process is in the situation of the individual
calling telling the personal story. The reflection
and awareness that connects to this situation
is of immediate importance for the pedagogue
working with the kids on a daily basis. It is
something that can be used in the relationship
with the kids – it is a tool to build relations. It
is also a tool to build capacity and self-awareness
for the kids on a personal level. I find that
these immediate goals are somehow difficult to
combine with. Sometimes I have the feeling that
I come as an outsider – not knowing the kids
well enough personally – wanting them to do
something as part of an artistic experiment with
political aim that might be too disconnected
from the personal situation for the kids. As an
artist working in the youth club I have to use
the personal relations as a main tool of facilita-
tion on the same terms as the pedagogue does
on a daily basis. Therefore the cooperation with
the pedagogue in the project is very important.
If the pedagogue and the kids work with the
project where I am not present there is a chance
that others are in a similar situation to us. It can
be seen as the first step towards political aware-
ness. I see the next quote from the youth club’s
references as opening up this discussion. Birthe
Juhl Clausen and Jørgen Lauritzen state:

“The narrative is a metaphor expressing that
we humans perceive and experience our lives
through the stories we tell. The story of our
lives creates a framework for our experience and
organizes and structures the experience.”

For me this is where the personal starts getting
toward the political. In a postmodernist outsider
in the youth club I am seen as a representative of
society rather than being a member of the “daily
youth club family” as I would be if I were a
pedagogue working on a daily basis in the club.
In this position I expand the framework that
the participants’ stories are told within. I see this as
a possibility of creating a context for political aware-
ness. I have experienced this as a direct
of achieving the results we want. I am the fac-
tor that enables the kids to develop the project
further than the personal but that becomes prob-
lematic if the immediate personal level for each
participant is not considered as the first step.
Therefore the balance between the personal
and the political is starting with the personal
story for each participant. Because the participants
are younger than preferred by me, the project has to
be considered in the context of not aiming too far
into the wider political perspective. As can be
seen in the theoretical references from the youth
club the personal story is widely seen as a way
of personal development. This is also the case in
the next position by Karin Flensborg and Kirsten
Thøngsgaard.

“Most of the stories we grapple with, remains
far into the wider political perspective. As can be
seen in the theoretical references from the youth
club the personal story is widely seen as a way
of personal development. This is also the case in
the next position by Karin Flensborg and Kirsten
Thøngsgaard.

‘...the society in general and for the multicultural
society label and represent them we will work
towards a situation that will be positive both for
the society and for each multicultural
...’”

The project has to be predicted. The project is falsifiable.

The idea that there is a conclusion – that
everything ends, that the life thread cuts, that
civilizations, planets, solar systems can end can
also be realized. For example the project
was interesting for her although she
said from the very beginning that the
project acted like her, by starting to produce
video material for herself. The creative process is
the “room of her own”, and she is aware that if it
is combined with either social tools or a collec-
tive voice it will turn into something else. If I, as
the artist in the project, get to work with her
material it will change and may potentially lose
its creative and artistic force in her creative uni-
verse – the “room of her own”. So in this sense
the biggest success in the project is a participant
who has decided not to take part.

I hope the investment of time in the project
will open up the possibility for further develop-
ment of this girl’s video story – on her
own terms. One could say that as the artist I
opened up her way of working by introducing
the project, but that she alone discovered and
stopped her creative process by wanting her to
do something specifically. I do not know if I can
find an argument that will open up her project
and make her gain confidence in me. If not I
hope she will use these experiences somehow
further on in her life.

I think that if more participants in the
project acted like her, by starting to produce
video on their own and refusing to share it in
the way that art would normally be shared, then
the project would be a huge success. The highest
goal in the project is free independent thinking
and creating “rooms of one’s own.” The project
is highly process-oriented even though there is a
toolbox of ways things should be done, whilst in
the project concept, no deductive conclusion can
be predicted. The project is falsifiable.
This somehow leads me to the last quote from the youth club’s references:

“A tale and an argument progresses in different ways. In an argument the conclusion must necessarily be, as it is, and a good line of an argument implies that the deductive conclusion can be predicted. When you follow a narration, you have to pay attention all the way to its end, the end cannot be predicted or deduced.”

This project is its own tale in many ways. I have no idea how it will end and there are no good arguments that will make the kids tell their own story alone. It is up to the personal relations and about paying attention to the kids all the way. At this time of writing the workshop in Gadehaven is at the point of reconsidering its strategies. The basic idea is still about creating “a voice of one’s own” for the participants through telling their personal story on video. As described earlier the experiment has until now been concerned with the participants using their smart-phones to tell their personal stories. As in Virginia Woolf’s thinking of how a room of one’s own and money in the context of freedom from social obligations will create a room for creative expression, this project has experimented with a room of one’s own via a tool (the smart-phone) for storytelling that is already there in the pocket, and a facilitator – an outsider – me. It has been the hope in the workshop that storytelling could be like a game and that the spontaneity of 12 year olds could be the factor that opened up the space for personal narration. At this point, half way through, the project has failed, but it has failed interestingly with a lot of experiences gained.

This project is as much about listening as it is about expression. As Hito Steyerl says about Spivak’s text, “although they can speak, we simply do not hear them.” As a project facilitator, I have not taken into consideration enough that my listening is as important as the kid’s self-expression. Communication in this project needs to be seen as a two-way communication. Children live through relations with other people, they depend on their relations to friends, family and pedagogues etc. in the process of growing up. For the children and youth “a room of one’s own” is a collective room built upon human relations. I explained to one of the kids who was interested in the workshop that if he wanted to participate he should do a film about himself – that he was the expert in telling a story about himself. He got very enthusiastic and started to film straight away. After a while he came back and showed me his video. He had filmed the youth club from the outside. For him self-representation was filming the youth club in the sense of “where I am – is who I am”. In the process of building identity relations are important tools. Relation is listening. The kids cannot tell their story in solitude; “a room of one’s own” is for them a collective room. In this sense, and in connection to the discussion of the position we speak from, I find it relevant to look at Arendt’s point regarding the individual and the public realm, both for the artist – me – and for the workshop participants:

“This revelatory quality of speech and action comes to the fore where people are with others and neither for nor against them – that is, in sheer human togetherness. Although nobody knows whom he reveals when he discloses himself in deed or word, he must be willing to risk the disclosure, and this neither the doer of good works, who must be without self and preserve complete anonymity, nor the criminal who must hide himself from others, can take upon themselves. Both are lonely figures, the one being for, the other against, all men; they, therefore, remain outside the pale of human intercourse and are, politically, marginal figures who usually enter the historical scene in times of corruption, disintegration, and political bankruptcy. Because of its inherent tendency to disclose the agent together with the act, action needs for its full appearance the shining brightness we once called glory, and which is possibly only in the public realm.”

We, the kids, me and the pedagogues are in this together, we need the public realm and we do not mind (some) glory.
“Fashion should thus be considered…”

a cardigan with its collar open

O S V

high waists for (evening) gowns

V S O
collars that are small for (sports) shirts

S V O

“Image-clothing and written clothing”, the opening onto Roland Barthes’ methodological negotiations of things and words, of concepts and their revision. Barthes’ Système de la Mode, translated as The Fashion System, was finally published in 1967, six years after being written, and opens, quite appropriately, with a description of another type of publication being opened. The declarative style of the opening makes quite clear the question that although some things may find their place in the world: “is there any system of objects… which can dispense with articulated language?” (FS: xi). The text quickly introduces us to the central division in its study of fashion as it informs us of the lines, surfaces, forms and colours and their relation to the spatial that belong to the photographed and drawn presentations (image-clothing) alongside the distinctly verbal/relational space which he attributes to words – the syntactical. Clearly stated, the first structure is plastic, the second is verbal.

The use of the ideas contained in Barthes’ text by someone wanting to understand clothing, or indeed, the economic and social values connected to the world of fashion, would be fairly confused. What Barthes demonstrated with this publication was the huge stock of techniques that are used to sell things to consumers. The writing primarily seems to involve the subject of language and, long after we have become familiar with the deconstructive approaches toward advertising, Barthes’ thought is still rewarding through the unexpected way it differentiates a system of fashion situated against French linguistic analysis of the sixties (a scene in its own right). Clothing, fashion, the articulation of the ways in which these existences proceed through obscure manufacturing techniques are ‘pinned’ onto the surface of the author’s form. Those spaces are transformed, are placed and through the written word the mechanisms comprising the fashion system are made intelligible, legible, calculable. The Fashion System draws from a commercial origin the thing we turn to in order to clothe ourselves in our existence – meaning. In order to say such a thing, Barthes uses the fashion world as a vehicle to demonstrate how our existence is fashioned through language and, in turn, how the existence of fashion is made clearer than ever through his method of language.

It’s not a book about the things which make up fashion, although it includes all those concepts. Pattern, form, structure, fabric, cutting, sewing, dyeing, constructing, wearing, timing, photographing, displaying – all those things that already exist within a world of language relations, a world which those particular things constitute – something he calls the vestimentary.

Yet curiously it is also not a book about language. This is where the publication performs its precious trick. It addresses neither language nor clothing as things in themselves, but instead the translation of one into the other. Not a conversion of things into words and words into things but the way in which, say, the technical language of clothing translates into a world of ‘things’, things that don’t answer to the call of the object or verbal sign but instead overflow, with some discomfort, those two conventions. The reader becomes acutely aware of things being relocated, not displaced as such but more aware that the reference calls for reorganizing, renaming, relocating the things which populate my practice appear when I try to be precise about what it is that I am focusing on.
something quite specific it can be said to mean In art and architecture
5. Articulation here visible spatial enclosure.


7. Theoretically speaking three authors come to mind: Baublattner, Barthes, Bourdieu.


9. Gottfried Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics, and Tectonic Arts; or, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Versecion which is being treated as the thing itself?


11. Otto Wagner, Die Bekleidung unsener Zeit, 1914, p. 76. This is an expanded edition of the textbook Wagner published, first in 1895, under the title Moderne Architektur. Wagner changed the title from Architecture to Architecture: the Art of Building (Baukunst), he said under the impact of Hermann Muthesius polemic. Baukonst, nich Stilarchitek- tur, an important docu- ment in the revolt against historical aesthetic.


5. Articulation here should mean something more specific than its everyday use of making clear through speech. In art and architecture it can be said to mean something quite specific in that it is a ‘stylistic of the parts’. This is impor- tant to my own practice as it accurately locates style as an interaction between two things – the corner of two walls in architecture, textiles and architecture or ver- balization and technical description. Style occurs in the joining of these things.


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those ‘others’, the Japanese arts, contained that fascinated Europeans? Did modern European eyes see something both influenced by themselves and yet still sufficiently different from its own influences to be able to play a role in new Europe?

Around 1900 in Vienna, the 6th exhibition of the Secession was devoted to Japanese Art in rooms specially designed by Koloman Moser. This ‘japonisme’, a French term for the influence of the arts from Japan, was first addressed by Adolf Loos in his journal Das Andere. Loos’ expresses his thoughts and theories of contemporary architecture, fashion and design, aiming attention mainly at England and America. Throughout the journal the issue of Japanese context arises enough to sense that Loos was aligning it with the things he found suspiciously threatening. The danger, according to him, laid in Japan overtaking Austria in its process of cultural development and production.

Adolf Loos’ Ornament and Crime was first published in 1910, not long followed by Junichirō Tanizaki’s In Praise of Shadows, an essay focused on the analysis of Japanese aesthetics. Loos’ sardonic understandings of non-style, as the proper architectural style for the modern age, are hard to read now without seeing their content as culturally shortsighted. Hindsight makes something like this far easier to see now, however what might be more interesting to pursue is the reading of Loos, the author of such a devoted vision of Anglo-Saxon utopia, a rather distant respect toward the ‘unknown’ East? They could be described as two faces of the same modern coin. Loos with his puritanical campaign and Tanizaki, all degenerate eroticized space. Where would they both be without each other’s conceptual realm to transgress? Each purging the space of its ornament. Yet the conflict in Tanizaki cannot be so easily positioned by the immediate bi-polarity offered in the quote from Tanizaki above. It is always useful to remember that Japan’s alternate modernism developed alongside the paradoxes that lay at its core. Not one of light and darkness or the idea of the ‘thing’ as a nondescript product of the industrial era, but the conflict of a nation that, during this revolutionary period, was caught between the irresolvable contrary identifications of belonging to their region whilst identifying with the western colonial powers which occupied them. Given this fact, the influence of William Morris’ revolutionary textiles, although popular, would have appeared as half colonial influence, half revolutionary call for a response. The wrong revolution in the right place.

My work practice is divided between two procedures; the first one is associated with the principle of utility in art that is employed in each different project, and the second one is focused on the development of the research of the subject matter (with the use of mainly historical references) and the skills of the technique. Therefore there will be a division into two sections also in this text. First I will analyse the progress of my practice, with examples of recent works that share similar values and methods of production. The second section is the written result of my research made for the work presented at the BFA Graduation Show, entitled Tectonic Textile (Study for a Textile Design). Both held important significances for the process of the artwork.

In my latest works, there has been an intention to cross boundaries between Fine Arts and Applied Arts. Above all, the aim of combining both is to provide a functional approach for the object produced. This continual attempt to fuse and yet to miss one another allows a new interpretation for new aesthetic goals, by imagining a material object that is animated differently from the commodity. What is interesting for me is the attempt of reimagining the social from the position of the artist and making a point of identification from the space of art into the space of the social. It is precisely the possible slippage between material and purpose, by showing the technical drawing demonstrates the connection between material and purpose, by showing how it was made. The contradiction allows a new space for challenge by using the artistic skills of the artist to become a different kind of social agency to the structure of the fetishisation of the object.

This should be the first step to be explained about my practice, which could be said to be associated with the Russian Constructivist ethos. For artists such as Alexander Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova and Liubov Popova, art had to be practiced for social purposes and incorporated into everyday life. Most of the artists associated with Russian Constructivism attempted in various and significantly different ways to enter into the Soviet mass production after the Russian Revolution. Undoubtedly, this utopian vision of bringing engineering to a deep engagement with the construction of a new everyday life under socialism could have only taken form in post-revolutionary Russia. However, two artists that I would like to focus on that have influenced my work Tectonic Textile (Study for a Textile Design) are Varvara Stepanova and Liubov Popova. During 1923-24, Stepanova and Popova were invited to work at the First State Cotton-Printing Factory in Moscow. Both artists ’(…) fulfilled the Constructivist brief of abandoning the role of the individual artist-craftsman and entering into collective factory production as ‘artist-productivists’ to produce utilitarian things for the socialist collective’. I find it interesting to see that the Constructivists’ activity in the textile factory proved an important experiment in adapting artistic creativity to textile production, and to an industry which had previously operated by adapting foreign models to local conditions, often by the simple expedient of reconstructing parts of the old patterns to the ‘new’ patterns. One of the first steps in bringing artistic creativity to the routine work of factory ‘designers’ was the arrival of both Stepanova and Popova to textile manufacturing.

The work Tectonic Textile (Study for a Textile Design) is installed with a woven fabric (wool and cotton) hanging-out from the wall, as used in showrooms, and the original technical drawing of the design framed. The practice consisted of three parts. After reading about the works of Stepanova and Popova, I became interested in learning about the process of creating patterns for textile design. The first step was to attain information of the basis of symmetry for the pattern structure to be organized in a regular manner, followed by the technique skills used in weaving production. The technical drawing is arranged accurately for both the setting of the lengthwise yarns that are held on the loom, also known as the warp, and the yarns that are inserted over-and-under the warp threads, the weft. The installation of both the fabric and the technical drawing demonstrates the connection between material and purpose, by showing how it was made. The second part is addressed to the research realized for the choice of the patterns. Briefly, it developed from various read- ings and architecture classes realized during my exchange program in Seoul, South Korea. One of the books mentioned in our classes was Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts by Gottfried Semper. In his book, Semper introduced the
Robert Musil, the main character Ulrich offers a striking critique about the state of affairs during this period in Austria: “Tell me what your house is and I’ll tell you what you are,” of which he had often read in art journals. After intensive study of these journals he came to the conclusion that he preferred, after all, to take the architectural completion of his personality into his own hands.”

After intensive study of various examples of artists, architects and writers such as William Morris, Adolf Loos and Junichiro Tanizaki, associated with the subject. Lastly, the third part concluded with the proposal made to the factory to produce the textile. The design is now included in the look-book of Junichirō Tanizaki, associated with the subject.

The Vienna Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte. During this period in Austria, art and artistic practice in general was very closely based on the principle of design. With figures such as Josef Hoffmann and Otto Wagner, whose work extended from architecture to the entire furnishings, from floor coverings, wall panelings, carpets and rugs to door handles, desks, chairs and lamps, etc. The Wiener Werkstätte was a workshop/company constituted by artists, architects and designers who worked together with the same aim of reforming art by adding utilitarian function with high-quality craftsmanship. Nevertheless, it was especially due to the high prices of their products that the Wiener Werkstätte failed to accomplish its primary social cause, resulting in the bankruptcy of the company. The individualism of the handicraft in contrast to the mass-produced objects characterize the principal difference from the Constructivists’ ideology. As a reader, for me both movements offer valuable standpoints in the development of artistic activity in the industry.

“Tell me what your house is and I’ll tell you who you are.”

Previously in my work entitled Présen’Action après Henri Michaux from 2012’s art exhibition Exquisite Corpse. I experience the unconscious, the irrational, and the immediately meaningful. What meaning does the physical delivery of my language have? The presence, even the absent presence of my body. When I speak to my child my body moves at the same time. I may get up, sit by his side, look away, carry his back, look down at the floor, smile, put my hand to his head, raise my voice, sigh, laugh... the semiotics of my body usually tell him more than what I say because the body has already Confessed.

My alarm clock worked, tick-tock, and then stopped. Silence. And suddenly the hand moved again. ‘Time doesn’t pass, it is.’ We are also mistaken about the movement of things to come. ‘The future is fixed, dear Mr. Kappus; we, however, move about in endless space.’

Because thought was my greatest enemy I discovered my body. My thought can dominate, increase, and transform itself into fear. If I don’t relinquish control of thought it becomes paralyzing and takes my body hostage. It conquers my body and its reality. These thoughts move forward in time and try to secure reality in advance. When they move away from the here and now, they therefore do not meet any reflective surface, anything concrete; everything becomes a land of thought. In the void of the present I can play and fantasise. Unintended hallucinations, images. To work in a similarity. To work in an anomaly.

My internal organs digest. They insist on experience. Existence is absorbed through the matter of the body and it is metabolized and digested. The brain sends impulses to the
body and the body sends impulses to the brain. I insist on the matter and movement of the body. The thousand movements a body can make. The thousand spaces in which the body can find itself. The thousand bodies the body contains. The torso is my switchboard where signals are connected. Materials to objects, objects to spaces, spaces to materials. I am on the look-out for an unmistakable sense of body. Fluids. Consistency. Membranes. The smell of the newborn or of the tainted. Waves of growth and decay.


“The torso – only he who can view his own past as an abortion sprung from compulsion and need can use it to full advantage in the present. For what one has lived at best comparable to a beautiful statue which has had all its limbs knocked off in transit, and now yields nothing but the precious block out of which the image of one’s future must be hewn.”

The torso is a vital organ from which the future grows.
I remember moving rapidly down a street, my eyes catching a guilty peek at an old window installation composed of outdated sex toys and porn movie covers. They had all been discoloured by a combination of sunlight and dust. The dildos’ false skin tones had gone sickly pale, where there once was any hope of liveliness and authenticity. Only a short look was needed before my eyes settled comfortably back on the passing monochrome surface of asphalt. At the same time as always I forgot to cross the street in time to avoid the uncomfortable presence of reality, I moved through a small crowd of blank eyed and toothless faces, people scratching at the pavement. The encounter triggered unweariness, a growing anxiety, that would for the time being be blamed on the alcohol I had consumed the night before to undermine complete boredom. Then, straight ahead, a huge winged “S” manifested itself triumphantly as a war shield on a large brick wall. The monumental building was the Copenhagen Central Station; I approached it from the west side, by way of Istedgade. I entered the building that at a rapid pace that seemed to descend almost completely into a large staircase. As I moved through the space I found myself suddenly participating in a public dance scene, my body willingly moved to some strange surfing choreography. I was aware of how far out into the room you can reach and of not bumping into anyone else. Lower the tempo again. Walk at a regular pace. Move as slowly as you can. Slow down completely. Notice the warmth flowing through your body. All the cells are active and spread their substance through your body. Return to your place and find your position and stop.  

Pendulum  
I alternate between making the present tangible and dissolving it again. Arrivals and departures. The analysis must be kept absolutely out of this space in order to prevent the moment from disintegrating. I am the liar, the soothsayer, and the judge who reflect through works, process through materials, associate through space. 

SIMEN GODTFREDSEN  
“There is not enough Prozac in the world to make people feel ok about going down this block.”

3. "The carceral Archipelago" refers to Michel Foucault’s use of the term in Discipline and Punish, see Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1977) p. 297.

4. T.J. Demos, “The Cruel Dialectic: On the Work of Nils Norman” (Gray Room no. 13, p.33) (since I did not have the original source available at this time, Nils Norman, The Contemporary Pictur scape, the quote is from a second hand source)

5. The Invisible Commit­tee, The Coming Insur­rection (Semiotext(e) Intervention Series, 2007)

6. ibid., pp. 57-58.


The outward signs of training, regulation and correction of behaviour to be found on a new island in the ‘carceral Archipelago’; the modern city, (...) today’s deterrent designs work to purify the public by eliminating all undesirables; to keep the vagrant body away from certain areas, off surfaces, regulated when seated, controlled when walking, all in the name of reproducing an ideal consumerized body.¹

I find it interesting that he points out many of the actual mechanisms as play and where they take place. I don’t know if I would consider a traffic hollard or a person watering down some stairs to prevent littering as something significant. But it is the combination of all these elements that seem to make a difference. To sit particularly uncomfortably on a steel bench while waiting for the bus in a glass shed that offers a minimal amount of shelter does not have to be part of daily life. But all these elements seem to have become a trend in urban development.

The safe haven of the gated community has grown out of proportion in such a manner that it now excludes all its inhabitants.

In Claude Faraldo’s movie from 1973, Themera, the main character blocks up the only entrance to his room. He builds a barricade between his home and the outside. Then he reopens his connection to the world by smashing out the window, and by going at the wall around it with a sledgehammer, he makes a great hole in the wall facing out into the backyard of the apartment building. Out of the hole he throws his clothes and furniture, leaving only the raw interior space and his naked body. He performs a rebellion against social and physical conventions, by attacking the structure of his habitat, and by returning to a primitive animalistic state; naked and roaring he protects his newly revealed cave. In a passage from the book The Coming Insurrection I could read a similar redefinition of space performed by the Israeli army. It says that “the armed forces don’t simply adapt themselves to the metropolis, they produce it. (...) the Israeli soldiers have become interior designers. Forced by Palestinian guerrillas to abandon the streets, which had become too dangerous, they learned to advance vertically and horizontally into the heart of the urban architecture, poking holes in walls and ceilings in order to move through them.” An Israeli officer is quoted explaining that “the enemy interprets space in a traditional, classical manner and I do not want to obey this interpretation and fall into his traps (...) I want to surprise him! This is the essence of war. I need to win (...) this is why we opted for the methodology of moving through walls (...) Like a worm that eats its way forward.”²

In these two examples the inspiration for treating the built environment in an unconventional way comes from a primitive man and the animal. In Themera the main character loses his ability to speak, he can only utter roaring sounds. Before he comes to the point of rearranging the architecture he has fallen into the consciousness of a Neanderthal. In the case of the Israeli army general, the inspiration seems to come from the animal world, more specifically the worm. Looking at the environment from the angle of a prehistoric man or an earthworm, the situation changes, not having to deal with the mental and cultural boundaries of the city they no longer need to deal with the physical boundaries. This leads me to the point that it is not the physical destruction in itself that interest me, but more the mental break with the conventions of architectural and structural conventions, by attacking the structure of the city might be standing on a less stable fundament. For what manifests a city structure anyway? I don’t think I am too far off stating that a city is a constructed environment, an artificial landscape. It consists of fragmented space; a space divided into many individual spaces. These spaces are then distributed, in the most general sense, between private and public. The form of the city is the following:

“A process of deterritorialization is connected to a movement of determinization that is ensured by the machine (groups of ham radio transmitters afford the same perverse structure).”³

This sentence became my entry point for working with radio transmissions. For me it connected radio space with architectural space in the sense that the two words deterritorialization and reterritorialization were very much connected to physical spaces in my mind. I was reading the sentence out of its context and extending it into a new one. I started to work with a ham radio transmitter as a tool of deterritorialization, meaning that the transmitter would create a “fresh” space. By building a small radio transmitter I would be able to enter the restricted radio space as a squatter. The transmitter provided me with an alternative reading of space, as I started to see the transmission area as a physical space that was able to move through the walls of architectural structures. The fact that the transmitter was very simply constructed, and that it relied on the weak power source of a 9V battery, would have made it possible to move through the limited transmission area and the restricted radio space. The consequences were a small and fluctuating transmission area and an unstable transmission space. But at the same time it would enable the transmitter, the source of transmission, to be portable. The transmission area became to me a nonmaccadic and uncontrollable floating space, not contained by the conventions of architectural space or radio space restrictions.

Major General Stubbblebine,” a commanding general in the Israeli army. He reopens his arms and security command from 1981 to 1984, struggled to accept the confined space of his office as described in the book The Men who state at Goats. He stands up, moves out from behind his desk, and begins to walk. I mean, he thinks, what is the atom mostly made up of anyway? Space! He quickens his pace. What is the atom mostly made up of? He thinks. Atoms! He is almost at a jog now. What is the wall mostly made up of? He thinks. Atoms! All I have to do is merge the spaces. The wall is an illusion. What is destiny? Am I destined to stay in this room? Ha, no! Then General Stubbblebine hangs his nose hard on the wall of his office.”⁴

If one looks with the right kind of eyes at the gestures aimed at the World Trade Center in 2001 it can be read as an attack on the physical structures. It can be seen as an attack on the idea of the great skyscraper and the modern metropolitan city. This assumption is of course far fetched but it leads me to a proposal made by Vito Acconci’s architecture and design bureau, appropriately titled Studio Acconci, to reconstruct ground zero. They made an attempt at a new World Trade Center full of holes. According to Acconci their starting point was the idea that if a building was probably going to be exploded at some point anyway why could it not be pre-exploited. They took the original site of the World Trade Center, extruded it to a height of a 110 stories, more of a mass, more of a volume than the original World Trade Center ever was and with more private office space than anyone could probably ever need. Then they ridelled the design with holes by shooting cones into it, hoping it could act as a sort of urban camouflage. A terrorist flying by would not bother with the building as it had already been dealt with. The Army Intelligence and Security Command from 1981 to 1984, through the building would also create space where they wanted to incorporate parks and street vendors, thinking that the building would no longer follow the conventions of a private office building with no so-called public space outside, rather they would mix public and private space inside.⁵ Vito Acconci started out as a writer, primarily a poet, in the mid-1960’s. He was interested in the physicality of language and writing, concerned with the space created.
Simen Godtfredsen

disco-cover
2012–2015
Digital photo prints, silk-screen print on paper
Dimensions variable
Installation view
between the words and the page on which they were written. This interest in space brought him to the conclusion that he would no longer limit himself to the space of a page. One of his last poems was titled The time taken for me to walk from 7. Ave. & 7th St. NE to 6th Ave. & 17th St. NW, June 30, 1969, beginning at 9 PM. With this text he seemed to already have made a natural leap onto the street outside. With his work Following Piece from 1969, he would choose a person at random in the streets and follow that person until he or she entered into a private place. He was moving randomly around the city by giving in to someone else’s behaviour. He performed an act that would allow him to drop his usual motives for movement and action in the city, also leaving behind any audience, taking up the role as viewer himself.

Acconci almost found himself walking down the street of the Situationists International, performing some sort of gesture in the tradition of the dérive. “In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and encounters they find there” describes Debord in his Theory of the Dérive. Debord and the Situationists International were searching for the experience of “the beach beneath the street”, to let themselves drift, often in a rather drunk state, and to let themselves be attracted to the ambiances of the city, to catch a glimpse of a completely different city beneath the privatized and commercialized surface. They wanted to see beyond the boredom of everyday life and experience the city outside the divide of work and leisure. By performing their urban wandering they would refuse participation in any of the daily routines, not taking part in the divided timetable. The act of walking became subversive, wandering aimlessly to reject social participation, and simultaneously exploring the city to participate in a critique of urban development. The wanderer was no longer only an aimless drifter, but was to perform scientific experiments under the definition of psychogeography, “where the emotional and behavioural impact of urban space upon the individual conscious-

ness is to be carefully monitored and recorded, its results used to promote the construction of a new urban environment that both reflects and facilitates the desire of the inhabitants of this future city.”

“The world we live in, and beginning with its material décor, is discovered to be narrower by the day. It stirs us. We yield profoundly to its influence; we react to it according to our instincts instead of according to our aspirations. In a word, this world governs our way of being, and it grinds us down. It is only from its rearrangement, or more precisely its sifting, that any possibility of organizing a superior way of life will emerge.”

My multi-colour ballpoint pen made a blue mark on the paper. As my feet carried me along the street, my hand traced the movement with the pen; a blue line followed my steps. Simultaneously my eyes carefully scanned the surroundings, moving over facades, light poles and fuse boxes. My eyes locked in, my feet halted, the ballpoint pen lifted off the paper, shifted from blue to red, then a distinct red dot stained the paper where the blue line stopped, then the colour of the pen was changed from red to black, a number appeared by the red dot. Then the pen was pocketed, the piece of paper, a printed map, was folded and entered the opposite pocket of the coat. A camera was gripped from its hanging position, aimed at the spot where the eyes had found their target; the shutter momentarily opened and captured the frame. Without any further thought the camera was again dangling from the shoulder strap, pen and paper in hand, the blue line traced further. The small alleys were filled with all kinds of greenery planted in Styrofoam boxes, old bathtubs and buckets, crowding the narrow streets and rooftops. A huge stack of carefully folded cardboard boxes was dragged along on a large trolley by a surprisingly tiny old woman. The blue line stopped, red dot, black number, camera, snap, the digital screen revealed a small poster glued to a wall, the poster was covered with black paint.

Above is a short description of my work process as part of a project I did in an old area


in Seoul called Imun 1 Dong. This is an area close to where I lived and close to the school that I had an exchange to at the time. As I was walking around I got attracted to an A4 poster that had been concealed with black paint, I discovered that the over-painted poster was not a single case. It became apparent to me that it was two people, or more probably two groups of people, involved in performing two actions close to where I lived and close to the school.

I would guess that the posters would probably only be pasted in this area. The poster was a statement to gather support for the preservation and restoration of the area. The second gesture was performed by painting the surface of the posters with black paint. This meant that someone had to actively seize the information stated. I would guess that it was two people, or more probably two groups of people, involved in performing two actions close to where I lived and close to the school.

I discovered one of the posters that the text had to do with a specific area, also meaning that the posters would probably only be pasted in that area. The poster was a statement to gather support for the preservation and restoration of the area. The second gesture was performed by painting the surface of the posters with black paint. This meant that someone had to actively seize the information stated. I would guess that it was two people, or more probably two groups of people, involved in performing two actions close to where I lived and close to the school.

The project became sort of a psychogeographical survey was a picture archive containing 154 numbered documentary photographs of the posters all in different locations. Most of the posters had been covered with paint, some were covered with other commercial posters, some were in good readable conditions and some of the posters I probably never located. Accompanying the photo archive was a map where I had traced my movement and pinpointed each poster’s location.

"In the illusory babbles of language, an artist might advance specifically to get lost, and to intoxicate himself in dizzying syntaxes, seeking odd intersections of meaning, strange corridors of history, unexpected echoes, unknown humors, or voids of knowledge... but this quest is risky, full of bottomless fictions and endless architectures and counter-architectures... at the end, if there is an end, are perhaps only meaningless reverberations." 15

KARIN HALD
Stop Making Sense

For me, it’s hard to imagine a society without art, if not impossible. Yet I often have the discussion about why art is still created. Perhaps it is because there is a focus on being rational and logical? Or maybe it’s because there aren’t many people who are good at explaining what art is all about.

I believe art does not hold a definitive answer, it is an irrational logic. This can make art seem inaccessible. Art is a meta-language, and it’s a specialized form of communication. To accept a work of art is not the same as liking it on an aesthetic level. I think that anybody who is interested can understand art on one level or another – if they are willing to let go of rational, linear understanding, just accept what they see, and try sensing instead of thinking. It does demand an effort. At the same time I insist on the fact that I’m not a missionary. And for those who are not interested, it’s not my job as an artist to change their minds.

I make art from inspiration. This might sound banal, but what does inspiration actually mean? If not impossible. Yet I often have the discussion about why art is still created. Perhaps it is because there is a focus on being rational and logical? Or maybe it’s because there aren’t many people who are good at explaining what art is all about.

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myself. Many have thought that being a true artist demands a sacrifice, which is connected to the mystery of the tortured artist. But making a sacrifice isn’t necessarily a bad thing. The sacrifice for me lies in a loss of individuality for the gift of serving a higher principle, which is shown through glimpses of inspiration.

In creating art there is always a wish to understand, but not in a logical, linear way. Art cannot give a logical answer, but art can still communicate with both the senses and the intellect. The greatest experience is when I see art that strikes a nerve in me, and the whole world opens up right before my eyes, it falls into me — and I understand.

The bigger picture of an artwork, my own personal interpretation grows after it is finished. The irrational logic can expand and sometimes a work which at first seems banal opens up through the years, as I grow into a person. I have had that experience with artists like Bruce Nauman, Jackson Pollock and Yves Klein.

I believe art is one of the poorest ways to get in touch with other dimensions than those visible to us. Maybe it is Carl Jung’s collective unconscious which sets in, and talks through the artist? Maybe it’s something divine? I am not sure, but what I do know is that I need a fracture in my understanding. I’ll read a text, see a film or look at an artwork that I understand completely, I lose interest in it. If there is no sense of mystery, it is less valuable to me. It’s appealing not to understand the interest in it. If there is no sense of mystery, it is less valuable to me. It’s appealing not to understand the

emotion which stands at the cradle of all true art and science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed.”

An exploration

“Art is born and takes hold wherever there is a timeless and unalterable longing for the spiritual, for the ideal— that longing which draws people to art.”

This text is the first attempt for me to formulate in words another side of being, both as a person and as an artist. Spirituality is connected to each individual’s inner being, and therefore there will never be one exact definition. This can make it hard to explain, to yourself and others as well. Rather than explaining I will try to explore spirituality through describing my own experiences, other artists and also examples of philosophy and science in connection to art.

Biking through the city. It’s freezing and I clearly see my breath. Constantly there’s a discussion within myself if I don’t want to go, and I know why. But I force myself forward. I enter the building and everyone sends smiles to me. I feel a good energy and change into the soft-two-piece bikini. I enter the room, people are already lying on their mats. Silence. No one is allowed to speak during Savasana. I lie down and slowly let my body and mind relax. As the heat rises, it’s easier to fall into a deep meditative state. My eyes close and I focus on my breathing.

I start to feel the energy start to drench me. It’s as if my body lets go. Anger and despair turns into gratitude. I start to feel the energy from the others. It is as if they are trying to help me. I’m still for a while. Then I’m able to join in again. When I stand I look at my mat. The sweat has formed a Borschch-like image. It looks like an elephant.

"Turn around for camel pose this posture will open up your heart chakras don’t be afraid come to the top of the mat and towel everybody should do this at the same time not before not after at the same time open your knees and feet 6 inches apart place your hands on your hips thumbs on the outside look in the mirror. Inhale breathing push your hips towards the mirror slowly let your head go back as far as you can look for the floor behind you go back halfway stop there first right hand to right heel then left hand to left heel take a deep breath exhale your legs and hips forward towards the mirror push your hips more and more your back is suppose to hurt I want to see 360 degree angle for greater stretch. Now push yourself slowly back up spin straight position quickly turn around and lie down arms out to the side palms facing up towards the ceiling if you are feeling nauseous sad or uncomfortable it is perfectly natural after this posture opens up the front side of your body which we normally keep closed of you are letting yourself be in a position where you could easily be attacked.”

Class is over. I don’t move for a long time, eyes closed, concentrating on my breath. Meditating as I do at home. I feel my body lower over the floor. Twisting feeling all over. I see images that appear only as glimpses. Mostly it’s just my breath.
I leave the room. The sweat slowly stops rolling off my body. I feel light light light. Released. Relaxed. No thoughts enter my head. The old thoughts are gone. New ones are able to come. I feel a strong connection between my mind and my body. I eagerly drink two litres of water in one swig. Bike home. I’m yearning for my next class.

Science’s job is to map our ignorance

“If you can draw a relationship, it can exist. The world keeps opening up, unfolding, and just when we expect it to be closed – to be a sealed sensible box – it shows us something completely surprising. In fact, the result and possibly unacknowledged aim of science may be to know how much it is that we don’t know, rather than what we do think we know. What we think we know we probably aren’t really sure of anyway. At least if we can get a sense of what we don’t know, we won’t be guilty of the habits of thinking we know any of it. Science’s job is to map our ignorance.”

If art is not aimed only at the consumer, like a commodity, it’s made by the artist to try to understand the world, herself and those around her. I see it as subjective storytelling. Each person uses the sum of knowledge accumulated by mankind, but the life and aim of one person is to understand oneself through subjectivity and moral self-knowledge. This quest is new for each person. You have to live and learn through yourself. You cannot fully apprehend through the knowledge of others.

I see a resemblance between artists and scientists. The difference lies in how knowledge is acquired, the execution of the knowledge, and also the quest for a definitive answer. Both the artist and the scientist look critically at the world, in the sense that there’s more than meets the eye, and more to be understood than what we already know. And they use their hands – the inspiration. The scientist can express herself through letters and numbers, whereas the artist can create a unique visual language, with whatever combination of tools the artist wants. The scientist wants to find the facts and through those the truth. The artist looks for truth, but not necessarily through facts, instead the artist relies on her personal truth – the subjective experiences she has accumulated.

As I see it the scientist will always try to superecede the one she follows. Science is about climbing up a staircase, always trying to get to the next level. It’s vertical, trying to dispove one objective truth with another. Art is horizontal. It occurs as a subjective truth, alongside all the other truths, as a new unique image. The job of the artist is to be concerned with the question. When an artwork is finished it’s a complete object in the visual language, a new answer to a question asked many times.

Stumbling upon the unknown

In the essay “Eupalinos or the architect” by the French philosopher Paul Valéry, he writes at one point about the difference between artist and philosopher. He writes of Socrates who walked along the beach. He saw something that had been washed up on the beach and picked it up. It looked like a seashell, but he couldn’t figure out exactly what it was. He knew that this moment was of importance for the rest of his life. If he kept it, he would accept what he did not understand, and therefore he would be an artist. But he threw it into the ocean, because he was a philosopher and he couldn’t accept what he didn’t understand.

When I read Valéry’s essay, I see a beautiful example of how the artist is described as spiritual. This lies in the fact that the artist accepts what he does not know and embraces the unknown as something to take forward. In this text the artist accepts the image which cannot be understood in a cerebral sense.

The philosopher wants the word to fit with the world and also needs to create a distance between himself and the world in order to understand it. The artist circles the concept and the word itself. He is in the world, more absorbed, as much a part of it as the work he creates.

Paul Valéry describes the artist as an image of continental philosophy and the philosopher as analytical philosophy. Today the lines between these two orientations are often harder to distinguish. Philosophers like Foucault have blurred the lines, as in many of his texts he uses both empirical data and also personal experience and feelings.

If we are able to use different kinds of knowledge and combine them, what will happen?
I see a growing focus on being interdisciplinary, which helps in opening up and learning from other ways of thinking. Something like Einstein used very unconventional ways in gaining new knowledge. He wasn’t afraid to expand his mind and knowledge, even though it could make him look like a fool. To predict an idea before you are able to prove it, is extremely courageous.

To create new knowledge or indeed art, I believe you must be willing to let go of fear and enter into the unknown.

"The human mind is not capable of grasping the Universe. We are like a little child entering a huge library. The walls are covered to the ceilings with books in many different tongues. The child knows that someone must have written these books. It does not know who or how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. But the child notes a definite plan in the arrangement of the book—a mysterious order in which it does not comprehend, but only dimly suspects." 9

Different approaches

When I read the text "Art—a yearning for the ideal" 10 by Tarkovsky I felt at home in the emotions he described when talking about art:

"Art could be said to be a symbol of the universe, being linked with that absolute spiritual truth, which is hidden from us in our positivistic, pragmatic activities" 10.

Tarkovsky continues to say that a scientist needs to educate himself logically to be able to grow, whereas an artist is in need of a particular spiritual lesson. In all of Tarkovsky’s films, his characters undergo a spiritual crisis. This is evident in a film like Stalker, where the main character struggles to listen to his intuition or inner voice.

Tarkovsky stands out in many ways as an artist. He created a new language with his movies, which is still an inspiration for many contemporary artists and filmmakers. Seeing both his films and photographs, I get a strong sense of spiritual presence. How this presence shows itself exactly, I cannot explain. But reading Tarkovsky’s books on the subject, I understand that he himself was a person who was very aware of his own spirituality, and I think that shines through in all his work.

In the book, Instant Light Tarkovsky’s son has gathered a selection of his father’s Polaroids from the period 1979-1984. The Polaroids are combined with small notes and poems from his private journal. I see the atmosphere captured as based on the experience of light. To use light as a metaphor for the spiritual is very fitting. When it appears, it lights everything up—it shows what is actually there. Light is the opposite of being in the dark.

The strong sense of an unknown presence I had when I saw his films and Polaroids was confirmed when I read his book, in which he reveals the spiritual as a big and important focus in his work.

One of the youngest artists I admire is the Danish artist Lea Porsager. Porsager’s work often evolves around ideas of the self without a core, and she has among other things used hypnosis on herself as well as others.

She was a part of DOCUMENTA 13 and the piece in Karlsruhe Park was called The Anatta Experience. The piece was based on an experience she had with seven other women. They had gone to Monte Verità—"the mountain of truths"—in Switzerland.

At the beginning of the 20th century, this was a place where all kinds of alternative people gathered, and ideas regarding spirituality, the occult and anarchism were explored. Porsager and the other women wanted to reanimate some of the ideas of the mountain. The piece she did was a small wooden house, inspired by a drawing by Harald Szeemann. There were different kinds of documentation of the process, and among these a video which showed their experiments.

Porsager has continued to work with these topics in her latest exhibition, where she uses the work of Annie Beasant and C. W. Leadbeater and their knowledge from the book Thought Forms. Like these two theosophists, Porsager tries to see thoughts as something that can be made visible.

In the show she tells the story of how there are bigger forces at stake whose powers we can draw energy from. Porsager juggles with theosophy, neuroscience, space technology and art history in a critical, beautiful and anarchistic way. I see a critique of old, rigid thought forms that are too easily reproduced without questioning. It seems to me she’s asking: ‘How can we use and produce new thoughts today in a more open way?’ What I appreciate about her approach to spirituality in art, is that she can make it tangible, and less inaccessible.

If you are not a medium, like Hilma af Klint, but still have a deep respect for and wish for an understanding of the spiritual and occult, then I think the approach that Porsager has is very valid. She combines theory and practice, and in using both she makes a point of being open towards experience, but also critical.

The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths

"You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even listen, simply wait, be quiet still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked, it has no choice, it will roll in ecstasy at your feet." 14

I think that is what Hilma af Klint also experienced when she was working.

Personally I need to go out into the world, go to exhibitions, be a flaneur and walk the streets. I need to accumulate knowledge and experience from the world surrounding me and the one inside myself. I can also experience a more intense approach, where I have something I know I want to explore, and I need to focus on that thought— and an answer appears.

When I get inspired, it happens subconsciously. If I am stuck on a piece, and unable to get further with it—it relies on time and intuition. Inspiration will come again.

The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths is a title of a Bruce Nauman work. It shows a spiral made of neon, with those exact words, spiralling into the middle. Nauman has said of this work:

"The most difficult thing about the whole piece for me was the statement. It was a kind of riddle—like when you say something out loud to see if you believe it. Once written down I could see that the statement, ‘The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths,’ was on the one hand a totally silly idea and yet, on the other hand, I believed it. It’s true and not true at the same time, it depends upon how you interpret it and how seriously you take yourself. For me it’s still a very strong thought." 14

I am jumping from one ice floe to the next. I need something to keep me afloat, but that is not why I believe.

More often than not spirituality is an undercurrent that runs beneath the surface of my body of work and only rarely if ever becomes visible. As a driving force it is pushing me forward, and breathing into my work. For me, spirituality is art itself. It’s the other dimension, it’s what, how and why I create new images. What the voice cannot say and the mind cannot comprehend, comes out in art.

I want to carry on, with dignity, curiosity and respect, towards all the things I do not know.
When I was fourteen I spent a lot of time surrounded by notebooks, composing what ended up as a forty-page epic about a young girl who lost her best friend in a tragic accident, and was left to deal with her grief. Through my writing, I got to explore all my fantasies of an earthshattering emotional drama, so far away from the everyday mundanity of teenage life.

“She walks slowly across the school yard and is overwhelmed by sadness. Marie is never going to cross this courtyard again. She’s never going to run up the stairs to make it to class on time. Ida opens the door to the classroom. Everyone’s turned towards the figure in the doorway, all dressed in black. The first thing Ida sees is Marie’s empty seat, and her used notebooks on her desk. ‘Just like Marie,’ Ida thinks. ‘A used notebook that’s thrown in the trash.’ But Marie’s life story wasn’t even half completed.”

What brought me to write this story, what enticed me, and maybe still does, was the idea that it was possible to completely give in to one’s emotions, rather than letting practicality and sense be the guiding parameters. This idea has lingered on, and has affected what catches my interest, and what I look for in art. I find myself being drawn to artists that take risks by sharing something personal and by challenging emotional inhibition and social conventions. In Sharon Hayes’ work Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time For Love? from 2007 she emerged from a corporate building in midtown Manhattan, five days in a row, to speak to an unnamed lover. In between comments on and about personal longing and desire, were comments about politics, and the hardships and trauma of living at a time of war. The use of the absent lover serves as a direct appeal to the fundamental human desire to belong and to be accepted. Hayes calls these texts, written by her, but informed by various famous love letters “love addresses” and each day the letter was different, but the “I” and the “you” were the same. This use of the “I” and “you” creates a fundamental connection between the speaker and the listener. Even when addressing a seemingly faceless mass of people hurrying by, at times there will be moments when the “you” will find its way to someone, as if spoken directly to them. Hayes’ work always has personal elements, and although her pieces are mostly political, dealing with questions about war, free speech and gender issues, she uses the language of emotion as a way to mediate her subject matter.

In general though, big displays of emotion are something you should try to keep to the private sphere. In the Nordic countries, we tend to keep our interactions very subdued, and are generally more comfortable with a moderate approach to our interpersonal dealings. In the face of some big emotional spectacle, like a woman crying out “My dear lover” on the street, we would most likely shy away, mumbling “oh, that’s so uncomfortable.” Even in times of crisis, there is little outrage to be seen. Maybe a torchlight protest march, but the riot is absent. Being stoic, graceful and “holding it together” has always been preferable, and easier for other people to deal with, compared to breaking down, losing it and falling apart. Although people tend to avoid negative emotional experiences in general, they will often enjoy sadness portrayed in music. Julia Kristeva writes about love songs, and especially the serenades of the troubadours of the late 12th century, in her book Tales of Love. For the troubadours the woman was merely an imaginary addressee, a pretext for the song of love, which, says Kristeva, is essentially an incantation, and therefore fundamentally semiotic, with rhythm and melody dominating over the message to the lady. She suggests that the aim of the love song is to show how strong it feels – as a performance directed towards the world, rather than to a specific recipient. “The song is not a metaphor but, as the most direct inscription of jouissance, it is already a transference, a longing of affect for the absolute meaning that shies away.” And even centuries later, the love song is
essentially the same, a signifier of affect, and in its emotional exuberance you get carried away.
The song offers a chance for redemption, and through it grief and desire are dissolved, and you sing along, because it offers some relief.

Chords provide a unique foundation for the very specifics of an emotional narrative, and the different keys will invoke feelings in you that feel instinctual.

"Of all the amazing things the mind does, the most amazing may be that it can take sound and turn it into music, and then take music and turn it into meaning. (...) Music is simply a set of physical vibrations that reach our eardrums; from those vibrations we make the emotional map of our lives." 4

So maybe humans really are physically affected by the science of sound, or it could simply be attributed to autobiographical memory. Or maybe it’s that we listen specifically to accentuate or confirm our feelings, and when we find it, more or less oblivious to this, we say that the song speaks directly to us. But when we find it, more or less oblivious to this, maybe it’s that we listen specifically for some-thing to accentuate or confirm our feelings, and when we find it, more or less oblivious to this, we say that the song speaks directly to us. But perhaps the important thing isn’t how music triggers our emotions, but that it does.

Music has always served as an emotion amplifier for me. Detectable in the final pieces or not, there is always a soundtrack present in my work; a few songs that set the tone, and often express my ideas much more eloquently than I’m able to.

At the same time music is also a source of inspiration, one of the reasons being the way the language of music just lends itself so well to emotion. Strike a chord! Cue the band! This is what songs are written about!

A music genre usually associated with expressive, melodramatic storytelling is country music. In Ceal Floyer’s work ‘Till I get it right from 2005, she makes use of the song with the same name by American country singer Tammy Wynette.

Floyer has cut out the “falling in love” part from the original line “I’ll just keep falling in love until I get it right”, yet the song still embodies the heartfelt desperation of Wynette’s vocals. This leaves the words universal in their vagueness, and although the original song would be categorized as a sentimental country weeper, Floyer’s piece is opened up to more than one meaning.

It can be interpreted as suggesting that everything is an ongoing process without any clear definitive end, that there’s a futility to trying to reach perfection, or, in its simplicity, it offers a more intimate reading of the piece, that whatever you feel like you are doing over and over again without getting it right, that’s what the piece is about. Tammy Wynette’s songwriting often dealt with loneliness, divorce and the difficulties of man-woman relationships. She embodies the romantic image where she asked 107 women to interpret the song with the same name from 2007, Take Care of Yourself, as both are processing and trying to understand their experiences, and sharing them with others through art. And even though these works have a very specific narrative, they are not fixed to one reading. Because even though they deal with something very specific, even though emotions are subjective, and feel private, there’s a reason why you can always find the perfect song to accent your emotional state. It’s because someone else has been there; they’ve felt exactly the same way.

In relation to pieces like this, it might make sense to use the word kitsch.’ Kitch can be interpreted as something that can be understood by everyone, independently of theoretical background. And these pieces have a strong sense to use the word kitsch.7 Kitsch can be interpreted as something that can be understood by everyone, independently of theoretical background. And these pieces have a strong
Although strict in his structuring of these peculiar "figures", Barthes was not trying to distance himself. "Defending the senses, he never betrayed the mind." He wrote with the authority of a lover himself, aiming to create a structural portrait of the discursive site of love; to understand and map out on the Lover’s terms. "The necessity for this book is to be found in the following consideration: that the lover’s discourse is today of an extreme solitude. This discourse is spoken, perhaps, by thousands of subjects (who know!), but warranted by no one; it is completely forsaken by the surrounding languages: ignored, disparaged, or derided by them, served not only from authority but also from the mechanisms of authority (sciences, techniques, arts)." Barthes wanted to provide an affirmation for the lover’s internal debate that rarely surfaced in everyday speech. This book was designed to give voice to that unspoken language.

"But there's to find the right language, there nevertheless needs to exist some sort of conversation around these types of emotionally explicit works. There is for a way to fill in, to start a discussion, to outline that landscape the piece belongs to, with real words, not with the air-quotes, platitudes and clichés that usually infect our language around emotion."

"So how do you obtain the distance needed for some sort of discursive and linguistic clarity? The problem that manifests itself when it comes to discussing explicit emotions in art, is finding the right language. How can you talk about emotions without getting tangled up in the emotional?"

Wittgenstein said in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that there are some things you can talk about, and then there are things you cannot talk about. "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world," and in with regards to art and emotion I, as Wittgenstein, keep bumping in to the borders of my own language. He thought that what you could not talk about with ordinary language, you had to apply to poetic language. Through his work he asked himself questions such as if there was a way to talk about what we really felt, and if it's at all possible to communicate one's feelings. Wittgenstein was trying to map out the different language games we surround ourselves with, and show that you cannot use the same language in all situations, that there was no one language game, doing so in a completely clinical and unsentimental manner. In this search for the right language to form a discourse around the explicitly emotional, I find myself in need of the right language to form a discourse around the emotional ground zero. He used structuralism to talk about romance, emotions and love.

"I Love you; je-t’aime / I-love-you. The figure refers not to the declaration of love, to the avowal, but to the repeated utterance of the love cry."
I remember a story that went around when I was a kid. One day, a woman who lives alone in an apartment gets the feeling that something is wrong. She has a powerful sense that she’s no longer alone. She searches her entire home, but can’t find anything. A few weeks later, she wakes up in the middle of the night, feeling more strongly than ever that she’s not by herself. She gets up and looks under her bed, and sees a man lying there. She becomes terrified, and calls the police. When the police arrive, she is told that the man escaped from a mental institution, and has been missing for 28 days. Much later, when she’s cleaning, she looks under the bed and finds some little markings somebody has made underneath the bed. She counts the lines, and there are 28 of them.

These last few years, my art has focused mainly on the security or insecurity of different individuals, as well as the processes involved in the attainment of security. I’ve often based my work on the idea of an individual’s creation of a home. A sanctuary and a place of refuge. A familiar place, where the trust an individual has in the home she has created is based on her various needs. Where the individual creates the home and the home creates the individual, and the body reflects the home while the home reflects the body.

“The bomb which destroys my house also damages my body in so far as the house was already an indication of my body.”

The home becomes an immediate extension of the body. These defence mechanisms can be as relevant as those intended for the defence of the actual body. They participate every bit as much as the body in the practical routines of everyday existence, to ensure that the individual’s physical and mental needs are met. Everyday life is experienced and lived within the home. The term ‘home’ denotes not just the house itself, but also its nearest surroundings. The impressions of the local neighbourhood are repeated in the movements people make each day, and become more and more familiar each time they are experienced. Recognition grows stronger every time, and thus becomes more familiar and more closely associated with security. However, the structure and function of this security are flawed in ways that require it to be constantly re-established. It’s constantly under the threat of total collapse, and this is my main area of interest in my work. When fear, or a threat of something, enters this place and reveals the fragility of the security we have made for ourselves. When our trust and security in the known and the familiar fall apart.

In Michael Haneke’s film Caché, we follow the story of a family that leads an ordinary life. One day, they find a videotape in their mailbox. The video is a shot of their house, taken from the street. The thought of being watched and under surveillance in your own home is very...
discomforting. It can utterly destroy the sense of security that the home provides.

The formation and creation of a home is an ongoing process, a search for security that has to be repeated and reinvented constantly so as not to be lost.

The home can also be considered a stage, where the people who live in it are actors collaborating to create a place with a history and narratives of its own.

In her videos, artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila shows us people who have discovered something else in their everyday lives. Something out of place, that makes them rethink things and find new ways of life.

Unexpected events can cause us to ask questions we might never even have considered before. During one period of my life, I often thought of that woman who found a man under her bed, and the effects this was likely to have had on her sense of security in her own home. What did she think about the twenty-eight lines under her bed? Did they mean that the man had been there for twenty-eight days, and if so, what had he been doing there all that time, and how many times had she been defenceless with a stranger in her own home? Had she, perhaps, spent twenty-eight nights of sleep with a stranger just beneath her, who could have simply raised his arm and touched her in her sleep? Was the man who hid there simply trying to get through the day, the week, the month?

A few years ago, on a cold and windy walk, I found some houses that had been raised temporarily. It was like a picturesque little village, all deserted, by the sea just north of Helsingborg. What had initially looked like a movie set, proved, on closer inspection, to be a group of temporary summer homes that were built every year only to be torn down again in the fall. The houses were surrounded by little pots, garden ornaments and other commonplace objects that demarcated borders, and probably provided a sense of home while the cabins were there. The whole thing felt like an effort to create and find ways to make the place seem like home and feel familiar. It looked like a stage in the process of creating your own world, one more important and significant than your experiences of your actual surroundings. There weren’t any cultivated patches, or other signs of activity. This made the strange placement of these everyday objects, so significant to the residents, seem both absurd and frightening. The cold wind probably only reinforced my discomfort. This place was a testimony to the ambition of creating an idyllic atmosphere, which seemed somewhat distorted in this context, and felt more disturbing than anything else.

In his films, David Lynch shines a light on the disjointed and terrible aspects of the idyllic. When everything seems to be at its most ordinary, and everybody is living their lives as best they can, he allows disquieting things to intrude, and terrible things to happen.

Sigmund Freud claims that the homely and the uncanny are closely related. In his text The Uncanny, he describes how the German words heimlich, which means something like “homely” or “familiar,” and unheimlich, which means “uncanny”, are obviously related, as both words are derived from the same word stem. They are both related to the security and everyday life of the home.

I’m interested in the ways that the familiar can contribute to security just as strongly as it can threaten it. A feeling of security is preceded by a long process, where several layers of recognition are combined. When something that isn’t really a recognized element reminds us of something that is, it will be experienced as disturbing, or even as a dangerous threat.

My work often relates to that very moment, when the unexpected or unpleasant occurs. My main interest, however, lies in the subsequent effect that this has on a person, causing confusion and concern to preoccupy her, until she is once more able to establish her safety zones in different ways.

To my mind, the discomfort of the woman who discovered the man under her bed is made stronger by the fact that it happened in the very place where she ought to feel the most secure. The space underneath her bed was a familiar, secure place for her. When she discovered the man there, this secure place took on a very sinister air. This discomfort is something the woman will always carry with her, and that will probably make it very difficult for her to re-establish the
desirable state of having your home function as a source of security.

In his text on the uncanny, Freud refers to E.T.A. Hoffmann’s *The Sandman*, where the experience of the homely has terrible consequences. The protagonist finds significance in the similarities of two different people; one a memory from childhood, the other a person known to him in the present.

In my work, I set out to investigate questions related to the expectation of security in a home. Using economical measures, I attempt to tear this security down, to show that it can’t be taken for granted. The way things are placed, or strange patterns of behaviour, can reveal or imply that reality isn’t necessarily self-evident. In an installation consisting of a three-channel video, I let two people, a man and a woman, act according to a specific pattern in an apartment that looks like it could belong to both of them. The three different channels appear to be synchronized by various events. But since their movements are arranged so that their paths never cross, the result is an ambivalence of time and space. Their movements are integrated in each other’s events. They affect each other’s experiences, each seemingly in ignorance of the presence of the other, which produces even more confusion. Like hidden elements, visible, but indicative to the discerning eye of differences or inexplicable movements within the core of security. When the self-evident is no longer definite. when the doors, walls, and furniture don’t just protect us or offer comfort, but also conceal something unexpected, and unfamiliar.

In his installations, Mike Nelson shows places and scenes that seem to be hidden behind building façades. Places, stories, and events that we didn’t know existed. I think similar places could exist behind doors, or in people’s homes. A place where somebody once enjoyed security that was later destroyed by various events, only revealed to the viewer as traces or fragments.

In my work, I want to create places, or new worlds, to direct the viewer to, where I can reveal the fine line between the familiar and the disconcerting. Where the familiar is transformed into the opposite side of its negative.

People’s desire to create security extends beyond their homes. Even in other environments, we value structure and familiar things that we can draw security from. When something devastating happens, and everything gets turned upside down, the home environment can be changed to such an extent that it becomes almost unrecognizable. This can make us feel rootless and lost, and will also bring the fear of the unknown and the uncanny into a place where we used to feel secure. This became apparent in the wake of the storm that struck northern Europe during the winter of 2005. In Sweden, where it would come to be referred to as "Gudrun", it mainly affected the southern regions. The storm felled vast numbers of trees where it passed. People in the affected areas didn’t recognize their own area now that the woodlands they knew so well had been destroyed. Their familiar and secure surroundings were so altered and destroyed that people suffered from total confusion, and lost their sense of home.

I’m interested in the vulnerabilities of human beings, but also in the ways that they are constantly confronted with situations where they keep choosing to go on living, to survive. In this survival, an individual creates her sphere, her world, and her home. Each individual strives for the things that he or she associates with security, and these things in turn shape the home and the individual. Whenever danger looms, or actually destroys your own sphere, a new quest for what you just lost begins.

My graduation piece *Bad Souvenir* portrays the aftermath of such an event. Anything recognizable has disappeared and been destroyed. All that remains are impressions of the event, life before it, and life after it. Through a window, we see an installation of a room. The room bears traces of having been a home once, but seems deserted now. Inside the room, three different events are shown in three separate video projections. In the first of them a man walks through the forest, while in the second, the forest comes alive as the weather changes, and in the third, we see fallen trees lying across a road.

Back at home, in my apartment, I look for the familiar and the recognizable. It’s an attempt to create security for myself. I realize that creating security is an activity that relates closely
to my fear of the unknown, a fear I am trying to overcome. But doesn’t resisting a fear also involve the risk of falling into some other similar pattern in the quest for security? Replacing routines, things and events with new ones, before one’s attention is once more directed towards the familiar, and the creation of new fears. Won’t the same patterns and the same inherent fear simply reappear, only to need to be put to rest by the constant search for familiarity? All to avoid any situation where we might encounter something unexpected and threatening, as though the fear existed to protect us from the immediate terror that this would produce.

I still think about that woman who found the man under her bed on occasion. Now, my memory isn’t sure where I first heard the story. I can’t remember who told it to me, or whether it was supposedly true or just an urban legend. During times when I’ve had to move frequently, this story has taken on a greater significance. I often thought of the man under the bed, as I hadn’t yet found any security in my new home and the neighbourhood where it was located. On certain sleepless nights, I leaned over and looked under my bed, to make sure there was nobody there. To my relief, I’ve never found a man under my bed.

Emma-Christina Landqvest / Bachelor of Fine Arts 3

Ronni Lykke Lauridsen
Patchwork

If I were to write an entry for Wikipedia about patchwork it would start something like this: What you are about to read may contain traces of misunderstandings, omissions, and wisdom. Patchwork, I don’t really have any relationship to this handicraft, but that makes little difference, because this text is about seeing. But then why this detour around patchwork, you may think? I will admit that it’s a bit unclear to me as well, but perhaps we’ll all become a bit more enlightened along the way. I’ve had some ideas about how I would sort of open up the bag in a way both interesting and relevant. Therefore, I have decided that we’ll visit my grandmother because of her having been given new eyes.

Grandma, which is what I call her whose name is also Sara, I visited a while ago, where she now lives but does not feel at home. Her home is in Vesteregade, from where one can see to the depths of the garden from windows in the kitchen, where it has been throughout my entire life. How does one see? And how does one see what one cannot see? Questions like these cropped up in my head, after these blue fluted visions. Does one see? I wonder what a blind person sees? Questions like these cropped up in my head, after these blue fluted visions. Somewhere in the USA there sits a woman with her back to the world, creating pictures based on inspiration, or that is, the woman in question did until she died in 2004. I’m talking about Agnes Martin, an artist I don’t have detailed knowledge of and probably not a familial relationship to either, but with whom...
I nevertheless feel a certain kindship. The other day I saw a number of more or less random videos on YouTube, like I have so many times before. At one point a video turns up called ‘Interview with Agnes Martin 1997’, the name seems familiar and I click the triangle. For 8.34 minutes this elderly grey/blue figure has my full attention. During the first seconds of the video one is introduced to a number of stills that are a combination of painting and photo, presumably paintings done by Agnes and photos of her when she was young and younger. And then a close-up of a face framed by silver-coloured hair and endowed with a pair of gentle eyes and a couple of comparatively large ear lobes. I think that the voice, the faint vibration, harmonies with the words that describe having ‘a vacant mind’, a mind that holds a space open, in case inspiration should make an entrance. According to Agnes it is not about seeing, nor is it about oneself, but about making oneself available and being open to what inspiration has to offer; here the function of vision is to act as a bridge between the canvas and the guest that figures in the mind.

From one set of eyes to another. Actually there are four eyes in total, of which two are placed in the head of a golden retriever, and the other two in the head of a blind person. What do you see, out of our eyes? There, let me just put on the other glove; that’s it! now I have fingers again, no, let me just take my hand off again, there was too much finger pressure. Now it feels the way it should, I believe, but in any case we’re not short on butter, have no fear of that, just quiet and easy milk, a little walk, it is, after all, tonight that the good series is on, but then we must also have cake and perhaps you should too. The one called ‘Bedstefars skæg’ (Grandpa’s beard), we like that a lot, but we’re not having that. We’d better let the baker bake our cake. Carrot cake, they almost always have that, it actually tastes pretty good. Gravel and school, then we’re right here. No, we really don’t have the time for the children to talk to you, you do see that, don’t you? It’s on right after we’ve eaten, so we had better eat. My arm is out in the air at the end of the leash, away from my coat and my body, behind your steps and before my steps. We’re in a bit of a hurry, that’s easy to see.

That’s how I imagine how the world looks, seen through the eyes of a golden retriever and from there on to a blind person. If we now imagine that the blind person used a cane and was not in possession of a guide dog, then the world would perhaps appear quite different?

I can see in my inner vision that the blind person moves his or her cane along the surface of the ground, like a pickup over the face of a vinyl LP record. Irregularities, indentations, and nuances are registered and conveyed via the cane to the hand and from there up through the arm to where they turn into images. I once had an acquaintance who used non-prescription glasses; at that time it was one of the wildest things I had ever seen and then he could even dance like Michael Jackson. He told me it made him look smart and that the girls liked it. I didn’t quite understand what he meant but I remember that I had a wish for just a slight astigmatism of my eyes, so that I would also be able to dance like Michael Jackson. I didn’t feel quite prepared for glasses that could even dance like Michael Jackson. He meant but I remember that I had a wish for just a slight astigmatism of my eyes, so that I would also be able to dance like Michael Jackson. I didn’t feel quite prepared for glasses that weren’t glasses. Since then I have had many pairs of glasses, even non-prescription glasses, but in the form of sunglasses. I have, to say the least, a difficult relationship to sunglasses, unless they are placed on the nose of Tom Cruise in the film Risky Business.’ It is as if a Wayfarer epidemic breaks out every summer. This epidemic causes a relatively large part of the population to be unable to see if they don't
wear a pair of sunglasses. As a rule I become extra irritable when I’m wearing sunglasses; it is as if my body tries to reject these substitute eyes, like a rejected Boneoc-cemented prosthesis in a reluctant body. And if the impossible were to happen so that I would have the courage to keep the sunglasses on indoors, then I would unavoidably end up in a situation in which I would be forced to choose whether to pretend as though I got the shades as a christening present and have worn them ever since, or to desperately look for a pocket in which they can rest until the next time I really need them on an overcast summer’s day. Do you also have a pair of Wayfarer shades? And do you also think I should stop writing about my anguish with glasses? OK, but I have to mention one last thing regarding glasses. Some time ago I sat at Copenhagen Central Station with half a croissant in one hand and several crumbs on my blue trousers, following my attempt to eat this bakery product in a casual fashion; in my left hand I have a cup of coffee that is too hot, covered by a plastic lid; perhaps that is why? Now perhaps something exciting will happen? To my great surprise I am accosted by a young woman, she asks me if I can show her how to use the ticket coupon she holds in her hand. As the gentleman and globetrotter that I always am, I agree to assist her. It turns out that we are travelling with the same train, and during the ride I am told that she recently moved to Denmark from Iran to study. She has neitherBasketball players or films in 3D for that matter, has absolutely no knowledge of animated blue Avatar her if she would like to come with me to the cinema. She smiles and insistent, ‘why no, you don’t want?’ and then on top of it all, what most of all looks like a pair of oversized Lucian Freud 5 sees through the surface of his model. In itself, the exhausting maintenance of a pose causes fatigue, and during this process a transformation occurs through which the immediately invisible becomes visible. Maybe in the same way that the painter Lucian Freud sees through the surface of his model. In itself, the exhausting maintenance of a pose causes fatigue, and during this process a transformation occurs through which the immediately invisible becomes visible. Georg Baselitz is another name that pops into my head, presumably because of the word ‘invisible’. I think about the massive,
rough-hewn yellow-painted wooden sculptures that together make up the series Dresden Frauen, perhaps not immediately a sight thatakens associations in the direction of something invisible, but solid and naked, with all their make-up removed, no camouflage, they appear to be invisible.

(Not the point)

In the beginning, or perhaps, Close to where something began, There were probably only Three or four or five Things. Possibly two or three or four of those were only words, But words too heavy to remain in Place.

Who said what First

Is the world watching?

When Melissa Rohlin of the Los Angeles Times asks basketball player Metta World Peace about his change of name from Ron Artest, World Peace answers: “Well I’m just happy that Jesus Christ did not let me lose my teeth when I was 20 years old. Cause I was wondering like; what if you kept your baby teeth until the age of 18 or 20 and then you’d lose them. That would look pretty bad. So I just think it’s really brilliant that you lose your teeth when you’re a baby rather than you lose them when you’re like 30 or 20. That has nothing to do with your question but that was definitely on my mind.”

This was entirely new to me. This is also a way to do it. This was just as huge as my childhood realization that a question can be answered with a counter-question. Irrespective of whether World Peace knows it or not, he answered Rohlin’s question, and I think I understand him completely.

In this text, I will attempt to address the questions of where I, as an artist, am coming from, and in what context I wish to have my works interpreted, and to do so in just as generous a way as that in which World Peace answered Rohlin, by relating stories and quotes, whether relevant or odd, stolen or invented, and mixing them with poetic ing stories and quotes, whether relevant or odd, which world Peace answered Rohlin; by relating correspondence with the people I collaborated with as well as offering some more mundane reading in fast forward by providing excerpts from my email correspondence with the people I collaborated with during the fall. Shifting perspective from micro to macro, and back again, while simultaneously passing over into some kind of in-between state. Nothing is waterproof, and everything is always – through work – connected to everything else. Proving a point through disorder, and discussing the elephant’s skin through Jurassic Park. “There is no difference between what a book talks about and the world.”

Charles Ingvar Jonsson answers Eivor curtly while puffing away at his cigar. Rocky, who doesn’t understand what’s going on, anxiously asks Eivor why she’s getting rid of their belongings. While he knows it or not, he answered Rohlin’s question, and I think I understand him completely.

In the year 1729, the King of Sweden, Fredrik I, makes a deal with the Bey of Algiers to have Algerian pirates leave Swedish merchant ships alone. The Swedish state buys this protection by making a peace offering of weapons, ammunition, timber for masts, and anchor lines. Two years later, the ship Werden arrives in the Stockholm harbour, bringing gifts in return from the Bey. In the hold, among other things, are two lions.

precise in the periphery ( hammock, hot periph- ercy ) there’s something there, under the coating of docile bodies, panopticon the watchtower and Good news witnessed throughout the whole world! docile bodies, panopticon the Watchtower and Awake waterproof fire and brimstone.

When the lions die after a few years of life in captivity, Fredrik I has them stuffed. The taxidermist who is tasked with stuffing one of them is in a
predicament from the moment he is presented with the skin and bones: he’s never seen a live lion, neither in a picture nor in real life. Besides the remains of the dead lion, all he has for guidance are the heraldic depictions on coats of arms and the like. The result is, accordingly, a fantastical being, with tight set, crossed eyes, happily peeping out over what can only be likened to a human mouth. A wide grin is plastered across the lion’s face, and an incredibly long tongue reaches out between two rows of flat, square teeth.

Excerpt from an email to composer Torkel Rönnblad:

I drew a quick little drawing, vertically oriented, on a long sheet of paper (see drawing.jpg). I wanted to make the drawing as flat as possible, that is, not to give the image any depth, so I let the lines relate to, and “bounce” against the edges of the paper. Like that classic screen saver. Then, I sucked the drawing out into the room by using it as a sketch for a sculpture. The lines were given angles and directions in space (see sculpture-front.jpg and sculptureside.jpg). I had expanded the drawing beyond the flat sheet of paper, by translating it into a three-dimensional sculpture. To expand it further, I documented the sculpture from various angles and applied the series of documentations to blank sheet music (see score1.jpg - score9.jpg). My hope is for the drawing to fill the entire room, so that you are able to walk around in it, by means of a translation into sound. Though an interpretation of documentations of a sculpture projected in a notation context. This is the interpretation I’d like you to help me with. The freedom in the interpretation is the same as in the translation between the drawing and the sculpture, it can result in any number of versions, while remaining anchored to the medium in question. It’s significant that they are projected onto sheet music. That is to say, I’m not asking for an interpretation of the “feel” of the sculpture/shape.

In ancient times, a temple to Apollo stood where the Hagia Sophia is today. The latter building was finished in the year 537, and was initially a Christian church, the Sancta Sophia or Holy Wisdom. The church was converted into a mosque after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and is a museum to this day after Kemal Ataturk decided to convert it once more in 1934. In the Vatican, pieces of marble from the Colosseum were used as building blocks for St. Peter’s Basilica, and here, in Malmö, the Caroli City mall is expanding into the Caroli Church, which is scheduled to be opened during the spring of 2013 as a part of the mall.
cerise-coloured model of the Millennium Falcon. Somebody laughed at the paused picture. If it had been viewed out of context, it would probably have been very difficult, if not impossible, to discern its different elements. The bird in the background was no more than a foul smell. The light filling the spaces between the leaves in the foliage seemed aggressive, like tooth decay. Suddenly, we were looking at clouds. None of the qualities of the film applied anymore, the paths had all suddenly come to an end, and we had to find our own way. The laughter died down and the picture made me uncomfortable.

Excerpt from an email to architect Filip Mayer:

If I tried to paint abstract, and let the paint lead the way, all that I would end up producing on the canvas was an echo of painters I like, with no sense of urgency to it whatsoever. If I tried to paint figurative, the subject would always get in the way of language, casting a cold shadow over it. To get around these problems, I projected a randomly selected image across the boundaries of three adjacently positioned mounted canvases. Then, I switched the canvases around, turned them a quarter or half turn, and projected a new image onto them again in the same fashion, repeating this process until I had ten randomly selected images projected across the three canvases. When I separated them later, they all looked like excerpts from some bizarre colouring book. White, a mess of lines moving in and out of each other in ways that couldn’t possibly originate from my hand. After the paintings were finished, I described each original briefly (one to four words each), and listed them in a document, like some sort of credits list. This left-right-aligned column was translated into an English, right-aligned column on the other side of the page, in the style of a vocabulary list. The fragile empty space between the lists was glaringly obvious. The descriptions then and there, the translation, the languages, the font face, the font size, the line spacing, and the proportions of the sheet of paper caused a shape to appear in the gap between the two languages, a shape beautiful enough for a carpet (see mattannn.jpg). I want this carpet to be the basis for the inspiration for a space’s room. An inversion of the classic relationship between carpets and architecture – instead of the way the shape of a carpet usually responds to the architecture, I want the architecture to answer to the carpet.

The A4 sheet filled up with words accidentally knocks its forehead against the shelf, something rolls off like drops off a goose, and the rest expands like ink moves in still water slowly.

In speech that is just as poor as • hammock, • or periphery•. There’s no real difference between how that or “tsk tsk” works in writing is there? You could say it’s just as difficult as when an American judge asks the jury to disregard a statement after an objection to it has been sustained. After all, you can’t just unhear something. But we’re discussing painting effects through Photoshop filters? Maybe, but it would be more interesting to translate a cactus through Google translate.

Extract from an email from Filip Mayer:

I think of how the carpet is like a hat for the feet. It protects us from the earth, that is, it protects us from nature. A hat protects us from above, and from that above. When we have both a hat and a carpet, we’re insulated both on top and underneath. But the middle remains unprotected. Sandbags protect us from what we can do to each other, from the climate, and from weapons. When you go inside to sit down on your carpet and put on your hat, you’re protected in the house of sandbags.

eighteen different parts against each other. Corrosive light on the bike shelter. Shadows --> Flat shapes with solid colours. Let the green at the bottom take another role. --> light the rest up let the form echo in what remains in the bluish green above. x Erase the demanding pink in the bushes with green. x ADD MORE COLOURS IN THE SAME WAY AS...
I find myself observed by eyes in displays. From windows along narrow streets, they gaze down from their grandstands. Framed behind glass, the transparent material separating them from me is merely stating the intimate sphere, rather than being a division. I feast on their delicacy, bathed in fluorescent, red light. Their rays reduce color range, blur my mind and kaleidoscope my vision. The seductive hues generate a growing lust in my flesh. Blinded by desire, I’m the one being objectified.

Here the stimulations are offered in rich assortments. The belladonnas dilate my perspective, only to enhance the hallucinations. The imagery unleashes its immense delights. Its intensity forces a non-focused climax. The thrill is sublime. Enclosed within oblivion. The mind is left behind to enjoy the trip. It forces no critical reflection preventing any infiltrating powers accessing its domain. Seeds are easily sown in ingesting soil. Here they will grow undetected, nurtured by the unawareness of them being there. Seamlessly a deceptive veil will blend in with the origin. The resistance has become too badly bruised by affairs with lip service.

A feather’s tender stroking of the skin upstages the eyes simultaneously being ripped out. It’s a brutal execution. Thus no pain is felt. The insult lies outside the field of consciousness. Dared by the solid transparency between the pleasantly perceived information, and what passes unnoticed. Sullied by the state of being unaware of the manipulation. Post stimulation. Ecstasy fades as the last spasms are left to die out. Still in fresh memory of: soft tissue. Notoriously unaware of the parallels between its derivation, and the processing through levels of degradation.

As a product of my time, I obtain my present as it’s presented, and experience appearances in the world as real. Those circumstances being false, I am alike my history, a lie. Barely sheltered from the self-consciousness of fundamental fragility. Subconsciously rejecting everything that can remove any faith in reality. This is a defense mechanism against the perdition that’ll follow with an acceptance of scarce existence. Fighting off total sedimentation by keeping the contemporary persistent, to verify its authenticity. Determined to hold on to the everlasting sunset.

Submerge space into the vast span of the unknown. Pursue the unrevealed. Seek the perspectives that haven’t already been widened. Find the core. Where existence yet has to become. Where virginal time awaits the mirror stage. Any remains undiscovered is ever of great significance. Resume consumption. Put back into vigor the disdained need to uncover. For what stays remote is confining the totality of being. It means, that confirmation of one’s existence is determined on one’s own detection of oneself in the world. Again, this depends on...
the diversity of one's meetings. The broadening of
one's perspective is achieved through the mirroring
of others, and how one perceives oneself based on
the reaction of oneself in others.

Light breaks down in diamonds, causing the
wavelengths to be visible for the naked eye.
The intensity penetrates the retina just as hard,
independent of the stone's authenticity. It can
be impossible to tell the difference. Favoured
spectraums have always been generated under
constructed conditions. The range of is a selective
manner. The sources have faded out into vague
recognitions in the periphery between reality and
fiction. Discreetly violated by evolution. Leaving
substance to decay.

Perplexity wins territory comparable to carbon
monoxide suffocating oxygen. The vital substance
doesn't adapt to the changing matrix. Evolving
into being compatible ceases its existence. Toxic-
ity tears its texture. The chemically constructed
prefix of our time is continuously eating out the
churn of the reality that it stands for. By erasing
the pathway of a's becoming, it reaches the end of
being evident of itself. As a definition, the prefix is
in need of the history bound to its genesis. Still it's
rejecting its equal like two repelling magnets.

The poses of our time are making smooth castling
their crime. Already moved pieces are not allowed
for such a move. Leading identity to corrode. The
bloodstream reaches the water's edge, causing
the clear reflection to dissolve. Blood being life it
breaks up the reflection of itself. The parallels take
out each other. United they compose the image of
the internal fight. Purity terminates. The ability to
distinguish between reality and fiction has lost its
influence on the genuine.

Grey matter\(^1\) is fragile as it blends easily with the
dark. The decreasing saturation causes a domino
effect of reduced belief in ethics. "The man who
admits the value of other people necessarily im-
poses limits upon himself."\(^3\) The condition leads to
a nihilistic mirage, where morality is replaced
with unconditional freedom. Generating an
unscrupulous want to demolish familiar features.
Aiming for those easily abused. The pleasantly
understated indifference accumulates violence
effortlessly whilst tearing their comfortable
recognitions apart. Re-evaluating the composition of
their qualities, before reconstructing them back
into uncanny interpretations of themselves.

“The greatest suffering of others always counts for
less than my own pleasure. What matter if I must
purchase my most trivial satisfaction through a
fantastic accumulation of wrongdoing? For my
satisfaction gives me pleasure, it exists in myself,
but the consequences of crime do not touch me,
they are outside me.”

The eye travels in search of somewhere pleasant to
lay its rest. Striving to please its hungry ego. Select-
ively choosing between the most favoured favours.
Driven by a grotesque curiosity to explore the inner
glimmer of the gem. Eager to find out whether the
inside is just as stimulating. “Beauty is desired in
order that it may be befouled; not for its own sake,
but for the joy brought by the certainty of profan-
ing it.”\(^4\) The dissection is by no means disgusting.
The scenery is highly spectacular. Offering a great
pleasure in viewing the fresh intensity of disclo-
sure. Exploiting the vulnerability by distorting the
character, making it a victim of its own symbolism.
Transformed to juxtapose itself. Violated by the
alienated context.

The scenery is constructed as a two-way mirror.
Either side is both the spectator and the one being
observed. Lucidity lies latent on the surface. Nev-
ertheless, this detection is not obvious. Bestiality
plays parallel roles. It inhibits the criticizer read
through the symbolisms of the crime, and pities the
character, making it a victim of its own symbolism."

The dissection is by no means disgusting.

The dissection is by no means disgusting.
The body falls short of ideal as the artist attempts to make V’s and A’s. This particular love is broader than a lover’s sentiment. Never mind all of that. Bubbles and ones. Sorry. Now I have failed to transform myself into a stable surface.

Is this the only body that I will experience the world through? Could the solution to the problem of the limitations of the body be covering it up with teddy bears? Is it a search for cuddle, after all, the park is still covered in snow and I am sitting in the middle of the bench and that is not very inviting is it? In my hands I have a needle and a thread and I am sewing the teddy bears tighter to each other. The teddy bears are covering my face and I can’t see anything except the camera that is supposed to document the event. I ask the person helping me with the documentation to zoom closer and get the details. A dog starts barking at me and the children passing by probably think that I am the deformed sibling of the Easter bunny. While sitting there, I wonder when the performance will end. I stand up and I start marching covered with teddy bears, people stare until they stop staring. Later I get irritated at the person who volunteered to help me document the performance, the camera was too shaky.

The skin as separation, protection, evidence of maturity, actually all wounds do heal one way or the other. Still, one constantly gets reminded of threatening external factors, birdshit is an actuality.

Humour has a prominent place in my works, bordering on slapstick. The uncomfortable elements are exaggerated, and the repetition of actions loses its pedagogical function. (Humour does not, then, function in terms of comic relief, but as its opposite). Meanwhile I can’t stop thinking about the different voices I have on my twitterfeed, I don’t even have to use CAPS, it is all there. Singing beats Lumosity.com at brain training, one’s voice becomes not only an apparatus but also sweatmarks not ready to vanish (yet).

The piece: “...founded himself in a walled garden on the top of a high mountain, and in the middle of it a tree with great birds on the branches, and fruit out of which, if you held a fruit to your ear, came the sound of fighting...” (2012) by Emily Wardill, perpetually reminds us of our relationship to our body. I see the film at the National Gallery of Denmark lying lazed, not still though, because the gigantic sako bag makes it impossible, the body analogue to motion. Kinaesthesia is not given, some of us have to watch every movement our legs make to be able to walk. The piece was first presented as performance and later as film. One knows that it was shot at the same place, and one can’t help but compare the different jobs the actors have done, now that part should come soon... Comparing their movements like sound samples, listening to their voices, taking into account the close-ups, being self-aware! Suddenly you are positioned on the stage with them. There is no separation. The performance has been re-enacted and the camera has been adaptable, not the opposite. We clapped when the performance was over.

With round corners the trailer becomes too long, so I start avoiding buildings with them. I cannot take the tension, but I continue walking. I speed things up a little bit. Later, looking at the footage/video, it would seem like my movements could surpass natural human movements and thought processes. An artist’s body has long been considered to be extended by the artwork. What interests me is the notion of extension as such, not limited to the artist’s body in particular, but any body interacting with technology today. Experiencing loss, discovering the body’s mechanisms of survival resulting in memory holes. “Distortion manifested through the body””, driving and driving, and questioning one’s strength. Surely my loss is no different from others.

In The Ballad Of Genesis And Lady Jaye, directed by Marie Losier, one wonders if it’s the love between Genesis and Lady Jaye that is immortal.
or their utterance of “we” itself. When does a performance start or end? When does one actually start loving someone, is it after one says “I love you”? The sentence performs itself, but at the same time it “doesn’t enter into the immediate order of things”. Rimbaud’s famous “Love has to re-invent itself” is the first sentence in Alain Badiou’s In Praise of Love. This performative aspect of fidelity to the truth of love is what is radicalised in the “we” of Genesis and Lady Jare.

I would dance to the music till I got tired, forgetting that the song was looping on iTunes. I would get exhausted, hungry, eat and then sleep. Before leaving my apartment I would rehearse. I would record myself with my phone and smile, thinking that I could always edit the order of the sentences later. I would sing, and think that my voice was not as powerful as I thought it was, it did not echo. Last night I dreamt that I met a friend, and we high-fived for 30 minutes. I am not sure maybe it was longer but it went from day to night in the dream. I started writing a letter to Orlan, and wanted to tell her about this experience. Maybe she had experienced in real time greeting someone for longer than 30 minutes. The sense of time is imprinted on my body when I wake up, how could I have slept on this wet mattress the whole night? I have to get out, move around, I have to dance. The song is not looping this time, so I won’t lose the sense of time, and I won’t dance till I get dizzy.

In some sense the world ends every day for many of us, and the activity of mourning is incoherent in our body from birth. Mourning as a pre-occupation, in which one gets a sense that it is productive, without necessarily seeing the results or a conclusion. I don’t think that everything ends in language anymore, because I get the impression that an agreement on a translation has to follow from it, and an agreement on a specific translation is a form of conclusion and a conclusion is a term that has shown itself to have been counterproductive in my practice. Throughout my experience at the art academy, all elements have played an important part in the process, and all elements are still active whether I am aware of them or not. The methods that have struggled to keep their head over the water have become methods that I trust, but I am still conversing with the idea of my body actually being the measure of all things I encounter.

I had good conversations with a fellow colleague, where we shared our experience regarding respect for the material. Could we as artists achieve mutual respect between us, and the material we were working with? That is not exactly the question I asked myself when I started working with mediums such as video and performance, on my part it was almost massochistic in the sense that it was a willingness to subject myself to distress-experiences. I have later laughed at this thought, but also learned not to underestimate it. Feelings of alienation from accepted positions and situations can lead to figuring out ways of trusting one’s own language. How long should one mourn and how visible should it be? And how does one choose to present oneself to the world outside? The body disappears when one accepts the language of grief because one has to forget the pain.

“To call a population barbarian is to measure their vocalization perceptually and sometimes quantitatively as noise; roar, shriek, howl, and ululation, bark, yelp, wail. A lupus orchestra, a constant cifieration of language.”

Sometimes you are forgiven for wasting people’s time, and sometimes it’s more difficult, and it’s better to ask nicely: “Let me waste your time” and in return they can waste yours if they like. Orlan says “Being a narcissist isn’t easy when the question is of recreating the self through deliberate acts of alienation”. With my only musical background being in singing, Zobah was my first attempt to incorporate music.
into my practice. I started working with software, became part of a community where the members would share sound samples. My deliberate acts of alienation through sculpture were rewritten through my body and the sound. Zobah would always display discomfort while performing, and would look the audience in the eyes believing that they could relate to the same awkwardness. In Zobah’s performance there would be a perpetual underlying bass sample, that when discovered would reveal itself as noise, a roar, shriek, a howl, a ululation, a bark or a yelp or a wail. The bass being autonomous, moving at its own pace, the bass that when controlled by a Novation Nocturn midi controller, would seem to be deformed, but reveal itself by acknowledging the space, not only the acoustics but also the living bodies unfortunately placed in front of the speakers.

How to not mystify things, how not to mystify the tools that I use, by revealing the structures? Revealing the structures could also result in some mystification, whereas using visibility to highlight invisibility also can backfire. The voice as something immaterial, but also something that could demand its place (in space? / occupy a space? Post Occupy / Preoccupy?), longer than the actual duration of the sound, a song gets stuck in your head.

NaEE RoBerts like Zobah is one of my alter-egos. NaEE RoBerts is a music project that I have presented in different art and music contexts. We have developed a technology that can mimic us and perform itself, and yet there are new tendencies for us to mimic the technology. I remember having a skype performance in which I got a viewer that did not act as I expected. The viewer started talking and coming with requests. I should not have been surprised, since skype is a tool that is used for exactly that. The automatic reaction to the situation was to pretend that I could not hear her, that there was a bad connection. I waited to continue as I was scheduled to perform, and so did she. How do I continue writing this without thinking about the sound of my voice... Art has always given me the space to be impractical. I am not a good problem solver but I still think of myself as a facilitator. The presentation plays an obvious role: it is intentionally decentered, and I don’t identify as an alchemist artist who strives to keep methods and materials hidden. Rather, I reveal the structures through exposing the methods. Decenteredness is a result of my anti-didactic way of presentation. The moments of synchronization will occur at one time or the other, when it happens I will be at peace with it. The dialogue I have with viewers is important, as long as they know I am not here to promise them anything.

Pop music as an available, tacitly accepted language, but still in constant change, one can’t tell the difference between the singer and a sample anymore, and playback is not a big deal, really. The overconsumption ambience of festivals, the striving of DIY musicians to keep their street cred. Our collective creativity is visible, individuality first though, then comes the sharing and caring, in the midst of genres dissolving. The access to distribution platforms like SoundCloud, where there is a myriad of such experiments. I am interested in these in attempts, where one discovers a kid trying to make house music but it is like nothing anyone has heard before. The genres as something inventive, genres perceived as a playful language. The over-sharing and giving resulting in an insistence on context. The body, my body, on the screen becomes the source of information, but also a body without narrative. It is the framing, not the content.

We have long accepted the death of the author, but in our time the author keeps dying again and again, and being witness to this evolution affects...
Ok, trying is last trying trying is last. I wish I wish I wish. Breaking out of the brain. Some points on sharing: too many tabs, too many tabs on my browser has the rest of the computer stopped function- ing the web is imperal oh yes.

As if sharing is not ultimately limited, limited in that way that in the end it is involuntary, just leaking emotions through every orifice, really though there is no wonder that no real connection was ever made, the secret is that I have already become a pseudo-you and from that starting point no sharing can occur.

The point, I think, has to be – not what sharing is, that is simple, like “ I give this to you”, but not as a gift, now we have it together – but what real examples can we find of authentic sharing? Like if I shared this text with you and I were not your bleak copy, and you really could take part in it as if we owned it together, like if someone read some of this text and did not think “oh this is written by a person” or “this is generated by a technical process” or “this is something inside some other thing, this is some shared thing created by more than one conscious mind, and that is astonishing”. In the end, today, this is intuition. Community as such has lost much of its glamour, so much that stealing as such does not make us feel anymore. It is our very temporal sense of emotive intuition that lets us distinguish between what is imposed, and what is appropriated, and what is pseudo-stolen, stolen or really deeply shared.

I have really no idea how to share with you. I am left with an infinity of chances to take, Throwing coins into the water, hoping that it is you who will pick them up.

Our world is so much more defined by water now, even the earth has become forever mud.

One impulse that keeps coming back is the impulse to erase what is put out, like, in a physical body becomes a challenge, because I expect the acceptance/dancer to act faster than what is possible. My mind is often fixed on the editing while I am filming. It is as if I expect the person I am filming to think of the editing process too, to make every move aware of the chopping and screwing. The person has to be present in my mind, for I can easily find a footage of someone doing “method acting” online. However, constructing a physical body other than my own is demanding, maybe because there is too much respect involved. There has to be an outcome soon, a result to build upon. Ironically a way of solving this is by slowly and steadily constraining a body by the use of software such as Blender.14

There is something ambiguous, revealing itself in different shapes and you can’t make a distinction. A lion is trying to tell you a joke, you run of course. It could be the shape of a loved one that no longer has a physical presence. Still one has to continue exercising. Finding a comfortable chair is not enough. The voice looping, and this time it won’t make sense either, and all you wanted to say is quoted. Patently waiting, having a clear purpose, knowing that it is truly man’s disappointment but will announce itself in a different incarnation next time. Everything cannot end up like that, our perception constantly fools us. I believe that is a straight line. An average person blinking 36 times per minute, Sharon Hayes reminding us that though the eyes may be closed the ears will never close.15

Speaking of interviews, what went through Michelle Williams’ mind when she played Mari- lyn? Her smile is so so subtle, that it almost bothers me. She says that she likes her hair short, for whenever she removes her wig she becomes herself again.23 You may think that you are funny, but your jokes will not make her laugh. But in the chair she sits in so gracefully, she also shows that she has a sense of humour. She is sitting in a chair she was prepared to sit in, only that this time she only had five minutes for the prepara- tion. She stares directly at you, and it is as if she is reading your lips. She knows the questions before you ask them, but still takes a minute to answer them. There is this form of acceptance and I think it has an octagonal shape. Working with
The following text concerns the conclusions I have drawn so far, after making various observations within and outside of my artistic practice, all regarding the truth about the world and the concept of reality.

The Poisoning

There is a widespread kind of pollution at large among us. A kind of cannibalism that renders us blind to a part of reality that many have forgotten about these days. Something we all originated from, but that lies unseen in this stage of evolution, overshadowed by the physical existence that we have chosen to relate to as the totality of being. In this forgotten mirror world, we are not separate beings. There are no partitions of skin there, no species to rank or divide us from one another. We are interconnected strands in an eternal web stretching out in all directions, beyond time and space.

Individualization was the true fall from grace. Being attached to high-maintenance lumps of meat. Vessels of pain and pleasure. We have come to put great value on comfort. Behind closed doors, the responsibility for committing the inexcusable act of taking a life that does not belong to us has been given to a small group of people. Those who have come to act as a filter for our own conscience, those who will end up with hearts heavy as lead. Shell-shocked souls, rising again to join the collective and pollute it. It is hard to breathe as the fog wraps itself around us. We speak loudly of morals, but we do not act accordingly. The noise of our own voices is so piercing that hearing anything else has become difficult. But if we listen carefully, we can make them out. Some people are more sensitive than others, and have no choice but to listen to the screams from the other side. They can come to us as the screeches of a thousand pieces of chalk on blackboards, penetrating the back of the skull, right behind the ears. Or little, tight grips clutching the muscles of your arms, tearing and pulling at them. Or eyes that stare and roll back. And they will not stop staring just because you close your eyes. The feeling that you are wading through thick paper pulp. The prevalent misinterpretation of this feeling as something that we need to look within to shake off. A mistaken interpretation of a problem often leads to a mistaken remedy. It is not about you; you are just collateral damage caused by the storm of our collective anxiety. Do not try to shut down, you will only end up stuck in the dense pulp, which will slowly harden until you are no longer able to move. Do not be afraid, these are good signs. If you hear them, listen. Begin the cleansing.

Opening up

To interpret these signs correctly we require a cleansing of both our physical and our mental bodies. Refraining from an animal protein-based diet is preferable, in part because it is less taxing on the digestive systems we have been endowed with, which were not originally designed for the...
There is a flower that grows everywhere. A weed to some, but a beauty to others.

When the body has been cleansed of this poison, and the mind is no longer weighed down by immoral actions, this will give rise to a sense of clarity and focus, which will in turn make it easier to expand our vision to see what was previously hidden from us. The truth about the world. We do not all stand alone, surrounded by the universe. If we pay attention, the boundaries begin to dissolve.

Before we can liberate ourselves from the prisons that our physical bodies really are, we have to get to know them well. Every cell needs to be awakened. I was out running when I first saw trees in the fullness of their existence. Ten kilometres a day, the same circuit, in the exact same number of minutes. One day, three weeks in, when my body had fully internalized the motions and the surroundings, I turned my eyes upwards. I was moving forward, but my consciousness had begun to seep out through my right arm. I drifted up, away. The familiar shape of a double helix, branches together and cut them off.

Wandering with Mugwort

There is a flower that grows everywhere. A weed that is most commonly encountered by the sea, or on deserted industrial properties, behind fences protecting it from being uprooted. The moment it begins to seep out through my right arm. I drifted up, away. The familiar shape of a double helix, branches together and cut them off. I saw the trees, and for a short moment, we were as one.

Mugwort as a magical plant that can grant the power of prophetic dreaming. I go looking for it at the beach. I have to search for a while, because I have never seen it before, and the botanical illustration I saw was not of much help. When I finally manage to identify a plant growing along the waterfront as the one I am looking for, I feel somewhat shocked. It is growing all over the place. I have never noticed it before, and now it is all around me, in huge clusters, rigid in the wind, more like tall bushes than the little bunches of herbs I had expected. I feel ashamed, and it is staring at me. It creeps closer, looming even larger, which only serves to intensify my sense of ignorance. It is obvious that I will have a great debt of gratitude to pay. I ask its forgiveness as I gather some branches together and cut them off.

'The Initiation. The flowers are to be picked one at a time. I drink the tepid concoction that I leave to brew for thirty minutes from my largest glass, filling it to the brim. A little at a time, since I am not sure about the dosage, and I know it can be toxic if taken in excess. The drink has a pleasant scent, and the first sips are surprisingly tasty con-

The flavour is mild, reminiscent of chamomile leaves that the tea-strainer did not catch, and are now getting stuck along the way to my stomach, which has had enough by now.

I do not know what to expect, but there is no doubt that the decoction is having some kind of effect. My heart begins to beat faster, and I have to swallow hard several times to press it back down when I feel as though it is trying to force its way out of my throat and escape my body. The nausea makes it difficult to find a comfortable position in bed, but my head is heavy, and a pressure across my neck, like the grip of a strong, padded claw, holds me down whenever I feel like I need to get up.
up to be sick. In the end, my body calms down, and I feel like I weigh a ton. I am soon asleep, despite my eyelids compulsively springing open every time I try to close them.

I have a troubled night. I oscillate between empty deep and the sweat-soaked sheets in my bedroom, which despite being completely dark appears to be an acidic shade of orangey brown. My bed is enormous, as are my windows, twice as big as me, and the curtains are rough, thrown into violent creases. I cannot keep still. Too afraid to move. And each time the sweat makes me throw the covers off, the fear ends up making me pull them back over me, all the way up to my ears, to protect my neck, which feels especially vulnerable. I am in a waking nightmare. I am not dreaming.

I am lying in my bedroom. I see it with my eyes open, and I see it with my eyes closed.

The following morning, I am exhausted, and my head aches. Exhilarated over I do not know what. Disoriented when I rummage through the back of my mind for the dreams I never experienced. I cannot stop thinking about that plant.

Before I go to bed the second night, I boil up another batch. I drink half as much as the night before. No nausea this time. I fall asleep, and dream. The same orange glow, but slightly warmer this time. I walk through a basement, with high walls covered in soil. The passageways are short, constantly broken by an endless series of new corners for me to turn, a new confrontation lurking behind each one. I am parading in shame around me. All that remains are bodies in a state of total flattening, made invisible to the naked eye. Suddenly I see the openings. I see the doors, I see the gaps, I see the reflections that glitter, and quiver, invisible and ethereal states. There are several levels. Nothing seems to be changing. My legs move motionlessly.5 There are ethereal states. There are spir- itual vibrations.6 There are several levels.

They must not be imagined as lying above one another like the shelves of a book-case, but rather as filling the same space and interpenetrating one another. It is a fact well known to science that even in the hardest substances no two atoms ever touch one another, always each atom has its own field of action and vibration, and every molecule in turn has its larger field; so that there is always space between them under any possible circumstances. Each physical atom is floating in an astral sea—a sea of astral matter which surrounds it and fills every interstice in this physical matter. The mental matter in its turn interpenetrates the astral in precisely the same manner; so that all these different realms of nature are eternates the astral in precisely the same manner; so that all these different realms of nature are

The intoxicating experience of utter bliss known as euphoria. Then, the autumn comes, and the plant stops flowering. I pick all the flowers I can make into an incense or make a potion...
The landscape is simple. The trees stand alone like lonely notes. The air between them sings more beautifully than the birds, embraces the black branches, and lets them blossom without flowers. I can see every shadow fall on the ground, so sharply, that I can see every branch, every bud, every thorn. My eyes are calm and lingering as they glide over the landscape.

Nishida Kitaro, one of Japan’s great Zen philosophers, writes about nothingness. If you walk through high grass, a path is formed. The path is an object. But it only exists by virtue of that which is not an object: the air, the content. The content and the object are opposites that together form a unity (unity of opposites). The word ‘nothingness’ alone sounds fantastic, lyrically speaking. I am seduced. And I am seduced, even if I with my limited knowledge don’t have the ability to read Nishida Kitaro in his original written language, the in itself open for reading, lyrical Japanese.”

“The content of beauty does not at all enter the horizon of knowledge, because that which sees itself in artistic intuition, has transcended the abstract standpoint of the consciousness-in-general, and directly sees the content of the intelligible Self. Beauty is the form of appearance of the idea itself; it is only in artistic intuition that we have an intuition of the idea, only the beautiful is a visible representation of eternity on earth.”

I walk along a winding and narrow path. It has often been trodden, but time and dust have all but hidden it from me. New shoots have forced their way up through the trampled dirt. They seem to be identical, seen from a distance, but on closer examination every single one varies, from the others. A closer plant has four leaves rather than three. Another has yellowish spots, a third has smaller flowers, and a fourth has a stronger scent. The conditions for their growth are different. In one place the soil is dry. In another, it is study, and in a third place insects feed on the plant. The world is a treasure trove of fantastic art and thought thoughts.

Precisely here from where I am standing, I create my art, with my experiences, with my role.

...from 1973, the character the Fool tries to kill the Alchemist with a knife. If an artist is likened to the Alchemist, the attempted murder can be seen as a metaphor for the resistance the artist sometimes feels, the battles that at regular intervals have to be fought. Battles where the opponent is the artist him- or herself. Downturns in which he or she wishes the gold was forgotten, and faith in its creation and value is gone.

And the film also ends with everything being exposed as a pale reflection, a recording of a film. There was no holy mountain. Just a mountain. A backdrop.

And the material the Alchemist turned into gold was nothing other than the Fool’s brown faces.

From my position on the top of the mountain my view is endless. I see the path I travelled, and I realise that I have walked in circles. Like Peri’s Rumi I have got lost in the circle. I have become one with my breath, have liberated my consciousness and my intellect, and have let body be body, one with the rest of the physical world. The repetition is beautiful. From the repetition arises something singular that cannot be repeated. The details will reveal that nothing is exactly the same. There are no such things as actual repetitions.

‘In Zen they say: If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, try it for eight, sixteen, thirty-two, and so on. Eventually one discovers that it’s not boring at all but very interesting.’

With my hands I form a map from the loose pebbles that cover the plateau. I pair my vision with my memories and my ideas. I build forests that I have not yet seen, I form rivers and lakes and embankments. I place myself in the map, where clouds of white gulls call to me. My route leads forward – towards a sea that gleams where clouds of white gulls call.

...from 1973, the character the Fool tries to kill the Alchemist with a knife. If an artist is likened to the Alchemist, the attempted murder can be seen as a metaphor for the resistance the artist sometimes feels, the battles that at regular intervals have to be fought. Battles where the opponent is the artist him- or herself. Downturns in which he or she wishes the gold was forgotten, and faith in its creation and value is gone.

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The artist constantly attempts to change the molecular composition, to draw miracles out of the existing, paltry materials. But the works are all dull and pale reflections of the gold that twinkles so beautifully in the distance. The artist will never be satisfied and keeps on searching.

In Alejandro Jodorowsky’s The Holy Mountain from 1973, the character the Fool tries to kill the Alchemist with a knife. If an artist is likened to the Alchemist, the attempted murder can be seen as a metaphor for the resistance the artist sometimes feels, the battles that at regular intervals have to be fought. Battles where the opponent is the artist him- or herself. Downturns in which he or she wishes the gold was forgotten, and faith in its creation and value is gone.

And the film also ends with everything being exposed as a pale reflection, a recording of a film. There was no holy mountain. Just a mountain. A backdrop.

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And the film also ends with everything being exposed as a pale reflection, a recording of a film. There was no holy mountain. Just a mountain. A backdrop.
The descent from the mountains is soon forgotten, at the arrival at the lake nature. Now it is the colours and the warm winds that engage me. My steps are lighter, and my senses are open and active. I run with the murmuring brooks and the insects and the cheerful seeds of the flowers. The winter frost is out of my bones.

There are cases of carefree days when work is not work. Everything is meaningful, and composi-tions and lines and shapes are alive. The feeling of sitting in the orchestra and forgetting every-thing about conducting, but instead just playing: the cello, playing the piano, and playing the flute.

Above me the night has opened its twinkling gal-ley, thousands upon thousands of suns twinkle with their echoes of the luminous dust of times gone by. Among them the planets sing their calm sym-phonies. The moon is full and struggles to explore with its paleness that which is hidden on Earth. Its blue light has made my own limbs alien to my eyes and they seem just as distant as the Milky Way. I lie in a meadow. My body lies in a meadow. I see it clearly from above. I move in the state between sleep and being awake. I lose sight of my body.

It is said that we know less about the brain, this grey physical substance and its composi-tion, than we know about the entire universe. This quantum mechanical juxtaposition of the two is dizzying and fascinating. It touches the great questions, regarding where reality happens, and what reality is. Is everything created and experienced in the brain? Does this cell-filled clump of muscles have a direct connection to something that isn’t itself, to the universe, to other layers of reality – to that which some call God?

Do dreams and states that resemble dreams, occur in the brain, or can one leave it and con-tinue to exist as an observing and interacting self?

It is still night. I must continue my walk, even if rest tempts me with its even song.

I seem to sense several moving shapes around me. I am no longer alone.

“Someone seems to come straight towards me. Others seem to make room for me, while others yet again seem to accompany me. Like a swaying forest of like-minded, inquiring shadows, we walk through the darkness.”

There is security in not being alone in the artistic loneliness. If one does not find kindred spirits among actual, living people, one can find them in the history of art or among the millions of books in the libraries.

And suddenly there lies before my feet, the ocean. It seems endless. The sea against the sky. Mighty endlessness against mighty endlessness. One moment all of it lies completely still – not a ripple, not a cloud. The next it is all in an uproar, foam and thundering skies mix on high and down below.

Haroshi Sugimoto’s ‘Seascapes’ are works I would have loved to have created. He seems to have succeeded in depicting the impossibility of the infinite and at the same time the transi-ence of the moment. I find the same superiority in Agnes Martin’s grid paintings. An unshake-able confidence mixed with the most quivering fragility. That is the paradox that pulls at me.

That is what I want with art. Mixed with beauty, poetry, minimalism, and intellect.14

“I have boarded a boat. I keep the rudder clutched in both hands in my attempt to main-tain control. The waves are a metre high, and the foam rages and cries. I can sense the end of the journey. But I have to stay focused. It is so easy to fall overboard. The sea is bottomless, and in it live thousands of unknown creatures. The sea is the fear that pulls me down, but it is also what carries me forward.”15

It is easy to lose one’s hold on things. It is easy to allow oneself to be seduced by that which is newly discovered. The truly demanding thing in the work process is to complete something. The very last piece requires a sharp focus. The easiest thing in the world, at this stage, is to lose interest and start something new.

The ship lands at a cliff. I set my foot on dry land. It is still dark. I must continue to exist as an observing and interacting self?

“The feeling of drawing the last line on a drawing is intoxicating. In that moment I am

Opposite page: Norschoch Skiea
2013
Photoshop works 29.7 x 21 cm
Detail


12. NASA Voyager Rec­orderings, Symphonies of the Planets, CD Box Sat. 1992. The ‘music’ seems incredibly meditative and seems curiously akin to Indian and Pakistani ra-gas, with the sitar music and its sounds.

13. Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 65–64. This is the meeting with the poets in the first circle, in their Limbo in Hell (Canto IV).

14. Another exemplary artist who masters this is Daniel Gustav Cramer. I have to mention him in this context, albeit without other words than by name – in a footnote. But that place is occu-pied precisely by him, probably also better than most.

15. Pieter Bruegel, Drawing is intoxicating. In that moment I am
free, liberated. In that moment I am the master. In that moment there are no limits. Suddenly I have sprouted wings and fly like a fool out into the world.

But already in the next moment, when I return to the studio, the fool is left behind on the doorstep like a peeled, malodorous bird skeleton. In comes instead a sharp-tongued critic who has little to spare for the excrement the fool left behind as art.

I stand on a ledge, at the very edge of a cliff. The sun is high, and the sky arches yellow and majestic above me. A white dog runs in front of my feet. On my right shoulder rests a bundle of everything I own and am; in my left hand I carry a freshly picked but dying rose. Before me lies the deep abyss; the horizon is low. Behind me there is nothing.

I have reached the line that simultaneously marks the end and the beginning. It is not a static, physical line. Just the idea of a line. Perhaps I have already passed it. I don’t receive any definite or glittering conclusion to my effort, no matter how intensely I desire the correct answers. One so much wants to simplify and translate the whole thing into mathematics, into physics, into the exact sciences. One so much wants to explain the inexplicable with formulas and numbers and straight lines.
One important issue in Rosa Barba’s work is time and temporality, in particular in relation to film and sculptures with her choreographed installations. With her Ph.D. project at Malmö Art Academy, she wishes to expand her fragmented orchestration into new possibilities of the cinematic space.

Rosa Barba (b. 1972) lives in Berlin. She has exhibited extensively since 1999 and has received a number of awards and commissions, among the Nam June Paik Award in 2010 and the Marta Herford Prize in 2013.
FRANS JACOBI

An investigation into the performative politics of contemporary activism – as seen in 5 events in Scandinavia and beyond
Artist and curator Marion von Osten has since long been interested in the exhibition format as a producer of knowledge. For her Ph.D. project in Malmö, she will continue to concentrate on the complex narratives of Europe and European art history in relation to migration and post-colonial conditions, inside western societies. Von Osten has been involved in projects such as Projekt Migration, The Colonial Modern, The Architectures of Decolonialization, and Former West.

Marion von Osten (b. 1963) lives in Berlin. She has written and curated extensively since 1990, and worked with a number of research projects, apart from the above mentioned she is also heading the research project Model House- Mapping Transcultural Modernism in Vienna since 2010.
Artist Andrea Ray is defining her practice as inter-disciplinary, with research playing a decisive role in her work, and also pedagogic experience. In her Ph.D. project *A Re-education, the Production of Meaning and Emancipation in Audio Installations*, she will work with the history of underground feminist projects, ideas of the community, and utopian projects, both on an installation level, where audio is playing an important role, and in discursive text-writing.

Andrea Ray lives in New York. She has exhibited since 1994, as well as been participating in panels and art events. She has been teaching on Performance, New Genres and Thesis Writing at Parsons the New School NYC since 2010.
Apolonija Šušteršić

Politics “In Space”/
Tiger Bay project, re-examined

Type of work: Project
Exhibition: Artes Mundi 5
Location: National Museum, Cardiff, Wales
Year: 2012
Curator: Ben Borthwick
Courtesy: The artist
Photo: Apolonija Šušteršić

Content: Video installation constructed of a wooden platform covered with artificial grass; video projection on a building site billboard; seating elements; TV monitors showing documentary films borrowed from the ITV archive which follows the process of the Cardiff Bay development.

Video: The Tiger and the Mermaid (HD, PAL, 20’).
Archive: BBC Wales documentary films
Talk Show, an event performed on the green platform with Gareth Jones (BBC Wales) and invited guests: Ken Poole, Roger Thorney, Stan Best, and Katie Jo Luxton, key actors in the video The Tiger and the Mermaid.

Concept:
capital vs. democracy

Change usually implies a process of becoming different. However the phrase “the situation has changed” doesn’t tell us how it has been changed: for better or for worse. When we think of producing change we think about a progressive change: things have to change for the better! The idea of progress has too often been associated with the Western notion of monotonic change in a straight, linear fashion without considering other concepts of change.

The progress associated with the changing of our living environment under the name of urban development is most often a planned change which must manage a complex set of political, social, and economic conditions. However, nowadays the constructed urban change has come more and more in conflict with democratic society as introduced in the Western world. Planned urban development, which mostly relies on capital investment, has been forced to speed up its process in order to be successful (since success is usually measured only in economic terms).

Spinning the process of development into faster and faster change with economics as the driving force creates some absurd paradoxical situations along the way. As a result, societies find themselves in a trap of progress when human ingenuity, in pursuing that progress, inadvertently introduces problems that it does not have the resources to solve, thus preventing further progress or inciting social collapse.

A big problem of urban regeneration projects is that they want to apply major change in a very short time in relation to the pace of human life. This tendency is a consequence of the economy of financing where the money has to quickly turn from an investment into a profit. Again, Profit is a measurement of Success! Therefore the slow process of democratic decision-making—which includes a lot of people and takes a lot of time for re-thinking, negotiating, and discussing—works against the Law of the Capital.

Politics “In Space” is the title of my long-term research that investigates the grey zones of political action and re-action within urban development. The research questions the relationship between democracy and space, the understanding of spatial justice within the market-driven economy, and the need for community building within the time of mobility and exodus, as well as underlines other invisible paradoxes that are situated between the text and the image. I emphasise and direct my research deliberately towards public...
participation in urban projects, which are related to physical interaction within space, where the space refers primarily to physical matter and secondarily to its social and political character.

The Tiger Bay Project is a new case study within the above-mentioned research. When I started to examine the Cardiff urban situation I became fascinated by the process of the city development in-between the sea and the land, the building of an immense structure of the barrage and the public protest that this urban development provoked.

According to Sian Best, who wrote the book *A Whim Set in the Concrete – The Campaign to Stop the Cardiff Bay Barrage*, this was the longest public protest against politically set urban development in the history of the UK (which might never end).

The regeneration project was proposed by Nicholas Edwards, the Secretary of State of Wales in November 1985. Since then the project is not only in perpetual development but also presents itself on its website as the largest waterfront in Europe: (www.cardiffbay.co.uk)

What is interesting for me in this situation is the way the politics have been performed. The UK government has developed a generic model to regenerate the derelict industrial waterfronts all over the country by setting up so-called City Development Corporations, which are a type of QUANGO (Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation), performing the governmental responsibilities but usually having no obligation to consult, negotiate, or encounter with the local representatives and local public.

In the case of the Cardiff Bay Development the city demanded its involvement, however, in reality that brought them very little room to negotiate. The other objectives that seem to be ignored or dismissed in the Cardiff Bay Development project is the history of the place as well as its social, cultural, and environmental context.

The original mudflats of the Tiger Bay were a very important littoral zone for wading birds largely from northern Europe who over-wintered there. The whole area was therefore designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest – SSSI, entitled to protection from damage or destruction. History also tells us the story of Tiger Bay as “the place of Wales’ oldest multi-ethnic community. Sailors and workers from over 50 countries settled here. Some of the largest communities included the Somalis, the Yeminitis, and the Greeks. Residents of many races and backgrounds socialised together and intermarried, creating a distinct community and atmosphere to the place.”

All that is gone now. Today what you can see when visiting the bay is mainly chain cafés and restaurants, generic clubs, 30-minute boat trips around the lake, and the edutainment type of Hollywood experience.

And in the middle of this entire almost unreal environment sits the new Welsh parliament, Sennad, a wonderful piece of architecture that ironically represents the voice of the people transformed into a public roof – the sky, a place for everybody, anybody …

The *Tiger and the Mermaid* video has been shot in the Sennad. I invited both promoters and protesters of the Tiger Bay development project to talk about the history, the present, and the possible future, while sitting in the People’s Gallery overlooking the main Chamber of the Sennad. Although I talked to each of them separately, in the video they appear to communicate with each other.

For the *Talk Show* I have invited some of the same people to meet in life for the first time in front of the public, on the green platform within my installation to re-examine the case of Tiger Bay. The moderator of the event was Gareth Jones who did a documentary in 2010 titled *Starbucks and Stadiums* where he critically reviewed the development of the Cardiff Bay (among other sites in the city), emphasising the lack of public voice and public participation within city development projects.
Participants at the Talk Show:

Ken Poole, Head of Economic Development, Cardiff City Council

Katie Jo Luxton, director of RSFB (Royal Society for Protection of Birds)
Roger Thorney, Operational Manager, Barrage (just retired), Cardiff Harbour Authority, former consultant to CBDC (Cardiff Bay Development Corporation)

Sian Best, writer of the book *A Whim Set in the Concrete – The Campaign to Stop the Cardiff Bay Barrage*, active in the Campaign against the Barrage

with actors in the public:

Gerald Conn, artist, managing director of Gritty Realism/Gritty Films, together with Jane Hubbard, authors of the "The Black Lagoon", animated film made about the Cardiff Bay Development in 1988
Emma Gelliot, art producer and journalist, deputy editor, Blown Magazine
Course description

Faculty

ISLANDS

Lead Teachers: Junior Lecturer Margot Edström and Senior Lecturer Maria Hedlund
Credits: 7.5
See page: 432
Karin Hasselberg, Skissernas Museum, Lund

Considering Sites
An installation at Skissernas Museum in Lund built up with news articles, letters and sketches from the museum’s archives

Skissernas Museum
Finngatan 2
Lund
Opening: Wednesday 17 April at 19:00
Please visit the museum’s website for further information: www.skissernasmuseum.se

Karin Hasselberg lives and works in Malmö and Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions include Considering Sites at gallery Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam, 2013 (solo); A Sense of Place at Kunstroom Lakeside, Kloosterher, 2012; The Only Rule is Work at Galerie Westkunst, Finsterwolde, 2012; and New Socket at gallery Sandy Brown, Berlin, 2011 (solo)

Can the artist speak?
– a pedagogical performance

Tuesday 14 May 2013 at 9pm at Signal, Monbijougatan 15, Malmö

The evening is dedicated to difficulties of speech.

An artist at work with paintbrush and a palette on a portrait of the patron – a bourgeois, middle-aged gentleman in a wing chair. It might have been finished since long. As it sits on the easel, adorned with a floral frame, it was surely destined for a drawing room. A fly makes a landing on the gentleman’s nose.

The artist exclaims:
– For heaven’s sake, monsieur, don’t move your hands or you’ll lose the pose!...

Without any further ado, the patron’s mouth zips up. Things then get more complicated, as the artist becomes indebted to a range of professionals, keen on representing, with speech that is shaped up by distribution fever.

I couldn’t help but wonder, can the artist speak?

With aid from Elinnor Aurora Aeegaard, Om Alexander Amundsen, Kah Bee Choo, Jeono Je Kim, Henri Lundqvist, Liv Strand and Megan Francis Sullivan to answer the question.

Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea is an artist currently based in Malmö. For details please contact hadjiculea@gmail.com

Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea

Verkstan
Modern Museet
9-12th May
(11 - 6pm, Thur - Sun)

Stephen Dupont is a visual artist currently living and working in Copenhagen

Darkroom
Darkroom is an installation and activity implemented by Stephen Dupont within the Verkstan at the Moderna Museet, Malmö.

The project explores questions around pedagogical practices within gallery education, and our expectations towards these spaces, through the darkroom photographic process and the making of photograms. Darkroom is an endeavour to intervene ideas about the laboratory and the playground, through which the public is invited to create new sites of playful immersion.

‘Verkstan’ Moderna Museet
9-12th May
(11 - 6pm, Thur - Sun)

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An installation at Skissernas Museum in Lund built up with news articles, letters and sketches from the museum’s archives

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The Temporary Department of Time and Space

The Temporary Department of Time and Space recognises but won’t respect any hierarchical authority within the department.

The Temporary Department of Time and Space recognises but won’t respect any hierarchical authority outside the department.

The Temporary Department of Time and Space recognises and respects that it is a guest in someone else’s house.

Running as a department within the VAV department at Gerrit Rietveld Academie, The Temporary Department of Time and Space is a project developed by Tobias Karlsson while working on a workshop with students. The workshop relies on an open-ended structure so that participants can help decide what the department will be. Together with the workshop leader the group will decide how the department is run and what its members will do, all with a focus on the artistic process. At the end of the workshop some kind of public presentation will take place at W139 in Amsterdam. The department will determine the form of this presentation.

José Tomás Giraldo, To Inger with Love, Archival pigment print, 42 × 42 cm, 2013

Learning from the machinery

Part Two of the lecture series Learning from Anders explores specific adjustments to the method of research and attempts to map out a chronology of relevant events that lead up to the arrival of the material to the Academy. One of the artists’ files will be drawn and shown as an example, a case that demonstrates in turn, the method of operation of the Gallery. Such modes of planning and organization had variations from artist to artist and can be seen as tailor made for each exhibition carried out in the space.

April 23
16:00
Lecture Room Malmö Art Academy (Limited seating)
José Tomás Giraldo is an artist from Bogotá now working and living in Malmö.

Stories from “2630 GHG”

Kids and youth from the youth club “Gadehaven – Klubben i Centrum” use their mobile phones to document and tell their life stories in a project with artist Nikolaj Kilsmark and pedagogue Dina Lindgren.

In this process of video storytelling the participants film and edit their own story – but at the same time Nikolaj Kilsmark uses the same video material (filmed by the participants) to tell the same story in a different way - giving the participants new perspectives on their own material/ideas/identity - challenging their views and understanding of the power of audiovisual storytelling.

Event:
Wednesday, 15 May 18.00 – 19.30
Fritids og ungdomsklubben Gadehaven (Klubben i Centrum)
Gadehavengårdsvej 18
2630 Høje-Taastrup
Relay

A group of animals engage in a task or activity. After a while, they are replaced by a similar group that completes the task. Relay is a durational performative installation composed of different contributions by 14 artists whose work sustains live and which have elements that make-happen. Relay consists of a curatorial structure where artists contribute work that reacts to a work from another artist. By association, each artist provides something to transmit to the next artist, in a continuing dialogue. Performance, installation, video and live streaming works take part within the theater space. Relay is an approach to making a collective exhibition. The works, planned or improvised, pass on the concept that is transformed.

A structure for time-based work is provided, reflecting on the role of the mediator and the artist, while dealing with decision-making and responsibilities.

You are kindly invited to Relay a durational performative installation:
Inkonst Theater, Malmö
May 18th, 16.00 to 23.00
Join us for food and a glass of wine

Tina Helen is a Copenhagen based visual artist. Her work emphasizes the importance of synthesizing the practical and theoretical in the understanding and production of images. Engaged on a personal and political level, she has worked internationally on numerous projects and collaborations within the field of activism, humanitarianism and fine arts.

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PLACE, SPACE AND GAZE
Lead Teacher: Junior Lecturer Viktor Kopp
Credits: 3
See page: 432

SELF-PORTRAIT/SELF-IMAGE
Lead Teacher: Professor Mats Leiderstam
and Guest Lecturer Cecilia Widenheim
Credits: 7.5
See page: 432
CASTING COURSE: BRONZE / ALUMINIUM / SILICONE

Lead Teacher: Senior Lecturer P O Persson
Also teaching: Robert Cassland
Credits: 9

See page: 435
Channelled

An exhibition curated by Gertrud Sandqvist
Lund Konsthall
23 February – 2 June 2013

Channelled is a visually rich and thought-provoking group exhibition at Lund Konsthall based on the thinking of visionary Swedish artist Hilma af Klint (1862–1944). The exhibition features works by her and by contemporary artists Carolus Enckell (Finland), Olav Christopher Jenssen (Norway/Germany), Joachim Koester (Denmark/US), Christine Ödlund (Sweden), Silja Rantanen (Finland), Nina Roos (Finland) and Emily Wardill (England).

Ever since Hilma af Klint’s esoteric painting was first shown to the public, in the exhibition The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985 in Los Angeles in 1986, it has provoked justified enthusiasm all over the world. We almost cannot understand it, as if it were a message from another dimension. That is precisely what af Klint herself considered it to be.

Somewhat depending on how we count, her oeuvre consists of either 193 or more than 1000 esoteric works. 193 is the number of paintings, made between 1906 and 1916, which according to af Klint were part of the large spiritual commission to make ‘Paintings for the Temple’. The remainder, around 800 drawings, watercolours and gouaches that are also esoteric or occult, she made after the main commission was finished, until a couple of years before her death in 1944. These are significantly smaller than the large commissioned paintings, but produced with the same method, at least until the end of 1920. Thereafter her working method changed somewhat, to better accommodate the doctrines and visions of another occult thinker, Rudolf Steiner.

All these secret paintings and the working process and visions and thoughts behind them are recorded in 1044 notebooks, usually called occult diaries, that might be described as research logbooks. Many artists use such books, where they note thoughts and ideas for images. Hilma af Klint describes her life-long contact with the spiritual world: the messages she receives, the insights into a world that remains hidden for most of us. A recurrent feature in her notes is the importance of being open and humble, emptying oneself of one’s own thoughts, one’s own will, being able to listen to the Voice, or to see the Image.

For some years I have been reading af Klint’s diaries and looking at her esoteric pictures. Sometimes her way of experiencing reality feels so different from other people’s that she appears totally unique. But I don’t really think this is the case; one aspect of af Klint’s experience is also shared by other artists. That is the method of taking a break from one’s own Self, with its intentions and plans, to wait for something, or experience an image coming to one, or a chromatic tone with a meaning of its own. Artists describe this in different ways, and af Klint speaks of the Voice, sees the images in an inner vision, or witnesses how the spirits, the High Ones, take her by the hand and lead it right in her painting.

Some of the contemporary artists featured in this exhibition have had similar experiences during meditation or strong concentration. Others speak of an inner place they must reach before painting ‘comes to them’ or the image ‘is given’. Someone speaks of ‘tone’ or a dream-like state. It is as if there were images associated with spiritual states not belonging to oneself in isolation but capable of being shared, mediated. This is the very foundation of abstract art, and perhaps of art in general.

When our current notion of art was developed in the second half of the 18th century ideas of the genius and the importance of inspiration were key. If we think about what the word inspiration actually means – something breathing through us – and how this word really describes a religious ecstatic experience, then we realise that this particular state transforms and spiritualises image-making. No longer a craft, it becomes such a spiritual phenomenon that philosophers such as Immanuel Kant or Arthur Schopenhauer can proclaim art to be crucially important for how people relate to each other and to a transcendent reality. This understanding
of art appears to recur in cycles. With the retreat of Romanticism artists became interested in other possibilities for art as communication, until the next big spiritual wave rolled in at the end of the 19th century – Theosophy.

Theosophy and Anthroposophy

The emergence of Theosophy is really a most unlikely story. The natural sciences were becoming established in Europe, along with an increasingly ruthless materialism leading to capitalist and colonial exploitation, while Christianity had become an official power rather than a genuine authority. At the same time many began to establish their own contacts to the invisible world. Spiritism, Mesmerism and hypnosis fascinated and attracted people. The medium capable of entering into relation with the spirits of the dead acquired knowledge of secret things that will otherwise have remained hidden. One of the techniques used was hypnosis, and famous psychiatrists such as Jean-Martin Chasnot or Sigmund Freud used hypnotic techniques to cure hysteria – in itself an enigmatic state, where bodily symptoms indicate injuries to the soul.

In this interesting period the Russian aristocrat Helena Petrovna Blavatsky takes the stage. She arrives in New York, where she founds the first Theosophical Society in 1875, in collaboration with Colonel Henry Steel Olcott. Blavatsky herself, ardent and enigmatic state, where bodily symptoms indicate injuries to the soul.

Above all the pioneers of abstract art, Vassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, Kazimir Malevich and František Kupka, were all theosophists. Not least Kandinsky was inspired by Annie Besant, Blavatsky’s successor as leader of the theosophical movement, and her experiment with occult chemistry and thought forms. Together with Charles Leadbeater Besant wrote the books On Thought Forms (1901) and Mind Visible and Invisible (1902). In them the two spiritual natural scientists claim to be able to see, through clairvoyance, people’s thoughts as a kind of electrical, colourful and radiant figures within the larger field of power and colour called aura, which they divided into the astral body and the mental body.

The artists understood what fantastic possibilities these discoveries implied. If particularly sensitive people could train their abilities to perceive the colour fields and shapes incurred by various states of mind (by emotions, in fact), that would mean an exceptional extension of the field that allows us to depict reality. At the same time scientific discoveries were made that allowed light to pass through the human body and reveal its inner truth on a photographic plate (X-rays), while other discoveries showed radiation invisible to Man being capable of extinguishing all life (radioactivity). The atom turned out to be divisible, and Einstein proved the old occult conviction that matter is nothing but transformed energy. In this context astral bodies, auras and thought forms hardly seem spectacular at all.

Besant and Leadbeater also made a chart of the colours that the various states of mind lend to the auras of astral and mental bodies. Besant and Leadbeater asked some artists to visualise their visions, but complained that the heavy pigments could never fully convey the electrical play of colours. The colour chart of the astral body’s visible emotions was later refined by Johannes Itten, one of the teachers at Bauhaus, the famous experimental school outside Dessau in Germany where Modernism was shaped. Kandinsky was also teaching there, as well as the theosophist Paul Klee. All of them are connected, through Theosophy, by their belief in the individual’s inner vision and in intuition as the capability that gives the artist direct access to mystical knowledge.

Some theosophists broke away from the Theosophical Society in London at the end of the 19th century to found their own association, The Golden Dawn. Its objective was the more straightforward practice of magic, both white and black. Again we see women in important positions, as priestesses. One famous magician, Aleister Crowley, was a member of The Golden Dawn before he was expelled, and the philosopher Henri Bergson’s sister Moïra was one of its priestesses. Another spin-off from Theosophy is
Hilma af Klint’s Diaries and Pictures

Hilma af Klint was for a while a member of the theosophical association Edleleweis, founded in 1890. Af Klint does not seem to have read much theosophical literature, but she and the small group of women who formed the group De Fem [The Five] use Besant’s and Leadbeater’s terminology of astral and mental bodies, along with central theosophical nomenclature such as evolution and reincarnation, gurus and mahatmas, when they write down their inspired visions. Yet unlike the theosophists, who were influenced by Buddhism and Hindu tradition, af Klint was profoundly Christian. She even writes in her occult notebooks that the big undertaking of the Temple Paintings was mostly aimed at theosophists and non-conformist Christians.

To read the diaries where af Klint chronicles her occult findings is a fascinating experience. It is obvious that she imagined them being published at some point. She even edited the notebooks at a couple of occasions, adding explanatory remarks. It is also obvious that she regarded the notebooks as an accompanying commentary to the occult paintings. In the beginning, i.e. during the ten years of group effort before af Klint made her first mediumistic painting at the end of 1906, the association appears to have used so-called psychography, and several of its members would convey messages from the spiritual world in a state of trance. Yet after a while it becomes obvious that the spirits, who have names and are referred to as De Hög [The High Ones], have singled out af Klint as their main tool. She was directly asked if she was willing to take on this big task, and she immediately accepted.

During this early inspired period of af Klint and her group appear to first have made a kind of psychic drawings, as a premonition of pictures to come, and to have received direct instructions from The High Ones. She also makes her first trips into the astral world, where she witnesses bizarre figures said to be elementary spirits from the South Pole. Weird heads in profile, at first vague and shapeless but later more distinct, are traced by af Klint. She describes these first encounters as frightening and unpleasing. On these drawings she writes down words sounding inside her. Sometimes they are recognizable words, such as the pair ‘vegetative’, and sometimes she produces words that cannot be found in the earthly languages, or even just singular letters.

Gradually af Klint and her group become more familiar with this way to receive messages and seek knowledge in an occult fashion. These notebooks are written in a rather easily legible hand with strongly varying pressure (in one of the comments, added later, af Klint notes that particularly important occult messages are recorded with very weak pressure). Going through them, the latter-day reader certainly gets the impression that af Klint experienced all this exactly in the way it was written and drawn.

There are a number of voices – Ama- liel, Gregor, Ananda, Gidro – and perhaps it is not so difficult to understand that these belong with The High Ones and don’t dwell on Earth. But what about Esther or Gusten? And what is happening to Lotten? She appears to be present in the occult work of The Five just as much after her death as when she was alive on earth. The situation is further complicated when the group receives fairly detailed information about earlier incarnations, not least to be able to understand the internal dynamics of the group.

Two notes, somewhat randomly selected and both from 5 September 1907, may give us an impression:

10. The spiritual sense of Dual Content. 9. The incorporation of the Monad with the Body. 8. HeH, that is: the Light of Life in Matter. 7. Wheat, the beginning of Sowing. 6. HjuHs, that is: the beginning of the divorce of Sowing. Hereby we mean: the ascetic and vestal divorce in Matter.

Anthroposophy. Its founder Rudolf Steiner was originally secretary general for the Theosophical Society in Germany. Steiner was to become very important for af Klint. The first Theosophical Society in Sweden was founded in 1889 at the suggestion of the writer Viktor Rydberg.

From unfinished series of drawings

3 February–29 March 1917

 Courtesy of the Hilma af Klint Foundation, Järna

(Phototo: Terje Östling)
Ararat is now in Arabia, but was once the mountain of Ararat, where Noah’s ark is in the astral world, and the High powers of Man’s passions. Dual Nature is a holy and pure concept. Of this mountain seek to liberate human-light. She describes sexual orgasm as the lowest stage of the spiritual quest. The intensity of this process is far from self-evident at the time. And she does not wish to receive it if it con-  All the colour golden. An image of the visual language of Fundamental Powers: Dual Nature is a holy and pure concept. Of this mountain seek to liberate human-light. She describes sexual orgasm as the lowest stage of the spiritual quest. The intensity of this process is far from self-evident at the time. And she does not wish to receive it if it con-
Germany, Jenssen claims to know exactly what he is doing, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, to not have a clue about what this means! That particular aspect of af Klint’s character appears to be shared by other artists. This exhibition includes a series of etchings by Jenssen. Remarkably, he seems to be entering the drawings that Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Hill made during his period of illness. It is as if Jenssen is taking over Hill’s identity, and this generates new additional images, of mushrooms and birds.

The same complete trust in the inner image, the same need to find the inner space, is manifested by Finnish artist Nina Roos. She waits until a specific colour chord grows within her, or until she sees an image, or a fragment of an image. Then her outside image meets the one on the inside. Much like Hilma af Klint, Roos alternates between abstract and figurative elements. Sometimes abstract and figurative forms co-exist in the same painting, or at least in the same series of paintings. The image comes first; its interpretation is not her task.

Swedish artist Christine Ödlund uses a meditation method reminiscent of early Theosophy, and of Hilma af Klint. In a state of deep concentration colour and sound change places, and a synthetic picture emerges. As a reference to this truly creative way of working Ödlund has made a map of Helena Blavatsky’s travels, which can also be read as a musical score. In addition, she has remade the illustrations of visible music we find in Besant’s and Leadbeater’s Thought Forms – visions relating to Gounod’s Faust, Wagner’s The Mastersingers of Nuremberg and Mendelssohn’s Songs Without Words.

For a long time, Finnish artists Silja Rantanen and Carolus Enckell have been interested in the early abstract pioneers, including Hilma af Klint. In his fascination with colour, Enckell found a way to establish communication between other painters and himself through colour alone, whereby he appears to escape the confines of the ego and enter into another consciousness. Rantanen’s interest in Besant’s and Leadbeater’s thought forms, originally interpreted by three Scottish painters, is given new form in a new video lecture made for Channelled. She also shows her own diaries, structurally reminiscent of af Klint’s notebooks.

* Stig Andersen and Bjørn Engqvist, En reise om vintern (A Winter Trip), 1985.

Gertrud Sandqvist, Curator of the exhibition
Translation Anders Kreuger and Lunds konsthall
Course description
The title of this course is taken from the 1915 novel "Herland" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, which was written as a "mind-game" to envision an all-female civilization that is free of some of the oppressive elements of late 19th-century society. The title underscores the idea of a utopian society that challenges gender norms and offers a vision of empowerment for women. The course aims to engage students in a dialogue about gender roles, power dynamics, and the construction of gender in contemporary culture, using the novel as a catalyst for discussion.

Course description

SPRING SEMESTER 2015:

BFA / TECHNICAL COURSES:

IBT SOUND
Guest Teacher: David Cueriellès Credits: 3

Participating students: Markus Bråten, Mieze Fabrikas, Oscar Hagbard, Golnosh Hosseini, Lavinia Jannesson, Lou Kuhlau Fjellfjord, Sandra Mijunga, Jonas Petter Wallner

The aim of this course is to learn about building interactive installations and performances using "bit sound techniques in microcontrollers. As a result the students will be making small and inexpensive sound machines that could be used in installations and performances of any kind.

Participating students: Claudia del Fierro, Stephen Dupont, Kim Engelen, José Tomás Giraldo, Ana-Maria Hadić-Cucla, Karl Hasselberg, Tina Helen, Tobias Karlsson, Nikolaj Kilstrøm

The purpose of the six-week internship is to give 2-3-year CPS students the practical knowledge and skills required for the application of pedagogical tools learned during the program. Students are given the opportunity to apply theory learned during the first year of the program to practical skills in a work environment. A plan is prepared prior to each individual internship in collaboration between the place of internship and the student where the objectives for further evaluation.

The internship should be a site for learning and contain an educational activity under supervision of the contact person(s) within each individual organisation. Students will prepare and deliver a project tailored for their place of internship that will include the skills and knowledge learned thus far in the program. The intern shall also be able to exploit the notion of pedagogy as practice and the position of artist as teacher through the process of delivering their individual project.

The intern should have hands-on experience in the educational situations – to be able to test out experimental pedagogical strategies and education both on a theoretical and in a practical level under supervision. This can be in the format of a workshop, a seminar, an event or gallery education conducted by the intern – all depending on where the internship takes place.

In addition to the work experience and project, students will deliver two written assignments and a final presentation for an additional 3 cps credits.


The course will teach you to create motion graphics and visual effects with Adobe After Effects. Enhance your video content with color correction/grading, animations and compositing images with sound and text.

Week 1: hands on exercises, demonstrations of techniques. Interactive work with online and printed tutorial.

Week 2: students will practice some of the techniques in individual projects and also learn how to model a simple 3D object in Maya.

CASTING COURSE:
BRONZIUM/ALUMINIUM/SILCON
Guest Teacher: Professor Christian Hjort-Olesen
Credits: 10

Participating students: Julie Falk Christensen, Andreas Hafstrøm, Kaare Gølles, Jørgen Drix, Hedlund, Hanni Kamaly, Kaile Enck Lindmark, Johan Lundfalk, Line Åxman

The course will provide basic knowledge in silcon casting as well as a handicap in a teaching situation. With the help of mould and silicone the students will produce objects and moulds in wax that will be cast in brass/aluminium in.

The course will be divided into two blocks.

Block 1 (duration 2 weeks): Silicone casting. Includes objects suited for casting in bronze/aluminium. Location: Annex

Block 2 (duration 2 weeks): Casting (copper-pipes), sand form casting, grind work and patination: Location: KIC- gutter (located in the same building as KHM Gallery).

BFA / THEORY COURSES:

PRACTICING WITHOUT A LICENSE – STRATEGIES AND MEANS IN CONTEMPORARY FILM AND VIDEO ART
Lead Teacher: Professor Joachim Kooster Credits: 3


In this course we will examine some of the spaces between the art practices and the laws that govern them. We will try to define what distinguishes the artistic approach to select matter and genre, when artists practice without a license and appropri- ate technologies, like documentary and drama, to different means. Also we will look at the use of the exhibition space itself: the way video installations and videos are displayed in galleries, and the exhibition space as a place of experimental production and distribution and the ongoing search for an audience not yet defined.

Monday the 4th: Mona Claymore will introduce Tom Gunnings concept of the cinema of attractions, which focuses on the figure of the early cinema spectator, and the relationship between film exhibition and other forms of spectator display. Later that day we will discuss recent developments in film storytelling, particularly the emergence of the mind-game film, which plays perceptual games with spectators.

Tuesday the 5th: the third space to be explored in- volves film philosophy, particularly the analysis of film texts. We will screen and discuss a selection of each of the three sessions Monday and Tuesday will make refer- ence to popular cinema and the final session is organized around discussion and feedback.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Monday we will engage in a series of extensive viewings of film and video works by contemporary artists, ex. Monon de Boer, Eric Balslev, Sven Augustinsson, Moyano Dávila, Emily Wardill, Dori Margolis, Filip Hrivnak, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Dalmantons Narkvics, Harun Farocki, Meilo Ginsberg, Zoë Well, among others.

À LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU/ REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST
Guest Teacher: Jürgen Bock Credits: 5

Participating students: Andreas Albrechtsen, Maria Håkansson, Anders Hegg, Andreas Furuseth, Erlend Brygka Wold, Golnosh Hosseini, Rina Eide Laavares, Maria Matt, Nicklas Randau, Ihra Lill Scharning

À la recherche du temps perdu is a seminar on memory which combines fields as diverse as art, architecture, history and socio-economic history. A range of international artists and texts, with their ambiguities often too uncertain to be named, will be presented and discussed (Maria Thereza Alves, Helen Mirren, Martha Minowa, Martha Deacon, Jean-Pierre Czarny, Matthew Fiske, tenemos, Jorn Utzon, Nathalie Desolles, Anna Lisa Løvseth, Manon de Boer, Eric Balslev, Sven Augustinsson, Moyano Dávila, Emily Wardill, Dori Margolis, Filip Hrivnak, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Dalmantons Narkvics, Harun Farocki, Meilo Ginsberg, Zoë Well, among others).

The problems of classification are intended to stimulate a creative space and make the different spaces between the art practices and the laws that govern them.

HÉRITAGE, TERLARDIN
Guest Teacher: Andrea Ray Credits: 5

Participating students: Siri Borge, Golnosh Hosseini, Joana Pereira

The title of this course is taken from the 1984 utopian novel by Charlotte Perkins Gilman titled "Herland." It takes as its premise a year 2000-odd all-female civilization that is discovered by three
THAT CREATED CRITICAL THEORY

BENJAMIN – ADORNO, THE THINKERS

provided for participants’ future reference. Additional readings and artists’ works will be used primarily with the two texts, a folder of lecture notes, and carefully copied records, firsthand descriptions, and the pictures – that’s the worst loss. We had some bird’s-eyes of the cities and parks; a lot of lovely views of streets, of buildings, outside and in, and some of those gorgeous gardens, and, most important of all, of the women themselves.

We can read this opening sequence as pointing to the problems of journalism, ethnography and translation – all of which have been subjects long explored in artists’ works. There are other questions posed in this passage that are pertinent to thinking through artworks. For example: how is our understanding of a work affected when the entire construct is framed in “cause or rumor”? What if the reveal was found later rather than sooner? What happens when we dream of another life, another circumstance? How might your work reflect such utopian dreams? How might your work reflect such utopian dreams? How is our understanding of a work affected when the entire construct is framed in “cause or rumor”? What if the reveal was found later rather than sooner? What happens when we dream of another life, another circumstance? How might your work reflect such utopian dreams?

The material to be read and seen during this course is meant to provide a research base from which to propel ideas and material for new studio work. While this course is primarily a seminar, participants will be challenged to think through these ideas with visual means – to develop proposals, sketches and/or models of new work by the end of the session to be discussed individually with the instructor and as a group. Because this course will be taken up primarily with the two texts, a folder of additional readings and artists’ works will be provided for participants’ future reference.

JÖHAN MARTIN CHRISTIAN

THEORY

Leading Teacher: Professor Gertrud Sandqvist

A work story is a written or oral narrative about the forming of materials, immaterial units, situations, relations and social practices that is, or leads to, an artwork. In conceptual art the work story is not only crucial for the understanding of the art work – the very order of the sequence of making and the action often have symbolic, metaphorical, material or political meanings. Work stories often have concluding and encapsulating forms that strive to embrace complicated and large courses of events in condensed form. As in all narrative they are works of exclusion, and what is left out is sometimes as important as what is included. They may be narratives in the form of media descriptions, background stories or foreground stories, they may be instructions, scores, protocols or sometimes even just lists. But they can also have an extensive structure, be long, complex, essayistic, journalistic, or have the character of commentary or translation – all of which have been subjects long explored in artists’ works. We can read this opening sequence as pointing to the problems of journalism, ethnography and translation – all of which have been subjects long explored in artists’ works. There are other questions posed in this passage that are pertinent to thinking through artworks. For example: how is our understanding of a work affected when the entire construct is framed in “cause or rumor”? What if the reveal was found later rather than sooner? What happens when we dream of another life, another circumstance? How might your work reflect such utopian dreams? How is our understanding of a work affected when the entire construct is framed in “cause or rumor”? What if the reveal was found later rather than sooner? What happens when we dream of another life, another circumstance? How might your work reflect such utopian dreams?

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THESS & EXAM PROJECT

Credits: 30

Each student submits a twenty page written thesis in English, which is assessed by an external examiner. The thesis is written in essay format, exemplifying a critical and analytical understanding of pedagogical perspectives in artistic practice. In addition to the thesis, students deliver an exam project; either preparing a discourse seminar, conducting a workshop or developing a specific project with a pedagogical aim; an oral presentation of the student’s exam project, and a public presentation of the exam project.
MFA 2
Andreas Albrechtsen
Una Margrét Árnadóttir
Daniel Peder Askeland
Martin Berring
Johan Eldrot
Ingrid Furre
Tiril Hasselknippe
Martine Sepstrup Jensen
Sindri Leifsson
David Nilson
Maria Norrman
Jessica Sanderheim
Maiken Stene
Linda Spjut
Julia Stepp
Bjarni Tor Petursson
Sebastian Wahlforss

Joana Pereira (exchange student)
Ihra Lili Scharning
Marianne Skaarup Jakobsen
Jesper Veileby

BFA 3
Sofia Berti Rojas
Marie Bonfils
Simen Godtfredsen
Karin Hald
Young Jae Lih (exchange student)
Nora Kapfer (exchange student)
Ida Bakke Kristiansen
Emma-Christina Landqvist
Ronni Lykke Lauridsen
Kalle Enok Lindmark
Rina Eide Levaasen
Sandra Mujinga
Emelie Sandström
Kathrina Skarðsá

BFA 2
Markus Bråten
Angelica Falkeling
Karina Andrea Furuseth
Dick Hedlund
Lavinia Jannesson
Hanni Kamaly
Johan Lundqvist
Ingrid Sofie Ofstad
Marie Raffn
Daniel Spies
Mina Vattøy

BFA 1
John Alberts
Meise Fabricius
Julie Falk Christensen
Andreas Franzén
Marianne Glimsdal
Oscar Hagbard
Golnosh Hosseini
Mads Juel

CRITICAL & PEDAGOGICAL
STUDIES MFA 2
Claudia del Fierro
Stephen Dupont
Kim Engelen
José Tomás Giraldo
Ana-Maria Hadji-Culea
Karín Hasselberg
Tina Helen
Tobias Karlsson
Nikolaj Kilsmark

MFA 1
Jóhan Martin Christiansen
Marten Damgaard
Helene Gjølme
Kaare Golles
Erlend Grytthakk Wold
Niilas Helander
Ingvild Kaldal Hovland
Loi Kuhlau Fjellander
Marika Markström
Helene Nymann aka Ima
Helena Olsson

Marcus Matt
Nicklas Randau
Jonas-Petter Wallner
Line Åxman

Ph.D students
Rosa Barba
Matthew Buckingham
Mats Eriksson
Marion Von Osten
Andrea Ray
Frans Jacobi
Apolonija Šušteršič

For more information please visit: www.khm.lu.se