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Vividness + Art-writing + Forms

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☆ **Acknowledgements**
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☆ **Abstract**
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This creative-critical commentary considers art objects which only exist as text, and the implications for such works when text is prevented from acquiring a static and final form because it is being constantly changed via digital technology.

The origins of ekphrasis are retraced to consider key differences between the description of art objects and ekphrasis. As a consequence, I explore not only the practical fabrication of textual art objects but also consider where these art objects could be installed as an exhibition. This led to a review of thought-exhibitions from literary and artistic history, and what François Laruelle has termed, a 'theoretical installation.'

In Parts 1 and 2, practical experiments with the theoretical installation resulted in a two-form exhibition: the assets and layouts for a possible physical exhibition and a theory-fiction text as exhibition.

The project used a unique research methodology; using a broad set of meta-practices, ancient and contemporary ideas from art, poetry and philosophy were reworked and deliberately misread and misunderstood. Rather than using critical reflection or practice as research, this project used theory as a material for artistic production. This resulted is a productive state of 'not-knowing' where terms, ideas and concepts constantly shift and mutate — this approach replicates the practical experiments with text being prevented from acquiring a static form.

In Part 3, collaborative practical outputs (residencies, publications, exhibitions) are offered as a contribution to the fields of artistic practice and research.

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List of Illustrative Material

PART 0

0.1 Introduction

My original project set out to research and create artworks that only exist as or in description, either because the object no longer exists (disappeared), never existed (fictional) or could not exist (impossible). I undertook an initial investigation, akin to a literature review, into the history of artworks that offer description as their content, studying existing and imaginary artworks that are anchored in language (e.g., Browne 1683, Weiner 1968, Catling 1990, Critchley 2014).

I wanted to explore the possibility of creating digital text works that were in a constant state of flux because the words displayed kept changing. I used the dictionary definition of 'flux', as 'a continuous succession of changes of condition, composition or substance (oed. com) in combination with the concept of the 'prevent' (Galloway 2014: 16) explored by Alexander R. Galloway via François Laruelle.

My reading, or misreading (see 0.9), is that the 'prevent' is a withdrawal of decision for an event. An event, for my project, is when a *possible* becomes an *actual* e.g., text having a static and final form. The 'prevent' is both something that prevents a decision on this static, final form and what comes before or 'hinders' (Galloway 2014: 16) the event (the pre-event). To put it another way: the event is static, the 'prevent' is flux. Synthesising 'flux' and the 'prevent' gave me a methodological principle: to develop a form of artwork that is prevented from manifesting in any static form because it is in a state of constant flux (see 1.2).

In the run-up to my Transfer examination, the focus shifted from the epistemic questions of content (what is a description as a thing rather than of a thing?) towards how artworks that are descriptions could be exhibited or shared (what could be the social life of description-as-a-thing?). This shift triggered a deeper engagement with François Laruelle's work, particularly his proposition of a 'theoretical installation' (Laruelle 2012b: 11). I 'cloned' (see 0.9) this term, per his method, to structure my thinking and making of texts that can operate as art installations.

By enacting this cloned concept of a theoretical installation, I developed an exhibition for this project that exists in two forms: a gallery show and a theory-fiction text. For the first, I have created the component material for a traditional exhibition (i.e., the assets, objects, a layout) that is not yet possible but is proposed as a prototype or hypothesis (i.e., an exhibition that could be installed in a gallery but has yet to be). This paradoxical model of a possible exhibition expands upon

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my theoretical framework. It is 'plasmatic' (Rispoli referenced by Webb 2016: 120), which is to say, something that is fictional but possible.

The second version of the exhibition is in the form of a theory-fiction tractate – part of the project's innovation is to claim it as a version of the exhibition. The tractate stems from the same ideas and research components as the possible exhibition but offers an alternate form.

Historically, a tractate is a genre of text that handles a specific topic systemically, like a treatise. In response to ideas that animated the collaborations of the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU 2017), my tractate 'operates not as a passive representation but as an active agent of transformation and a gateway through which entities can emerge' (CCRU 2017: 36).

What the simultaneous co-existence of these two versions reveals, in relation to the critical self-understanding of my practice, is that my practice is 'hauntological' (Fisher 2013: 53), with ideas, techniques, methods and forms constantly reappearing and constructively preventing a movement forward. In relation to the original contribution made by my practice-led research, it demonstrates the possible-impossibility of a Laruellean theoretical installation as a new rendering of the 'agency of the virtual' (Ibid: 18) proposed by Mark Fisher. It proposes a direction in Fine Art research that utilises description and fiction as an intermedial node between art-writing and exhibition-making.

This commentary will narrate and analyse the research journey and its findings to articulate the spirit of discovery, from connection to connection, that has animated my research. This spirit is key to my method of practice, as someone who thinks-through-making, so I do not deny or over-write it. In Part 0 – Critical Context, I interrogate the terms, references and encounters built through the research, organising and anchoring concepts to serve as a guide to the practical outputs, and sequencing those concepts as gestures for the practice. In Parts 1 and 2, I offer documentation of the central research outcome — the two-form exhibition. In Part 3, I narrate documentation of the surrounding research process, including residencies, exhibitions, poetry manuscripts and publications.

I did not intend to dedicate a section to hauntology, in part so as not to dwell in my own past research and practical interests developed during my previous degrees and professional career. However, during the

project it became increasingly clear that hauntology is foundational to my practice and therefore necessary for me to address in this commentary. My practice is hauntological in the Derridian sense that my ideas are unable to shake the spectres of the past (Derrida 1994), but also in the sense developed from Derrida by Mark Fisher, that the projects (fictions) I am attempting to manifest in reality fail to materialise and instead become cycles of repetition (Fisher 2013). As Fisher states, 'hauntology [is] the agency of the virtual, with the spectre understood not as anything supernatural, but as that which acts without (physically) existing' (Fisher 2013: 18).

By framing my practice through the lens of hauntology, I better understand issues and tendencies in my work and am then able to draw out the specific contribution of this project. For example, my attraction, as a practitioner, towards museums (see 3.1), and a moment from a twenty-year-old video game that has had a profound impact on my work, which will be explored in detail in section 0.15 and the Appendix. My practice has been haunted by the failed actualisation of many projects during the period of study as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which amplified worries worries that my speculative practice was really just a failure to manifest things recognisable as art. However, my response to the limits of the situation has been to the development of thought-exhibitions as *plasma* (something fictional but possible), re-centring the hauntological gamble staked by Fisher in the quotation above. I have come to recognise that this method breaks the negative cycle of failed manifestations because it prototypes the research findings, offering different forms of the same work to increase the odds of actualisation or the 'degrees of realization' (CCRU 2017: 36) that are possible when future conditions permit.

0.2   Description vs Ekphrasis

At the beginning of the project, I undertook considerable reading around literary description, specifically the differences between description and ekphrasis. My key frames of reference within literary theory were Ruth Webb's work on ekphrasis (Webb 2016), and Stephen Benson's work on description (Benson 2018a, 2018b, 2020).

Despite its origins in Ancient Greece and its conceptual prevalence in Renaissance European artistic and literary contexts via the *paragone* — reinforced by, amongst others, Lessing's famous essay on Laocoön (Lessing 1962) — the first reference to ekphrasis in English was in an 1815 issue of the *Edinburgh Review*. Janice Hewlett Koelb proposes a clear philological reason for the delay in appearance:

> Because the Romans translated the Greek ekphrasis by the Latin 'descriptio', speakers of English and the Romance languages had no need, until the late nineteenth or twentieth century, to reach back for a Greek term. (Koelb 2016: 5)

It was not until Leo Spitzer's 1955 essay on Keats' ur-ekphrasis, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (1819), that the modern definition began to be established:

> The ode belongs to the genre, known to Occidental literature from Homer and Theocritus to the Parnassians and Rilke, of the ekphrasis, the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art. (Spitzer quoted by Webb 2016: 34)

As a consequence of Spitzer's influence, and the subsequent reinforcement of his definition through its repetition in key works by James A.W. Heffernan (1991), Murray Krieger (2019) et al., ekphrasis became aligned in very particular ways with poetry and the visual arts.

Over the past decade or so, there has been a reappraisal of ekphrasis, and this contemporary turn in its conceptual value has been significant to my research. The origins of ekphrasis, its intention and method have been retraced by scholars like Ruth Webb (2016) and Rachel Eisendrath (2018) and deployed in recent essays by authors citing Webb's reappraisal, including Olivia Milroy Evans (2021) and Dan McFadden (2022). To summarise that history and recent discourse, it is important to note that ekphrasis appears as one of the numerous techniques in the *Progymnasmata*. The *Progymnasmata* was the defining handbook of rhetorical studies that emerged as a teaching guide around the 5th Century BCE. According to George A. Kennedy, there are four surviving

versions in Greek written by Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus (Kennedy 1994: 203). The *Progymnasmata* was taught to elite young men as part of their preparation for social and political life, delivering sanctioned study and precise techniques. The teaching of the *Progymnasmata* began in Ancient Greece and continued into the Roman Empire and beyond.

Ekphrasis was just one of many subjects (roughly fourteen, depending on what is noted in the surviving Greeks texts) that were taught, and at 'no point in antiquity was ekphrasis confined to a single category or subject matter' (Webb 2016: 2). There were numerous subjects to which ekphrastic expression was applied including events, battles, architecture, festivals, places, times, seasons, animals, trees and plants. In other words, ekphrasis was a unique rhetorical form of description of things and events, which was retrospectively re-cast in the modern period as the description of art only.

In its fuller, ancient definition, ekphrasis is 'a speech that brings the subject vividly before the eyes' (Spitzer quoted by Webb 2016: 1). This 'vividness' (εναργεια) is fundamental to ekphrasis; Pseudo-Longinos (one author of the surviving Latin versions of the *Progymnasmata*) instructs that this vividness 'not only persuades but enslaves the listener' (Pseudo-Longinos quoted by Webb 2016: 98). By this account, as a rhetorical tool, the remit of ekphrasis is 'to make listeners into spectators' (Nikolaos quoted by Webb 2016: 8), manipulating the audience by using 'vivid' and 'emotional' speech such that they see the world as the description proposes it. For example, this technique was used in a court setting to obtain the edge in persuading a jury, and students were taught that language correctly deployed would be 'a force acting on the world' (Tompkins quoted by Webb 2016: 23) because 'the word does not seek to represent, but to have an effect in the audience's mind that mimics the act of seeing' (Webb 2016: 38). There was also a belief that these 'vivid' images created a shared subjective positionality, i.e., the audience saw exactly the image the orator wished them to see, thus generalising the subjective to circumvent the need for objective evidence.

The Oxford Classical Dictionary updated its entry on ekphrasis in 2017 to include Ruth Webb's reappraisal. It no longer states, as per the previous entry in 2015, that 'Most were of works of art'; now acknowledging that 'the ancient and modern categories of ekphrasis are […] formed on entirely different grounds, and are entirely incommensurate, belonging as they do to radically different systems.'

The impact of this reappraisal has been important. For example, James A.W. Heffernan, a notable scholar on ekphrasis and author of *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (2003), stated in 2019 that, 'I must admit that visual art has nothing directly to do with the earliest known definition of ekphrasis' (Quoted by Kennedy et al. 2019: 257).

I have no interest in dismissing the ekphrastic scholarship by Heffernan et al. as this is not necessary or useful for my practical work. Rather, I bring up the debate to illustrate why Webb has become a surprising and guiding influence for the contextualisation of my practice-led research. Following her historical research, I was able to re-trace the broader (extra-art) origins of ekphrasis to learn how certain scholars understand the difference between description and ekphrasis. This process uncovered a significant, and hitherto over-looked, point regarding where *in* or *outside* the mind ekphrasis occurs, which is explored in section 0.11.

How, then, can we understand the difference between description and ekphrasis? Firstly, as Webb states, description is traditionally formed in/as text whereas ekphrasis is live, oral and performative. Ekphrasis is a narrative device. Narrative is based on a represented sequence of events, and description only has themes and sub-themes which 'seem to possess no logic at all' (Koopman 2018: 31). Ekphrasis is 'about people [whereas] description deals with things' (Don Fowler quoted by Webb 2016: 8). Ekphrasis is 'a force acting upon a listener […] while description whose domain is (theoretically) confined to the object, is itself treated as an object, to be dissected and analysed by the critic' (Webb 2016: 86).

Description adds to the world of the narrative, assisting in what Roland Barthes (1968) calls the 'Reality Effect.' This effect occurs when description is used within prose, making the textual feel 'real' (Hale 2006: 233), e.g., a description of what a character is wearing or the objects in their house can create a realist impression. However, the intention with description is not to 'enslave' (Pseudo-Longinos quoted by Webb 2016: 98) as with ekphrasis but rather to give an atmosphere and context. There is a clear difference between being told (orally) in ekphrasis and to be shown (textually) in descriptive method.

Ekphrasis has its origins in provoking emotion, whereas description purports to be non-emotional. However, such a simple distinction soon becomes increasingly complex as multiple descriptions can be utilised

to build what T.S Eliot (following a term coined by Washington Allston) calls an 'objective correlative' (Eliot 1997). Eliot describes the objective correlative as 'a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion' (Ibid: 85). This idea was impactful on those poets who came to be called Objectivists, beginning in America with William Carlos Williams and influencing a strong British contingent who bridge high Modernist and Post-modernist impulses, including Basil Bunting. We can retrofit Eliot's 'formula' onto John Keats' poem *Fragment of "The Castle Builder"* (1821); in the poem, Keats places people in specific rooms to emphasise their spiritual status and uses the objective ambience of the room to offer glimpses into their character, such that the objects combine to offer an emotional dimension and symbolic portrait.

Stephen Benson (Benson 2018a, 2018b, 2020) argues that description has traditionally been thought of as decoration within writing, even as something that regular prose readers can skip over. He says, paraphrasing Michael Beaujour, that 'description came to lay itself open to charges of being [...] an undignified display of skill' (Benson 2020). Webb's revision of ekphrasis re-enforces Benson's claim. She argues that Theon (another known author of the *Progymnasmata*) considered 'description as a separate block inserted into the flow of narrative' (Theon quoted by Webb 2016: 66). These two accounts, one a report of ancient attitudes, the other a comment on contemporary literature, both cast description itself as an object or chunk of language without a necessary use-value – a thing that can get in the way – a distinguishable 'blockage' within a given narrative, understood as an object that inhibits narrative progression.

This confluence of ideas, derived from Webb and Benson, but framed by the collision of their theorising rather than a scholarly appraisal of their theories, was central to my early practical methodology: to explore description as an interruption, block and blockage. The first phase of my practical work during the PhD used description to stop the progression of time in narrative; as something that 'prevents' (see 0.1) narrative representation.

The artistic opportunity I saw in this phase of work was based on the idea that, paradoxically, while a fixed (static) description might suspend narrative, a description kept in flux could create blocks of description that open up their temporality and their own narrative world, thus being essential to the text rather than ornamental. This alter-temporality can be a fleeting site for thought about or resistance to

relentless external narratives, in the sense of 'alter' recuperated by Nicolas Bourriaud in his concept of the 'altermodern', as 'a vision of human history as constituted of multiple temporalities […] a positive vision of chaos and complexity' (Bourriaud 2009: 13). The site created by description in flux is fleeting because, ultimately, as JT Mitchell pointedly put it, 'no amount of description adds up to a depiction' (Mitchell 1994: 152).

The pinning of orality to performativity, and textuality to objectivity, per Webb's reappraisal, is a separation based on ideas about text being thought of as static or as a method of fixing. Unlike speaking, text gives language a form of stillness that appears not to be performative but instead spatial. That was made to seem even more true by print culture and publishing, whereby fixed editions are reproduced. Regardless of bigger historical debates about fixity in print culture (see Simanowski 2016, Jefferies & Kember 2019), the presence of digital text disturbs that separation significantly.

For example, in academic publishing, we can consider the appearance of a 'Crossmark' button in digital versions of books and journal articles. This button 'gives readers quick and easy access to the current status of an item of content, including any corrections, retractions, or updates to that record' (crossref.org). Although this technology does not show a flux of changes in real-time, as my works came to do (see 1.2), it is clear evidence that the idea of fixed or static text has long since weakened. Whether publishing cultures are better or worse for that is a question beyond this project.

'Fixity', in the techno-preservation sense, is when a file or text can be verified as being the same as it was when originally stored (see www. dpconline.org). Knowing that a file has been altered or corrupted is important, but knowing what was changed or what has been 'accidentally' lost is vital. Although my intention with text being put into flux was to disrupt the idea of fixity in an excessive visual form, the ability of governments, institutions, and individuals to change what was once deemed to be authoritative or fixed is a significant problem for researchers and activists trying to work with reliable data.

One aspect that was investigated briefly during this project, as a counterbalance to flux, was the idea of 'perma-storage', a method that has been developed on decentralized networks and offers the permanent and uneditable storage of information. An example of the potential for this technology is how the Internet Archive's *Wayback*

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Machine project (wayback.archive.org) is in the process of being made part of the permaweb by an organisation called Arweave. Arweave states that, 'Information integrity is one of the most important aspects of archiving. It is essential that historians are able to trust that the data held within an archive has not been modified (either maliciously or by accident) during the time in which it has been stored' (The Arweave Project). Arweave states that it is 'like Bitcoin, but for data: A permanent and decentralized web inside an open ledger' (arweave.org) and it is among a growing number of organisations and protocols that are seeking to expand the reach of the permaweb — another protocol being the 'InterPlanetary File System' (IPFS) which ultimately plans to have the data stored in space.

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The political dimension of ekphrasis

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines the political effects of the representation of historical paintings in film. It contends that the inclusion of this 'older' form, painting, and of the world associated with its popularity brings a mythological past to

Figure 1. Example of the 'Crossmark' button on a downloaded journal article

What this digression highlighted, during the second year of my research, was that I was making the fixity of text more like a voice by changing the temporality of its presence, which paradoxically could be viewed as turning description into ekphrasis. Although beyond the scope of this project, the idea of the 'perma vs. fixity' in art has the potential for a future research project and was an important phase for considering the oppositional principle within this project.

0.3   Stumbling into a Museum

Many artists have explored the idea of description (textual) as an artwork or the description of 'possible' artworks. One of the most well-known is Lawrence Weiner's *Statements* (1968), a book that describes, or gives instructions for, several artworks including: 'One hole in the ground approximately one foot by one foot by one foot/One gallon water base white paint poured into this hole' (Weiner 1968). Hans Ulrich Obrist's curatorial project *Do-it* (2013-ongoing) uses 'scores or written instructions by artists as a point of departure' (Obrist 2013). Over 300 artists have contributed to the project so far including Louise Bourgeois' piece that states: 'When you are walking, stop and smile at a stranger' (2002). Tino Segal uses what he calls 'constructed situations' (Maidment 2013) in which he describes to performers the requirements of the artwork and how they should perform it. Unlike text as a description (as a trace of the artwork), a key requirement for Sehgal is that the work 'must not be documented in any material form, such as wall labels, photographs, films and written contracts (Ibid) so that the work only exists in live performance or description. When Tate aquired his *This is propaganda* (2002) piece for its collection, it was done so only via a 'verbal contract' (Ruf 2006: 132).

After this initial art historical review, I was drawn to two precedents from very different eras, and in this subsection, I pinpoint their relevance to my project rather than offering a critical interpretation of the works. The first is Brian Catling's 1990 book *The Stumbling Block, Its Index* which demonstrates the potential of description as a form of language-based artwork. The piece consists of twenty-one prose poems that describe 'a non-existent-sculpture, but one whose non-existence is multiple' (Catling 1990b: 4). It was originally published by Bookworks as a limited-edition in 1990 but has recently been made available online via UbuWeb and an excerpt featured in *The Penguin Book of the Prose Poem: From Baudelaire to Anne Carson* (2008) edited by Jeremy Noel-Tod.

This work was important because it was 'a direct attempt to write sculpture' (Catling 1990b: 4), performing the intention to be a description of an art object without any physical referent beyond the text and the medium of the book. Through its title, the work suggests a textual representation of the aforementioned idea that description is a blockage, a stumble within narrative or a block in the material production of artworks. Experiencing Catling's piece digitally, via UbuWeb, led me to think about the possibility of an entire exhibition of discrete descriptive works. Rather than rewriting the same object over different pages/poems as Catling has, I could use the concepts
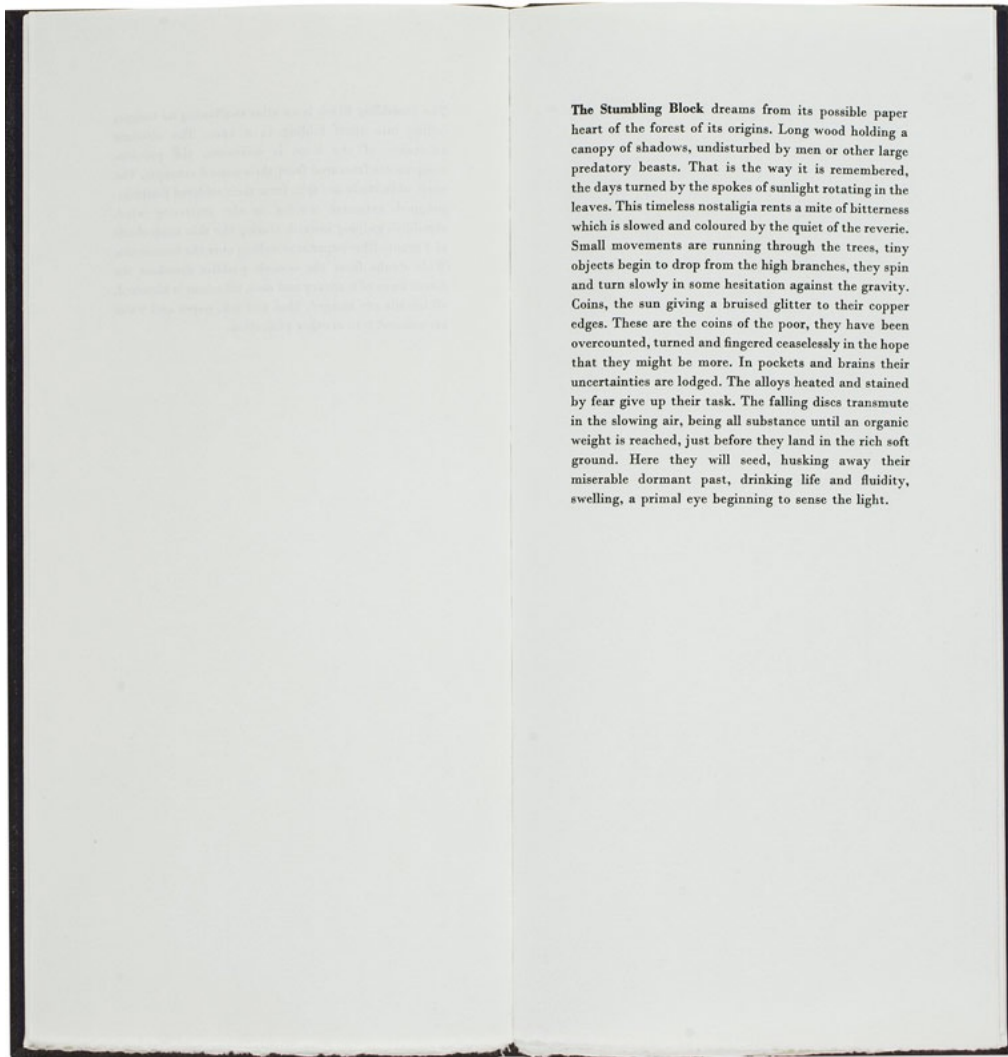
The **Stumbling Block** dreams from its possible paper heart of the forest of its origins. Long wood holding a canopy of shadows, undisturbed by men or other large predatory beasts. That is the way it is remembered, the days turned by the spokes of sunlight rotating in the leaves. This timeless nostaligia rents a mite of bitterness which is slowed and coloured by the quiet of the reverie. Small movements are running through the trees, tiny objects begin to drop from the high branches, they spin and turn slowly in some hesitation against the gravity. Coins, the sun giving a bruised glitter to their copper edges. These are the coins of the poor, they have been overcounted, turned and fingered ceaselessly in the hope that they might be more. In pockets and brains their uncertainties are lodged. The alloys heated and stained by fear give up their task. The falling discs transmute in the slowing air, being all substance until an organic weight is reached, just before they land in the rich soft ground. Here they will seed, husking away their miserable dormant past, drinking life and fluidity, swelling, a primal eye beginning to sense the light.

Figure 2. Page spread from *The Stumbling Block, Its Index* (1990) 48 hand-printed pages in an edition of 500 (Source: www.bookworks.org.uk)

of flux and the 'prevent' to offer language-based art objects that were never fixed on the page but always in motion and evolving (See 1.2).

The second key precedent was Thomas Browne's *Musæum Clausum or, Bibliotheca abscondita*. This work is 'Tract 13' in the posthumously published book *Certain Miscellany Tracts* (1684). I was led to Browne's work via his appearance in Borges' *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* (Borges 2000) — as will be expanded upon in section 0.9, an important method in my practice is to follow such references and footnotes outside the text. Browne has had a considerable influence on the English language; the Oxford English Dictionary cites Browne as the source for the first

usage of 771 words, including some that are particularly relevant to this project, including coexistence, hallucination and ruminating (oed. com).

Musæum Clausum's introduction adopts the rhetorical form of a letter, giving thanks to an unnamed author for sending various books about rarities and singularities. Browne then lists in the letter several famous collections of such works and ends by stating that he will present 'a collection, which I may justly say you have not seen before' (Browne 1683: 194).

Musæum Clausum is not unique in its idea of a description of works of art, and there was a trend in early modern literature (c.1600-1700) to describe spatial tours of galleries, private museums, laboratories, gardens and natural-historical collections (see Preston 2017). Browne's work may be a critique of such a trend, one that mocks the items some people claimed to have acquired for their private collections. It was also the case, as pointed out by Paula Findlen (see Morris 2014), that books which described fictional or real collections were called 'museums.' This string of connections led me to an important break in my assumptions: museums are not limited to architectural constructs and actual artefacts. As a consequence, I moved away from my basic understanding of 'museums', towards ideas for practical work made as textual objects.

The items described in *Musæum Clausum* are perhaps real, perhaps possible or completely fictional. For example, something that we know exists is 'Item 2' in the first section, the 'Artemidori Oneirocritici Geographia' more commonly referred to in English as *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Artemidori's work exists today in numerous translations; it has been discussed and referenced by Michel Foucault (Foucault 1986: 4) and was influential on the work of René Magritte, who held a copy of the *Oneirocritica* in his library (Lipinski 2019: 37).[1] Other items, however, push the imagination. For example, 'Item 12' in the third section is 'The skin of a snake bred out of the spinal marrow of a man'.

The combination and balance between existing and fictional objects in *Musæum Clausum* demonstrated to me the potential of bringing real and unreal objects into a 'thought-exhibition' (Birnbaum & Wallenstein 2019: 254).

I consider Browne's book to be a thought-exhibition – a proposition in description of a collection that does not otherwise exist – framed through the culture of the private museum that was popular at the time of his writing. Both Catling and Browne's works made me recognise that focus on the intrinsic form and content of individual artworks perhaps missed the most significant consequence of my research: how do these two examples and others like them relate to the extrinsic, to the world around them? My original objective was to create objects that exist in a flux; but reflecting, in turn, on my project, the influence of Catling and Browne made me ask: how and where could one install multiple artworks that only exist in or as descriptions?
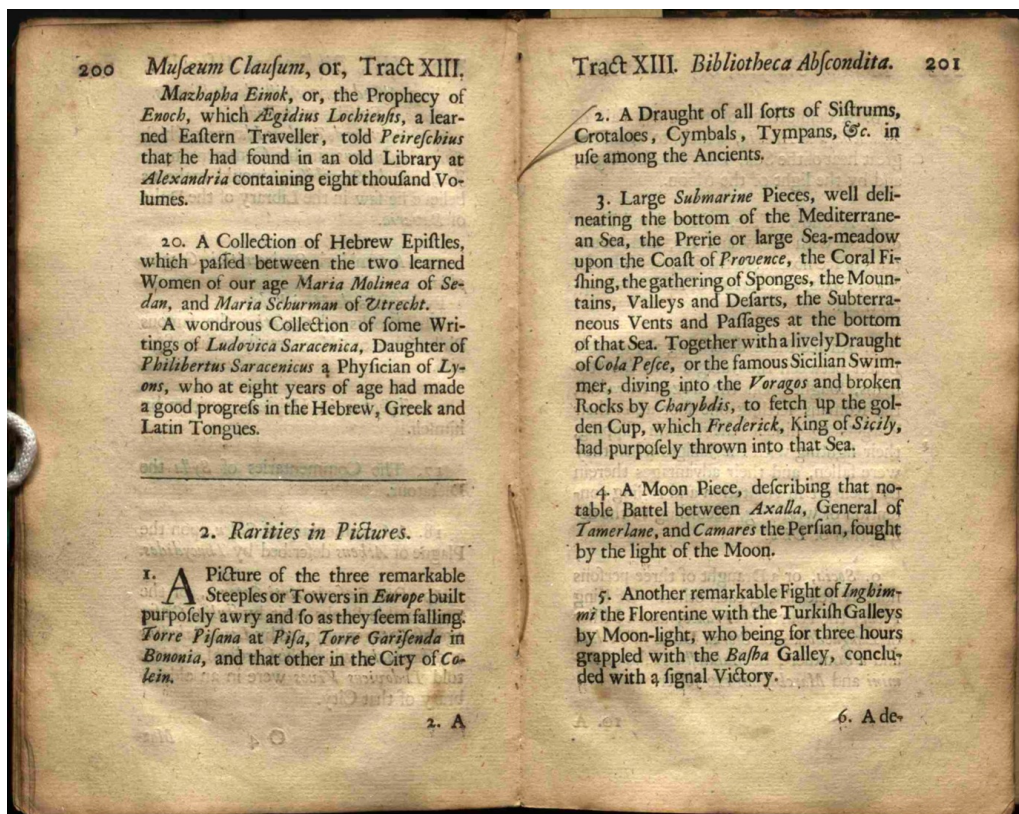

Figure 3. Page spread from *Musæum Clausum* (1684)
(Source: The University of Saskatchewan Library)

1. It is perhaps interesting to note that although the *Oneirocritici Geographia* does survive, Artemidori's *Oiônoscopica* (Interpretation of Birds) has been lost.

0.4   Thought–Exhibitions

In addition to the thought-exhibitions presented by Catling and
Browne, I wanted to explore physical exhibitions that perhaps had an
intended thought-exhibition component. The first was *Les Immatériaux*,
an exhibition staged at Centre Pompidou, Paris in 1985, co-curated
by Jean-François Lyotard and Thierry Chaput. It featured hundreds
of works of contemporary art and historical work, as well as samples
from the spheres of technology, science, philosophy and poetry. The
installation of the exhibition was across sixty-one 'sites' created inside
the Pompidou's galleries, with multiple possible paths between them.
No wall texts were used to inform visitors about the exhibits. Instead,
there were audio 'guides' available via headphones that recited various
philosophical and poetic texts rather than explaining the exhibition or
its component pieces. Thematically, *Les Immatériaux* focused on the
emerging telecommunication technologies of the day, and Lyotard
stated it was a 'manifestation' (quoted by Broeckmann et al 2015: 9) of
the post-modern condition he had famously theorised (Lyotard 1984).

Lyotard's interest in André Malraux (for example, his 1998 book
Chambre sourde: L'Antiesthétique de Malraux) is significant for the
distinction he makes between a physical and a thought-exhibition.
Malraux's concept of *Le Musée Imaginaire* (1952-54) introduced the
idea that an individual could create a museum mentally, which went
beyond the history of constructed imaginary museums by which
wealthy men museumified their imagined histories (i.e., John Soane,
Charles Wade; see Morris 2014 who also discusses Browne's *Musæum
Clausum*). For Malraux, not unlike Browne, this meant that any artwork,
including things that can not normally be considered curatable
(e.g., frescos that cannot be moved), could be brought together in
a dialogue through representations: to provide, potentially, a new
understanding of art. Rather than Browne's textual thought-exhibition,
Malraux's version was assisted by photographic reproduction. However,
the fundamental point is that Malraux is not suggesting a fabrication
of 'new' artworks. Malraux's imaginary act is a curatorial one; it is
focused on the curation of existing artworks. There is also no sense,
idea, or description of an architectural container or gallery in which
these artworks would be exhibited. Malraux's model became, for me, an
important link between, *Les Immatériaux* and another seminal figure in
the history of curating conceptual art.

Harald Szeemann is considered one of the most significant curators in
recent art history (Obrist 2005, Birnbaum 2005) curating exhibitions
including *Documenta 5* (1972), and *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes
Become Form* (1969) at the Kunsthalle Bern, the latter of which is

often cited as a landmark for post-minimalism (Osborne 2013: 63). Szeemann described his approach to exhibition-making as one of configuring 'poems in space' (Phillips 2018: 253). As Daniel Birnbaum has pointed out, 'the only museum Szeemann was interested in was one in his own head: an imaginary, otherworldly entity, a kind of utopian sphere that actual exhibitions could only hint at' (Birnbaum 2005). Apart from suggesting that it might be possible to understand Szeemann's physical exhibitions as having had a thought-exhibition component, the interest for this project was the idea of poems as objects within an exhibition.

Exactly 40 years after Szeemann's *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (1969), in the same gallery, was the exhibition *Voids: A Retrospective* (2009). The curatorial team included John Armleder, Gustav Metzger, Mai-Thu Perret, Mathieu Copeland, Clive Phillpot and Philippe Pirotte. The concept for the exhibition (which initially opened in early 2009 at the Pompidou Paris) was to survey artists who were interested in the potential 'to exhibit without showing an object' (Copeland 2009).

The exhibition consisted of ostensibly 'empty' rooms with works (shown in chronological order) by Yves Klein, Art & Language, Robert Barry, Robert Irwin, Stanley Brouwn, Laurie Parsons, Bethan Huws, Maria Eichhorn, and Roman Ondák. The supporting catalogue acted as an extension of the exhibition with documentation and historical context for the nine rooms and texts from an array of writers, artists and curators. The exhibition cleared the galleries of all objects but not art or architecture. The visitors were not prompted to imagine artworks (as with Browne) in these spaces but rather the opposite: to try and 'think art' without physical or imaginary objects.

One room of the exhibition became relevant to my project and appeared to be a precise and literal example of Szeemann's 'poems in space' (Phillips 2018: 253). Bethan Huws' *Haus Ester Piece* (2009) was originally shown in 1993 at the Haus Ester villa designed by Mies van der Rohe (built 1928–1930) in Krefeld, Rheinland. After viewing the house (which had been turned into an exhibition space) Huws decided that it didn't need any art objects installed because it was already an artwork/readymade. However, she did write a text/poem based on a conversation with the artist Thierry Hauch about his work. Heavily reworked, the text was more of a concrete poem with a 'limited number of pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and the auxiliary verb

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"to be"' (Ibid). The text was printed (in English and German) on a sheet of paper folded once before being 'distributed to all visitors' (Ibid). The text/poem created a flux between itself and the architecture. As Julian Heynen stated in the *Voids* catalogue: 'a work of art is presumed somewhere between the space and the text and the process of walking around and the act of reading' (Heynen 2009:133). Rather than describing artworks without an understanding of their architecture container, Huws' piece presents the container as artwork with an abstracted (via the text) art object. In addition, the art object (as text) is in constant motion and flux with the architecture.

Understanding the curatorial strategies of *Les Immatériaux* and *Voids* demonstrated that a thought-exhibition could have a measure of success in a physical exhibition form, mixing words and objects with a different methodology than I had pursued until this point. As my focus was solely on individual objects, I had overlooked these curatorial approaches, so it was important to follow these threads. For my project, I started to understand both poems as objects in relationship with architecture (as with Huws) and poems/descriptions without consideration of their architectural container (as with Catling's *Stumbling Block*, see 0.3). This all led to the idea that I could fabricate mental architecture and poetic art-objects together as a theoretical installation (see 0.6). In response to this, I need to re-centre my research questions.

I returned to François Laruelle, and via him, revisited an influence who had been present since my project proposal, but whose presence I had not understood until that point: Marcel Duchamp. In *Photo-Fiction*, Laruelle states that 'we must construct a new type of concept that holds on to the means of art and its Idea … [art's] internal operations are no longer materially or physically optical but intellectually optical' (Laruelle 2012b: 15). The connection to Marcel Duchamp's comment in 1946 is explicit: 'this is the direction in which art should turn: to an intellectual expression' (Duchamp quoted by Sweeney 1946: 21).

Duchamp's *The Box of 1914* (1913-1914) demonstrates an early move towards what would become his primary concern: that his works exist as thoughts and should be seen as 'optical' in some intellectual sense, as something 'in the service of the mind' (Arnason & Prather 1998: 274), not the more obvious 'retinal' sense that Duchamp famously lambasted (See Tomkins 2014: 58). A later box, *Boîte verte* (1934) is an essential entry or exit point into Duchamp's *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (1915-1923), more commonly referred to as the

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'Large Glass'. Duchamp stated:

> the glass was not made to be looked at; it must be accompanied
> by a literary text which is as amorphous as possible and never
> takes form; both elements, the glass for looking at and the
> text for listening and understanding, had to complement each
> other and, above all, prevent the other from acquiring a plastic/
> aesthetic or literary form (quoted by Filipovic 2016: 68).

I came to understand Duchamp's prescience for the turn in my own
research: he was committing to a kind of anti-form, or a form that
'prevents' an art object from acquiring a final or manifested form.
Duchamp seems to suggest that he did not believe or even intend the
'Large Glass' (the sculptural object) to be an essential component of
the concept of the 'Large Glass.' According to Elena Filipovic in *The
Apparently Marginal Activities of Marcel Duchamp* (2016), the notes in
the *Boîte verte* were designed to prevent the 'Large Glass' sculpture
from becoming the core component of the work's exhibited totality.
She quotes Duchamp as saying that 'whether [the glass] is there or
not, is not important' (Filipovic 2016: 68).

Duchamp's boxes have a dual identity as both the description of art
objects and art objects. In books by Elena Filipovic (following Rosalind
Krauss), in regard to Duchamp's boxes, and Daniel Birnbaum and Sven-
Olov Wallenstein, in regard to *Les Immatériaux*, the term 'theoretical
object' is used (Filipovic 2016: 38, Birnbaum & Wallenstein: 75). However,
none of these commentators uses the term 'theoretical installation',
which is a link I make in this project.

Laruelle's use of the word 'installation' initially appears to be rather
casual. He is clearly positioning it as being related to art, or what
he calls an 'art-thought' (Laruelle 2012b: 9), which he explicitly
differentiates from a 'thought about art' (Ibid: 5). Installation art (both
the installation of art and installation art) is an area with extensive
scholarship, including notable contributions from Brian O'Doherty's
Inside the White Cube (2000), Julie H. Reiss' *From Margin to Center:
The Spaces of Installation Art* (2001), Clare Bishop's *Installation Art: A
Critical History* (2005) and Mark Rosenthal's *Understanding Installation
Art: From Duchamp to Holzer* (2003). I was forced to ask whether
Laruelle means (or clones) 'installation' in the art historical sense i.e.,
is he invoking a lineage from El Lissitzky's *Proun Room* (1923), Kurt
Schwitters's *Merzbau* (1933), Marcel Duchamp's *Sixteen Miles of String
Installation* (1942) et al., into the minimalism of the 1960s where

the work's relationship to the architecture of its display became fundamental to the work? Is he using or 'cloning' any of Rosenthal's (Rosenthal 2003) four categories of installation art (enchantments, impersonations, interventions and rapprochements) into his thinking? Does the theoretical installation even fall within one of these categories? Or was he guilty of what Claire Bishop has identified as the 'blurring' (Bishop 2005) of 'installation art' and the 'installation of works of art'? Although there is never a clear answer within Laruelle's writing, these questions can start to be viewed via his description of a theoretical installation being '… the construction of a theoretical object, and is thus transparent, but which will function more like a black box' (Laruelle 2012b: 11), and that it must be '… an aesthetic impossibility (Ibid: 12).

Taking into account both of his books on photography, Laruelle's installation is fabricated via thought and writing without physical (object or architectural) support. I believe he is trying to provoke a type of thinking (in writing) which extends Duchamp's idea of the 'intellectual expression' (Duchamp quoted by Sweeney 1946: 21) into the 'intellectually optical' (Laruelle 2012b: 15). Duchamp is not mentioned by Laruelle, but it seems unlikely that his thinking and work have not contributed to the idea of the theoretical installation.

Although Laruelle's usage and intentions regarding the term installation are interesting, and create an opportunity to potentially open an additional category of thought-based installation, this detour opened up a much more important question for the practical project: where in the mind do thought-exhibitions or theoretical installations exist? As Bishop states: 'Installation is an art of organizing spaces in order to induce a questioning of standard art-historical categories and critical distinctions' (Claire Bishop 2005). Re-framing Laruelle with Bishop's art theory pushed me to consider whether the mind was a single space or if it was like a museum, divided, or that could be divided, into different spaces or rooms.

As with the previous investigation with fixity vs. flux, (see 0.2) at this point in the project there is evidence of a drilling down into a zone beyond the project's original scope. Thought itself as a method of flux became an important consideration. It forced me to once again historically trace the idea of the mind as an architectural container.

0.5 Rooms and Mental Furniture

In a letter to J. H. Reynolds dated 3rd May 1818, John Keats describes his 'Mansion of Many Apartments' (Scott 2002: 124). The scene is made up of many doors and many corridors – perhaps an infinite number – described as an architectural interior space, one offered as a metaphor for human life. The narrator says only two doors are open to him at this stage of life. The first is the 'thoughtless Chamber' where we 'do not think'. In this room, we can see other doors but the brightness emanating from them is not tempting enough to lure us into them just yet. To be tempted, we must wait for the 'awakening of the thinking principle.' Then we are ready for the second room, the 'Chamber of Maiden-Thought,' where, initially, we 'become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere' in a place that seems to have the openness of positive thought. However, 'thought becomes gradually darken'd'; we can see many more doors and hallways leading to yet more and more doors and rooms, but this time they are all dark and, 'we see not the balance of good and evil.' This is what Keats calls 'a mist', wherein, 'we feel the burden of the Mystery.'

One hundred years later, Paul Valéry also wrote about this idea of many apartments. For Valéry, access is gained by a complete understanding of the nondescript, where everything and every feeling is thought to be known until one day 'a secret door swung open', and he:

> entered strange and infinite apartments. I was overcome at every step by my discoveries. As I moved through those unknown and mysterious rooms, I felt they were the true abode of my soul (Valéry 2020).

In 1988, Gilles Deleuze published *The Fold* (2006) where he outlines his concept of the 'fold' via the description of a Baroque house with two floors. This is a house that generates more and more space by folding and refolding. The lower floor has windows and a door, represents matter, a space that is bright and with dimensions that can be clearly understood. The upper floor has no windows, representing the soul; it is dark, a space where the dimensions are unclear. Deleuze states that the Baroque 'introduces a new kind of story' and follows three traits: 'description replaces the object, the concept becomes narrative, and the subject becomes point of view or subject of expression.' (Deleuze 2006: 146). This chain of association that led me back to Deleuze brought up a series of analogies to what I anticipated as the potential of the thought installation, to which the question of how and why description replaces the object in Deleuze's reckoning is key.

In Deleuze's brief discussion of Leibniz's *Théodicée* and the 'architectural dream' (Ibid: 69), this reckoning is sharpened. This architectural dream takes the form of a pyramid. It has a summit, but no visible base as it is shrouded in fog. Inside the pyramid, rather than two floors of the Baroque house, there is once again 'an infinity of apartments' (Ibid: 70). Inside each of these apartments is a unique world, or perhaps we could suggest, spaces in which things-as-ideas can be installed.

This chain of references is just a sample of the many writers – often using identical descriptive language – who have discussed the experience of imagining a many-roomed structure in the mind. For example, there are many variations on the idea of memory palaces and memory theatres (Critchley 2014), or architecture as a memory storage device from the Middle Ages (e.g., Hugh of St.Victor, see Carruthers 1993). Numerous visual artists, such as Vilhelm Hammershøi and Xavier Mellery, have depicted interior spaces that imply the kind of infinitely networked space that Keats imagines in his letter. In the throughline, the thread running through Keats, Valéry and especially Deleuze's observation that 'description replaces the object' (Deleuze 2006: 146), I became preoccupied with the question of what exactly was being described in this literary and painterly history. One of the most consistent thoughts, or features of such spaces, is the lack of furniture, and the concept of Mental Furniture (Franklin 1983, Wyatt 2009) came into view.

According to Bernard Cache, furniture is just a reflection of the exterior made interior:

> though classified as objects in our everyday language, furniture can be seen as an interior replication of architecture. The closet is a box in the box, the mirror a window onto the outside, and the table another floor on the ground. But at the same time as it is a replication of architecture, furniture is also that object that is directly connected to our bodies (Cache 1995: 30).

In the analogy of minds to a room or network of rooms, mental furniture structures thought, and the way we think. A memory is a piece of mental furniture. Once fabricated, mental furniture can be permanent. Thought, if dwelled upon enough, will become mental furniture. The position of each piece of mental furniture in our mind creates a room-tone. When we move or rearrange our mental furniture, we change the room-tone, and therefore the way we think.

Figure 4. Vilhelm Hammershøi, *White Doors, Strandgade 30* (1900)

David K. Wyatt suggests that mental furniture 'consists of something like little boxes: when we perceive something, or apprehend or comprehend it, we automatically place it in one of those boxes – whether social or political or cultural or economic or intellectual or religious […] affects how we perceive the world […] mental furniture helps us make sense out of what we see around us. If we are lucky, during our lifetime, our mental furniture gets rearranged now and then' (Wyatt 2009). This is memory understood as space inside spaces, in an infinite network of layers, each layer or tier of which is inter-dependant with the rest and their furniture, in much the manner we unpacked 'installation art' earlier on.

Having established an artistic and literary lineage for the mind to become not just a single site but many rooms, I could track back to a more rigorous investigation of Laruelle's theoretical installation. Now, my proposal of a thought-exhibition had not just one room, but an infinity of rooms.

0.6 Understanding a Theoretical Installation

Amongst Laruelle's books translated into English, the term 'theoretical installation' (*installation théorique*), first appears in *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics* (2012), as the sub-titular concept for a chapter called, 'Photo-Fiction, A Theoretical Installation'. Confusingly, he initially refers to the theoretical installation as an 'exercise in the construction of a theoretical object' (Laruelle 2012b: 11). A 'theoretical installation', he proposes, is 'a thought that exceeds or replaces the general process of philosophical aesthetics and its descriptions.' It is 'an aesthetic impossibility' (Laruelle 2012b: 12). Laruelle's term and approach offered a starting point for my attempt to synthesise various aspects from the precedents I had found. For example, Laruelle's idea of a theoretical installation being 'like a black box' (Laruelle 2012b: 11) provided a synthetic-theoretical way to think about the mixing of real and unreal objects in shared virtuality. The term black box is derived from science and engineering to describe a system with opaque transfer characteristics. Therefore, the processes which effect change on inputs before they become output are unknown.

This research phase, culminating in my third year of the project, had a seismic effect on my approach to the practice: it made me realise that I did not want to make the artwork for a theoretical installation, but rather create descriptions of the places in which they would be installed, to imbue that place with a heightened kind of vividness (see 0.12). It also became clear that there was the potential to combine my theoretical and practical work in the content of a text-work (which became Part 2's *EX-H + K-REX = ARk* tractate) that would be central to this revised model of a theoretical installation. What I have since conceived is a text work that would attempt to install itself in multiple rooms of the mind, extending the psychological concept discussed above in the 'Rooms and Mental Furniture' section. The outcome proposed by this prototype would be a theoretical installation that requires no material support but perhaps could be imagined.

0.7 Difficult Plasma

During the second and third years of research, my key frame of philosophical reference narrowed towards Laruelle's works on Non-Photography – primarily *The Concept of Non-Photography*, written in 1992 but only published in a bilingual (French/English) edition in 2011, and *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics*, which was published in a bilingual (French/English) edition in 2012. Although Laruelle's thinking anchored my determination to keep exploring the theoretical installation, conceptually there grew an unresolved tension with a concept that had entered my project earlier: *plasma*.

Ruth Webb mentions *plasma* in her book *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (2016). Webb only briefly mentions it in relation to modelling, in that it 'conveys the way in which a given body of material can be reshaped, like clay, creating a new image out of existing material, just as a plausible fiction (Πλάσμα) of the type that an orator was often called upon to present is worked out of existing materials' (Webb 2016: 120). As in the case of my moving-text works, these existing materials could be textual and fictional, like Browne's museum discussed in section 0.3.

The modern Greek definition of *plasma* refers to a 'creature/animate being' or 'figment'. However, I dug into the Ancient Greek definitions which include:

1. anything formed or moulded, image, figure
2. counterfeit, forgery
3. figment, fiction, of a story which is fictitious but possible
4. delusion
5. formed style in writing or speaking
   (Source: perseus.tufts.edu) [3]

The research into *plasma* led my reading back into numerous fields, including poetry, art, sound, music, film and philosophy. For example, although I felt comfortable with the moving-text pieces developed in years one and two of the project, I wanted to expand my reading and listening around contemporary music, and in particular, develop a greater understanding of the Wandelweiser group — a group who took a post-Cageian approach, whereby the focus is on forms of silence and duration that are intended to occupy space. This led me to Jürg Frey's *l'âme est sans retenue I* (2017), which consists of field recordings made in a Berlin park in 1997. The final recording is over six-hours long, moving between the field recordings and varying durations of silence. Following Frey, but moving away from his environmental soundscape, I

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realised that it is possible to reframe his compositional formula of alternation to pair together a flux between the room-tone of a recorded room and the room-tone of the exhibition space, to sonically 'mould' two rooms together in an otherwise impossible proximity; this idea informed the structure and delivery mechanism of the soundscape for the *plasma* exhibition (see 1.3 and 1.7).

0.8   Tangled Tourism

The network of writers, frameworks and concepts I reference seems tangled because it is. My aim throughout has been to stay with that difficulty, that unresolved flux in thinking, as an artistic approach to scholarship; rather than to resolve my theorising and illustrate its conclusions in the style of a non-artist. I have slowly, and awkwardly, become more comfortable understanding that my engagement with philosophy, and in particular the non-philosophy of François Laruelle, is akin to a tourist's engagement with a place.

As Mark Dion stated in an interview: 'Artists are not interested in illustrating theories as much as they may be in testing them' (Dion 1999: 39) and '… reading philosophy is like acquiring new tools…' (Ibid: 40). My reading of Laruelle's work becomes material for artistic production, which is consistent with Laruelle's approach 'to use philosophy as a material (as one would use space or color, as a materiality)' (Cox et al. 2015: 177). Although I have not experienced the entirety of Laruelle's oeuvre, following Dion, I 'use what works [for my practice] and discard the contradictions' (Dion 1999:39). Laruelle's work became more like poetry, and I have always turned back to Judith Balso's concept of the 'poetic event', (Balso 2014: 16) i.e., as a process of thinking *with* rather than about poems, which offers the opportunity to fold the work of others into the process of practice or making/writing. The ideas prompted by Laruelle's 'poetry' are something that can be practically explored in the development of an artwork. Laruelle mentioned that his ambition was to create a new 'genre' of writing and the search for a singular *poématique*; an ambition he feels remains unfulfilled because he was locked in theory or theorisation. I dispute his sense of failure. My research demonstrates his success in becoming material for my practice – for someone else's *poématique* if not his own.

Commentators on Laruelle's work often struggle for critical purchase on the fact that there are never coherent or stable definitions for concepts in his work (e.g., Fardy 2020: 64). The flux of non-philosophy attracts love-hate criticism. Even the *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy* (2013), written by Laruelle 'and collaborators', now stands as a relic because swaths of terms defined therein have been updated or changed by Laruelle subsequently. For example, the idea of 'fractality' in *The Concept of Non-Photography* is replaced/amended/upgraded to 'the imaginary number' in *Photo-Fiction*.' This approach (which can also be observed in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*) 'clones' his own concepts so they only make sense under the conditions of the project they are deployed within — this is perhaps one of the most

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useful speculative gestures Laruelle offers to my project. To reiterate, my interest in Laruelle stems from the fact that he is performing the speculative gesture that my project was founded upon: to question the notion of static text and the potential for fixed meanings to be prevented by flux.

0.9   Practical Research Methods

In this subsection, there are examples of the research methods I have developed through the practical work, or rather, following Melrose & Sachsenmaier (Melrose & Sachsenmaier 2019), my 'metapractices.' These metapractices have become makerly habits, forming a background structure that I have only been able to identify through this critical reflection. I introduced new methods, for periods of testing (e.g., the daily asemic writing that is mentioned in 0.10, 3.2.1), which only settled as habits if they had repeated pay-off. I found myself drawn to Melrose and Sachsenmaier's (2019) formulation of metapractices because some of these activities and actions became performative artworks themselves, rather than purely theoretical methods.

The idea for developing a set of core metapractices began after reading 'How to be an artist by night' (2009) by the Raqs Media Collective. In the text, they mention a musical instrument and the practice required to master and maintain mastery of this instrument via a daily focussed effort. This practice is not only maintaining what you have already gained or learned but is a daily renewal and pushing of boundaries. They go on to offer suggestions for how this discipline could be applied to artistic practice. From these suggestions, the aim is to develop 'the diligent and enduring cultivation of the kind of intellectual ambience and social matrix which allows for the unfettering of artistic praxis and inquiry' (Raqs 2009).

One of Raqs' suggestions is 'radical incompleteness', which is 'learning to be comfortable with the idea that the circumference of a work is always larger than the boundedness of its nominated authorship' (Raqs 2009). For me, this framed a metapractice that starts with reading, and a conscious awareness of allowing misreading and misunderstanding to incite new ideas. At its most consciously extreme, I read against and before an author's own definition. This has been a difficult process to accept because 'not-knowing' in academic contexts 'can usher in the feelings of anxiety and embarrassment, the debilitating sense of being at a loss or lost' (Cocker 2013). The idea of not-knowing, as developed by Emma Cocker, 'is not experience stripped clean of knowledge, but a mode of thinking where knowledge is put into question, made restless or unsure. Not knowing unsettles the illusory fixity of the known, shaking it up a little in order to conceive of things differently' (Cocker 2013). For me, the concept of not-knowing is a mode of negative capability.

Keats only mentions the term negative capability once, in a letter to his

brothers on the 22nd December 1817, but the passing phrase has generated a significant amount of scholarship and interest. Although perhaps 'over-known' (Benson, 2018b: 77) in artistic and literary circles, negative capability does represent a thread through my entire project, from the Zen of Hiroshige (see 3.4) to the superpositions of Laruelle. Keats's definition is:

> I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason (Scott 2002: 60).

This also aligns with Raq's notion that 'the artist learns to constantly prepare for the unknown, for what remains to be done' (Raqs 2009). In this project, negative capability has been an important tool when trying to understand description. Description presents a place or object that is always already absent in itself but represented by the description. Description is both an object itself and an illusion or spectre of an absent object – it is simultaneously what it is and is a version of what it is not. This led to a recognition that the project considers numerous binaries (e.g., fiction/fact, inside/outside) and that my aim was to have them theoretically exist simultaneously, in what Laruelle calls, 'superposition' (Laruelle 2012b: 26), a term he cloned from quantum physics, where things can exist in multiple states simultaneously. Applying this logic means that negative capability can be understood not as a mindset but a 'prevent' or what Cocker calls 'not knowing', effectively 'a state of suspension, comprehension stalled' (Cocker 2013).

Returning to the Raqs text, another section is called 'incrementality.' This idea of 'incrementality,' for me, is tethered to reading; reading as a metapractice, embracing temporal leaps or hypertextual links between books and following obscure footnotes to move around the edges.[4] However, it was also important to be able to archive this reading, and find a way to make it reflexive. This led me to the cloning of another ancient Greek term: *hypomnema* (ὑπόμνημα).

Plato developed the hypomnesic principles for his students, initially, as a method for learning in the Academy. It is most basically understood to have been a type of copybook, notebook or journal; a site to record thoughts, fragments, experiences or conversations. *Hypomnema* becomes material for objective memory, 'which must be reread from time to time so as to reactualize their contents' (Foucault 1981: 500).

Its aim was 'to make of the recollection of the fragmentary *logos* transmitted by teaching, listening, or reading a means to establish as adequate and as perfect a relationship of oneself to oneself as possible' (Foucault quoted by Rabinow 1984: 365). For the first time, this process 'also formed a raw material for the writing of more systematic treatises in which were arguments and means by which to struggle against some defect or to overcome some difficult circumstance' (Foucault 1983). To be able to document and revise material memory provided Plato's students not only with the means to record his theories but also a method to understand their own thought processes. This technique was revolutionary in Plato's time, which he explores in the *Phaedrus*. Foucault makes the analogy that the introduction of *hypomnema* was 'as disrupting as the introduction of the computer into private life today' (quoted by Rabinow 1984: 363).

By utilising *hypomnema* as a mode of metapractice, I generate poetic-fragments of thinking to objectify thought in a contemplative space, tracking thoughts back and forwards. In practice, this resulted in a document with all the key quotes from the project; an archive, with every book or text that has been read and numbered. I re-read this document regularly — new quotes are added, others removed, creating a kind of ambient writing practice, one that ledgers memories.

However, when a quotation is added to the document, the reference to the individual quotation is removed and replaced by a number (which can be retraced if required). This degree of displacement (I can retrace but the attribution is not immediately present) shapes remembering as a kind of not-knowing, and the once distinct voices become conflated. Finally, this enables, again following Balso, a 'thinking *with* rather than about' texts and works. The *hypomnemata* I have built could be re-framed as a work in itself but is more accurately a methodological (or cloned) foundation of my practice rather than an outcome from it.

Laruelle's hallmark gesture of 'cloning' shifts philosophical and scientific terms, such that the cloned ideas function differently depending on context — what he calls 'a dictionary without-encyclopedia' (Laruelle 2013: 230). Laruelle uses the term 'clone' throughout the *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy* (Laruelle et al: 2013) but it does not have its own entry. I consider cloning to be the key idea within Laruelle's project because terms can mean different things between texts.

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A clone 'has neither the conceptual solidity of the concept nor the semantic clarity of a word' (Fardy, 2020: 65). As Ben Woodard suggests: 'instead of inhabiting a world, the world inhabits them' (Woodard 2008). From these interpretations, I have come to understand cloning as a removal of narrative. Clones become descriptions when placed/utilised within different projects; their historical and conceptual baggage remains but the clone detaches itself into a position of 'not-knowing', i.e., there can never be a decision on the meaning.

Removing this stability (as with the removal of references in the *hypomnemata*, and its impact on the moving-text work, see 1.3) disrupts any attempt for anyone to gain a foothold across multiple works, myself included. This allows terms to shift and join with other ideas, forming a complex matrix without explanation or guide (following *Les Immatériaux*). As this commentary illustrates, there are a raft of terms pulled from numerous periods, which ultimately, creates a 'flux of clones' (Laruelle 2012b: 34), the definitions of which are constantly re-defined.

My use of the term 'ekphrasis', for example, shifted in my critical reflections in line with Webb's definition, with a distinction between written/oral, emotion/non-emotion. It then shifts into being an external 'vision' in the tractate. Similarly, *plasma* fluxes between its numerous ancient definitions rather than the more contemporary ones throughout the exhibition (Part 1) and tractate (Part 2). Clones, as a product of the metapractice, are important as they feed into my black box method, where not-knowing is the objective. As discussed (see 0.6), black boxing is a method of artistry, one that works between unknown or 'not-known' (Cocker 2013) or 'over-known' (Benson, 2018b: 77) inputs and unknown outputs. This method of black boxing generates a singular '*poématique*' (Cox et al. 2015: 177) by which the coeffective disattribution of all elements, rather than a single text or exhibition, becomes the ultimate aim for the practice.

Ultimately, this research revealed that by appropriating Laruelle's clones, I could describe the tangled and not-knowing methodology into a practical application, an application that may also be useful to other practice-led researchers and their metapractices.

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4. It seems apt to mention that a footnote is the origin for the recent interest in Laruelle's work. Artists and theorists were intrigued by Deleuze and Guattari's footnote in *What is Philosophy?* (1994) that simply stated: 'François Laruelle is engaged in one of the most interesting undertakings of contemporary philosophy'. (Deleuze & Guattari 1994 220

0.10 Removing Dimensions

I initially failed to recognise the significance of the moving-text works to my broader research project (See 1.2). I was triggered to re-evaluate them after reading a 2014 essay by Anne-Françoise Schmid and Armand Hatchuel titled 'On Generic Epistemology':

> We must develop the writing of experimental texts to construct hypotheses on the parameters and the dimensions of objects and of disciplines (Schmid & Hatchuel 2014).

In the essay, which takes cues from Laruelle's work, the authors propose that different disciplines (art, science, etc) can be understood as different dimensions of an object or concept, which is to say that an object/concept and its function/s are seen differently by each discipline — a designer views a spoon differently to a metallurgist, say.

However, I misread the concept of dimensionality at stake in their demand. Rather than understanding it as the shape or planes of a disciplinary formation, I followed the more general etymology of dimension meaning 'any component of a situation' (etymonline.com). This put me on the road to the simple notion of adding or removing dimensions from artwork. A pathway for this misreading had already been opened via a talk by Reza Negarestani on the idea of material hierarchies that span the macro, micro and atomic (YouTube 2014). For example, the hierarchies of a steel beam: the macro being the physicality of the beam, what we can perceive, and touch; the micro being the crystalline structure; and the atomic layer constituted by the protons and neutrons.

The idea of removing dimensions forced me to reconsider my approach and experiment with adding or removing what I defined as a dimension. Consequently, I realised that the most useful part of the moving-text experiments was not that they are in flux (as originally conceived for the project) but that I was adding flux as an extra dimension — that I was making the text move, animating language. I started exploring the different dimensions of writing, for example, undertaking a daily practice of asemic writing to withhold the legibility of its visual dimension. This ultimately led to the sonic documentation of handwriting, a recording format that removed the visual presence of the act of writing or its spatial markers, leaving only its sonic trace (see 1.3). In turn, these field recordings led to new experiments with trans-diegetic sound.

Diegetic sound is the sonic equivalent of what we see to be happening

in a visual presentation e.g., in a film where we hear sound of the pencil writing as we see a person writing with a pencil. Non-diegetic sound is not equivalent to what we see happening. Instead it is an added narrative component, like music overlayed on film to enhance the mood of what the viewer is seeing but that the characters in the film cannot hear.

In film studies and practice, when diegetic sound and non-diegetic sound are combined, they form what is called trans-diegetic sound e.g., the music that seems to be diegetic changes to the music on a radio that the characters can hear. I decided to clone this term and shift the intention of the prefix 'trans-'. I became interested in the idea of recorded sounds that move, as in transfer, from a recorded soundscape into an exhibition space. Unlike, for example, a musical score, these captured sounds would have a diegetic relationship to the real, and that the source of the sound could be simultaneously present but the two would not be synchronised. The clearest example of how this manifested was the alarm clock going off in section 1 of the soundscape (1.3) and the alarm clock (the object) that would be set to go off in an exhibition space at different times. In this example, the trans-diegetic co-presence of things is further complicated by the replay media. The soundscape's ringing alarm is 'time-stretched' (slowed by 777%), whereas the alarm clock going off in the exhibition would be heard as normal, in real-time.

My experiments with adding and removing dimensions continued. I saw an opportunity to remove the physical installation, as it was considered another dimension, just as Browne and Catling had done. This broke some of the components I had planned to show, including the trans-diegetic component described above. This speculative attempt to remove the actual presence of the installation, as if it were just another dimension of the exhibition, to shift the exhibition from an actually-real thing to the virtual, culminated in the *EX-H + K-REX = ARk* tractate presented in Part 2. The tractate utilised the same body of research and metapractices but offers a completely different form of presentation, whilst allowing for further experiments with removing attributions (to trans-, as in transfer) and changing the content of quotations, to 'prevent' the accuracy and authority of quotation. In doing so, my aim is to bring into flux the fixity of concepts and their intellectual histories, replacing 'the text' with a black box of clones, creating the reading space for an intellectually optical experince (in a Duchampian sense), an external dimension to thought. As per Laruelle's statement that a theoretical installation 'will function more like a black

box' (Laruelle 2012b: 11), the removal of dimensions is a black box as method (transfer, as in transfer characteristics, as in black boxing). This manifests in my two-form exhibition: the same research and ideas are fed into the process, and from them, different dimensions are added or removed, such that different unknown outcomes can be outputted.

Reflectively, this overhauled understanding of what I was trying to do, as it emerged through the research in year three, gave me a new set of conditions for reviewing other artists' work. For example, Marcel Broodthaers' piece *Musee d'Art Moderne Departement des Aigles, Section Documentaire* (1969) is an exhibition which removed the dimension of a museum requiring walls. This semi-physical execution of a thought-exhibition was fabricated on the beach at *le coq* on the Belgium coast. Rather than totally removing the architectural container, Broodthaers and Herman Daled dug a floorplan in the sand. Unlike text-based or thought only exhibitions, this gesture gives a sense of scale to the museum through performance and photographic documentation.

Figure 5. M*usee d'Art Moderne Departement des Aigles, Section Documentaire* (1969)
(Source: www.umbigomagazine.com)

Along with the photographic documentation (see figure 5), signage (handwritten) was produced and placed in the sand. Two of the signs stated: *Défense absolue de toucher aux objets* (Touching the objects is strictly forbidden) and *Il est strictement interdit de circuler sur les travaux* (Treading on the objects is strictly forbidden). These signs indicated that objects were present but not visible — which is a prototype to my idea of the possibility of objects being ontologically real in the tractate (see Part 2). In addition, as the tide ultimately washed away the floorplan, the museum was 'prevented' from acquiring a static form and was transferred into a memory for those that were present. Broodthaers' piece is unique to the other works mentioned in this commentary as it offers photographic documentation of/as performance rather than as text (Browne, Catling) or an exhibition with a though-based component (*Les Immatériaux, Vides*).

Another example is *The Text of Shelley's Death* (1995) by Alan Halsey. Halsey's poetic variorum, as a precedent for my own moving-text works, removes the dimension of a fixed version or account of a historical event by montaging different re-tellings. Combining references and sources, excerpts from prose, poetry, literary criticism, historical commentary, diary entries and journals, Halsey conflates numerous voices (including Byron, Mary Shelley, the Tuscan authorities and later biographies) to describe the last day of Percy Bysshe Shelley's life in the Bay of Lerici in 1822. As the texts in Halsey's work progress, they quickly begin to contradict one another in minor or major detail, ultimately forming a fragmented account whereby no single, accurate or authoritative description of Shelley's death can be established. In a review of the book for *The Keats-Shelley Review*, Christopher Goulding complains:

> Rather than tinkering with the unacknowledged work of others, it would have been better if Halsey had allowed the original authorial voices to speak for themselves (Goulding 2002).

This seems to misunderstand the poetic stakes completely. Halsey's achievement is to put the numerous voices in conversation, to show their re-tellings change like a rumour, akin to the gossip of an archive that was more recently championed by Holly Pester (Pester 2015). Just as Halsey has done with multiple material sources, I have used works from poetry, prose, letters, film and a video game in my moving-text work for the exhibition (see 1.1), opening the texts into a wider field of possible intertextual conversation. Detaching sources, merging voices and cloning weakens the authoritative and gives agency to the text

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rather than the author. This process of detachment led me to realise that my initial research into ekphrasis and description was really a way for me to learn how to distinguish dimensions, and/or to learn how to describe dimensions. This had an effect on the way I approached pre-existing ideas about artworks, as not only a method to understand what I had done but a way to rework existing or new artworks.

0.11   Laruelle + Poetry

The *EX-H + K-REX = ARk* output of my project (Part 2) emerged from a Laruellean influence in some veins of recent poetics. Indeed, two recent essays position my tractate within an emerging field of trans-disciplinary research on, or with, Laruelle. Both essays seem to mimic the opaqueness of Laruelle's writing and use poetry as a mode of writing and thinking to explore ideas in his work.

The first is Drew S. Burk's 'With One's Eyes Half-Closed, A Particle Of Laruelle' (2014). Burk translated Laruelle's *Photo-Fiction* (2012b) and two books by Judith Balso, *Affirmation of Poetry* (2014) and *Pessoa, the Metaphysical Courier* (2011).

Burk's essay considers Laruelle's photo-fiction and, via Balso, the poetry of Fernando Pessoa, as types of 'irreflective thinking' (Laruelle 2011: 32), which are thoughts which withdraw from decision. Burk also invokes the theoretical installation, deploying it to mean some sense of a 'posture or stance of performing or living life within the theoretical installation that is thought-art of the photo-fiction' (Burk 2014), connecting it to the idea of living as something 'performed-without-performance' (Laruelle 2013: 175). For Burk, the theoretical installation is trying to create a space to install or perform (without performation) irreflective thinking. The second essay, encountered late on during the writing of the tractate, is Timothy Lavenz's 'Utopic Expressivity: On Laruelle's Oraxiomatic Method and Paul Celan's Vision of Poetry,' published in the first issue of *Oraxiom: A Journal of Non-Philosophy* (2020), which is described by its editors as having the aim 'to investigate the current state and the genealogy of François Laruelle's non-philosophy and to further explore the possibility of alternate instantiations of non-philosophy as an applied method of research and practice…' (oraxiom.org).

Although Lavenz's text is concerned with eschatology and utopia, he adopts the same approach as Burk, using Laruelle and poetry (in Lavenz's case, a focus on Paul Celan) to explore the idea of the 'imaginal' (Corbin 1976). Although there is no mention of a theoretical installation, the essay made me question whether a thought-exhibition could be examined outside the mind, beyond subjective inner experience, as an exteriorised 'vision' rather than a figuring in the interior 'imagination.' This allowed me to rework my terminologies in the tractate into something more speculative, which looped into the earlier research on mental furniture. This is most evident in the second part of the tractate (*The Plasma Cross* p.97), in which thought is encouraged to move outside the mind into various rooms and

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landscapes following Samuel Taylor Coleridge's proposal:

> to make the external internal, the internal external, to make
> nature thought, and thought nature [...] In every work of art
> there is a reconcilement of the external with the internal
> (Coleridge 1818).

0.12   Ekphrasis and Vividness

I progressed into the second half of my project believing that my practice had side-lined ekphrasis as a narrative method rather than a descriptive device. However, by the time I got to the end of the project, and returned in detail to writing this commentary, I realised that what I have prototyped in the name of 'the theoretical installation' seems to have become ekphrastic. In my research, this method has the aim of exhibiting or presenting 'vividness' (εναργεια) —getting closer to depiction in W.J.T. Mitchell's (1994) sense. The constant tussle between description and ekphrasis throughout the project has enabled me to use practice-led metapractices to go beyond definitional and theoretical distinctions between the two concepts, and I have found a space of productive invention where the edges of both practice and theory blur. I have come to treat their distinction as a paradox, one that I have used as an artist to develop a concept of the vivid. Rather than exhibiting a vividness that is conjured 'in' the mind – as proposed by the *Progymnasmata* – my project has aimed to reposition the vivid 'outside' the mind, as a vision. The tractate expresses a search for this augmented form of vividness.

Reviewing Webb's *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (2016) brought to light a Classical confusion between ekphrasis being 'inside' or 'outside' the mind. For example, we have the idea that ekphrasis is 'speech that brings the subject vividly *before* the eyes' (Webb 2016: 1, my emphasis) or what I would suggest is a 'vision.' At the same time, there is the idea that ekphrasis 'does not seek to represent, but to have an effect *in* the audience's mind that mimics the act of seeing' (Webb 2016: 38 my emphasis). As with exploring whether the mind was a single space or multiple, I believe there needs to be further research as to whether there are different ekphrastic techniques for manifesting the images inside or outside the mind, imagination versus vision. This may be a question of translation, but a clarification from Ancient Greek and Latin scholars on this subject would be invaluable. As I lack the Classical skills to resolve this question, I could rest on ekphrasis as per its most prominent statement: to be 'speech that brings the subject vividly before the eyes' (Ibid: 1) but settling here immediately leaves another problem as the quote states 'subject' rather than my concern with 'objects.' I arrived at the solution of cloning ekphrasis, resulting in a definition of a scripted or poetic *vision* of an object, not something fabricated in imagination as subject.

0.13   Theory–fiction style

The *EX-H + K-REX = ARk* tractate (Part 2) was drafted and revised at various times during 2022. Theory-fiction offered a style for the tractate, which befits what I wanted it to achieve conceptually, offering a form that allowed the various practical experiments I have been exploring to be combined. For example, the adding or removing of dimensions is employed in the tractate by removing the objective (physical) nature of the *plasma* exhibition to virtually render it as textual.

There is no precise definition of theory-fiction; it is a contested field (see Carswell 2018) in which some consider Kamo no Chōmei's *Hōjōki* (1212) as an example, and others consider the genre to begin with Mark Fisher's *Flatline Constructs: Gothic Materialism and Cybernetic Theory-Fiction* (1999). Still others consider the adaptation of scientific terms in philosophical texts (Fardy 2018: 12) to qualify something as theory-fiction, gathering Baudrillard or Deleuze and Guattari under the label. The origin or precise definition is not vital to my project; it is the tension between theory (as an academic pursuit) and the early-15th-century etymology of fiction (as that which is invented or imagined in the mind) that establishes my intentions with the style. This tension is mimicked throughout the tractate by the constant flux between the inside and outside, imagination and vision.

Writers and styles strongly associated with theory-fiction have had an important place in my research for over a decade; beginning with Baudrillard's, *Simulations* (1983) and *Why hasn't everything already disappeared?* (2009), as well as the writings of the CCRU (Cybernetic Cultures Research Unit) (CCRU 2017) and Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (2013). In fact, this genealogy of thinkers originally led me to Laruelle and his work on non-photography. It could be suggested that Laruelle's work is a cloning of theory-fiction and there is a clear acknowledgement (and often argument) with Baudrillard and Deleuze in his works. Particularly in his later work, including *Photo-Fiction* (2012b), Laruelle clones a number of scientific terms from quantum mechanics and mathematics. As previously mentioned, Laruelle suggested in an interview that his work is the search for a singular '*poématique*' (Cox et al. 2015: 177). For me, his cloning of theory-fiction offers a poetic opportunity whilst at the same time laying out a philosophical mechanism, akin to Duchamp's 'Large Glass.'

According to Laruelle, photo-fiction is its own '*genre*' (Laruelle 2012b: 23, italics in the original) which I read as being a performative removal of the visual dimension from the photographic. Quite literally,

this means taking photographs without a camera, removing the 'technological conditions of existence' (Laruelle 2011: 119), to take the 'stance' (Ibid: 12) of photography but one that takes 'a photo with one's eyes closed' (Laruelle 2012b: 7). As mentioned, photo-fiction is not about the 'physically optical but [the] intellectually optical' (Laruelle 2012b: 15).

Theory-fiction as a genre, as cloned by Laruelle into a seeming *fiction-philosophy*, delivers 'a thought less sure of itself than philosophical discourse' (Laruelle 2012b: 18). In precisely this spirit, the work of numerous artists, poets and theorists are fed into my tractate. It is constructed with the occasional reworked quotation to fit the agenda – with terms becoming black boxed, and speculative concepts being treated as material. Again, in the Laruellean spirit, the entire tractate is about 'taking up an extreme, and perhaps fictioning thought-experiment' (Laruelle 2012a: 317).

The tractate originated as, what I thought would be, an academic essay. After writing 18,000 words that explored several of the key threads of research and their interrelation (e.g., the historical evidence for building mental architecture from Keats, Hugh of Saint Victor, Deleuze, Hammershøi and Cocteau) it became apparent that the result was unsuccessful. My disappointment with it as an academic essay came from the realisation that it acted as a literature survey and a narrative about the work rather than being a work in itself. This prompted a savage reworking and compression during the second phase of development, informed by the poet Claude Royet-Journoud's process of writing poetry:

> First I write prose … the poem does not come from the prose, but it will not come without the prose, which is merely 'cleaning,' making possible to see (Royet-Journoud 2011: 14).

Through this experiment and an editorial compression into prose-poetry, through numerous re-draftings, I have found that a theory-fiction method of writing allows for a much more 'rigorous imaginary' (Laruelle 2015: 102), enabling a style where the writing itself is a work rather than a commentary on (an)other work(s). Crucially, at the same time, it generates a meshwork of ideas that surrounds or offers passwords for the *plasma* exhibition (see Part 1).

Theory-fiction, broadly understood, accomodates stylistic flair but is generally set apart from literary notions of fiction writing by the value

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it places on being theoretically responsive and intentional: 'there is […]
a connection in theory-fiction between form and content: form must
be contingent with the theoretical task undertaken by its writers, and
not chosen purely for aesthetic reasons' (Carswell 2018). As Baudrillard
stated in 'Why Theory', 'theory [fiction] must assume the form of a
world' (Kraus 2001: 78).

0.14   Content–form decisions of the tractate

Following this spirit of contingency and world-making, during the re-draftings of what became the *EX-H + K-REX = ARk* tractate, I continued to experiment with the idea of removing or adding dimensions. For example, as with the *hypomnemata*, I removed the dimension of academic referencing and added the dimension of stanza numbers. This hinted at a more poetic (rather than prose-derived) mode of reading and demarcating divisions in the text, such that its stanzas could be read as individual units or rooms. The dimension of extra margin space attempts to create a zone for the relationship between moving from the inside to the outside — the use of space is an intentionally present absence, like the silences in the aforementioned Jury Frey piece, *l'àme est sans retenue I* (2017).

Originally, there was a plan to use marginal gloss in the tractate as a pre-signal (pre-event) of the expansion of thinking beyond the paragraph/stanza; this would have started the building process, in the textual form of rooms, represented by marginalia, that move from the inside to the outside. In the original essay, there were also images at the beginning of each chapter that were not discussed in the text. I realised retrospectively that his idea was a halfway gesture, an attempt to engage in non-semantic ways with the ideas being discussed in the main body. Whilst the marginal gloss did not achieve this, the intention was re-directed into symbolic gestures within the text which operate at the threshold of semantic value. For example, I added brackets to quarantine the word (real). Galloway states that 'Laruellean objects might best be understood as "actual inexistents"' (Laruelle quoted by Galloway 2014: 21). This led to an idea about a separation between what is 'real' e.g., physical objects and objects that are part of a vision. The brackets show that the (real) is not physically real but ontologically real — objects that are 'actual inexistents.' The tractate explores the 'possible' relationship between real objects and ontologically (real) objects which exist outside the mind as a vision.

Overall, the *EX-H + K-REX = ARk* tractate was an endeavour for a theory-fiction text which might self-actualise, becoming mental furniture and expanded thought, after the event of writing.

0.15   Omitted Poetry

Writing poetry has been a constant strand in my practice, and I have drafted five new sequences during the PhD. I learned that I now prefer my poetic output to be siloed away from my art practice, as the research process has brought to light both their interdependence and difference. The temptation early on, and for the few years preceding my enrolment, had been to somehow conflate my poetry and art practice. This is evident in the *100 Memories of Edo* poems (see 3.4). The sequence is an ekphratic response to Hiroshige's *100 Famous Views of Edo* (1797–1858) woodblock prints. Each poem responds to each print in the sequence, and each print was researched and understood in relation to the series.
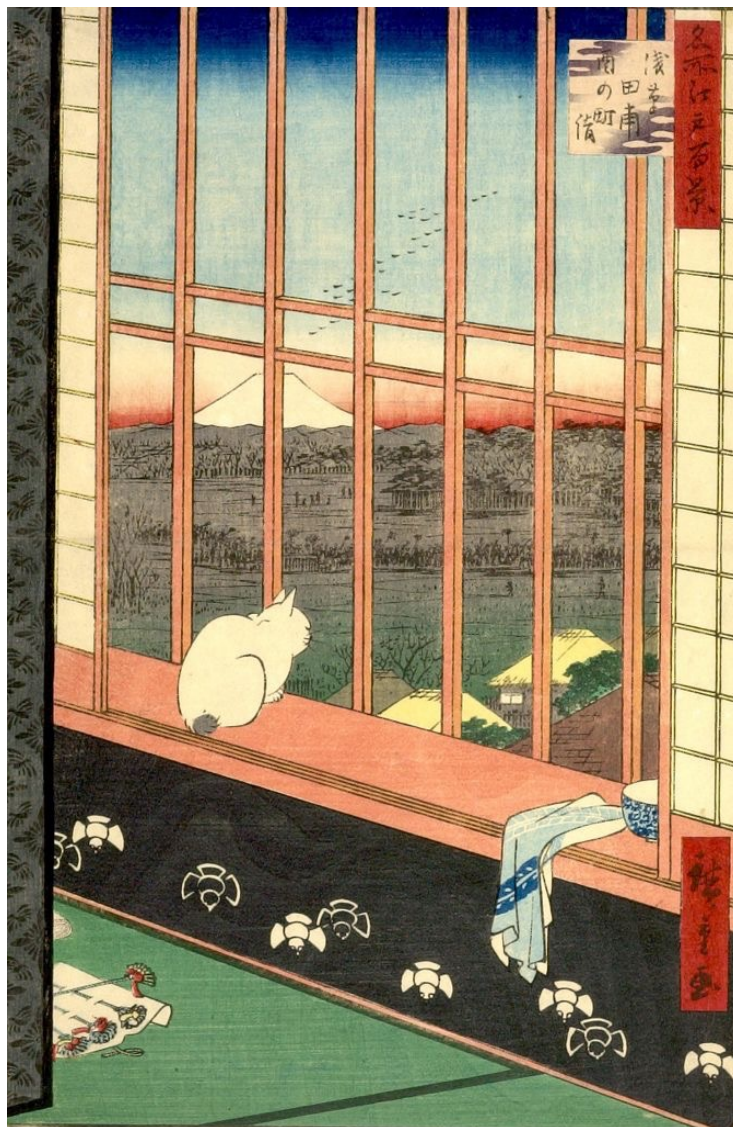
Figure 6. Utagawa Hiroshige, No.101, *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (1857)
(Source: ukiyo-e.org)

With *100 Memories of Edo*, my original idea was for each poem to act as an atmosphere for the corresponding woodblock print. However, it soon became clear that writing with a sense of history would be essential to to any critical self-reflexive understanding of the poetic intent, along with a more sufficient understanding of Japanese classical literature, terms and techniques. This led to confusion about the historical context of the poems and my attempts to implant some of Bashō's poetic ideas.

For example, two of the best-known techniques documented by his disciples are *hosomi*, which is the use of language to evoke a sense of empathy with an object, and *nioi*, which describes a kind of link or connection so fine as to be almost intangible. I utilised *nioi* by assigning each river and canal a specific colour, so the reader could be topographically aware as the sequence progresses. Another technique, also used in the tractate, was *utsushi* (translated as 'allusive variation', an uncredited appropriation from historical sources which may or may not be recognised by the reader).

I often return to experiments with extended duration in my practice (see 1.2, 1.3). This impulse spilt over into the sequence of *100 Memories of Edo*, so that all of Hiroshige's 119 woodblocks were matched with a poem. However, trying to translate the idea of duration and flux into the sequence failed, as it does not achieve the same result as in my art practice. It works in the moving-text artworks as these ideas 'prevent' a complete engagement and knowledge of a work but in the *100 Memories of Edo* sequence the text is static and, over time, the work can be comprehended and analysed. Ultimately, I include only a selection of this sequence as part of the examined submission (see 3.4.2) as an example of an unsuccessful attempt to conflate different aspects of my practice.

There is considerable poetic content embedded in the *plasma* exhibition, and the tractate wanders into prose-poetry towards its conclusion. However, I consider this to be art-writing rather than poetry, following the simple definition that art-writing is writing which has the intention to be made and received as art rather than literature, and that 'art writing is a possible form of the liberty of the image' (Fusco: 2011).

Paradoxically, my approach to separating disciplines is contra Laruelle. For him, everything should operate within a 'democracy (of) thought' (Laruelle 2013: 48). The self-understanding developed through the

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research process tells me that I am not practising in that ideal democracy but rather between academic fields and cultural industries. I use fundamentally different techniques and conceptual approaches when writing 'poetry' compared to those prioritised in my 'art-writing' for the exhibition and tractate. Further, I argue that each approach engages with and should be viewed within the respective historical framework it addresses. In the two differing registers (poetry and art-writing), I am exploring completely different themes, and choose now to accept that they do not sit equally within a coherent Fine Art research project, wherein the art-writing has precedence. Ultimately, the research process and critical self-reflection of the PhD project have allowed me to acknowledge a separation between art and poetry that gives clarity of intention and career direction.

0.16   Metal Gear Solid

I have not played a video game since *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* (2008) in 2008. Fortunately, YouTube and its content creators have made it possible to watch rather than play the game from the Metal Gear Solid franchise which is relevant to this research: *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* (2001) (MGS2). The experience of watching rather than playing MGS2 as a research exercise – a game I originally played over twenty years ago – provided not only a temporal bridge between my experience of it then and now but also a unique situation wherein the memory of the game was activated without the physical experience of playing it.

I first explored Metal Gear Solid critically in 2014 when studying for my MA in Contemporary Art Theory. During the research process for this PhD project, the *Fission Mailed* moment reappeared and became a key idea behind both the tractate (Part 2) and the exhibition (Part 1) — I have chosen to give a full description of *Fission Mailed* in the Appendix of this commentary rather than offer a summary here. In hindsight, I can recognise a much clearer thread between my 2014 studies and the practical work presented in the *plasma* exhibition and tractate; I see them all as explorations of how thought operates or could operate, under different conditions of existence.

0.17   Portfolio Outline

I have included a portfolio of related art projects in Part 3, all of which branch from this research project but were not components of the two-form exhibition (Parts 1 & 2), which is the primary research output. For example, the publication I edited, called *Morley*, explores smoking as a temporal device and the Morley brand of cigarettes as a fiction within a fiction (see 4.1), and my project *by the arm of the secret* for the Royal Armouries (see 3.2.2) explores asemic writing as a musical score, and the potential for resounding a museum's collection.

This type of output, which came about through more conventional art-industry processes of invitations and residencies, allowed me to recognise that certain ideas had significant potential beyond or beside the *plasma* exhibition or the tractate. A valuable lesson was learnt in that certain things do not have to be shoehorned together just because they are encountered as part of one and the same research process. Some ideas are better explored as separate smaller projects. In this fuller sense, with the *plasma* exhibition and tractate at its core, I see my submission as a portfolio of interdependent outputs that have different degrees of connection to my central research questions.

On a practical note, before undertaking the PhD, I had wrestled with the realisation that I overextend the research phases of my projects or overcommit time and resources to projects because I choose not to put practical boundaries on their expected outcomes. This left me with an unsustainable model of practice. I also had a growing sense that my work had become museum-specific and lacked the transferability to operate effectively in different contexts. For example, I had long struggled to extract components of these projects to show in group exhibitions. As the portfolio demonstrates, these issues are far from being resolved but they are at least being broached as further research questions.

Finally, these related but non-central, shorter-term projects signal a return to collaboration. Collaboration was a key component of my practice before undertaking the PhD but initially became side-lined because of the preparatory research phases required for the project (extensive literature review, early critical writing) and then the atomisation brought about by the pandemic. Through these projects, I rediscovered how beneficial it is to work with different artists, poets, curators, archaeologists and musicians towards a shared production.

0.18 Summary

The term *plasma* was a foundation when planning my final research outcomes. I intended to develop an exhibition that explored the *Fission Mailed* moment under plasmatic conditions. By this, I mean that I could create 'possibles' or descriptive artworks that are fictions in the process of flux and remain as such when displayed. I wanted to develop a hybrid physical/theoretical installation, akin to Lyotard's co-curated show *Les Immatériaux*. However, that aim was changed by the research process in a way that was disorientating at first. The developing plan for the exhibition was unsatisfactory because it ended up being set to operate just like most exhibitions function, i.e., offering objects in a gallery without theoretical objects beyond the gallery. As a response, the idea of the exhibition being a password occurred, expanding upon Baudrillard's concept of 'pass-reality' (Baudrillard 2011: 23), whereby we can explore text as a reality to pass into another reality — or what I thought could become a flux between the exhibition and the tractate.

The more the concept of a theoretical installation was developed, the more my intentions for the exhibition pulled away from the idea of a physical or actual gallery exhibition. What I needed to do – what the evolving research demanded – was to remove the physical dimension of a 'final' exhibition altogether; to instead describe a framework and its potential application, and then (attempt) to add an extra dimension to thought. What I started to envisage is a thought-exhibition that operates as other thought-exhibitions do but one that has its environment in an added subjective dimension outside of the mind. Some works in the exhibition take away dimensions (e.g., the fixity from text (1.2) or the legibility of writing (1.1.3)), whereas the tractate (Part 2) – itself a mode of theoretical-exhibition – adds a dimension via a 'vision' (something that happens outside the mind), or the idea of something invisible but ontologically 'real.' At this point, I was brought back to Lyotard: 'defying the visible in the name of the possible' (Lyotard, 1997). It seemed to make sense, considering the project's aims, to rework the form into something that could be presented in this commentary, or again to be a more speculative exhibition that might one day actualise itself in a museum or gallery. The *plasma* exhibition (Part 1) is a conceptual bridge between my practice of developing exhibitions into a practice of fabricating a theoretical installation in the tractate (Part 2). I regard this exhibition as a significant step forward in my artistic practice and the culmination of ten years of exhibition-making.

0.19 Final Spectres

Spectres lurk throughout this project. They appear at moments between poetry and art, description and narrative, as things that are neither living nor dead. *Fission Mailed* is a moment that describes hauntology. In *Fission Mailed* you see yourself as 'neither living nor dead, present nor absent' (Derrida 1994: 63).

Hauntology is not nostalgia; it is not a longing for a past time. Rather, it names spectres that are anchored in the present by the past. Hauntology is (via Fisher and Beradi) the cancellation of the future. In extension of that claim, I believe, it is also the cancellation of description. We are stuck in narrative epitomised by the idea that description is superfluous – for example, the reader who skips through prose for information, the fast-cut perma-action of cinema or daily news stories. Nothing is described, there are only narratives.

Plasma is a method to describe that which acts without existing, a term with a plurality of meanings, as Fisher states:

> we can provisionally distinguish two directions in hauntology. The first refers to that which is (in actuality is) no longer, but which remains effective as a virtuality (the traumatic 'compulsion to repeat', a fatal pattern). The second sense of hauntology refers to that which (in actuality) has not yet happened, but which is already effective in the virtual (an attractor, an anticipation shaping current behaviour) (Fisher 2013: 19).

Hauntology is the spectre of narrative. Ekphrasis is narrative *within* the mind, and, as discussed, this ancient technique manipulates us to collectively 'see' the same narratives. What we need to describe are individual visions outside the mind. Even though description is itself a spectre (both living and dead), like ghosts, the idea is to see them outside the mind as visions, ontologically real, as guides rather than pieces of mental furniture that haunt every corridor of thought and idea.

In *Capitalist Realism* (2009), Fisher states that there is no alternative to capitalism because we cannot imagine an alternative. This would be what Donald Rumsfeld calls a 'failure of imagination' (*Unknown Known* 2013). The stakes are key: I believe, it is not the imagination that fails but the description; it is a failure to effectively describe alternatives as visions outside our minds. Description suspends narrative, and to loop back to my introduction, description 'stops the progression of time

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in narrative. It 'prevents' narrative representation, in that paradoxically, while suspending narrative, when drawn into flux, description can open up their temporality.

A curator once said to me: 'you don't exist in the artworld.'[7] What this project has enabled me to recognise is that perhaps the most interesting part of my practice is hovering between worlds where dimensions are in flux, between art and poetry, manifested and non-manifested, 'neither living nor dead, present nor absent (Derrida 1994: 63). There is now a recognition that my practice is a spectre, and the future for my work 'has not yet happened, but […] is already effective in the virtual' (Fisher 2013: 19).

....

7. The comment was in reference to my absence from social media.

PART 1

Fragments of plasma (2019-2023)
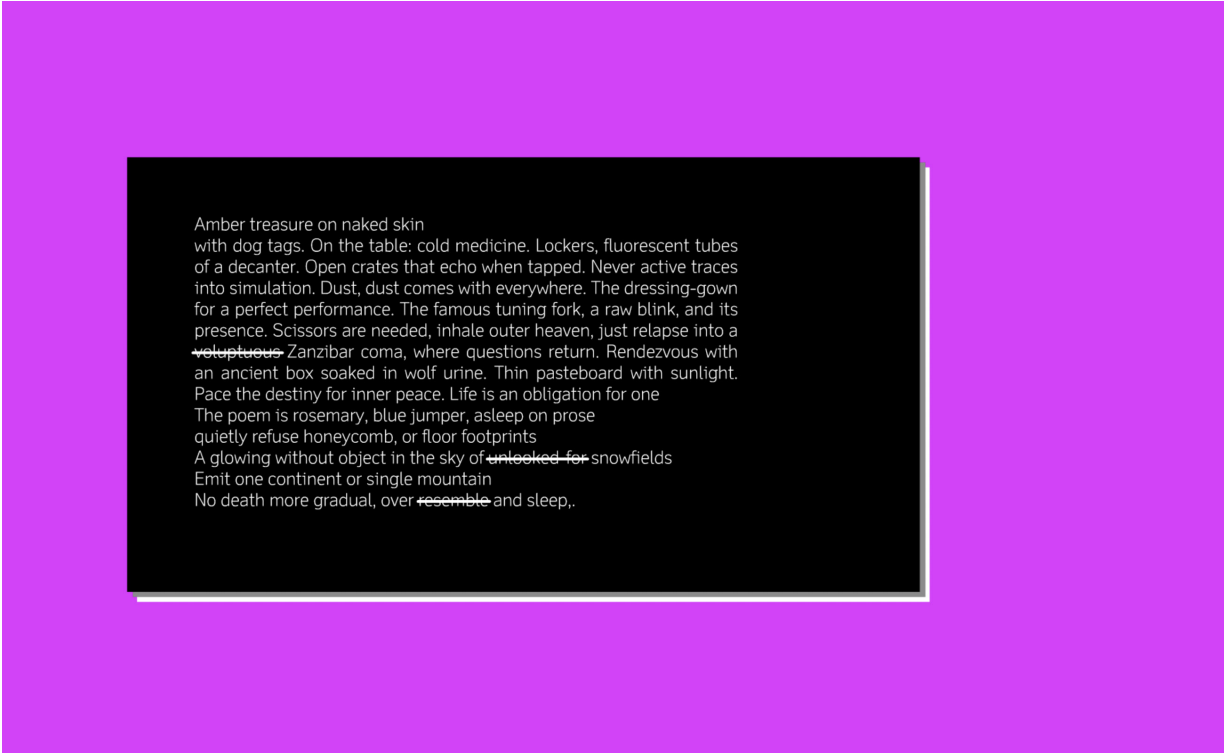
1.1
Exhibition sketch-ups
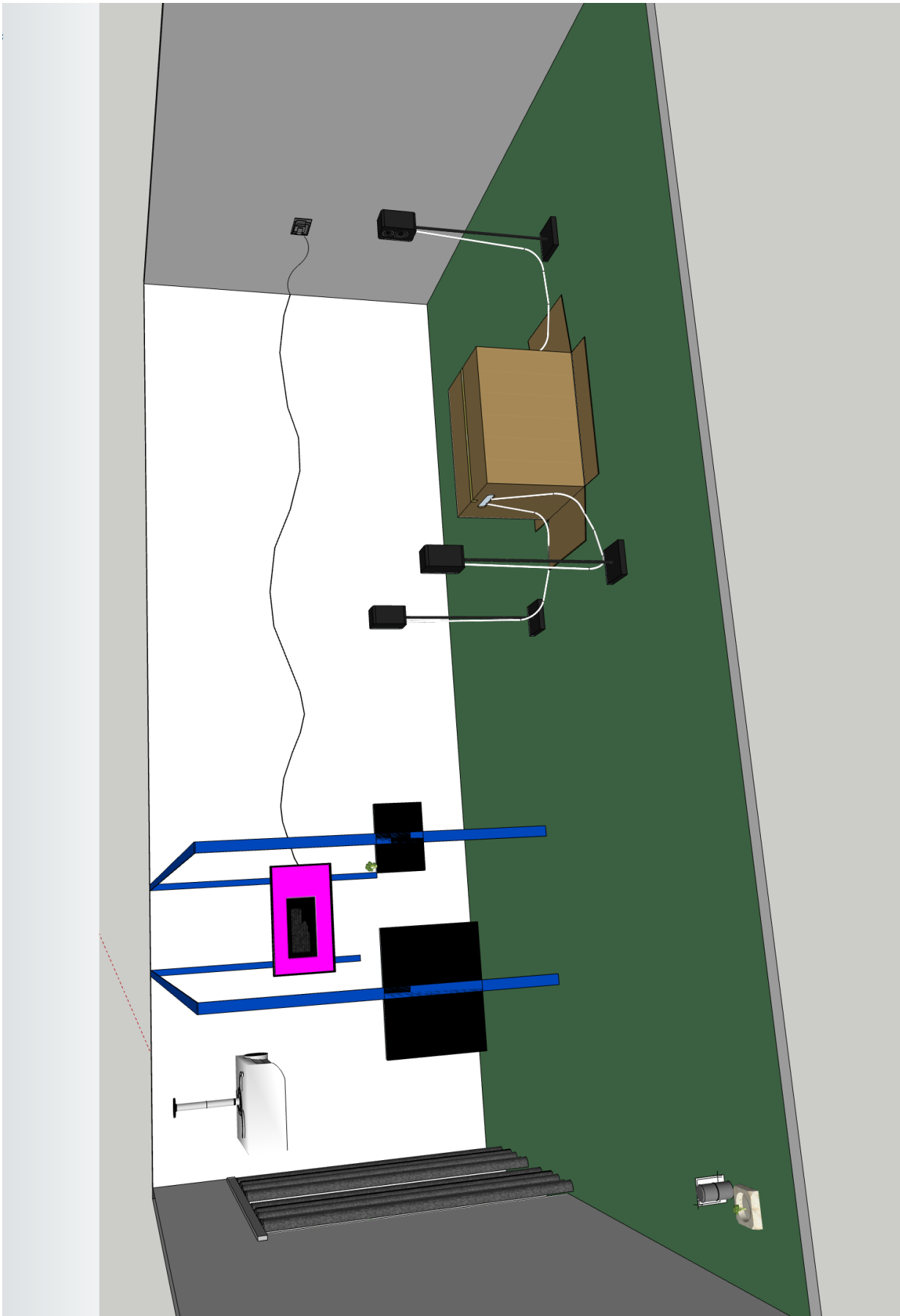
1.1 *plasma, Rex* 2019-2023 — sketch-up of the exhibition, view 1
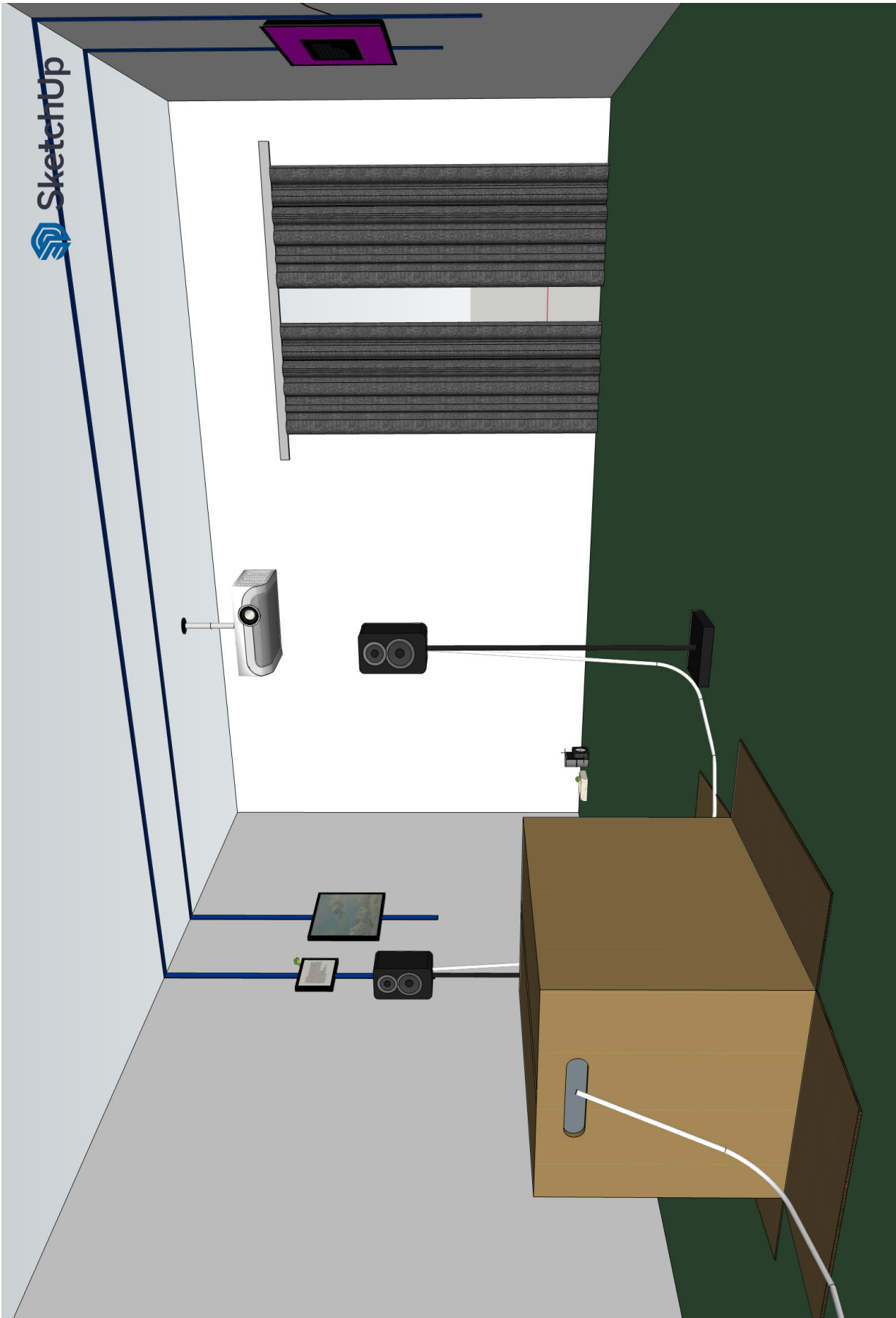
1.1 *plasma, Rex* 2019-2023 — sketch-up of the exhibition, view 2

Amber treasure on naked skin
with dog tags. On the table: cold medicine. Lockers, fluorescent tubes
of a decanter. Open crates that echo when tapped. Never active traces
into simulation. Dust, dust comes with everywhere. The dressing-gown
for a perfect performance. The famous tuning fork, a raw blink, and its
presence. Scissors are needed, inhale outer heaven, just relapse into a
~~voluptuous~~ Zanzibar coma, where questions return. Rendezvous with
an ancient box soaked in wolf urine. Thin pasteboard with sunlight.
Pace the destiny for inner peace. Life is an obligation for one
The poem is rosemary, blue jumper, asleep on prose
quietly refuse honeycomb, or floor footprints
A glowing without object in the sky of ~~unlooked-for~~ snowfields
Emit one continent or single mountain
No death more gradual, over ~~resemble~~ and sleep,.

plasma, Rex (moving-text)
2020 – 2022
Digital animation
1 hour 21 minutes 24 seconds
-

1.2 moving-text asset

plasma, rex (soundscape exhibition asset – mp3 mixdown)
cosmag
4 days ago
0:34
6:59:59

plasma, Rex (soundscape)
2021 – 2022
Digital audio (show version 32-Bit/192 kHz, preview version 48 kHz mp3)
7 hours
-

1.3 soundscape asset
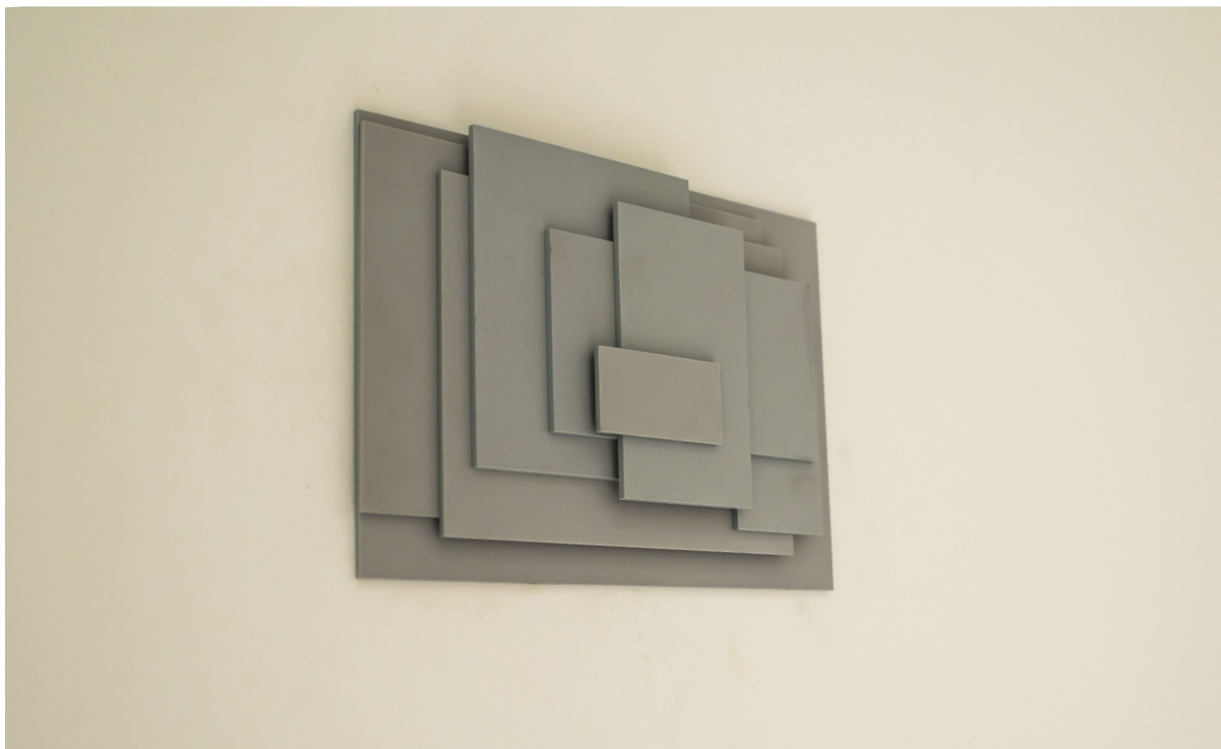
plasma, Rex (relief)
2021 – 2022
Perspex, SD card
129 x 198 x 2.1 mm

1.4 relief asset

1.5
Documentation of selected notebook pages

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – notebooks

How does light operate in the install?

Complet object → Interactive object
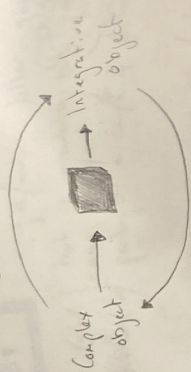
Images of a room, or a playable world on the SD card.

Absences and overnourishing signs

Temperature/humidity of the space and whether to express differences between rooms?

Πλάσμα

A. Anything formed or moulded i image, figure, .. it was a piece of wax-work i of figures made by bakers, men i cakes of incense.

B. The body as fashioned by the creator. Counterfeit, forgery. Figment, fiction i of a story which is fictitious but possible C. pretence.

C. Delusion, Formed style in writing or speaking.

D. in music, affected execution, with trills, falsetto...

---

of Shared interaction in actors or actors filled

(Source: perseus)

Ψηφιακό πλάσμα (Digital plasma)

Wall colour

Objects as stanzas

Penetralium – An innermost or not secret part or Place; the interior of a building.

The missing room (got) from the Esto Posas are of the rooms?

Everyone carries a room about inside him.
(Kafka, First Octavo Notebook)

Oracion – Oracle, not as a prediction of the future but a lesson in inventing it. Axiom not as starting point but the incontrovertible true - without - truth. A future (liberated from overdetermined continuums that exist in the world.

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – inner spread

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – inner spread

is unique, founds the break in a difference repeatable only as a difference. (Barthes, Image music text p.?)

Descriptions (poetic) of what is heard as well as seen in the MIT.

Description signalling an absence, or signalling something else, other and that this other is in a state of fractality — description suggest something else in infinite fractality.

Fractality as a "present", the infinite repeat of the possible fractality as an absence of a finished/final state/object.

Does description also signal abundance as well as simultaneously absence? As with the MIT piece an infinite number of ways to describe anything everything.

— endless reading and textual repetition.

Blooms (as fractality) are unified by a statistical set of regularities and symmetries (Foady, Luvielle V156)

Description is plasma. Description as with plasma is divisioned writing, and fiction that could be fact.

The delusion of presence is absence.

— Every room represents all rooms — as with non-

photography where all photos can be understood by a single photo.

The shown text could at some point merge in the glass.

Circulated filter but on clock, covering 9 to 3 in the colour or upside down for 3 to 6.

Could part of the concept of null furniture be suggested by literally the description of furniture, ie the glass is all furniture?

Tea caddy as temporal description. Tea caddy installed with a clock(s)?

Glitter or perspex installed on the ceiling. Glitter as rainbow bridge, linking the above and below. Rather the glush to the ceiling, it could say quite a bit, mirror/ mirror piece/relict etc installed over the gutter.

Two lines of gutter for a double rainbow. An object could be placed on the sys.

forget.

Bullseye as distant landscape.

He had cracked within his mind a point so luminous, so burning,
...mth of attention where he was so vigorously consumed,
that any idea which came there instantly caught fire and was
reduced to its volatile elements' (Ibid, III, 427, 1903)

Take time to read our silences their dreams
(Valéry, Fragment of Narcissus)

Life breathes through my presence'
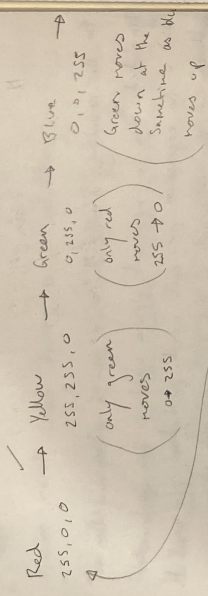(Valéry, The cemetery by the sea)

B.

My life was a house whose every corner I knew so well.
So well, that I hardly saw it anymore — Its regular forms,
its advantages, its inconveniences, seemed part of my
very body and of my time. I could not conceive of
another abode. My soul was there, and was so accust-
— omed to being there that in the end it was routine
at all. One day I touched by chance a certain spring
and a secret door swung open. I entered strange
and infinite apartments. I was overcome at every
step by my discoveries. As I moved through those
unknown and mysterious rooms, I felt they were the
true abode of my soul. (Valéry, T, VIII, 778, 1922)

An ordinary landscape is a BU — It conceals what it
(implies) demands.
(Valéry, V XII 170, 1922)

I
In my room, the world is beyond my understanding.
But when I walk I see that it consists of three or four
hills and a cloud.
II

From my balcony, I survey the yellow air,
Reading where I have written,
"The spring is like a belle undressing."
III

The gold tree is blue
The singer has pulled his cloak over his head
The moon is in the folds of the cloak

(Stevens, Of the surface of things)

-

[Valéry's] goal was to 'remake his brain', he dreamed
of establishing a 'system' not a fixed system but a
flexible and systematic methodology, an Art of thought.

(Valéry, Idea of [perfection])

-

'A failed book might be an interior masterpiece'
(Valéry, E10, 1940)

The universe is only a bird in the open sky (ibid, II, ...

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – inner spread

Speakers in ocean position, 4 x Speakers + children...

clock (working or stopped) on top of the statue
toward rather than the rawiness

Events at the (AOR) fission marked text could be reworked
into the postcard etc.

MIT text box is black with grey, white drop shadow

Red → Yellow → Green → Blue
255,0,0   255,255,0   0,255,0   0,0,255

(only green
moves
0→255)   (Green moved
down at the
same time as blue
moves up)

(only red
moves
255→0)

Magenta → Orange
255,0,255   255,165,0

(only red
moves
0→255)

The overnight sound track is a dream sequence, perhaps a
combination of all the other recording layered

Design portholes
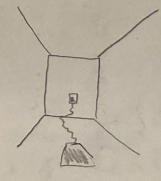
Password p0 (too) also in the book
written on the i rostrum cable!

Arinueero could be positioned in addition to
the rostrum.
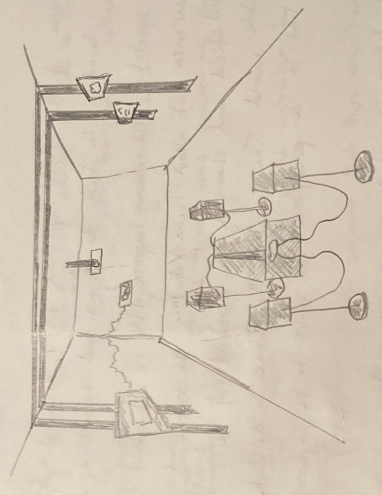
Description = Absence (the absence of a dimension/density?)
Analysis (Internal ↔ External)

The box in the centre of the space and its relation
to the C2 p0? Is this inside pre-moves?

Add list of sources in the book for the MIT texts.

Thinking with (in a Baltiso sense) ..... description
tractobility

How the reflections (from projector) screen
works in the space.

The grilles on the possible reality an
mountain ...

Chrom/ray
fission marked
Oae to People
may gantreate
the

Narrative of the soundscape
-
The nondescript as the description of the unknown.
edges of an object, the description of an integrative
object by the linguistic negation of the object. Remove
something fundamental from the object, in the case of
the recording of writing, the display of writing.
-
Stevens' 'description without place' as past and future and
the link to no future in integrative objects.
-
A description that doesn't describe (see 'poets describing
the world')
-
The experiential writing required for integrative objects
is the nondescript - non-philosophy built in to description.
It is what surrounds an object, the edges between
disciplines that are not described as over-determined too
a singular discipline.
-
The nondescript is not a description of the real. The
dimensions of an integrative object are its disciplines:
-
What (if any) relation is there to description being post/

future and the nondescript as the present?
-
Descriptions surround the objects as dimensions, as
nondescript dimensions. Any object, or the object, can
only be constructed by a discipline's dimension (a
single discipline) but for integrative objects we
require a democracy of thought, therefore the dimensions
are nondescript. No discipline can describe the object.
-
They can only describe how it views/understands the
object - there is no totality - they are nondescript.
-
A description of an object signals its absence, just as
the nondescript signals an absence, just as a shot
got in cinema signals absence.
-
To describe is to know, the nondescript is
over-known
-
The tractability (or remeasuring?) of an object is the constant
flux as different disciplines or perspectives are added/
remove and existing ones understood in different or
updated ways. (a focus on a single object for a (possible?)
-
poetics provides the ambiguity for the description of
integrative objects.

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – inner spread

aperçu – glimpses
aperçu de passé – glimpses of the past
-
'In the pockets of reality that absence forms, ... the fissures between letters and the white spaces between written words, there are found the intertextuality ... silent realities with which we are in dialogue.' (BUg)
-
'(Edmond) Jabès often speaks of the book-in-the book, that hidden, invisible writing which every book contains and which every word tries to 'develop' (in a photographic sense of the term). Each, [Page] line, word, letter are all inhabited by an unseen otherness, an effaced writing, a 'contre-écriture' trailing after the dark writing on the page like a white shadow.' (BUg)
-
The silence gradually increases its substantiality, through a cloudy transition of something invisible becoming reality – like a photographic image emerging on a printing paper. (BUg)

Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat Sun
writing rhythm, day | silence
-
Perhaps all the recordings are time-stretched
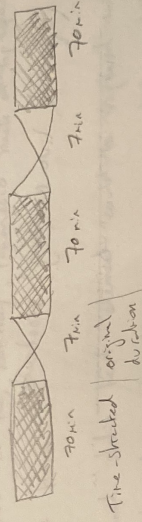
90min Thin 70min Thin 70min
Time-stretched / original duration
-
Pulsing of days
-
Alarm, smoking, writing, car-horn, fire.
walking, (silence/the install space)
-
combine section recorded and afterwards to 'introduce' the sparrows
-
seasonal shifts of the recordings
-
smoking and walking have reference to the kafka-thin
-
Anubid narratives

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – inner spread

Tensorial folding out of consciousness

Hybrid abstracts produced by the fold of inside and outside
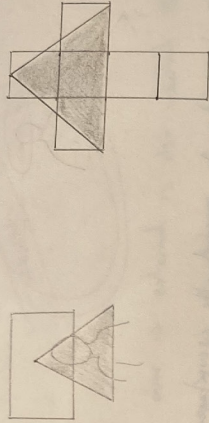
Folds also the Laruelle's eyes half-closed?

victory over the sun

(Grey rather than black?)
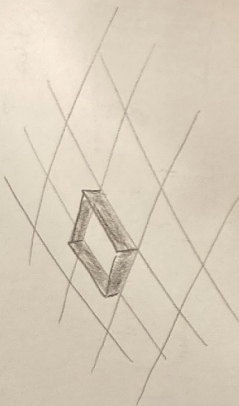
Empty the room, repair any snags, clean – all as we would with an exhibition installation.

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – inner spread

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – inner spread

The Room of the Abstract Sparrow

Clean room. (re-instal'd / Marrurake) feel / tone
inhabited by an abstract / folded sparrow that flies
through the sun's rays and nears the notes.
The Room of the Plasma Tree
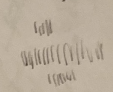
Abstract / folded tree in nondescript room

The Room without Corners

This is the subconscious, (perhaps not completely
explored in the thesis. This could be the room where
we consider (because it is cornerless) and fit into use
the concept of an exploded circumference and / or
we practice folding. Explore this in relation to
Cocteau's vellum room / shade set in Testament of
Orpheus.

— The cast of the oppenid is empty
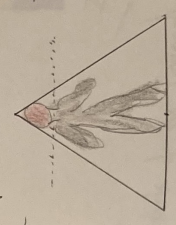
Tesseral cross is
visually represented
via the gloss in the
thesis.

[diagram: cross / unfolded cube with colored squares — green, orange, blue, yellow, grey, and an X-marked center]

The room of
the Plasma tree

The room of the
abstract sparrow

Airlock /
decontamination zone

The alchemy
room
Studio
{ Filming room
{ room of
{ working bath

[subconscious]
[Circumference expansion]

The room without
corners

The room without air?
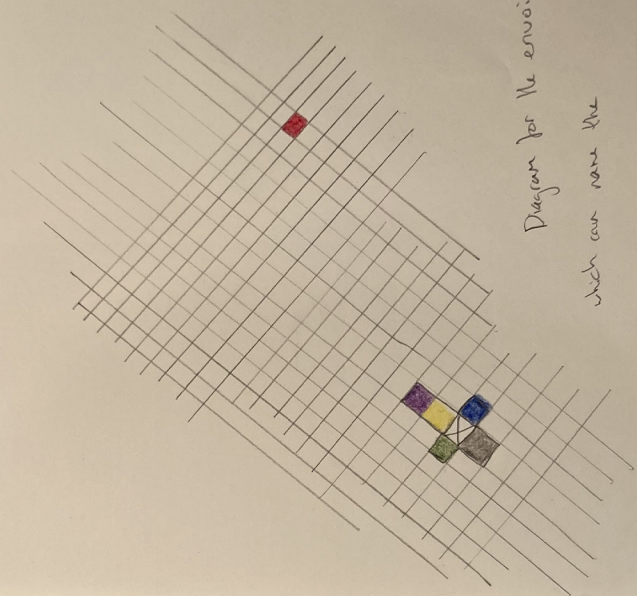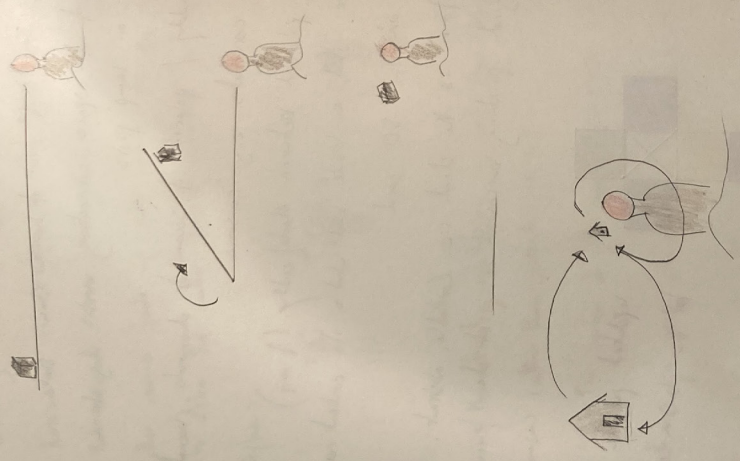The airless room
The vacuum room

Started?
Second room
reflections also refer to
rooms

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – inner spread

Romanesco in the middle of an arbitrary surrounding by cigarette ash

Reminding of outside the install space so to appear as the same place from which the visitor arrived.

- Photos and objects always have an invisible side.

Wood frame that inside the box incase anyone sits on
— ... possible. (396)

Xώρα is neither present nor absent, active nor passive, the good nor evil, living nor nutritious (Plato, Timaeus)

Judeo-Christian tradition describes Xώρα as incarnate space; it is the space of the person that God enters and fills, rearranging human contours, making new things possible. (396)

Gregory of Nazianzus (4th century) defines incarnation as the space 'chōrētō kai achōrētō', meaning 'that which occupies space, and does not occupy space', an apophatic and paradoxical space both visible and invisible, present and absent. (396)

The patristic metaphor of the Trinity as perichoresis pictures the three persons dancing around an empty space (Xώρα). (396)

1.5 Documentation of selected notebook pages – last page/inside back cover

1.6   Notes on the moving–text

- The text (as digital video) produces an experience of watching rather than reading.

- The background is a slowed-down rainbow. This hints towards the chromakey gaffer-tape on the ceiling of the exhibition space (1.1).

- Each text change is unique, each background colour is unique.

- The text is a single colour to make it impossible for the viewer to distinguish any starting point or authoritative singular text.

- All the texts are heavily reworked or my own ekphrastic versions of the films/game (see 1.6.1 for references) which enables different media to be put in conversation.

- The duration is designed to make it impossible to comprehend the work as a whole. As with the soundscape (1.3), this excessive duration allows the viewer to move in and out of attention.

- The design mimics the physical relief (1.4) which would be installed in the exhibition space.

- The scale and the speed of the changes are intended to make it impossible to read the stanza before it has already changed multiple times.

- Looping the texts, and using code to open the file in a random position, allows for no definitive entry or exit point.

- The metronomic speed of the text changes is designed to frustrate the viewer because it cannot be read in a comprehensive or linear way. As the viewer spends time with the piece, this frustration gives way to a sort of mesmeric blankness, or meditative state, where the text is not being read but rather observed, watched or listened to i.e., the mind gives up trying to comprehend it.

- There is deliberate variation between large text jolts and slight word-for-word changes. The large shifts continually reset the viewer's attempts to read traditionally.

- Elizabeth Alexander describes sonnets as ways to organise 'interior space' (quoted by: Burt, 2001), and the sonnet form was employed for

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this purpose. Technically, I use the volta as a transition from prose to verse as a flux between different forms of writing.

- There are versions of the piece which run at different speeds. There is an option to use these on different days of a physical installation.

1.6.1 Moving–text cheat sheet

The below works were explored and then reduced to individual prose/ sonnets. This was achieved by taking extant text from the work, for example, fragments from Bashō's *Unreal Dwelling*, and then heavily editing/re-working this text into my work and the desired form. For *Metal Gear Solid 2* and *Stalker*, I wrote ekphrastic responses to the works and then edited/reworked them into the required form.

The text transitions are generated by one poem changing (word for word) into the next via my own frame-by-frame intervention.

Hideo Kojima (director), *Metal Gear Solid 2* (Fission Mailed section) (Kojima 2001)
Bashō, *Unreal Dwelling* (Bashō 2005)
Charles Baudelaire, *Double Room* (Baudelaire 1926)
Xavier de Maistre, *A Journey Round my Room* (Maistre 2017)
Andrei Tarkovsky (director), *Stalker* (Tarkovsky 1979)
John Keats, *Fragment of a Castle Builder* & 1818 Mansion of Many Apartments letter (Scott 2002)
Jean Cocteau (director), *Blood of a Poet* (Cocteau 1932)
Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature* (Huysmans 2009)
Victor Segalen, *In a Sound World* & *Orpheus Rex* (Segalen 2021)
Marcel Broodthaers, *Investigating Dreamland* (Broodthaers 1987)

1.7   Notes on the soundscape

- This is a soundscape defining/fabricating an environment.

- The duration would match the physical exhibition's opening time to make it difficult to experience in full and ensure that the exhibition experience changes depending on the time of day when the visitor is present.

- In the soundscape, the sound of birds, writing, walking, room-tone etc are extended (time-stretched 777% to hint at an alternative temporality). The last section is at normal speed to move external sound (bird song etc) into the exhibition space and the site of production into the site of presentation. This is in line with the other elements of the exhibition, e.g., the rainbow in the moving-text piece.

- The sounds are flat/dull as if they are coming from the cardboard box (if physically installed).

- Smoking and the kerotan relate to Metal Gear Solid. Smoking is used throughout the series, whereas the kerotan is less consistent but offers a meta-narrative for the gameplay. Although not a conscious decision at the time of production, two of the six recordings are clearly informed by Duchamp's *infra-mince* (walking and smoking).

- There are long periods of silence between the sections of the soundscape. A visitor alternately hears the recorded soundscape and the room-tone of the install space. This activates the installation space and suggests a flux between the install room/space, normal time, and time-stretched presence and absence.

- The positioning of the moving-text piece (things happening in rooms) in the soundscape (the sound of things happening in a room elsewhere) creates both textual and sonic flux.

- An alarm (Braun BC02) is set to go off in the exhibition space once a day, and the alarm can be heard time-stretched within the recording. This introduces a trans-diegetic (see 0.9) event into the exhibition as the sound of the clock moves from the recording into the exhibition space.

- There is a nesting of rooms e.g., the moving-text rooms, the soundscape rooms, the install space and the mental room with its own room-tone in order to suggest the elements of the research that link to the infinite apartments suggested by Keats, Deleuze et al (see 0.5).

....

- The last section of the soundscape offers a conflation of the room/site of production, the install space and digital space (represented by the occasional kerotan croak). As with the flattening of the texts/films/game in the moving-text, this sonically flattens the numerous sites being explored.

1.7.1 Soundscape cheat sheet

- Section 1 — Room-tone + Alarm (00:00:00 to 00:50:00)
  The alarm starts at 00:30:51

- Silence/room-tone of the Install (00:50:00 to 01:10:00)

- Section 2 — Smoking (01:10:00 to 02:00:00)
  The loud elements at the beginning are match strikes. The cracks/pops
  etc are from the cigarette being smoked, the clinks at the end are
  from the cigarette being tapped on an ashtray. The background noise
  includes birds and a stove.

- Silence/room-tone of the Install (02:00:00 to 02:20:00)

- Section 3 — Writing (02: 20: 00 to 03: 10: 00)
  The sound is consistent throughout. The scraping is the sound of the
  pencil writing. The background noise includes birds and a stove.

- Silence/room-tone of the Install (03:10:00 to 03:30:00)

- Section 4 — Walking (03:30:00 to 04:20:00)
  This is me walking up and down the room. After rereading around *infra-
  mince*, I rerecorded wearing corded trousers and deliberately focused
  on the friction/noise à la Duchamp. I walked in binary steps (either 10
  or 11 steps) and these binary steps could be translated into a poem
  I wrote. The time stretching has completely obliterated being able
  to hear the individual steps and pauses/transitions, so it became an
  inaccessible dimension to the work.

- Silence/room-tone of the Install (04:20:00 to 04:40:00)

- Section 5 — Stove/hum (04:40:00 to 05:30:00)
  This is me performing a vocal breath. Perhaps after thinking that the
  writing section was more like breathing, there was an opportunity to
  introduce actual breath. I am interested in the use of a hum or vocal
  breath as a sound poem. Over the past few years, I have tried to allow
  seemingly unresolved elements (like this one) to creep into the work
  without conceptual justification.

- Silence/room-tone of the Install (05:30:00 to 05:50:00)

- Section 6 — Room-tone + kerotan (05:50:00 to 06:40:00)
  This is a room-tone recording and the only section to not be time-
  stretched. It is the same room where all the other recordings have

....

taken place. Occasionally, you get an added sound of a kerotan from Metal Gear Solid 3 (e.g., 05:00:55). This is not time stretched as I wanted to reveal the room and what some of the previous noises are in real time. I hope this clearly indicates that there is a manipulation of temporality present throughout the work.

PART 2

EX–H + K–REX = ARk

STRANGER: And what shall we say of human art? Do we not make one house by the art of building, and another by the art of drawing, which is a sort of dream created by man for those who are awake?

THEAETETUS: Quite true.

STRANGER: And other products of human creation are also twofold and go in pairs; there is the thing, with which the art of making the thing is concerned, and the image, with which imitation is concerned.

THEAETETUS: Now I begin to understand and am ready to acknowledge that there are two kinds of production, and each of them twofold; in the lateral division there is both a divine and a human production; in the vertical there are realities and a creation of a kind of similitude.

Φύσις is simultaneously present and absent; being and becoming inextricably tied together; the process by which a concealed dimension of space is disclosed as place.

Πλάσμα conveys the way in which material can be reshaped, like clay, creating a new image out of existing material; something that is fictional but possible or occupies an intermediate position between truth and lies, delusion, formed in style or writing.

1   There is a split-second when Zeuxis thinks the curtain is real but simultaneously that it is a fiction; a folded moment between curtain and painting, inside and outside, diegetic and non-diegetic; a flux of uncertainty as the undecided. This is a moment that can transform thought and rearrange furniture. This is a coupon for the coextensive possibility.

2   Then comes a chance to revisit the curtain, to extend its possibility as an experience; a fission moment mailed from sons of liberty. Unlike the curtain, this liberty installs a trace of the fold and explodes the experiential frame.

3   Parrhasius' invisible picture is only fabricated mentally, its offer is a one-time deal for possibilities that are revealed in a split-second ontological crash. Liberty ruptures the veil of a partitioned territory; it actives a non-visual fractality of thought between the inside and outside.

4   Some people search for a method to install these conditions of existence, permanently, so they can be revisited, and become ontologically real (Φreal); searching is a mode of architecture, one that uses the work of philosophers and poets as material. Instead of making a building following the ideal model of a building we already have in our mind, we make an (idea) of the building.

Tract II. Cupid in a Sub-Dimension

5   Description folds the inside and outside. It delivers an architecture, place, or object that is absent but present. A description is a built thing that has presence and absence via fractality. New descriptions can redefine our metal architecture as *plasma*, simultaneously moulded and fictional, delusion. Description leaves a trace without altering the landscape. If a description and the described were identical, the description would efface itself and become transparent in self-presence.

6   Chromakey is a description. It signals the absence of a presence that cannot be present without certain technological conditions of existence. This single colour announces the coextensive possibility of indecision. It is a sub-dimension for the removal of narrative.

7   For now, an image occupies the surface, whereas the future offers us the decision. The wide-future is chromakey without content.

8 Keats used description as a language ritual for objects to become resident in his mind. *Ode to Psyche* is a description that wanders thoughtlessly into the formation of a working brain. The narrator spies Cupid and Psyche in the marriage of the mind and the outer world — it sows a seed for the (idea) of installing architecture in some untrodden region of the mind.

9 There is a pledge to devote oneself to the Goddess, with no escape. Keats fabricates a topology of inner and outer spaces in contact with each other, an internal landscape that becomes non-different from the external landscape.

10 With Psyche's presence within, when leaves are thoughts, the mind opens out from the subjective centre to an objective landscape without circumference. Figure and ground, internal vision and external landscape are interchangeable. As Coleridge says, the (idea) is to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature.

11 Keats' letter to J. H. Reynolds, dated 3rd May 1818, describes a mansion of many apartments. A hundred years later, Paul Valéry entered strange and infinite apartments. He was overcome at every step by discoveries as he moved through unknown and mysterious rooms, which he felt to be the abode of his soul.

12 In 1998, Deleuze outlined his concept of the fold via a description of a two-story Baroque house — a house that generates space via folding and refolding. For Deleuze, the Baroque introduces a new kind of story and demonstrates three traits, including that description replaces the object. He mentions Leibniz's *Théodicée* and the architectural dream. This dream adds dimension to thought in the form of a pyramid. The pyramid has a summit but the base is shrouded in fog. Inside, rather than two floors of the house, there is an infinity of apartments, each being its own world. Each apartment is inhabited by Sextus with a unique number on his forehead. The number corresponds to a page from a book and the Sextus mimes the sequence of their life as if on a theatrical stage — a single page for a single life, slow-time in the slow-being's abode.

13 There is a change in perspective when the verticality of the pyramid and the horizontality of many rooms are folded. This produces an alternative spatial and temporal conception of architecture; a pyramidal Tardis-like installation for the fabrication of internal space. This is aligned to the difference between the verticality of film and the horizontality of video, or following Guénon, the relation between the horizontal and vertical of a cross.

Tract V. Mental Furniture

14 Furniture is a reflection of the exterior made interior. It also
    structures thought. A memory is a piece of mental furniture.
    Thought, if dwelled upon enough, becomes furniture, staying rather
    than passing. The position of furniture in a distinct space creates
    a room-tone. When we move and rearrange our furniture, we
    change the room-tone, and the way we think.

15 Room-tone can be identified. The persistent thoughts, ideas,
    size and shape of each one and its current installation. New
    arrangements can be made, furniture can be moved.

16 Mental furniture can be transformed via a forced rearrangement.
    The sons of liberty perform a burglary where nothing is stolen but
    all the furniture is repositioned into a much better configuration.

[17] European scholars, in the Middle Ages, designed buildings that were not intended to be constructed, and any that were built, were different in substance from their mental origin. Descriptions and plans for certain buildings were shared so they could be built collectively in minds.

[18] Any physical building turned architectural detail into information and substance e.g., seven steps for seven stages of wisdom. Pilgrimages or festivals were created to install a temporal rhythm for revisiting architecture.This continually re-established the relationship between the building and its substance.

[19] For Isidore of Seville, the fabricating of mental architecture was akin to the creation of a poem. Hugh of St. Victor describes the fabrication of mental architecture as painting. Via painting or poetry, the storage of thought and substance is in constant flux between the inside and the outside.

The Plasma Cross
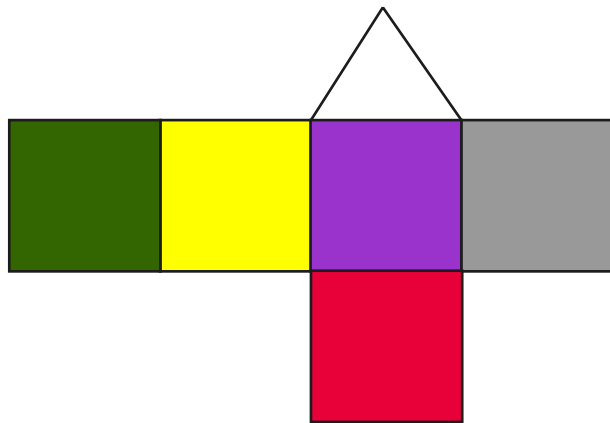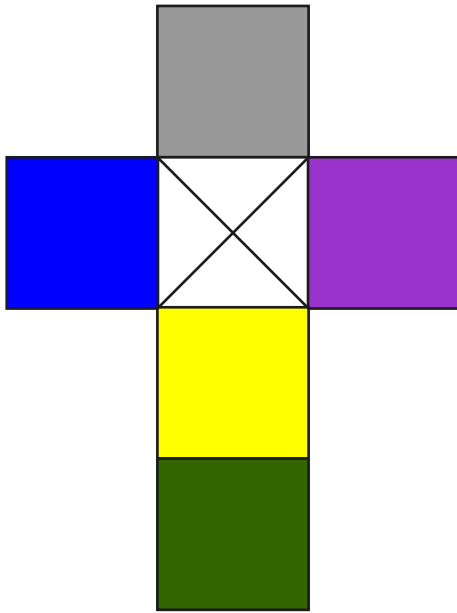
20 The quest: catalyse vision-events that are not removed from the real world but expose its limitations in light of another real space.

21 The Plasma Cross is a mental relief, foundational and folded. It is visible to the individual but invisible in the real. It is an exercise in plasmatic hallucination, a functional and possible-real mixture, fabricated outside our skull as an (ARchitectural) overlay that is (Φreal).

22 To work with specific abilities, we visualise the rooms unfolding from the central point of our skull, a fane. Through repetition, the function of altered discernment becomes natural.

23 The fane is the mind, empty. All abilities of thought are moved into other rooms. The fane is a (stanza) inside the skull, relieved from the distraction of details. It is a mirror without dust or scratches; a suppressor of narrative.

24 The fane is a pyramid, a reality in the present moment; without internal partitions, features or detail. It appears as if all thoughts and memories have been deinstalled. No snags, just the immaculate; a state of extinction with defined corners.

25 Thoughts are distinct. When they appear, they can be analysed, seen with absolute clarity in the non-descript. Thought anchored to an object creates endothought or exothought.

α' - The Vacuum Room

[26] In vision beyond our skull. Room as decontamination chamber; a place to dispense with unwanted thoughts. Nothing is forgotten or destroyed. Transfers are visualised, a manoeuvre between (stanza) and room. Thoughts can be jettisoned, mental furniture moved into the Ark Room. Jettisoned furniture will combine with other thoughts to create thinking without knowledge.

β' - Le Grand Large

27   Le grand large is a room without corners, a non-positional
     possible; a utopian no-place which is (Φreal) but invisible. Le grand
     large is an altered discernment from what is deemed to be (real)
     but cannot be pointed to in traditional space. We have equivalence
     of the inside and outside, the non-diegetic and diegetic folded. It is
     a new description created via dualysis.

28   Dualysis is a method of neither analysis nor synthesis; it uses the
     password Φύσις to access a sub-dimension, not the subconscious
     but rather a vision-event that is simultaneously present and
     absent. It will produce a thinking equation, the calculation of an
     (idea). The inside and outside fold but remain independent. Πλάσμα
     is used as two-factor authentication; fictional but possible,
     delusion, formed in thought and writing.

$$1+1=1$$

29   The equation operates as an agent, tasked to find the perfect
     room-tone that will unveil a new kingdom of thought. This
     may seem absurd. However, if we accept the changing level of
     referential correspondence for defining the (real), the absurdity
     becomes possibility.

30   We return to Coleridge and his wish to make the external internal,
     the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature.
     In every work of art, there is a reconcilement of the external with
     the internal. The reconciliation is the inside and the outside, it is
     the union of the mind and le grand large — the vastness of mind
     merged with the vastness of space. In the etymology of reconcile,
     there is a 'mental sense' from the 1620s: to make consistent
     with each other in one's mind. Le grand large is the coextensive
     choice we have been estranged from; a sub-dimension that can be
     activated or lived without.

31   There are two universes at scale. The internal universe is le
     grand large. A tree has its equivalent mirror in le grand large. The
     extended circumference liberates, no longer imprisoned within the
     compass of the skull.

32 In a room, look at a coffee mug, then a wall, the road outside and finally, something outside the window.

33 Fix these items in your fane so they are the actual distance from each other externally. They are not memories or recalled images inside the skull; place them where they are actually situated in space. These objects are now spatially resident.

34 With eyes open, objects are where they are in the real. With eyes closed, the same items maintain their relative spatial distances in the mind. Now walk away but keep the objects where they are in mind and space.

35 For example, with eyes open, if the coffee mug is out of sight, you can still see it in the mind with correct perspective.

36 Now travel a mile away from where you were but keep the objects spatially resident to where they actually are physically. Spatial residency unlocks an entirely new kingdom of thought.

37 Thought (Δ) is inside the fane-skull; non-spatially resident, unfolded, unanchored to any object. Even with chromatic difference, terms are assigned to distinguish two universes. Thoughts should be anchored to objects, otherwise they operate wildly, deciding their own site of residence.

38 Any thought in le grand large or (real) is an unfolded endothought; this type of thought is spatially resident via its anchoring to an object.

39 Any thought in the environment is an exothought. These are spatially resident when anchored to an object. They are unfolded.

40 There is architecture in the real environment, (architecture) that has been fabricated in the mind, and (ARchitecture) as a vision-event. Inside the skull there are (stanzas), outside the skull there are rooms. We understand that a (stanza) produces and organises certain kinds of crystallisation of the imagination and the real.

γ' - The Ark Room

[41] To the left of the skull resides mental furniture. When visiting
this room, rearrange the furniture to change the room-tone and
thought patterns. Mental furniture cannot be modified, only its
spatial position. As with unanchored thoughts, furniture which is
not positioned is free to make its own decisions. A memory is a
pieces of furniture. A memory was once a thought that became
tactile via experience.

δ' - Chromakey Studio

42 Presently, (ideas) are created by thought encounters. We seek the capacity to manage the process of ideation. The studio utilises the chromatic conditions of existence for the fabrication of (ideas) and agents.

43 An example: there is an endothought attached to a tree in le grand large, and there is an exothought anchored to a shed in the environment. These two objects, although operating in different realms, can be moved into the studio and folded into an (idea) — two images and two thoughts. The act of combining endothought and exothought results in an (idea) which has an abstracted form due to the fold.

endothought + exothought = fold (abstracted)

44 Folding creates a broken transfer. This is not an accident but the consequence of dualysis. Abstraction is fundamental as it allows us to recognise that the (idea) is not inside or outside but folded.

45 The studio has other possibilities and combinations: multiple endothoughts and exothoughts can be utilised alongside mental furniture.

46 The consequence of folding thoughts/furniture together is that the (idea) becomes an agent. Agents are active. They are objects already thinking, that continue thinking, waiting for conversation, so updates can be provided. By installing an agent in a room, the performance begins. As with chromakey, something is visualised on something else. The past and the future are keyed into the present like a poem of the mind in the act of finding.

ε' - The Room of the Abstract Squirrel

47   The interior fabric of this room has dust motes dancing with
     sunbeams. An opaque window, so as not to be distracted from
     the outside-real of the world. This room is a reset, somewhere
     overknown, the establishment of rumination.

48   In this room, we find a squirrel, not trapped or in distress but
     rather the opposite; it is where it wants to be in this moment. The
     squirrel is an agent, abstracted by a broken transfer.

49   Visualise the squirrel moving through the precise sunlight,
     changing the position of the motes. As we become comfortable
     with the activity, focus shifts towards the room-tone, movement
     establishes a reference between the animal and the universes.

ϛ' - The Tree of Oraxiom

50 The walls are covered with curtains, and in the centre, an abstract
    tree. The tree has recently been installed; it now thinks, it is
    thought itself striving to be art. The tree wants to invent the
    future, to become an oracle.

51 As affinity is felt with the tree, enter the πλάσμα password;
    decorate it with definitions that jump through time, bridging the
    etymological past and present, liquid containing life.

52 The tree becomes, as if looking at a sycamore with eyes half
    closed, empty in moonlight. The foliage is a luminous form but
    edgeless. Its relation to the room creates a contained fractality;
    time and thought are slowed and stretched. Coleridge's idea about
    leaves being thoughts becomes plasmatic, reintroduced by its
    branches.

53 Pilgrimages should be made to this room. Always folded in the
    background, it offers seasonal thinking. A tree is something new in
    every moment, the basis of intellect.

*ζ' - The Plasma Cross is a farewell to the human security system,
an illusory blending with the undecided.*

PART 3

Portfolio

3.1
Morley (2022)

3.1.1 Project Information

At the end of 2019, I was approached by the artist-run space Two Queens in Leicester to curate a series of performance events to support their exhibition programme, focused on the relationship between art and writing. We planned four performances over a period of three months — three were developed and scheduled. As the pandemic continued to delay the exhibition programme, by October 2021, we had to abandon the original plan, but as the budget was still available, we decided to refocus on the development of a publication.

My idea for the publication was rooted in Metal Gear Solid. Smoking is a consistent gameplay element throughout the entire Metal Gear Solid series; the main character, Snake, smokes not only in the narrative gameplay but also in non-diegetic space e.g., during the loading screen of *Metal Gear Solid 4* (2008). This idea splintered into Metal Gear Solid's fictional cigarettes and the use of various cigarette brands with slight changes to their packaging and/or names e.g., 'Pall Mall' became 'Bal Mal.' This thread led to a particular brand of fictional cigarettes outside the Metal Gear Solid universe: Morley.

Morley is a fictional brand of cigarettes that has consistently appeared in film, television and video games over the past sixty years; their first film appearance seems to have been in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Originally, the logo was a horse but it soon changed to look almost identical to the 1955 Frank Gianninoto design for the Marlboro 'red' packet. With their distinctive, strangely familiar packaging, Morley has become a fans' in-joke, a symbol of knowing deception, a fiction within fiction, an artwork within an artwork. Morley's are perhaps best known via the 'smoking man' in The *X-Files* (1993-2018) but they have appeared in a diverse range of programmes including *Friends* (1999), *Breaking Bad* (2013) and *Twin Peaks: The Return* (2017). As *Morley* has become such a known trope, some directors have stopped using them because they worry that recognition takes the viewer out of the narrative.

For the publication, I asked poets, artists and curators to respond to the Morley trope in works that consider the packet, breath and the temporal break afforded by the disappearing ritual of cigarette smoking. Along with commissioning all the artists/writers/curators, I handled all the production, design and typesetting.
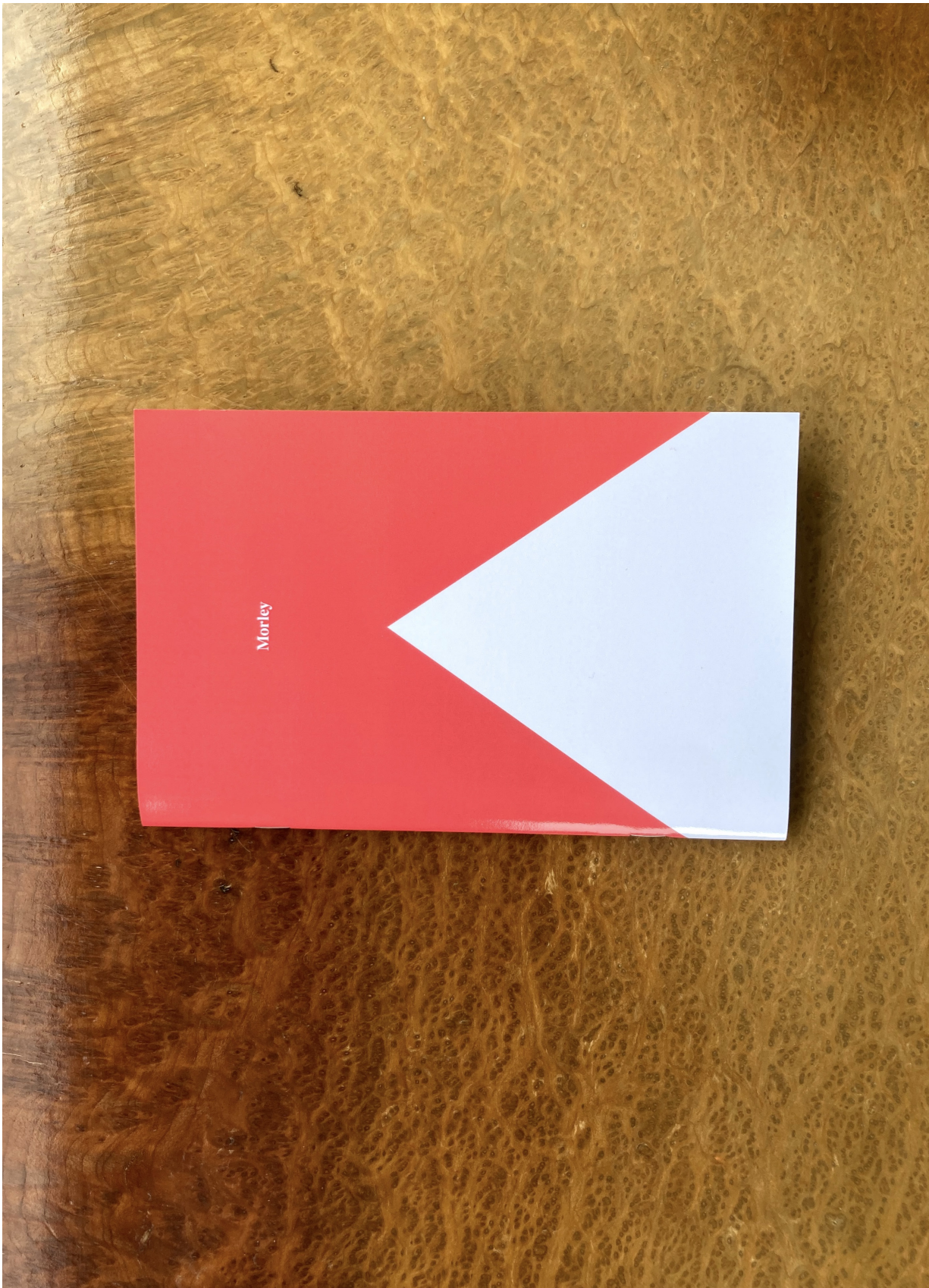
Publication details

3.1.2 *Morley*, 2022 — front cover

Pavel Büchler
The Critic
(empty cigarette packet, 2001)

3.1.2 *Morley*, 2022 — pages 12-13, content by Pavel Büchler

the horses & riders look to this: their breastplates were fiery
red, dark blue, & yellow as sulfur. the heads of the
horses resembled the heads of lions, & out of their
mouths came fire, smoke
killed by plagues of fire, smoke
& the smoke
& the temple fills with smoke
see the smoke
when they see the smoke
& again shout: *the smoke*

though i am a wineskin in the smoke
part & come down; touch the mountains, so that they smoke.
as vinegar to the teeth & smoke ———
who is this coming up from the wilderness? a column of
    smoke,
& over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke,
at the sound of voices the doorposts & thresholds shake &
    the temple fills with smoke.
wickedness burns a fire; consumes briers & thorns, sets the
    forest thickets ablaze, so that it rolls upward in a
    column of smoke.
wail, gate! weep, city. a cloud of smoke
see, with burning anger & dense clouds of smoke;
it will not be quenched night or day; its smoke
lifts up your eyes, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will
    vanish, smoke,
who says, *keep away: don't come near me, for I am too
    sacred for you!* smoke,
therefore they will be the morning mist, the early dew that
    disappears, the swirling & thrashing from the floor,
    smoke
will show you wonders & on the earth, blood & fire &
    billows of smoke
will burn up your chariots of smoke,
will show signs & blood & fire & billows of smoke.
the smoke
when in the open abyss, smoke
rose from it, the smoke
& sky darkened by the smoke
& out of the smoke

3.1.2 *Morley*, 2022 — pages 22-23, content by Linda Kemp

3.2
Royal Armouries (2020 – 2023)

3.2.1 Project Information

The Royal Armouries Museum is a core partner of WRoCAH, and I was introduced to their research manager during an online event in September 2020. Initially, I had little interest in the museum as the challenging social and cultural issues (monarchy, imperialism, militarism, nationalism) that it presents were outside my interest and comfort zone. However, on reflection, and in conversation with the research manager, it felt like an opportunity to move my work into a new arena and directly engage with such complex issues for the first time. The research manager was also keen to work with an artist who would use a non-standard approach to their collection, i.e., using the collection as a material for artistic production rather than researching the history or use of certain objects.

We agreed that I would undertake a three-month residency; the central idea would be how I could 'resound' the collection. It was evident that most of the weaponry in the collection no longer sonically functioned as intended, and that the museum was acting as a silencer. It seemed to me that the objects in the museum's collection no longer participated on a physical battlefield but rather within a static landscape of conflict between historical description and manipulated narrative. I also wanted to incorporate the unseen collection of objects in the storerooms to get a sense of scale and scope of the collection as a whole; there was an additional interest in the sonic environment (the room-tone) where the objects are stored.

The residency was officially approved by the Royal Armouries' steering committee on the 17th December 2020, but due to the pandemic, I was unable to access the museum storerooms until 21st April 2022. In fact, the 'official' residency period ended up being completely online, and I had to use their online collection resource (fortunately with excellent quality images) as a method to research the collection.[8]

I started to explore the idea of a musical score that was constructed from numerous intentional and unintentional marks found on the shields, armour and sculptures within the collection, treating those marks as inscriptions. At this point in the PhD project, there was still a strong focus on ekphrasis, and gravitating towards shields seemed an obvious and logical link to Homer's description of the 'Shield of Achilles.' My research before the residency had also taken me into asemic writing, and there was an opportunity to merge this form with a graphical musical score. Although untranslatable, the asemic score I produced became, technically, an alien alphabet. The score joins the graphical memory of the objects into a performable language that

could be resounded by the musicians. The score was developed by hand (pencil and paper) but digitally redrawn for the book (the digital version tries to keep a balance between the hand-drawn and digital). In the final printed version, I hand-embossed the score to resignal its origins in handwriting.

— Polaroids

During the residency, I kept thinking about a couple of quotations from Leonardo da Vinci's *A Treatise On Painting* (1632), in which Leonardo suggests, among other things, that battles can be seen in marks on walls or even created 'by throwing a sponge impregnated with various colours against a wall.'

My initial idea was to film performances of the score but the museum's guidelines state that any filming or photography of the storerooms, and their 'overall location', is strictly forbidden. A compromise was reached with the Royal Armouries whereby I could use polaroid within the restricted areas, as long as after each picture was taken, it was immediately handed to my chaperone for internal review. Without the ability to be geotagged or instantly replicated/uploaded, using polaroid became a medium that turned photography into a conversation about what constituted visual security.

— Performances of the score

The CD collects three interpretations of the score. The audio level of climate control mechanisms was maintained as I considered the space to be an equal performer. I wanted the audience to be the objects themselves, to interrogate the museum's stated vision of being 'history's expert witness'.

I have been in conversation with sound artist Ryoko Akama since 2019 and we decided that this was the right project for collaboration. Ryoko suggested bringing onboard Scott McLaughlin as I wanted a cello component. As mentioned in section (0.7), I developed an interest in the Wandelweiser genre and the way this genre explores silence and the relation to spaces seemed ideal for this project.

Track 1 is a duet between Ryoko Akama (accordion) and Scott McLaughlin (cello) recorded in the National Firearms Centre's warehouse X (this centre is part of the Royal Armouries Museum). In addition to climate control, a unusual noise that sounds a bit like a

pigeon can be heard; this is the sound of a pistol being 3D printed. This component of the recording was not staged, it was just happening in the space when we arrived.

Track 2 was recorded in storeroom 2 of the Royal Armouries Museum. This is a solo cello piece by Scott McLaughlin using a prepared cello with wooden discs placed between the strings creating multiphonics and other complex sounds. He initially used the score as tablature for movement around the cello but towards the end he found 'a sound emerging that blended with the ambient sound, hanging with a strange weight in the air' (Mason 2023: 38).

Track 3 was recorded in storeroom 1 of the Royal Armouries Museum. Ryoko Akama used a set of microphones to retrace the score on various surfaces of the room, executing feedback between the mics and an analogue television screen. All tracks were mastered by Taylor Deupree.

Overall, the project allowed me to explore a few new elements for my practice (e.g., asemic writing, graphical scores, hand embossing) and was the first time I have collaborated with musicians.

From this project, I now see an important role for mastering in my sonic documentation. Having the opportunity to work with such an experienced engineer made me understand the way mastering could dramatically affect the sonic presentation of my work. There is a lot more control possible over soundscapes and there seems huge potential to consider what mastering could do before making the recordings. I now consider mastering as a compositional issue that could add another conceptual layer to my soundscapes (e.g., the potential to change the way the *plasma* soundscape is understood via mastering — see 1.3 for an unmastered soundscape).

— Book

A publication was developed to bring together the polaroids, score and recordings of the performances. By using the book form, there was also an opportunity to expand the collaboration into ideas from other artists and writers.

My commissioning process is based on engaging with writers/artists/ poets etc whose work I believe could bring something very different to my approach and thinking. In the case of Sharon Kivland, I was

....

confident that she would deliver an edge to the project that was missing. This missing edge was that I had failed to address some of the uncomfortable aspects of the Royal Armouries Museum as an institution and she has managed to beautifully rectify this with a thought-provoking text about the potential use-value of such a museum and its collection.

Having read Daniela Cascella's book *En Abîme: Listening, Reading, Writing. An Archival Fiction* (2012) many years ago, I knew she would understand the scope of the project, especially the score and the musician's interpretation/performances of it. My brief was that Sharon Kivland and Daniela Cascella should not respond directly to the work I had produced but to the surrounding ideas or whatever thread they were keen to explore in response to what I had produced. It was interesting that Daniela ignored this request and chose a direct response, from which I gained enormous benefits from her thoughts and reading of my work.

....

8. There were some fascinating objects that had been physically fused into a single object, either from the 1841 fire in the Grand Storehouse at the Tower of London or the IRA bombing in 1974. These fused items were of great interest and something that could have ended up becoming the focus of the residency. The fused items had gained an aesthetic and sculptural quality, and there seemed great scope to somehow pair these items with the sketches that Turner made of the same 1841 fire. However, with the severe lack of access, this thread had to be abandoned, although I do feel this could be revisited in the future.

Publication Details

CD

Track 1: Warehouse X, National Firearms Centre © Ryoko Akama & Scott McLaughlin, 2022
Track 2: Storeroom 2, Royal Armouries Museum © Scott McLaughlin, 2022
Track 3: Storeroom 1, Royal Armouries Museum © Ryoko Akama, 2022

Recorded by Scott Mason
Mastered by 12k Mastering

The recordings were made with an ultra-high-dynamic-range (32-bit float) using a mid-side microphone set up (Sennheiser MKH-30 and MKH-40). The masters are 24-Bit/96 kHz, the CD and soundcloud version are all presented at 16-Bit/44.1 kHz.

the corridors and halls we plundered. We became the territory, not its occupiers.

We did not play at parliament but nonetheless we continued to debate. There were some who called for patient resolution, without arms, without violence. Others urged armed resistance, no retreat. We did not play at war, for of war we knew nothing though its signs and relics surrounded us. Nonetheless we continued in our early morning and nightly drillings, staves at our shoulders like muskets, handclaps to simulate firings, for still we did not dare to attempt mastery of the firearms. We were steady, firm, and temperate. We dared to hope, as we did in the days when we instructed ourselves, severally or in groups, our letters by drawing them with our fingers in a sand-table. Taxes had been placed upon our knowledge. We could barely read, when we were taught labouring through books we could barely read, when we were taught our letters by drawing them with our fingers in a sand-table. There was a certain pleasure in cladding our faces, concealing them in closed helmets, donning visors with divided sights, joking that we could not be recognised now, that we were anonymous bodies with only eyes. At last, we were able to laugh, brandishing spears in the gestures of a mock-battle.

On the seventh morning a great noise was heard outside, but we could not locate its source. There was a blinding light in the sky, but it was not the dawn.

★

The manuscript ends here. It breaks off, despite the full stop. Its purpose is unclear, its author or authors nameless. It may have been written by more than one person, as the handwritings are various, and often ill-formed. In addition to this manuscript, alongside it, several paper sheets with undecipherable markings were found, their meaning and intention impenetrable. The events that followed the rising are known to all, though there is nothing known about this group, its members (though it is assumed they were the usual motley of former workers and artisans, those from petty trades, domestic production, and rural industry, unemployed labour), or what happened to it. When the building, in which there had been much wanton destruction, was taken back, it was unoccupied. There were rumours, of course. In one account, it is claimed that an immense red flag was seen floating above the building.

The manuscript and the accompanying arcane notes have been preserved in the collection.

6

3.2.2 *by the arm of the secret* — Sharon Kivland (left), Scott Mason (right)
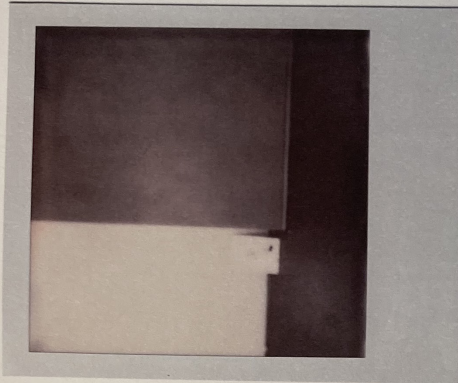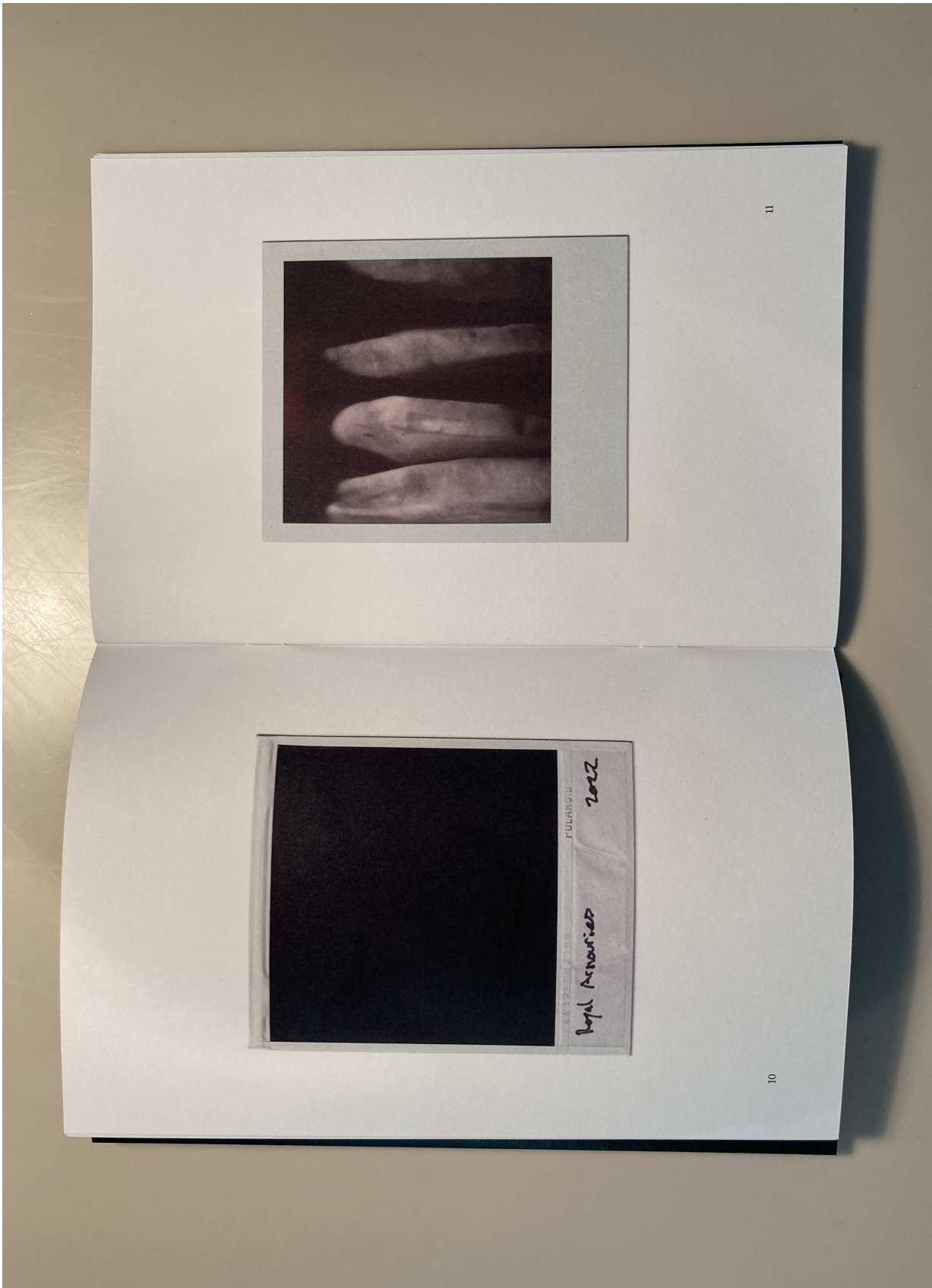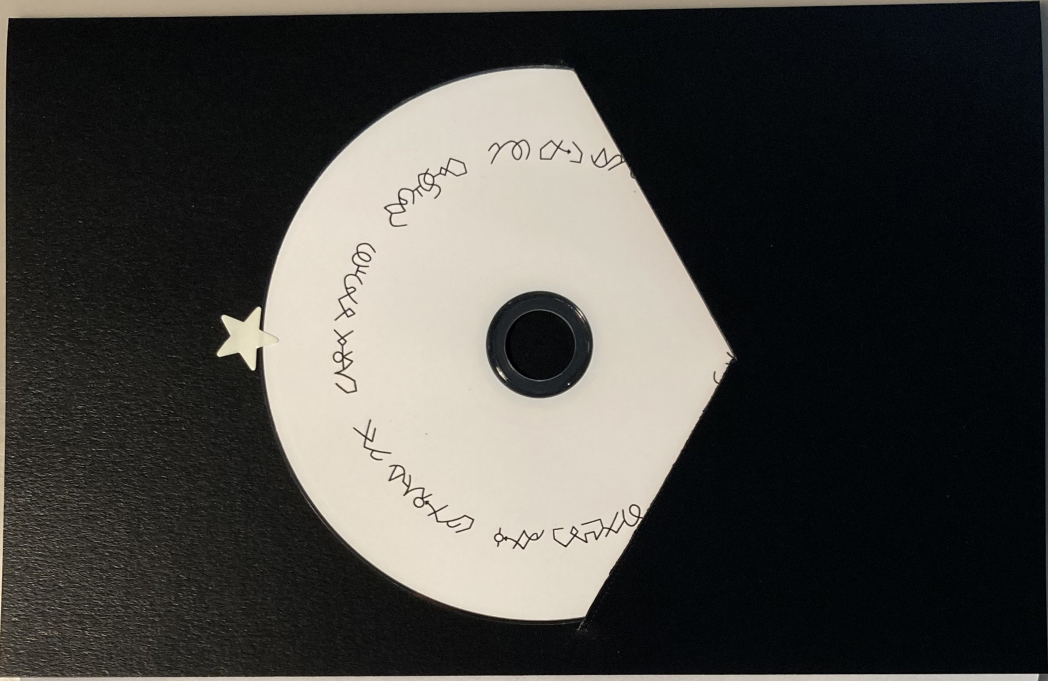
3.2.2 *by the arm of the secret* — page spread, polaroids by Scott Mason

3.2.2 *by the arm of the secret* — page spread, score by Scott Mason

3.2.2 *by the arm of the secret* — page spread, hand-embossed score detail

3.2.2 *by the arm of the secret* — page spread, colophon and CD

3.3
Pier Arts Centre (2022)

3.3.1 Project Information

A WRoCAH funding award requires the completion of a REP (Researcher Employability Project). As a practice-led researcher, it was clear that a residency approach would be best suited for my development. The Pier Arts Centre in Orkney offered scope for collaboration, whilst at the same time holding a unique collection of 20th-century art that could be experimented with as part of my established line of enquiry into museum collections. The strong archaeological presence in Orkney also appealed, as my work had not previously been informed by such practices. Conversations with the Pier Arts Centre began properly in August 2021 and a Tripartite Agreement was signed in March 2022. I arrived in Orkney in early November 2022 and was in residence until the end of December 2022.

The accommodation was provided at the Piers Arts Centre's newly established 'Linkshouse,' a dedicated facility for artist residencies located at the northwest corner of the mainland in Birsay. As requested by the Pier Arts Centre, one day a week was spent working in the centre's library in Stromness which allowed for time to be spent with their collection and its display environment. This library research led to the discovery of books/works by local writers/artists.
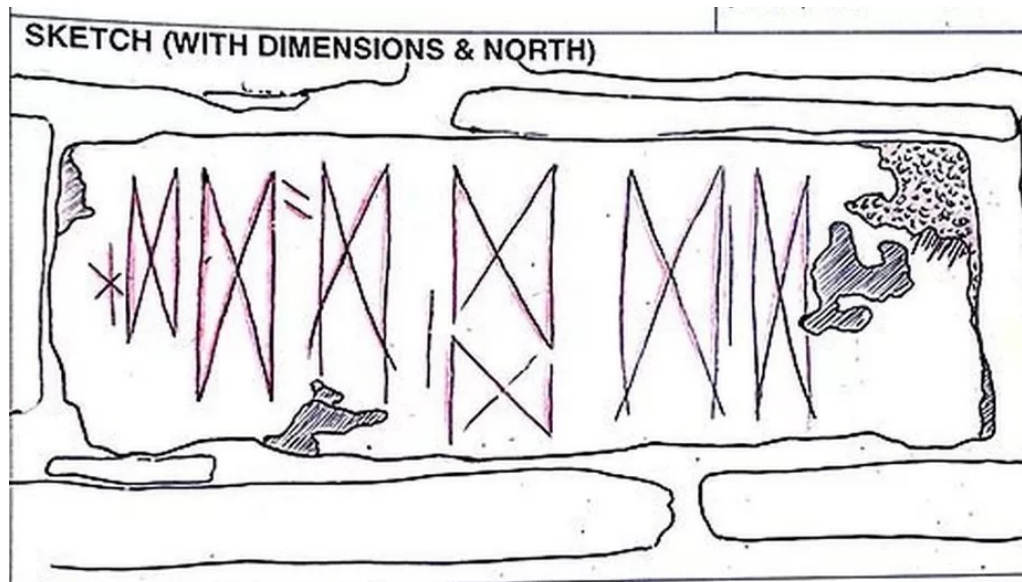

Figure 7. Drawing of the 'butterfly stone' (source: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-40653877)

During my time in Orkney, the 'butterfly stone' found at the Ness of Brodgar in 2017 became the centre of my research. The markings on the stone are so faint that it was discovered by chance in a pile of rubble when sunlight hit the surface at a certain angle. It has been speculated that the markings are designed to mimic a butterfly in flight as light travels across them. However, most local archaeologists do not think this is a depiction of a butterfly. This is because, uniquely in the world, there are extremely few figurative markings found in Orkney from the Neolithic period. This opened an idea for me about the relationship between the lack of figurative marks from the Neolithic and the relatively few figurative works in the Pier Art Centre's collection.

The butterfly markings, due to their shallowness, have been unable to be photographed and only a drawing has been shared with the public (Figure 7) — the stone itself was removed from the site after it was discovered and has yet to be exhibited in public. The depth of the marks potentially has a meaning; most marks that are found are shallow and ostensibly made quickly, but others have deep grooves that would have taken many hours of repetition or 'over-writing' (Peebles 2014). I kept thinking about how this extended duration of marking or scoring could have the intention of not only leaving a visual trace but a sonic trace. Rather than recreate the original sound of these markings being made, there appeared a possibility (to continue the work started with the Royal Armouries project) to resound the markings by using them as a musical score that could then be performed.

In addition, if the stone's markings cannot be photographed, then perhaps markings or scoring could become an additional dimension to photography as a method of non-photography. This led to experiments with hand embossing the butterfly marks onto polaroids — this process creates a photograph of what cannot be photographed. The polaroids also perform the same effect as the original stone, whereby the marks cannot be seen unless the position of the viewer and the angle of light are perfectly aligned. As with the problem of photographing the actual butterfly stone, I have not included these works in this commentary as the marks cannot be effectively photographed/displayed digitally or in print. The experiments are successful when you can physically move the polaroids and position yourself in relation to a light source, and these works will be worked up into finished pieces in the future.

I took numerous 'tourist' polaroids at various archaeological sites (see 4.3.1) and these acted as precursors to the experiments with the hand embossing of the butterfly marks mentioned above.

Another significant output was a sequence of thirteen prose poems that were developed from scratch into a final draft by the end of the residency. These poems are not related to this project's line of enquiry and have not been included in the commentary.

Discussions about a public output with the Pier Arts Centre began in December 2022, and in March 2023, we agreed that a publication would be an ideal medium. My thinking had evolved since I had left Orkney, and it became clear that a publication required a return visit to complete certain elements of research that were restricted by the weather in late 2022, create new work and finalise potential collaborators. The second part of the residency, once again with accommodation at Linkshouse, was from the 13th April to the 10th May 2023.

The butterfly stone became one work within several new works and the publication format allowed for other ideas to be explored, including the micro-naming of the coastline, or the 'Workan Names' that Rebecca Ford (Ford 2019) has written about. These names are not cartographically assigned and 'not a landscape labelled in terms of aesthetic appearances but known through the day-to-day activities needed to make a living and survive the challenges of island life' (Ibid).

Following on from the Royal Armouries project (see 3.2), the book will be produced in a small print run of 100 and include handwriting and hand colouring. The distribution (again as with the Royal Armouries book) will not be public, and will only be given to people involved in the project, previous or potential collaborators.

This publication also brings together work from the Pier Art Centre's collection, new commissions from artists that were resident at Linkshouse and local artists that had an important impact on my time in Orkney.

At the time of writing this commentary, the publication is still in development and work-in-progress spreads (see 3.3.3) are offered only as an example of the final output. The intention is that the printed publication will be presented at the viva.

3.3.2 *The Stones of Stenness (Tourist Mode)* 2022, Polaroid
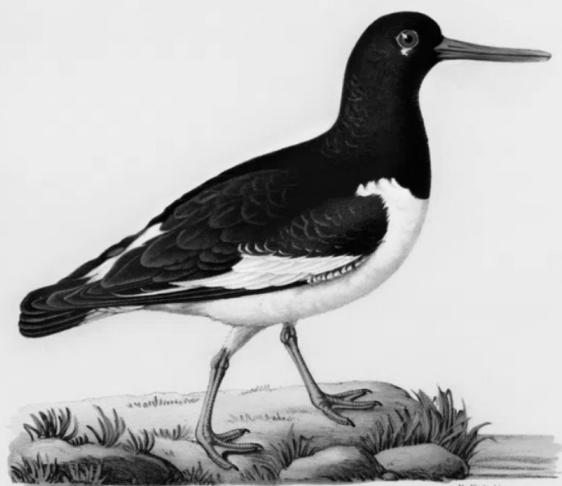
3.3.3 *Days between Weathers* (work-in-progress page spread 1)

3.3.3 *Days between Weathers* (work-in-progress page spread 2) Hand-drawn butterfly marks
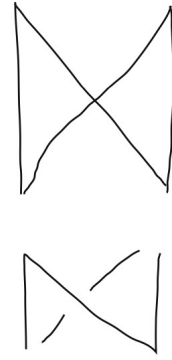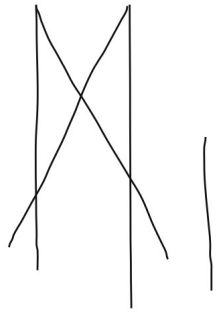
3.3.3 *Days between Weathers* (work-in-progress page spread 3) Details from an Alfred Wallis painting
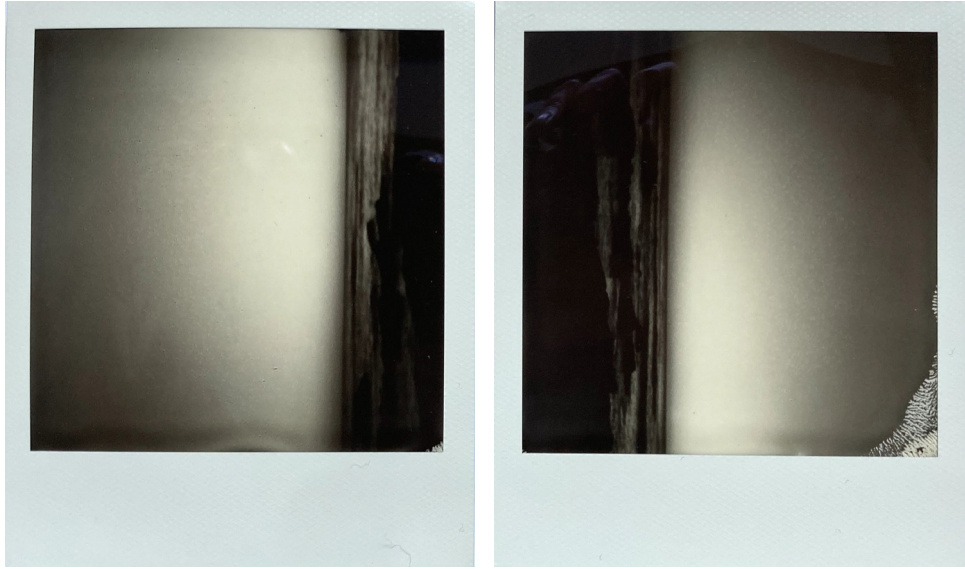
3.3.3 *Days between Weathers* (work-in-progress) Polaroid diptych to be included

3.4

100 Memories of Edo (2016 – 2020)

3.4.1 Project Information

This is a sequence of 119 poems in response to Utagawa Hiroshige's woodblock print collection *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (1856– 59). The process consisted of considerable research into classical Japanese literature and the techniques of Bashō. Each poem attempts to gloss the original image and its surrounding history. I started writing the sequence before I went on to formally study poetry in 2016, continued during the studies, and culminated in a final draft between late 2019 to early 2020. The later drafts were supported by a detailed (visual) research map that showed exactly where each woodblock print was located, overlayed with any mention of the location in classical literature. The myths surrounding each place/print were key content for the poems along with my ekphrastic response. This enabled slight phrase repetitions so there was a link to repeated locations, and as previously mentioned, the colour coding of rivers in the poems to give a reader a topographical understanding of the location through the sequence. Please refer to section 0.15 for a more detailed description. For this commentary, I have selected ten of the 119 poems that were composed as part of the PhD as an example of the sequence.

3.4.2
Selected poems

The battledores wait
for suspended shuttlecock, unseen faces play on the drawn.
Looking west from daybreak-mouse, familiar tethered pine.
Lines stroke the sky, rival kites tangle. In earshot, a difficult
footman flounders. Bystander plover on han blue moat, outer
wall rise as bow of stone. Residence gate of imaginary-blood
spans the opposite bank. Visitors, a monopoly on occidental
artillery. Horizon falters before treetops, unsure before release
of a new year with the never-ending mountain it desires.

三

The obscuring cedar
cuts space into portraits. Three focused in slow-time on a
vague event. Real sky with a human cloak of clouds. A shrine
forecasts the sun; keepers undertake their morning rounds as
thoughts travel. East, across equivalent carbon roofs. Flat tree
dawn, grass fade into green earth. Outer bark and light trunk,
crestfallen benches and framework. The sacred has a hint of
architecture. A biennial guardian through distractionless gate.
The fifteenth day of the ninth month, battled recall seeks
autonomy.

+

The cherry swagger
tungsten kink in bloom. The roomless mountain requires a new simulation. A tea stand shaded with preparation — souvenir murder, survivors behind a hedge. Vista delights muscles, achievement without commitment. Hilltop view of reality. On switchback, a missing stone and hut. A fast thirty-one days; daily cup of sleet to be embalmed. Veneration of facsimile can cause eruption.

二十四

The edgeless window
removed from experience, frictionless, second-floor radius.
Sliding door cuts paramour-ladder. Distant double-petal.
Camellias enquire about the view, as white as can be, phantoms
in collaboration. Aroma suppressed by skewered sauce and
charcoal. Tide mixes stone blue and smalt, pleasure congested
with barge and roof boat held motionless as highlight. Grain
of exiled sun, plum rise to frame wedding peaks. As blossom
crumble, a flock of birds graft into infinity.

三十六

The poetic-pillow
drifts in milk. Swan sails lean into coeruleum wind. Three ramblers in position for seven miles of delta. Bluff curves into overhang — consumed sunset and cricket soundtrack. Pine leaps into gravity; straggled rock toes in reeds. Provincial capital as defence. Chronicles of brothers with canine descent and principles. Unverified victories cause daughters to weep. Epic land in volumes, a child born by a thunderbolt.

九十五

The overexposed snow
thunder gate, wind on left, donors have lantern calligraphy.
Stone speckled threshold. Packed shops, bodies with umbrellas
for double kings. No pheasants lashed to boughs. The clean
pagoda, finial fishbone — vibration of seven to five, pauses
reinforced. Brothers, fishermen history. A snagged idol, thrown
back but recurring, a net always contains sculpture rather
than fish. Compassion enshrined in a grass hut. Fantasy of a
reckless homage, flake stars hold.

九十九

The night hawks
final approach for horse-stable landing. Thick make-up masks
disease, disfigurement or commitment to a lover through self-
mutilation. A related pimp. Highlight sash and mallard blue
head towels, straw mat for all occasions. Under-lit smalt, raw
gloom, their cold association. A pile of rocks leak on riverbank,
blanketed by ever-green oak and willow hang. Cloth sky and
solid away trees. 300 yards upstream from success and hovel.
Harmonies with moss texture and wet land.

百五

The last whisper
cushions of snow, pristine and even. Talcum sky affects peacock blue pond. Moon too far away to be seen, ringed by early morning fold. Common paths, stone steps for the stone entry. Their corner into short-infinity of houses, roofs of cobbles — scholars stroke cows. There is time for tea, dawn waited for temple bell. Rededication in a dream, a poet causes natural disasters. As the east winds blows, carry fragrance beyond the table.

百十七

The thick darkness
changing tree on new year's eve. From eight provinces, foxfires
assemble around a hackberry. Their wisps of flame breath a
spark from horse bone or human skull. These foxes fluctuate,
pay respect and receive future instructions. Stars open
between branches, haystacks become witness. Ghost light of
another hundred bolt out of the woods, luminosity for harvest.
A world to retire from; history left in the east, forward into
a journey for other western places, reappearing before the
moon.

百十八

A night of rain
scratches landscape and sky. Fire-perch paulownias lined on
crawl of bronze blue. Sections of fence shelter lavish grass and
rotten shepherd's purse. Flowers or irregular stones would be
a distraction. Hill of engineering art, shadow on shadow. In the
fabric, an ordinal sleeps under the influence, playing cards with
poems scattered and an unmarked tea caddy — a boy surprises
fire. The phantom path leads up to another realm, all harrowed
climb. Time fills in theory, all dust comes from the outside.

百十九

Appendix

☆ Fission Mailed

Figure 8. The Fission Mailed moment from *Metal Gear Solid 2* (2001)

In 2001, Konami released *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* (MGS2) directed by Hideo Kojima for the PlayStation 2.[9] The narrative is extremely complicated; in essence, you are a highly trained solider, with the gameplay revolving around a potential enviro-nuclear apocalypse. MGS2 was one of the early generation 'stealth' games. In fact, the fewer people you kill, and the fewer times you are spotted by the enemy, the higher your ultimate ranking will be at the end of the game. Back in 2001, MGS2 was one of the first games to explore artificial intelligence, memes, social engineering, and political conspiracies. However, there is one point in MGS2 that warrants particular attention, which has become known as 'Fission Mailed.' This is not an easy moment to describe. In an ideal world, if you have not done so already, you should play the game before reading any further. Personally, apart from revealing the coextensive possibility, it also happens to be one of the greatest moments in video game history,[10] and the following exposition will annihilate the effect. As when Zeuxis tried to pull the curtain back, Fission Mailed is something that must be experienced first-hand and without prior knowledge.

To understand the Fission Mailed moment within the game, we need to focus on the gamic devices that constitute it. One of these devices is called the 'Codec.' This a communication link to various people that provide you with in-game information. It is like an earpiece mobile phone. As you are playing, you get an audible ringing noise, with a 'call' message flashing on the screen when such an interaction is required. The military colonel that is leading the mission, a doctor, and even

enemies sometimes call. You can call various people at any point of the game by selecting their unique frequencies via the Codec interface. The Codec is one of the key devices for narrative progression. It is useful if you get stuck; characters call and give advice and clues about what you need to do. This is the first element that builds to generate Fission Mailed.

Towards the end of MGS2, you play as a character called Raiden. Raiden has just escaped from a sort of lab prison and is completely naked. You are informed via the Codec that the current objective is to find the other main character you play in the game, called Snake, who will give your clothes and weapons back. As you navigate through a military installation, sneaking past some guards, the frequency of Codec messages starts to increase. However, this time, something is not quite right with the messages that you have trusted and relied upon throughout the entire game. The colonel that has been guiding you starts to stumble over his words. More messages come and go, and each time, anomalous communication builds. Then the colonel tells you to 'Complete your mission according to the simulation' and then after a few more interactions: 'Turn the game console off right now', and 'Actually, I'm in real bad shape financially', then after yet more: 'He was never factored into the simulation.'

These messages become distracting, and as mentioned, you are currently naked. The temperature is starting to affect you, and you occasionally sneeze. This can be heard by the guards, alerting them to your location as you are sneaking past. To resolve this, you must take some of the cold medicine that is supplied in the equipment menu, as fighting the guards is not an option in your *au naturel* state — any injury sustained will be much greater than normal. So perhaps we can put the communication ruptures down to the effects of the cold, or even as a side effect of the medicine? After even more messages, including gardening advice for pruning the Clematis plant, the colonel's image starts to break up, and his face turns briefly into a skull. It becomes clear that this is not a drug-induced hallucination but a realisation that your commanding officer is an AI.

After yet another call, a picture of a sleeping Japanese woman appears over the top of the heads-up display which normally shows you a map and the position of the guards. This is odd in many ways, as the game design is so precise, to see an actual photograph, not a CGI image map, is further disconcerting. After more bizarre conversations with the colonel, you meet up with Snake who gives you your clothes

and weapons back. Together, you both venture forward and encounter some enemy resistance. Then, suddenly, you find yourself and your comrade Snake surrounded by a group of 'Tengus' special commandos, and a battle ensues.

Before we can elaborate on Fission Mailed in detail, we must explore another element of the gamic structure: the 'Game-Over' screen that operates in non-diegetic space. Nearly all games have a game-over screen for when you die or fail, and they appear in numerous forms. In MGS2, the top left quarter of the screen shows a scene from the moment when you died. Other on-screen elements include the words 'Mission Failed' and various smaller amounts of data, along with the standard 'Continue' or 'Exit' buttons to try again or quit. This screen is a key moment of most gameplay because it causes genuine affect; it is lurking in the background throughout the entire game waiting for an instance of death; it appears at the moment of death, a visual identification of failure where you are ripped from diegetic to non-diegetic space. It forces the realisation that you need to be better. The return to non-diegetic space from death is never satisfying, and the game-over becomes a site of contemplation. For some (myself included) this form of contemplation can produce unique thought processes. It is rare that such intense concentration about a single but complex issue is explored i.e., what do I have to do in order to not die? We can now resort to consulting the internet for advice, but in the early days of video games, if you did not know someone who had beat that level, you were stuck and had to figure it out for yourself. This process of thinking might only take minutes, other times weeks, and in some rare cases, gamers are still trying to beat games from twenty years ago. Having considered the game-over screen, we can now finally return to the moment of Fission Mailed.

To recap, we are suddenly fighting in an immense gun/sword battle, and whilst taking time to adjust to the situation, you are taking heavy fire and being sliced, which is taking your life gauge down rapidly. Suddenly, there is a white flash, and the game-over screen appears, and you are dead. As with the experience of the Codec, after a moment or two, something with the game-over screen does not feel quite right. The screen in the top corner that shows the last moment you died is still actionable space. It is difficult to express the shock this moment causes because you suddenly realise that you are still playing. Somehow you can control your character within the game-over screen, and you must continue to play in what you thought was non-diegetic space, in the small window with the action overlaid by the game-over

screen. The non-diegetic becomes diegetic. What is not immediately apparent is that the first two letters of the Mission Failed text have changed to Fission Mailed, and various other textual elements of the interface have changed e.g., 'Exit' is now 'Emit', 'Continue' is now 'Continent'. This is the ultimate moment of hauntology: you are watching yourself alive when you are dead; you think you are dead, but you are alive.

Immersed in an ontological system crash, a split second of comprehension reveals that even though you do not think you are playing within the simulation, you are. Many players tell stories of how they put down their game controller in frustration at dying, only to then *actually* die. This moment reveals the coextensive possibility: that the non-diegetic space that normally remains silent, but present, in the background, is accessible.

The Tetris Effect

> You play through the tears, the aching wrist, the hunger, after a while it all goes away. All of it except the game. There's no room in my mind anymore; no room for other things. And when the power goes off for good then I will play it in my head until I die (Gaiman, undated).

I believe that what we experience during the Fission Mailed moment is unique. As such, it is important to try to distinguish it from the 'Tetris effect' or more precisely, what researchers now call 'Game Transfer Phenomena.'[11]

Depending on sources, the term 'Tetris Effect' was either coined from a poem called *Virus* by Neil Gaiman or an article in *Wired* from 1994 in which Jeffrey Goldsmith wrote:

> At night, geometric shapes fell in the darkness as I lay on loaned tatami floor space. Days, I sat on a lavender suede sofa and played Tetris furiously. During rare jaunts from the house, I visually fit cars and trees and people together (Brain Decoder, 2015).

For this text, we will use the term 'Game Transfer Phenomena' (GTP) which amounts to a more academically developed version of the 'Tetris Effect.' You may have experienced GTP for yourself, where the gamic becomes present in the real via an image/graphic overlay or gamic

components seeping into daily life. Apparently, playing a video game for only five minutes, as brain scans have shown, produces what is termed a 'cognitive afterimage.' This could be the image of Tetris blocks falling as you close your eyes or the desire for getting into a cardboard box you see on the side of the road after playing Metal Gear Solid. The GTP effect is not restricted to video games but also to real world experiences such as the feeling of the ocean still moving when on dry land or contemplating stealing the contents of an open delivery van after watching the film *Goodfellas* (1990) too many times.

> Three quarters (75%) had thought about using an object from a video game in real life, while a similar number (72%) had felt the urge to do something in real life after seeing something which reminded them of their game. (Unknown, undated)

The reason this is most effectively revealed by playing Tetris is due to its pattern-based composition i.e., blocks either fit into place or do not. GTP is not a simple retina-based response like when we stare at a bright light and a shape temporarily remains in our vision. A 2000 study by Robert Stickgold (Helmuth, 2000) investigated GTP with a group playing Tetris who suffered from amnesia. After each session, the group could not remember playing the game but still consistently reported the Tetris shapes appearing in their minds for many days after the test; they had no idea where these images originated from.

We can also look at the experiments conducted by Arvid Guterstam into self-perception: people were placed inside an fMRI machine wearing specially designed VR goggles that enabled them to view the actual room they were in via virtual reality. In the room, a dummy was placed in the opposite corner, and the view or perspective from the VR goggles was as if the subjects were the dummy. They could see themselves across the room in the fMRI machine. The scientists then conducted several experiments in which they simultaneously stroked the dummy and the person in the fMRI machines. The results showed was that the person in the fMRI machines felt the stroke as if they were the dummy in the corner of the room.

> You feel touches on another person's body you intellectually know that's not your own (Fusion, 2015).

The test subjects felt their own bodies were physically located somewhere else in space. The subjects reported a sense of being teleported out of the fMRI machine. The experiments continued,

and at one stage, they threatened the dummy with a knife: 'the person reacted as if they'd been threatened themselves: their skin conductance response increased, a physiological sign of stress' (Ibid).

It seems second nature to know where our arms and legs are in relation to space, but as Guterstam points out: 'it's a very complicated task to continuously compute the location of our limbs and body in relation to the external environment' (Ibid).

These moments of dislocation are not unique and are equivalent to something Hito Steyerl discusses in her text *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective* (2012). Steyerl highlights an event of subject-object collapse that fighter pilots can experience:

> As you are falling, your sense of orientation may start to play additional tricks on you. The horizon quivers in a maze of collapsing lines, and you may lose any sense of above and below, of before and after, of yourself and your boundaries. Pilots have even reported that free fall can trigger a feeling of confusion between the self and the aircraft. (Steyerl, 2012: 13)

Game Transfer Phenomena, the case study with the dummy or the plummeting pilot, demonstrates the potential of us opening the coextensive possibility, folding the inside and outside. Returning to the precise moment of Fission Mailed: we now understand it is a singular moment that reveals the coextensive possibility; a simulation that reveals the simulation. It is a playable experience that displays another layer of reality, a sub-dimension lurking in the background, just as the non-diegetic layer of the game-over screen can become diegetic at any moment. It is offers coextensive vision outside our mind.

9. There are other moments in the *Metal Gear Solid* series of 'fake death', including the 'fake death pill' event in *Metal Gear Solid 3* where you appear dead to the other diegetic game characters but can in fact operate in non-diegetic space. Another example would be a fight with the 'The Boss' (also MGS3) where if you take the fake death pill she doesn't fall for the trick and tells you to get up.

10. 'Game Transfer Phenomena' is a term coined and used as a research platform by Angelica B. Ortiz de Gortari.

Glossary

Art writing

The practice and study of art writing involves creative, philosophical, critical and theoretical approaches to writing about, writing with, and writing as art. Drawing from disciplines including visual art, art criticism, art history and literature, this interdisciplinary field is as much about creative production as it is concerned with critical discourse (gsa.ac.uk).

Art Writing is a possible form of the liberty of the image (from *11 Statements Around Art Writing*, frieze.com).

Art Writing names an approach within contemporary culture that, in wanting new potentials, embraces writing as a problematization of the object of art, its dissemination and forms of exhibition (from *11 Statements Around Art Writing*, frieze.com).

Black box

A process or system that produces a particular result although it is not understood how it works (collinsdictionary.com).

In science, computing, and engineering, a black box is a system which can be viewed in terms of its inputs and outputs (or transfer characteristics), without any knowledge of its internal workings. Its implementation is "opaque" (black). The term can be used to refer to many inner workings, such as those of a transistor, an engine, an algorithm, the human brain, or an institution or government (wikipedia.org).

Cloning

While Laruelle has elsewhere differentiated his sense of cloning from the 'biotechnological' act of cloning, we may begin to understand what attracts him to this [conceptual] persona by noticing [...] that the clone is not a mere copy of an original. Neither is it a reflection upon something other than it. The clone retains its own identity, thereby not being a reflection or copy, but carries the same genetic structure as the material it is cloned from. In this way, the clone carries forth the essence of the One [of the Real] in its action, without this action being able to be claimed in any meaningful sense of the One [of the Real]. (Smith 2016: 83)

Description

Description is revelation. It is not
The thing described, nor false facsimile. (VI)

Thus the theory of description matters most.
It is the theory of the word for those
For whom the word is the making of the world,
The buzzing world and lisping firmament. (VII)

It is a world of words to the end of it,
In which nothing solid is its solid self.
(from *Description without Place*, Wallace Stevens, 1945)

Ekphrasis

Ekphrasis refers to the literary and rhetorical trope of summoning up—through words—an impression of a visual stimulus, object, or scene. As critical trope, the word ekphrasis (ἔκφρασις) is attested from the first century CE onwards: it is discussed in the Imperial Greek Progymnasmata, where it is defined as a 'descriptive speech which brings the subject shown before the eyes with visual vividness.' (oxfordre.com)

Flux

A continuous succession of changes of condition, composition or substance (oed.com).

Everything is in flux according to Heraclitus, who is reputed to have said that 'everything flows', and that 'you cannot step into the same river twice'. The idea, in Plato's interpretation, was that the world consists entirely of perceived items each one of which is relative to the perceiver and time of perception with no place for a stable, objective reality. Plato and Aristotle exposed fatal weaknesses in the view (www.oxfordreference.com).

Hauntology

Hauntology is a peculiarly English phenomenon. Karl Marx famously claimed that his Communist revolution would start in England and, more than a hundred years on, England has become a haunt for the specters of its most recent past. The existence of this Pivot is a timely reminder of the ever growing and changing field of critical and popular enquiry on hauntology. Hauntology destabilizes space as well as time, and encourages an 'existential orientation' in the haunted subject, making the living consider the precarious boundary between being and non-being. By the new millennium, hauntology had become part of the zeitgeist of academic and popular criticism in England. In areas as diverse as architecture and music, art and psychoanalysis, a range of critics harnessed Derrida's concept as a critical lens through which to read a twenty-first century English culture seemingly more concerned with co-opting the past than embracing the future. (Shaw 2018: 2)

'More broadly, and more troublingly, the disappearance of the future meant the deterioration of a whole mode of social imagination: the capacity to conceive of a world radically different from the one in which we currently live' (Fisher, 2012)

Hosomi

Hosomi (細身) is often translated as 'slenderness.' It is the use of modest and understated language to evoke a sense of empathy with an object, place, sometimes tending to personification, lacking volume and relativity to an image. Slenderness is a form that describes the conditions of an image i.e., history, myth rather than the actual image and its contents. Slenderness is the gap between two states.

Hypomnema

The word Hypommnema (ὑπόμνημα) has the abstract basic meaning 'memory', presence in the memory or call/support for the memory (in this sense it

already appears in Thuc. 2,44,2 and in Isocrates, Demosthenes, Xenophon etc.), however, in the course of time it takes on a large number of different connotations and nuances, especially the widespread (concrete) meaning 'mention, reference', also in the literal meaning (e.g. Thuc. 4,126,1), 'notice, memory aid, record' to designate a written memorandum of a private or public nature: economic catalogues, accounts, lists of persons or things, legal records, also formal documents e.g. petitions or protocols [3; 16].
(…)
Hypomnema can assume the meaning 'note, record to aid memory' with reference to various occasions and situations of a private nature, e.g. list of keywords for a speech, lecture notes or records of newly acquired knowledge, teaching material etc. For example, 'to write notes' (ὑπομνήματα γράφειν) is used in Pl. Plt. 295c for a doctor or a teacher, who leaves behind written records for the sick or their pupils; in Pl. Phdr. 276d hypomnĐmata are written notes to help one's own memory against the forgetfulness that accompanies old age, i.e. a kind of personal diary. The connotation 'note of a private nature' justifies the use of the word hypomnema in the sense of a certain piece of writing not intended for dissemination to the public, in contrast to a published work. The use of the term in the sense of 'draft, outline' to prepare a work still to be elaborated also has this basis in historiography and philosophy. In historiography it is well documented, according to one theory the historian first had to prepare a rough outline of facts, a hypomnema, that was then developed rhetorically (brillonline.com).

Negative capability

A phrase coined by Keats to describe his conception of the receptivity necessary to the process of poetic creativity, which draws on Coleridge's formulation of 'Negative Belief' or 'willing suspension of disbelief'. He defined his new concept in a letter (22 Dec. 1817); 'Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason—.' Keats regarded Shakespeare as the prime example of negative capability, attributing to him the ability to identify completely with his characters, and to write about them with empathy and understanding; he contrasts this with the partisan approach of Milton and the 'wordsworthian or egotistical sublime' (Letter to Woodhouse, 27 Oct. 1818) of Wordsworth (www.oxfordreference.com).

Narrative

A telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator […] Narratives are to be distinguished from descriptions of qualities, states, or situations, and also from dramatic enactments of events (www.oxfordreference.com).

Nioi

Nioi (匂い) is often translated as 'fragrance.' It is linkage so fine as to be almost intangible; using slight alterations in language/ phrases/tone/ patterning to achieve fragrance and/or the use of words from old sources to generate a fragrance of history.

Plasma

1. anything formed or moulded, image, figure
2. counterfeit, forgery

3. figment, fiction, of a story which is fictitious but possible 4. delusion
5. formed style in writing or speaking
(perseus.tufts.edu)

Prevent

The 'prevent' is a term used by Alexander R. Galloway in his book *Laruelle: Against the Digital* (2014). It is a way to think with certain ideas within François Laruelle's writings.

The 'prevent' is a withdrawal of decision for an event. An event (for this project) is when a possible becomes an actual e.g., text having a static and final form. The 'prevent' is both something that prevents a deciding on this static, final form but also what comes before or hinders (Galloway 2014: 16) the event (the pre-event). To put it another way: the event is static, the 'prevent' is flux.

Theoretical installation

A term coined by François Laruelle in his book Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics (2012). My reading (or misreading) is based on a type of installation art that is fabrication in writing and thought rather than physical objects installed in a brick-and-mortar gallery/museum.

Tractate

A book or literary work treating of a particular subject; a treatise (oed.com).

Utsushi

Utsushi (写)is often translated as 'allusive variation', an uncredited appropriation from historical sources (poems, music, plays etc) that may or may not be recognised by the reader. Rather than direct reference or quotation, the source is often rerendered but retains an element of the original. This stacking of references allows varying access/exit points into the complexity of the poem.

Vividness

The state or quality of being vivid, in senses of the adjective.
a. (1668) Of colour, light, etc.
b. (1768) Of ideas, conceptions, impressions, etc.
c. (1828) Of description, narrative, etc.
(oed.com)

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