

with regard to the unknown we are slow and impatient—
between a poster's body-size expression (180cm x 90cm) and A5 flyer-contents, I conceive this volume as found mediations, revealed or yet to come—*l'à venir* in Jacques Derrida's sense (Mal d'archive).

A material expression (the poster) and a material content (the flyers): Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev's programme from 1943, the 'transformational half-chains' determined by Gilbert Simondon.

this volume is a non-book, or a book turned inside-out—

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cover:
printed on plotter at KHiO by Brynhild Seim [who also printed the vinyl poster
for the WAC 08 conference in Sept. 2016]

body-text
printed by 07media [Jan. 2018]: www.07.no
11 pt. bau
Book-title—32 pt. bau [used on the body-size poster original: 180cm x 90cm]
115g Arctic matt 4+4 colours in 100x
100x Colorit red [backboard]

ENTER

The present volume is a small part of a larger research activity conducted by the editor at Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO). As the physical volume its precedents are 1) *interceptions[at]centre_pompidou* (2011), a collaborative project with the Norwegian Academy of Music [NMH], and 2) *Commons in Transit* (2015) that were both archives compiled in books.

These projects were based on a strict chronological delivery-regime—the archive as a legal deposit—and bound for the intention for use in future research (whether by the author himself, or others who were interested). The 2011-volume was hot-glue bound, while the 2015 was cold-glue bound, according to a method used at the National Archive, at Ian Brown's suggestion.

With the present volume, the intention has been to drive the process of book-building one step onwards: the core is bound according to the National Archive Standard. It is also a low-cost publication, as the other two, both in regard of the paper & printing costs and in regard of the amount of work put into the design. The idea being to reach for what is needed, not the ultimate.

The KYOTObook has been compiled and developed with the idea of book-format that itself constitutes a maker-space—and gives an idea of a maker-space—with contents that are in-the-making. It departs from the traditional work-in-progress format in that materiality of the book communicates a validity of the maker-space; as a place to live and work.

These ideas are cultivated not to undermine the validity of the finished product—finalised text, layout and production—but to claim the *res publica* (public matter/thing) of making; which is what we, in a number of different aspects, is what we ask of our students in the context of the art school. This is to highlight a) the experimental process, and b) the process of value-making.

If one of the major statements of the art-school—as an educational and cultural establishment—is the intrinsic value of the process of exploring creative venues and developing project activities, then these must somehow (or, at some point) be made readable to a third party. Readability is here used in an extended sense; acting and receiving in a public context.

Which brings us to the broader superordinate research question that guides the miscellany of experimental formats the editor seeks to develop, in the wake of activities in artistic research: whether these are pedagogic (cf, the emphasis on portfolio development in the MA theory curriculum in design), collaborative (the majority of the projects), or solitary as in this volume.

The heading of this overarching research-topic is signage for wayfinding in timescapes, it queries the possibility and utility of using a mark-up system—the HEX-signatures—that help to develop a third-party interest/readability of portfolios growing organically out of artistic research, as an artistic proposition addressed to the current relevance of portfolios (e.g., at universities).

A rationale for marking up the documentary trail of artistic research is of course to incorporate it into the maker-space. But it is also to take portfolios one step further, to tweak a surplus out of a personal process (i.e., the research portfolio, as in this volume), which then becomes available for the variety of work-book formats that we find at the graduate, post-graduate and 3rd cycle level.

The elements of the materials conjoined in the present volume are to be considered as 'conversation pieces'. That is, materials that live and work in conversations. In the broader scope of the editor's KUF these are cultivated in a series of ongoing conversations with: Ane Thon Knutsen, Tore Vagn Lid, Karen Disen, Trond Mikkelsen, Bjørn Blikstad and Ludvig Uhlbors.

These are colleagues at KHiO. At AHO similar conversations have emerged with Carsten Loly and Rolf Gerstlauer. These are concerned, in different ways, with drawing. The former with drawing as a programming device—in the broadest sense—the latter with the transition from writing to drawing and back. Here our emphasis is on latent mediations, reverberation and the neuro-diverse.

Due thanks go to the Board of Artistic Research for funding the production of this volume—and the journey to Kyoto—to Dragos Gheorghiu and José Pellini for accepting the core papers at WACo8 in Kyoto (and for inviting me as chair and discussant), to Mike Sperlinger to reading & reacting to the added materials, and to Jørn Mortensen and Karianne Bjellås Gilje for support.

Theodor Barth (ed.)

How is it possible for humans to engage in artistic research only to note—at some point—that they have acquired skills for which they previously had no talent, ways of knowing that earlier was beyond their horizon of capabilities, and a newsreel of memories that they cannot have? This is my query.

For its attention, I have opted for an experimental report, verging unto the format of an artist-book, in order to be able to work more freely with the question. Though without abandoning the idea that a meaningful dialogue between ideas & evidence, should follow a logic of inquiry.

In my doctoral work¹ there was one issue of fieldwork-methodology that I returned to, at several occasions in the thesis: how pattern can emerge from detail, how the researcher can gain a broader wisdom by diving into the particular, and how the practical context of travelling, here, plays a role.

These are questions of the traveler and typical of the fieldworking anthropologist; whose premise is to stay for a while—some times a prolonged stretch of time—and then to move on. Often anthropologists stress the immersion in a local culture, more than this mobility. Aiming to be part of the local.

However, the condition of mobility is interesting from several aspects, if seen from the point of view of contemporary art-practices, and more specifically from design. In 2009 Nicolas Bourriaud devoted one of his curatorial «monographs»—The Radicant—to what he called ‘art by journey’².

In design, the journey relates to the reflective path of being between projects (as a counter-point to being ‘between jobs’). The professional designer travels from one project to the other. From the between-space of multiplying projects emerges a material residue of what designers relate to as process.

Beyond this point, however, the professional ties that emerge from theoretical discourse in design—for a long time—appeared to me, being a field-worker and an anthropologist, as notoriously broad and vague. Not yielding a theoretical understanding based on a robust empirical depth.

And making up for the dangers of ending up with the claims of a ‘department of dislocated memories’, my interest was fed by the challenge of tracing the steps of theory-development which design disciplines have in store, when looking to specialisations we teach at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

My perception was that they were simply not receiving any help from a design theory—beyond the historical accounts—its being busy achieving a contemporary status of a discourse (on par with the contemporary art-field). They became hostage to the dialectic of the colonised and coloniser.

As an anthropologist I am prone to be particularly sensitive to this sort of disempowerment. And for this reason, I was also predisposed to be critical of any theoretical endeavour that was not derived from a practical, hands-on, perspective of doing and making; looking to a richer account of the journey.

In my classes with the MA-students we would work iteratively with a format departing from the ethnographic field-diary³ to one which—in local parlance—we ended up calling a ‘research portfolio’ (after some twists and turns); the research portfolio differs from the project log.

The horizon of the research-portfolio goes beyond collating what is relevant in the context of an ongoing project. It cultivates a mindset in which the utilitarian attitude is provisionally put on hold, in order to develop process-materials with an interest of their own (i.e., a provisional autonomy).

A surplus of unused, but yet potential, ideas are reaped from ongoing specialised projects, and cultivated up to a certain point—reaching for a potential balance between the finished and unfinished—and are made available for later review, or for sharing with others. The two being related endeavours.

MA students in graphic design & illustration, interior architecture & furniture design, fashion & costume are placed in trans-professional groups of 3 in a morning-session, to cultivate an ethos of co-work, exchanging ideas and practices for their research portfolios and working on them the afternoon.

There is only a thin wall between this way of working—cultivating personal goals and building a community of practice—and the workings of the contemporary Hacking- and Makerspaces⁴. With its access to high-standard laser-cutters, CNC-mills, 3D-printers the school has that infrastructure.

That is, an infrastructure of machines and works-masters that help the students to target their objectives and develop skills in a climate of mutual assistance and exchange when hacking solutions. However, KHiO is not a typical hacker-space, in that it also has a professional-vocational motif.

The research-portfolio can therefore be seen as an interface—or, a hybrid—between the Maker-culture running the corridors & workshops, and the specialised curricula offered at the KHiO. It allows the students to develop a form of legitimate peripheral participation; a reflective form.

That is, in Lave & Wenger’s terms (1991)⁵, a form of apprenticeship in connecting what they learn in their specialisations and what they learn from becoming “streetwise” in “making”. Or, if you will, the connection between reflective practice (specialised) and the community of practice (broad).

As I am writing these lines, KHiO is in the midst of strategic soul-searching on a sustainable direction that synergies of this type are likely to bring in the future, and how to capitalise on the current situations and move into preferred ones (H. Simon); with some lessons from the past: the KHiO-legacies.

The lessons I am exploring in the present volume come from experimental archaeology. That is, what we might call the footprint of a contemporary Maker’s Movement in archaeology: both in terms of how it involves communities in research, and in the hatching of strategies of enskiltment.

Experimental archaeologists have conducted a variety of tests of how the dialectic between de-skilling and re-skilling can provide a back-door to understandings of the past, using the experiential venues to knowledge rather than relying on the older descriptive and interpretive ones alone⁶.

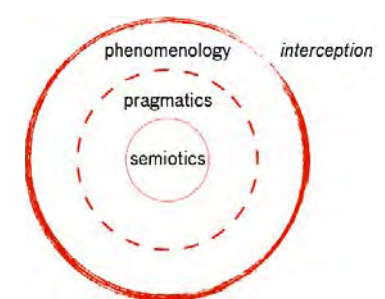
Thereby bringing to attention experiments as constructive aspects of experience, before their potential value for human circulation (whether through publication or for business), harking back to Goethe’s experimentalism⁷ and its importance for ‘natural history’, as a broad scientific tradition.

It is presently re-surfacing with the work of the Swiss type-designer Karl Gerstner (1964), in which he draws on Fritz Zwicky’s broad-scoping of morphological analysis (1957)⁸, from a research-method based on Zwicky’s experience as an astro-physicist. Let me explain the connection to Goethe.

In Goethe’s tradition, form is not an “add-on” to— but surfaces genetically from the substance of natural phenomena. The experimental design thereby links up with the substance of what we learn, in a scope of things where learning, and educating the human senses, are tributaries of natural history.

The education of the human eye becomes part of the phenomenon that we call “colour”. Human being and its endeavours are not separate from nature, nor are its attempts to understand and shape nature. Hence our forms of knowledge, is part of the natural history of planet Earth/Tellus.

Which means that that not only the marks left by human being on nature (anthropocene) but also nature’s marks on human forms (the anthropogenic) are specific ruts of what we broadly understand as intelligence. These marks are of different categories: semiotic, pragmatic and phenomenological.



I.e. the ones that communicate through code (semiotics), those that communicate through practice (pragmatics) and those that are incommunicable but can be intercepted by the intermediary of enskiltment (phenomenology). By wiring these we design a programme from/for our research portfolio.

¹ Barth, Theodor (2010) *Travelogue: Contemporary Understandings of Citizenship among European Jews*, Oslo: University of Oslo. Volume of 6 books based on multi-sited fieldwork.

² Nicolas Bourriaud visited an MA-space developed for on-site research and interventions in a well-known suburban area of Oslo (Romsås), where he and Sinziana Ravini gave a workshop-reading of Bourriaud (2009) *The Radicant*, London & New York: Lukas & Sternberg.

³ Cf, Clifford & Marcus (eds. 1986), *Writing Culture*, Berkeley & London: University of California Press.

⁴ Davies, Sarah R. (2017) *Hackerspaces: Making the Making Movement*, Polity Press.

⁵ Lave, Jean & Wenger, Étienne (1991) *Situated Learning—Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge University Press.

⁶ Cf, the presentations in the present volume of Gheorghiu, Dragos & Bouissac (2015) *How do we Imagine the Past? On Metaphorical Thought, Experientiality and Imagination in Archaeology*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing [in that volume Barth, Theodor “The Anthropogenic Imagination: A Synoptic View of Research Designs in the Aesthetics of Experimental Archaeology”], and Pellini, José; Zarankin, Andres & Salerno, Melisa (2015) *Coming to Senses*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

⁷ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (2006 [1810]) *Theory of Colours*, Dover Publications.

⁸ Gerstner, Karl (2006 [1964]) *Designing Programmes*, Lars Müller Publications; Zwicky, Fritz (1957) *Morphological Astronomy*, Berlin, Göttingen & Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag; and Juarrero, Alicia (1999) *Dynamics in Action: Intentional Behaviour as a Complex System*, MIT Press.

#01 Kyoto

Landing & Settling



I usually don't travel online. Japan, however, will be the exception. I am here for the first time and the days are short before the World Archaeological Congress starts (WACo8). So, instead of immersing myself into the signs, ways and service of public transportation I am settling for a bike.

I used meditation to create some sort of continuity across the night. The result is that I got 8,5 hours of rest. I don't feel too lagged actually. They say it's worse when you travel back. Sometimes, I feel that these daily habits of mine not only get me through the day, but save my life.



23.08.2016

[attempt]

01. The broad assertions made in the prolegomenon, will here be explored in more detail. The travelogue from my journey to WAC o8 (22.08-04.09.2016) was developed in situ. In this report it features as two series of standard elements, called flyers. 2 flyer-series: one shown here, and other at the end.

02. The first flyer-series was developed up unto WAC o8 (WAC= World Archaeological Congress) in Kyoto/Japan, to which I was invited to act as a discussant in two sessions called T14-J and T09-C. In T-14-J I was also to act as an organiser, for my associate & friend Prof. Dragos Gheorghiu.

03. In addition to this, I was to present 3 items: a) one paper on the sensorial approach to theory-development in archaeology; b) another on art as inspiration to archaeologists; c) the poster that has been re-utilised here as the sizeable text-element featuring longitudinally on the cover.

04. I am mentioning them in this order, in order to account for their internal logic—which is a logic of inquiry⁽¹⁾—rather than the chronological order of presentation at WACo8, or for that matter, the above codes indicating a huge conference structure, in which the subtopic contributions were a bit lost.

05. The logic of inquiry I used—in the above mentioned conference elements—is crudely: a) a content-track focussed on a core idea; b) another content-track focussing on the empirical resistance to this idea, c) a

third content-track exploring the mediation between the idea and the resistance to it⁽²⁾.

06. The WACo8 conference-plan had included these in a reverse chronological order to the methodological procedure outlined above. In the sequence of conference-presentations, the mediating element—the poster—appeared first, then the paper on art as inspiration, and then the one on sensoriality.

07. Working on the poster, the brief that I gave myself was to find a form that could match a conference of 1600, and the grid-system with a taxonomy of areas, topics and subtopics—as indicated in 02—acting more as a formalistic constraint, than as categories emerging from the contributions themselves.

08. The brief I gave myself was to try and respond to this situation—where going into the detail of the conference-organisation, would go amiss of its morphological characteristics—by focussing on the situation, rather than on the communication (which without any doubt was confusing & cranky).

09. This is why I chose the urban grid of Kyoto as a model for the lay-out developed for the poster. With the underlying idea that a poster emulating a city-map—when displayed to the endless crowd of visitors, inside the corridors of the Doshisha University—would link them up with the urban site.

10. This is elaborated in more detail in the presentation-manuscript I prepared for the

#01 Kyoto

Landing & Settling

As I had landed, gone through the passport-control, retrieved my luggage and made my way through the exit to take in the early beginnings of a Japanese scenery, my first move was to identify an agent for mobile WiFi rental, and after that being fixed to locate the MK-taxi service (hotel shuttle).

The time it took to reach Kyoto—the inn Rakuchō Ryōkan: I landed at 09:10 and arrived at the ryōkan entrance at 13:00 hours. Thinking about my departure in 2 weeks; it means getting up at early hours, if the service is available at that time of the day. And then something to ponder on.

My first impression of Japanese life—in Kyoto, and perhaps also elsewhere—is that there is nothing such as 'all-included'. The price I had received from booking.com was not the one I was presented upon arrival. I pointed out the difference to the host, who replied: "Oh! That is because of cleaning."

So, you have to pay for cleaning separately. On the other hand, a deal is a deal so he billed me for the JPY156.000 and said I could have the room without cleaning. I didn't have the time to react. Feeling that the atmosphere was tainted with some sourness, I gave him Ylva's bicycle cap. Happy!

I should probably have a store of those (the first thing I do when I get another from Ylva is to give it away to someone else). Well, anyhow... thank you Ylva! I wouldn't say I sense that people here are more focussed on money than anywhere else, but it appears (naively) to that the code is very elaborated.

The ATM's here, for instance, use finger-print recognition and are designed to function with this weird combination between customer-service and surveillance that you find here. When the officer took my picture at the passport control, there was a flowery frame around my face on the screen.

Care & control. On my way, I saw some of the video-material Alan had linked me up with. One of the documentaries featured a cuddling-service where offering the arm, cleaning the ears of the customer, and turning up in various cuddling attire came at fixed and clearly distinguished rates. What's it about?

That's the sociologist in me starting. I cannot accept that the Japanese are just weird, and always 'oh, so different!' In the Lonely Planet Guide that I gleaned before leaving there was the traditional historical overview of the Empire and the Shogunate: Buddhism versus Shinto. Hence the variety.

Local varieties bifurcating down the the level of individual cultural particularities mediating between two extremes—universalism and particularism—that are never quite solved within this insular oecumene, that has gone to and fro in opening and closing its boundaries to the world.

In that perspective, the panoply of differentiated money transactions here could be seen as a mediating system between the care for the individual and the collective obligations: that these are not abstract but constructed through daily transactions, up and down between the person and the commune.

23.08.2016

[attempt]

short lecture-like speeches that regularly accompany poster-presentations in conferences like this. The broad issue being to attract the attention to the conference-venue as a site—i.e. as an archaeological site.

11. To the non-initiated reader this might appear as a rather conceptual intervention, of the likes one expects to come from an art-school. But these inflections on the site, the communitarian aspects of research and the emphasis on mediation, is a well-known assemblage to this crowd.

12. The people who attend archaeological conferences of this kind, is not an homogenous crowd. Between the fieldworker (with hands-on & close-up experience from digs) to the Professor who manages the entire crew, codes data and compiles findings in articles, there is a variety of actors.

13. Which means that between practice and theory in archaeology there is a range of intermediary positions—for professionals and laymen—which includes the possibility for more experimental approaches (such as 'artistic research'), as well as professional tributaries that tend towards anthropology.

14. In sum, the idea of inviting an anthropologist, with some experience with artistic research, to do the job I did at WACo8, is less surprising from the point of view of the archaeological oecumene, than from what can be somewhat stereotypically evoked as 'the art-school' point of view.

15. By focussing on the WACo8 site at the Doshisha University, I could locate myself as a participant observer of the slow-moving, complexly layered, extremely dedicated flow of archaeology: a life-form generated from personal and professional exchanges; as evidenced e.g. by diaries.

16. The diaries I saw—or, was shown—were very rich, like miniature-versions of the complexity of the conference. Typically, they would not only contain hand-written notes, and entries, but also drawings; which despited their evident display of artistic skill, were characterised as 'diagrams'.

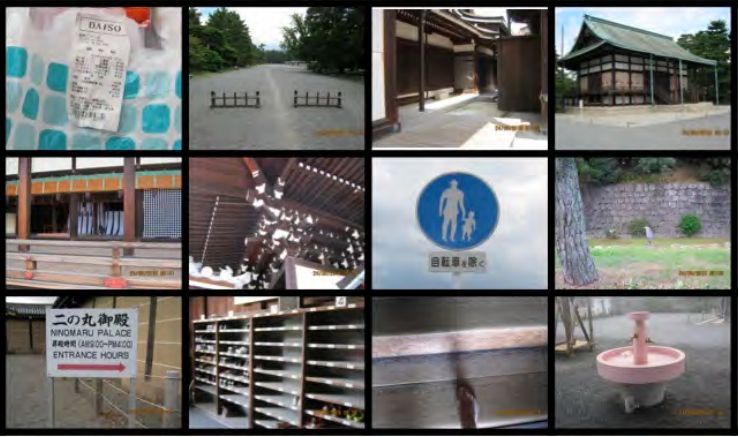
17. People at the conference were not secretive about this kind of material, but at the same time it was rather clear that it was material of a personal-professional kind. Not private, but not materials for conference-display either. They were materials for close-range sharing, at the small-talk level.

18. Yet, this kind of material reveals a sensorial style of reflective practice, and a frictional realm where a meaningful dialogue between ideas and evidence are processed, until the point they are deemed worthy of further elaboration, and framed within academic sets of references.

19. The sensorial style & the frictional realm being the given topics of the sessions T09-C and T14-J. So, why separate these, when their integration at the diary- or project-log level are organically integrated and

#02 Kyoto

Walking



Yesterday, as a mixed group of Japanese and European customers were settling into the MKtaxi-shuttle, the taxi driver gave us a long and rhythmic explanation of the route that he would use to bring us around in Kyoto, and at the same time not to talk unnecessarily and avoid disturbing each other. A Japanese young woman, who had studied English in Dublin translated for me, with a wry smile: "He is telling us to behave!" On the other hand, upon arriving at the Ryokan I discovered that the collective loo was an comely Panasonic product, where everything could be controlled by a light touch.



24.08.2016

[try again]

aesthetically satisfying to the point of being interesting in and for themselves?

20. What is considered is what makes diary-, note- and sketchbook materials—or, more collectively compounded project-logs—interesting in themselves, is to some extent the same as what will earns them to be dismissed at different level: that is, the notion of 'useless detail'.

21. The corollary of such a notion is, of course, the existence of something such as useful detail. If 'redundancy' makes our lives meaningful at one level, it makes us blind to differences that can make a difference. As an anthropologist working with design, this is a matter not to be taken lightly.

22. It relates to a domain in which form is not an «add-on» to stuff that has already been solved; as when form is neither defined nor perceived as part of the core-issue, and is otherwise attributed a «decorative function». Morphological analysis challenges this. Form is not a diversion from reality.

23. Rather, form is strategic: it allows the interception of detail that otherwise would not have surfaced; lost in the depth of our experience; or, in formats that convey it, such as diaries. In morphological analysis, form is an intrinsic and disposable function in human ways of living and knowing the world.

24. The two flyer-series presented in this volume, feature such an idea of form:

that is, the paradoxical exploitation of the human knack of coming up with forms where all the communicable aspects of a problem have been accounted for. Of course, this is never possible: reality exceeds form.

25. But for this very reason human beings who provisionally integrate form into their basic assumptions, will come up with a different harvest of details, facts and data, than their colleagues who consider form a more/less valuable add-on. The flyers provide a working-example of this difference.

26. They apply to the discussion here, since they are a heir to the field-diary. On the other hand, they are conceived according to a formal set of steps, which together constitute a mesh allowing the description, analysis and synthesis of any substantial area. Like a digital 3D mesh.

27. The idea of completeness is not contrary to the idea that there are many such forms: since completeness is a formal criterion, that is played into a discussion of whether the candidate form is well-formed. The criterion of wellformedness being the generative quality of such 'meshes' to pick up detail.

28. The flyers proceed by the following steps [formulated as instructions]: i) attempt; ii) try again; iii) do something else; iv) return [come back with a new perspective]; v) unlearn. These steps have been accounted for elsewhere (in Pettersson, 2017) (3). Recently, a sixth step has been added: vi) cross over.

#02 Kyoto

Walking

I'll have to come up with a new word for this combination between surveillance and service. Perhaps 'survice' will do. I decided that I would rebel and go for conquest. So, when I got up in the morning I went to the bike rental—the Bike Lab—only to find that it was closed on Wednesdays.

"OK, no bike, then I will walk!" I thought to myself. So, I walked down the Karasuma-Dori with my first stop at Daiso—the shop Alan tipped me about, the '100 yen shop' where they have "everything" for a low price. To a newcomer what they have looks like a comic-strip retail/kit in 3D.

A graphic designers/illustrator's heaven. I did a handsome pick and went to the cashier. There I became part of a ritual that takes place at many cashiers here: after being courteously greeted by a young lady, each purchased element is picked up, declared and placed in a different container.

As it passes from the store's container to "your" container it also enters the cash-registry, then, when the sum is made, you push a button to confirm. Then, an automatic service takes over. Evidently, I am looking for a key to the human-automaton interface which Japan shows is different from the Western.

Though I did not understand a word, I was impressed by the sweet cashier's language. It came in a rhythmic cadence that resembles the chanting of auctioneers at American cattle-fairs. A combination between a fractal depth with worlds upon worlds guided by strict rules, and bursting love-bubbles.

There are aspects of Japanese ways that easily link up to Manga-strips, and features a feminine aspect. An older lady, whom I had let pass before me in the escalator, after some bargaining for courtesy, took my stuff and wrapped some tea-cups in recycle-newspaper left by the counter for that purpose.

She handed the pack to me with a big smile. I felt that the Daiso-experience brought me closer to the domestic sphere in Kyoto. But I was out for conquest, so I ventured back to the streets and side-walks, where a world of impassive faces and public demeanour rules. Down to the Imperial Palace.

Of course, both the Imperial Palace and the Shogun's castle are both extremely impressive. Though you cannot touch anything, the materiality of these visions of old Japanese architecture—that continue to inform a "timeless way of building"—simply has to be experienced to communicate.

However, there are aspects of this communication which also transposes in translation, on account of signage which both explains to and confuses the newcomer [me]. The visual grammar of what is connected and separated differs from the European, with a number of unintended consequences.

The street-grid of Kyoto was conceived by the urban planners of yore as a Go-board. It suited my purposes perfectly, since it is a game of conquest. Whatever you encircle is "taken". I always walk in closed circles. I took some territory by walking. As an author of *Lettres Persanes*, or Segalen's "Exot".

24.08.2016

[try again]

29. The last step was added because the steps i-v threatened to become self-contained: with the effect that I would end up with independent flyer-sets, while the transfers—which always take place in real life—would neither be shared, nor would be up for discussion and debate. Hence the change.

30. Visually, the flyers follow a set pattern: they all have a front page [recto], where the selection and composition of images, prompts the contents on the second page [verso]. The text-content parses the topic—in a stepwise fashion—and feeds forward a topic, prompted in text [recto].

31. In this way, clearing one's senses to receive new experiences is facilitated, because the exit-procedure, that completes each flyer, is already prepared to receive what is coming (while linking up with the train of ideas where we left them on our last entry) to hatch substantial novelty.

32. Hence, there is an entry-and exit- procedure with each flyer, in which the formal criteria help to hatch the novelty which we bring in, at each new juncture, and accordingly we have a source of information that otherwise either would have been lost, or would have been difficult to retrieve.

33. Up to this point, the description of the flyers is largely semiotic. But there is also a pragmatic aspect of developing flyer-entries, which has to do with the practical reason for wanting to make the

flyers, during my sojourn in Kyoto, and the impact of making them in Kyoto.

34. The first pragmatic concern was to test the range of practical consequence of my idea for the poster: that is, to test the obstacles to the idea of using the city-map as a locational strategy, to have a sense of the territory—not limited to the map—to conquer a stand as a body in that city.

35. This was to avoid standing on empty grounds—or, rather the grounds of standard conferencing, anywhere in the world—but to develop a sense of ownership, and doing the job I had come to do, from an experience rooted specifically in Kyoto. I wanted to go to WACo8 from Kyoto—>in.

36. It was not a moral stand, though perhaps ethical in the sense that the idea of dealing with a knowledge area which is site-specific to the level archaeology invariably tends to be, should be conveyed with a sense of the site(s) in which this knowledge is developed and shared: site-specifically!

37. Here, I am not so much concerned with where this requirements comes from—i.e., whether it is artistic, ethical or logical—as with its connection with morphology, and morphological analysis. That is, I am interested in extending this range of topics beyond their self-enclosed definitions.

38. These are ideas that have been explored in design by Karl Gerstner (1964) in a book with

#03 Kyoto

Bicycling



I am starting to get grounded in Kyoto—most of the effects of a body in “flight mode” are starting to wear off—and the sense of what I am doing in Kyoto, what I want to achieve in this place, is gradually emerging. First of all, the will to achieve something. That is, in areas I care about.

I have not yet a clear idea of what the archaeologists who have invited me over are hoping to benefit. But—as an anthropologist working with design—I sense that I can benefit from walking a stretch with them, in order learn more about ‘empirical semiotics’ [based on sensing and experimenting].



25.08.2016

[do something else]

#03 Kyoto

Bicycling

A bike makes life a lot easier in Kyoto. It allows you to be more mobile than on foot, to learn left-driving, relate to road-signs and a variety of signals. It gets you close to the pulse of the city. You find your way through trial and error. And you by making mistakes find things that you otherwise would not have.

The road to the Buddhist temple-area Daitoku-Ji goes straight from Rakuchō Ryōkan. Yet, the tactic of entering visited areas like this from an odd end remains valid. This is how I spent some time in the marginal Koto-In zen temple. Crossing the threshold into a forest, it's like entering another world.

Like “a wall of presence” if that makes any sense. When I entered the temple facilities—where the monks have practiced ‘emptiness’ since the 17th century—it was not like stepping out of a garden and into a space devoted to zazen [meditation], but rather like stepping further into nature. One step further in.

I paid a small fee at the gate. But under the circumstances, it felt more like an exit-fee than an entrance-fee. It's that kind of world that when you enter, you stay. You do not come and go as you please. They could keep you. But you have paid you can still leave. A Buddhist zen-temple is definitely not a spa.

Yet, as you leave your shoes at the threshold, there are different zones in the compound: green rubber-slippers if you go into the garden, blue ones if you need for the WC. But the temples of Daitoku-Ji are walled compounds. They are connected by a road-system which is a public area: for monks and others.

At the other end of a long stretch—in terms of bicycling—there is a world for everyone: the Manga museum. Here you pay an entrance-fee: ¥800 which is about €7. But then you can stay as long as you please, and read as much Manga as you can take. One can safely say that Manga is pop-culture.

The facilities of the Kyoto International Manga Museum is a building which formerly was devoted to the education of children with learning problems. Not disabled children, but children—for instance—with ‘big hands’. Manga fits in the spirit of this house, since Manga is not only for entertainment.

It is probably more correct to say that it is an all-purpose communication system—with a dream of universal understanding at its behest—possibly also a problem-solving tool. Besides operating an extremely popular Manga library, the museum explains a lot of what there is to know about Manga.

Not only through educational displays, but also watching artists making Manga live. The tool kit needed to operate an older Manga studio. There are also computerised educational games, where screens are framed with a billboard with instructions on how to proceed to make your own Manga.

In many ways, Manga proposes an idea of communication based on making, which is why by design it is a tool to convey learning, commentary or fiction, but it is also a vehicle of transactions. What the Manga and the Zen world share, is a culture of expressing, mediating and mitigating contradictions.

25.08.2016

[do something else]

an ominous title to some, felicitous to others: *Designing Programmes*. The book is not about designing computer-programmes, but about designing working-patterns for design. Working patterns that work.

39. Working for the design and for the designer. For this reason, the book has recently known a revival, amongst designers who use computers as a design tool. It offers an elegant idea on how we can comprehend computer programmes, through the demands they put on us to design our work-processes.

40. In other words, our understanding of how sequences of computer operations work, is through the consequences for how we structure our work-processes. In this sense CAD—computer assisted design—is a misnomer: computers do not assist us in designing, they challenge us.

41. Or, even, they force us to reflect on our work-practice, because rather than assisting us, they first and foremost multiply our options. Without programming our operations, they can bring us all over the place. Scattering our minds and talents, fragmenting what the simplest craft would connect.

42. The kinds of multiple-alternative narratives—and the new design problems—that arise with computers become evident as they are processed in computers but also made and produced. This becomes evident f.ex. in Chris Ware's

graphic novel *Building Stories* (2012)⁽⁴⁾. A board-game story.

43. The novel comes as a kit, with several elements—including the box that contains the pieces—reminding board-games. If you already read Georges Perec's *Life: a User's Manual*⁽⁵⁾, it becomes virtually impossible not to think about it. It is the designing programme which is similar, not the stories.

44. Chris Ware's box contains a variety of formats—or, boards—in which various aspects of the time & space structuring each story is drawn out: it cannot be exactly known whether the stories are different chapters of the same life, different lives, different perspectives on the same lives, or kit-features.

45. The kit-features relates to standard elements of Ware's drawn comic language displaying the graphic novel as an assemblage: i.e., the elements can be yanked out of place, put in somewhere else and still work. Yet, the stories appear as unique, in a certain cultural stereotype.

46. The kit-features are cultivated to an advanced level, subject to display and discussion, in the Japanese Manga-style comics. They are kinds of narrative contraptions in which the contents appear to extend almost seamlessly—or, by small steps—to the Manga mode of production and back.

47. Because it comes like pieces in a box, Ware's graphic novel comes out as a theory of this sort of relationship, where

the subject matter does not only deal with what comics are, how they work and are made (cf., McCloud)⁽⁶⁾, but features the comics universe as a life-form. A «bio-hacking» experiment.

48. Here the designing programme aspires to the logic of the genome. A level of code in which the drawn elements and the typography are treated according to the same—or, similar—sets of rules. It would be wrong to say that they operate in the same space, or operate on the same space.

49. Rather, they operate on the time-aspect of spatial elements, which—in the case of Ware's graphic novel—features in the physical dimensions of the boards, and the variety of other formats (including strips, posters, more traditional «comic-book» elements etc.), and their interplay.

50. The elements of the box thereby come out as categories or, rather, as categorisers; in which it is the ‘operative compound’ of our biological organism, the artefacts that feature the life-form. The designing programme—as a genome of sorts—thereby is not conveyed by the elements.

51. It is the live interplay between the formats that conveys the programme. By working with the box, and bringing its elements as a constellation of time-spaces, our bodies integrate the programme into its repertoire of skills, and transport it into other productive settings.

52. Art-by-journey—which is Bourriaud's (ibid.) shirt-sleeve definition of the ‘radant’—is a modus operandi, where the opus operatum, here Ware's novel-box, constitutes a temporary soil: having learned we break up and move on. The makerspace is a life-form inventing the computer.

53. It is a common mistake to understand Makerspaces as prototypes of production-spaces of a future industry. The Makerspaces question the industrial ideas of production. Instead of users there are makers; instead of products there are projects, instead of services there is mutual help.

54. In Japan the Manga life-form studies, questions and proposes alternatives to current life-forms. Here the connection to the makerspaces is clear, but also close to ideas of how Makerspaces are agents in the economic system (and clearer about this than in other parts of the maker-movement).

55. On the one hand, this allows us to see Makerspaces as ‘para-sites’ (Marcus). On the other hand, the graphic novel provides us with an idea of exchange, in which economic transactions are integrated into a set of ulterior motif, which is to parse and prompt the life-form. Life on the edge.

56. One of the causes for the Western fascination with Japan, is that the Japanese have hundreds of years of experience with integrating this sort of life-condition into their culture. From the point of view of the

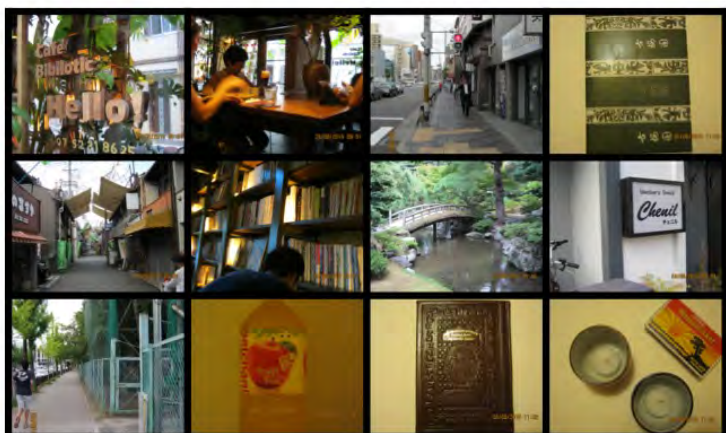
#04 Kyoto

Congressing



End of the week-noise. Knife purchased at Aritsugu [thank you Alan]. Fruits. Washi paper [Japanese hand-made]. New note-book acquired at the same place. The arcades at Taramachi Dori [thinking of Walter Benjamin]. Initial contacts made with a professional who cuts paper.

What I've learned here so far: there is not a good- and a bad end of the stick—they are two ends to the stick, and the outcome depends on how they are balanced. This balancing of non-same elements is the design. By now I am visually a mess. But my hearing starts to improve [...]



26.08.2016

[return with a new perspective]

Western traveler, however, these fundamental conditions are found in the journey itself.

57. Everything down to the most elementary aspects of 'making do' become singularly complicated, have to be learned afresh and is part of the attraction of travelling to Japan. Even something as simple as developing, printing, making and annotating flyers forced me to take knowledge of the site.

58. My suite at the Ryokan became part of a maker-space with nodes all over the city: including the sites I surveyed, during a short week of adapting to the time-zone, the printshop, paper-cutting workshop, the drugstore ['Family Mart']—for scanning—my computer, my Canon Instamatic from the 90s.

59. Exploring an unknown site by carrying out a task where all the parameters are known, is an adventure similar to exploring the affordances of the kit in our graphic novel. You literally have now idea of where it will bring you, while having control of the operations. It resembles the situationist method of *dérive* (7).

60. This is also the focal idea in Zwicky's morphology (1957: 12): «what here interests us most is how to use the principles of the inexhaustibility of the communicable aspects of life and the of the flexibility of scientific truth for the realization of a never ending progress in thought and action.»

61. What Richard Hollis coined an «imaginative use of a rational process» in his

introduction to Gerstner (ibid.) is transposed, in the latter's own words, unto the digital age in that the topics he raised in the 1964-publication are still relevant today: «Perhaps more than ever», he adds.

62. And he continues: «I believe that they belong the the prerequisites of handling the computer creatively.» This creativity arguably lies in the proliferation of contact-points, driven by maker-projects—such as even of my humble flyer production—become 'street-wise' (rather than confined).

63. The conjoined domestication of the computer in the maker-space, and the discovery of urban affordances in Kyoto, through a set of routine transactions, allowed me to access the city differently than joining the «ant-roads» of tourists, and through the tours organised by the conference.

64. Some of the antiques of these walkabouts are related in the flyers. The important point to retain here is that the spatial conditions in the development and production of flyers, were more dispersed and differentiated in Japan, than what I am used to in Norway or, more specifically, at KHiO.

65. The contact-points involving people, money and technologies were greatly multiplied, as were the different kinds of technologies involved: the use of e-mail was rather sparing, faxing was widespread, and calligraphy more than a relic of the past. Assemblages reflect socio-cultural realities.

#04 Kyoto

Congressing

When I left from Oslo, I had promised myself—as well as to a couple of colleagues and friends—that I would rely almost exclusively on sound-recording during my stay in Kyoto. Having obviously broken these vows, I yet have grown heedful of sound, and have learned a number of things here that way.

It may be that when one listens one eventually starts to hear things. Something of this kind happened to me as I was walking along with other tourists inside the Shogun's Castle. A sound resembling a flock of cage-birds came in from all sides. Very distinct. But there were no birds. Only bird frescoes.

Having thought, for a split second, that the bird-squeaks came from a synthesizer—or, some other digital soundtrack—I suddenly realised that it was the sound came from the massive and ancient wooden boards that we had under our feet. I have never heard anything like it. I recorded the sound.

A female guard who was worried that I was doing some sort of visual recording, approached me: «Are you taking pictures? That is not allowed!»—I told her that I was making a sound-recording. She explained that it was coming from the boards. I confirmed: «It is very beautiful!»—Thank you! she said.

Suddenly, we were on the same side. Marvelling about the building. Visual recording is forbidden, aural recording is allowed and even praised. The floor and the stage suddenly was transformed into a seamless whole, as though by the touch of a magic wand. She was genuinely happy about the compliment.

Where I come from, we are set on resolving contradictions, as through conflicts could be resolved by logic. Here contradictions are expressed—rather than resolved—and are part of life. Therefore they must and can also be designed. That is the grand challenge I will take with me into my work.

In the cross-roads—in my urban area—the traffic lights for pedestrians are accompanied by different sounds; a 'cuckoo' sound for one direction [usually a smaller road]; a 'buzzard' sound for the other direction [usually a larger road]. In Norway we have a children's game called «hawks and pigeons».

In that game the hawk takes the pigeons. Here they come out as a joint reality—the crossroads—where the challenge is not to get them mixed up [at the peril of your life]. If things that originate from a joint reality have opposite consequences for us as humans, separating them is consequential for us.

E.g., the public toilets are rather discrete—integrated into a landscape of bushes and trees—they give off a soft and cheerful recorded sound, to remind the users that they are there. At the same time there is a legal ban against urinating on the streets. People keep the two options separate.

Keeping the two options separate is something else than keeping the two options open, and avoiding the one from fear of punishment. Here they rather seem to set their efforts on optimising the alternative; in this way, personal comfort colludes with public sanction. Perhaps *surveillance* is a better term.

26.08.2016

[return with a new perspective]

66. The extension of my computer-assisted operations in the city of Kyoto featured one form of assemblage. But the capacity of my assemblage-work brought me to the very outposts of what I could have imagined upon arrival; i.e. the fragments of locally remediated operations—yet an assemblage.

67. So, assemblages interact, and at the outer limit there are exchanges. Without the definition and activation of this 'contact-zone' the interaction and exchanges are spurious. They are makeshift and unstable. They are readily perceived as exotic, arcane and often quite a bit absurd.

68. However, the extended maker-space allowed me to establish—in a fairly short time—a social contract of trust, a climate of cultural interest, and also a sense of warmth. The extended maker-space, also extended my power of intercepting situations, even when socio-culturally alien.

69. Picking up on situations that are not part of the situation of one who intercepts them, is a candidate definition of a '3rd party interest'. The situational intelligence here does not come to the distanced and passive observer, but demand the kind involvement of the maker: s/he has his/her «own reasons».

70. The 3rd party interest is transcendent, in the sense conveyed by Bruno Latour (1993: 128) (8): «We have never abandoned transcendence—that is, the maintenance in presence by the mediation of a

pass.». S/he is centred without being the core of the action.

71. It is in this precise sense that we can imagine how it is possible—and methodologically sound—to carry out operations that have their own rationale, or system, in order to study something else: to make observations that are, by their very nature, spontaneous. It is a common research assumption.

72. Meaning that it does not matter—in this particular aspect—whether the research is defined as e.g. artistic or archaeological (or, for that matter, empirical). What we are interested in is the 'maker-share', which they all have, alongside the range & scope of this intelligence.

73. In contrast to my «domestic» queries in Kyoto, the range and scope of the archaeological maker-intelligence is enormous. It reaches across time-gaps which—in the scale of a human life—are «aeons» of time. And the awareness of the maker-varies considerably, in the discipline.

74. That the archaeological dig is a makerspace, on account of the variety, distribution and connection between different sets of skills that are current in standard digs. Some—more methodological oriented milieus—cultivate a more experimental and reflective awareness of the maker-intelligence.

75. Some of these are discussed in the two essays I presented at WACo8 in Kyoto. And I have also included two

#05 Kyoto

Pitching



Tomorrow, I will pin up a poster—1 among 141—at the World Archaeological Congress in Kyoto. The posters are 180cm high—which is the height of the door into my room at the Ryokan. My poster aims at reminding the viewer of this. And also features a grid that resembles the map of Kyoto. With its quadrature, the city was designed to resemble a Go-ban—the board of the Go-game. The poster also replicates the two exceptions to the Kyoto-grid: the Imperial Palace and the Nijo Castle. This is the support structure. The poster has the exact proportions of the door to my room at the Ryokan. Content: what I am driving at is Walter Benjamin's archives: the Arcades Project.



27.08.2016

[unlearn]

examples of such experimental approaches, from the session T14-J, in which I acted as both the organiser and the discussant: **Lia Wei's** and **José Marmol's** contributions.

76. We agreed to include them into the report as drafts, since the idea of this volume is rather to underscore process, and spur the imagination of the reader in this direction. Their kind contributions to the present volume are described in more detail, in the conference manuscript (below).

77. My own conference drafts can be characterised as two experiments in 'situated reading'. Concretely: I parse the contents of two books—one in each essay—that are relevant to the topic of the Subsessions, and were both edited by the co-organisers (2015). The readings are situated sense that they are prompted by my own query.

78. As the reader will have noted, this order of procedure has some similarities with the way I used my maker-project in Kyoto, to develop a situational intelligence there. And it is based on the same interceptive logic. Yet, it certainly is not identical. In the essays I use a different situationist method.

79. Which is that of the détournement (Asger Jorn, 1958)⁽⁹⁾: contrary to the montage, the juxtaposition of **a)** the queries laid out in the two books with **b)** my own errands—in both of the two essays—does not seek a narrative connection between the two levels of query.

80. They are written in this way, in anticipation and postponement of a connection, remitted to the encounters that I assumed—at the time I drafted the two essays—would take place at a later point in time. The essays were also intended as a preparation for a re-investment of an archive.

81. I.e., the body of manuscripts after Walter Benjamin, as a candidate for a modern archaeological inquiry, with the methods of artistic research. This ambition was based on a rather broad, and interdisciplinary, interest for the Benjamin estate amongst a select group of colleagues at KHiO.

82. My own interest in Walter Benjamin is connected to an ongoing artistic research on 'signage for wayfinding in time-scapes.' A material exhibit of some of the elements in this research are seen at the bottom these introductory pages, in the stamped signatures that the reader will have noticed.

83. Again, there is a similarity between these and the generic elements in Chris Ware's comic design-kit. However, their domain of application—and of remediation—relates to the form of process, rather than to narrative. I will return to this point when discussing the concluding flyer-series (WAC).

84. The purpose, however, is to raise to a systematic level, the questions that are explored in the 2 essays at a case-level, and also to attempt a conclusion on the extent, and with which reservations and

limitations it is possible to apply the approach developed in situ (Kyoto) for comparison.

85. That is, in the development of methods to juxtapose different corpuses, with the aim of establishing a 'third way' between generalisation (as in natural science) and particularism (as in historical accounts), between nomothetic and idiographic explanations, in the form of models.

86. Such a 'third way' would be transcendent in a similar (empirical) sense of the term, as 3rd party interest. A locus of arbitration between possible alternative designs which is the idea behind Gerstner's 'designing programmes'; if I have understood them correctly. A method for these.

87. An anecdote relating an episode in Kyoto, will serve to illuminate this topic. When developing the contents, designing and producing the poster for the T14-J session, to be displayed in the campus area, I dutifully reproduced the size of the dimensions indicated in an e-mail from WAC.

88. I only later realised that these were the dimensions of the panels used at the exhibit, rather than the indicated size that were prescribed for poster-submissions. In effect, the poster I had brought along, was the only one at the conference to meticulously cover the entire board. I was surprised at this.

89. As I was surprised by the dimensions as such: 180cm x 90cm is not only a poster of

#05 Kyoto

Pitching

Of course, I must apologise to all those who know Kyoto—and Japan—far better than me. The aim of this little experiment has not been to produce new knowledge about Kyoto nor Japan. But to see what a week of first impressions can reveal about what can be learned through the senses.

Since I have no knowledge of Japanese language whatsoever I have, in some ways, been privileged to have nothing but the senses. But it doesn't mean that I have been out of sync: when the bike-dealer showed me how the dynamo worked, he made the wheel spin so I would hear the whirling sound.

And I do feel that teaching through showing, and learning through the senses, is part of the culture here. The cashier-ritual—as I commented in flyer #02—is based on the didactics of show-and-tell. I realise how upsetting it must have been for the host at the Ryokan when I failed to acknowledge the price [#01].

Semiotics is the science of signs; but it very often limited to define their meaning—and creating taxonomies/classes of of signs—but not their value. However, in the real world, signs are connected to their economic and cultural value. And signs cannot be studied in the same way as language.

The main reason is that signs cannot be transposed to a written language that is separate/abstract from them. But is possible to record them in a variety of ways. And it is possible to learn about them by replaying the record—as I have done—before setting out to do a new round of recording. Day by day.

Signs have a gestural- and technical component: the bike-dealer's gesture to make the wheel spin as he turned a knob on the frame, was a demonstration of some feature, but it was only when I made the connection between the whirling sound and the dynamo that I caught the whole meaning.

It is a compound. If design can be defined as the accommodation of non-same elements—gestural and technical—into a single compound, then signs are designs. The question that has been haunting me here, since after all I am here for an archaeological congress, is if such compounds have to be "live."

I have been down that alley before and I know exactly to where it leads. It is therefore with some hesitation that I venture to bike it anew. What if we accept that tools are artefacts we use for primarily-level operations, while instruments are used for secondary-level operations? Like driving and navigating...

In cars with GPS-consoles this compound is really tight. But is it advanced? Perhaps, but it likely to have existed in some form, as long as homo sapiens has been around. And the real adventure starts when we mediate between the two—by operating them—and we discover a number of other mediations.

This is my understanding of what Walter Benjamin meant with mimesis. In Kyoto, I have had contemporary Japanese fellows help me find my way step by step—but is it possible to do this with what one finds in archaeological sites? Well, I think that this is what experimental archaeologists aim at.

27.08.2016

[unlearn]

truly large dimensions, it also featured as standard that was unknown to me. Outside campus, however, at the Ryokan, I kept bumping my head into the door-frame. Though I eventually learned.

90. But the idea struck me that I would ask the manager's assistance to hold the poster inside the door-frames. And it proved to be a perfect match. It turned out the that the poster measured 2 Japanese Ken. The equivalent of a Tatami-mat. Which in turn is not only a unit of measurement⁽¹⁰⁾.

91. The exact correspondence of the rectangular Tatami mat with 2 Ken—the square Tatami measures 1 Ken—and the architectural plans of traditional Japanese house is not only measured using the Ken unit, but built using the Tatami-mats as the founding ground-unit. But there was more than that.

92. The grid of the poster had two irregular elements, also featuring on the city-map: these irregularities were designed by me, as I had created an idealised version of the city-map to grid the poster. It then turned out that Kyoto-city was constructed as a Go-ban: the board for the Go-game⁽¹¹⁾.

93. This is a strategy game in 3 phases with **a)** an opening game; **b)** a middle game and **c)** an end game. These games are very different. They are reflected in the way the materials in this book have been structured into a variety of different formats. I wish you a good journey & a good read!

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- (8) Latour, Bruno (1993) *We have Never been Modern*, Harvester & Wheatsheaf.
- (9) Jorn, Asger (1959) «Détournement comme négation et prélude» [Eng. Détournement as Negation and Prelude], Internationale Situationniste #3.
- (10) Zwicky, Fritz (1957) *Morphological Astronomy*, Springer Verlag.
- Op. cit.: 13 «The first approximation to the formalism of communicable truth may be made through a complex of a few dozen axioms on the existence and the properties of marks, signals or words which we use as elementary means of communication. Some of these axioms about signs or marks are as follows.
- a) There are marks or signals the existence or the action of which is perceptible to an individual through one of his senses.
 - b) There are marks the meaning of which can be agreed upon by more than one individual.
 - c) There are identifiable marks. These are countable and result in the establishment of the series of whole numbers 1, 2, 3, etc. as a means of identification and communication. Numerous actions and operations of arithmetic which have been introduced to amplify the axiom.
 - d) in all necessary detail need not further be discussed here.
 - e) There are non-identifiable marks such as light quanta and electrons. Their presence and action can clearly be demonstrated by their generation of secondary marks, which may be either identifiable or not.
 - f) There are non-identifiable marks which are countable. Electrons caught in a box are marks of this type, because they may be made

countable through measurement of the total electric charge in the box.»

The first three (a-c) correspond with: a) the phenomenological level; b) the pragmatic level; c) the semiotic level (cf, Prolegomenon).

(11) Perec, Georges (2003) *Petit traité invitant à la découverte de l'art subtil du go*, Paris: Broché.

“Epigraphy in the Landscape: Intersections with Contemporary Ink Painting & Land Art.”

Abstract

Between the years 2009-2013, while investigating the monk and calligrapher Seng’An Daoyi (active 562-580 CE), who engraved monumental sutras in the mountains of Shandong, China, our duo developed a form of interactive writing and large-scale installations contextualised in heritage sites.

The monk’s epigraphy brought unprecedented innovations in visualisation practices, the ritual function of Chinese script, and its relation to the natural landscape, but left no trace in History.

This paper delivers cross-fertilised results of the experiment, between ancient epigraphy and contemporary ink painting, thereby confronting modern Archaeology with the pre-modern Chinese discipline of Metal and Stone Studies, a form of Antiquarianism.

Keywords

Epigraphy, Intersubjectivity,Intertextuality

Theodor’s round-up

Lia extruded a lowdown from a narrative that has been developing over the last 7 years, in a collective working with artistic research on the legacy of a gigantic epigraphic oeuvre left by the monk Seng’an Daoyi on some mountainous climbs in the Shandong province of Eastern China. With techniques ranging from the exploration of this legacy with the full size of the human body, to a variety of a ‘pushing hands’ technique extended by paint-brushes working on two sides of a silken canvas—apparently of unlimited length—as a reading-technique combining haptic interaction and acrostics.

She demonstrated a strength, energy and cogency of a material technique, adaptable to a variety of tasks and occasions—ranging from a foundation sacrifice, exhibits and industrial-size facility, to land-art applications—without a loss of specificity to the unique legacy of a marginal, and possibly idiosyncratic, branch of Buddhism after Seng’an Daoyi. The project spans the extent to which traces of a ritual practice left on the skin of the earth and the ‘oecumene’ of writing, can be absorbed by repetitive gesture and enhanced in its peregrinations across contemporary cultural encounters.

Key-references I(Theodor) picked up

- co-authorship with Zhang Qiang,
- non-literati approaches to epigraphy,
- haptic intersections/symbolic crossroads,
- the Arsenale as exhibition venue vs. a range of exhibiting experiments more articulated with the site,
- Deleuze & Guattari as a parallel of extended co-working and
- the seal of readability resulting from such experiments.

CV

Lia Wei studied calligraphy, sigillography and landscape painting at the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, and Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing (2007-2010). She took part in a contemporary ink painting project – ‘Biface Graphy/Open Scroll’ with calligrapher Zhang Qiang (2009-2013) and in a China Ministry of Education funded research project on Buddhist epigraphy in Shandong Province – ‘Great Vacuity Buddha-King : Sutra Engravings and Visual Culture under the Northern Dynasties’ (2012-2016). Her on-going collaborative project in creative archaeology with geographer Rupert Griffiths is entitled ‘Site_Seal_Gesture’ (2013-2016).

Lia Wei is now conducting her PhD research on ‘Rock-cut burials along the Upper Yangzi River, 2nd to 3rd century CE’ at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

In 2014-2015, she lectured at the Art Theory department in Sichuan Fine Arts Institute on the ‘History of Sinology : The Study of East Asian Art in the West’, and at the Archaeology department at Renmin University of China on ‘Comparing Values in Cultural Heritage : Landscape, Identity and Authenticity’. She is now teaching on the ‘Art and Archaeology of the Silk Road’ at SOAS.

SOAS page: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/staff/staff88116.php>

Academia page: <https://soas.academia.edu/liawei>

WAC Presentation

This article stands as the conclusion of a co-authored research and publication (Great Vacuity Buddha-King: Seng’an and the Visual Culture of the Northern Dynasties, in press).

This art historical research project revolved around the monk and calligrapher Seng’An Daoyi (active 562-580 CE) who engraved monumental sutras in the mountains of Shandong, north east China. The monk’s epigraphy brought unprecedented innovations in religious visualisation practices, the ritual function of Chinese script, and its relation to the natural landscape, but left no trace in History.



SENG’ AN DAOYI (active 561-580 A.D.)

Why choosing SENG’AN DAOYI as an “Inventor”?

- Never happened in the Past = The future
- Invisibile in the history of calligraphy (does not respond to canonical taste/aesthetics)
- Inaccessible (hard to reach, hard to convey in rubbings)
- Innovative: ambivalent context in the history of religion (strong individuality, no followers, drawing a “personal sacred geography”)
- Hidden author is the mountain: direct bodily interaction with the land, cliffs, stone.
- Transcultural Contact: incoming scriptural tradition meets an “indigenous” scriptural tradition and calligrapher meets uneven rock surface.

In a first movement ‘from text to language’, Seng’An extracted meaning from chosen sections of the sutras, repeating this selection of fragmentary passages from one site to another, and mimicking the logical structure of sutras in word games of his own. In a second movement while increasing their size and depth, he further reduced the length of the inscriptions into 3 to 4 characters deity names and isolated sounds, simultaneously re-designing his own name following the same rules of combination and display. In a third movement, Seng’An re-embodies these creations into the rock, to be understood as Buddha bodies, in specific locations of the valleys, cliffs and rocky surface.

In the first part of this presentation, examples of Seng’an Daoyi’s epigraphic work are given for each of these steps: Text/stele/language – character/name/calligraphy – stroke/carving/mountain.

Below, the shape of a monumental sutra carved by Seng’an in Mount Tie, framed into a vertical rectangle with a pointed top. Such a shape has a long history in Chinese material culture, having been used for ancestral tablets, that is, wooden tablets where the names of deceased members of the family are inscribed, and which are kept in commemorative shrines.

Less often used for stele, its use by Seng’an is all the more explicit when he inscribes the 4 characters of his own name in it: Seng = Monk; An = Serenity; Dao=path; Yi = One.



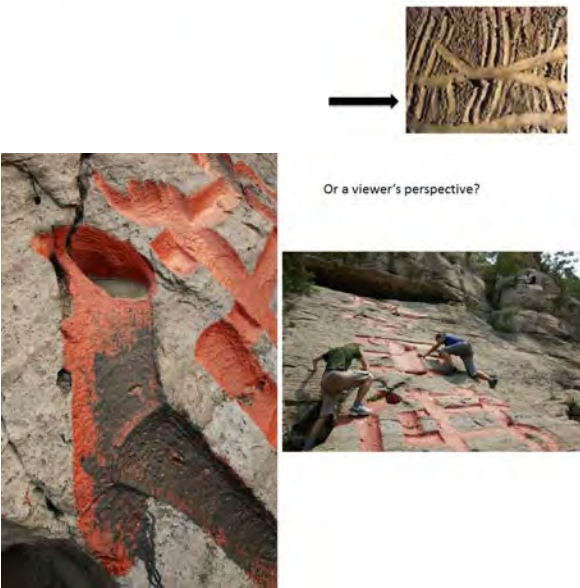
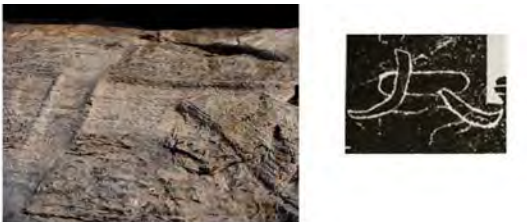
As we will see, the characters An and Yi of his name are also the basis for a text of his own invention, mimicking the logical processes of Nagarjuna’s tetrad.



If A can B, If B can A > AB,BA



5,26,29,30,32,33) show ways in which Seng'an animated his script by combining it to the shapes of nature and rock, faults, protruding veins, waterfall beds, cast shadows according to the time of the day, as well as to the act of climbing, with all factors being confronted to the human body: slope, depth of relief, smoothness or roughness of the rocky surface, etc.



Bridging text to the mountain, Seng'an builds up a chain of transformations, where, through the stele format, language is revisited, transcended, deconstructed and re-assembled.

Going even further into the language, and taking advantage of a supplementary level of language offered by the Chinese script, Seng'an uses the format of names and the obvious anthropomorphic aspects of identification to bring calligraphy beyond the very structure of Chinese characters.

Lastly, having introduced humour and nihilism into language, and bodily parts and gestures into characters, Seng'an manages to territorialise his textual fragments and shorter names into a physical environment of his own choice and a specific material, stone.

Seng'an thus acts on three scales: on a micro scale, by exploiting the texture, rhythm, shape of natural rocky conformat-ions, but also, on a mesoscale, by creating inter-visual or deambulatory connections between inscribed locations, and on a macro scale, by re-shaping the sacred landscape of the mountainous region as a whole.

On the left is a Daoist 'true picture' of mount Fengdu, a mountain which correspond to a location on earth (today a city on the upper course of the Yangzi River, but inhabited by spirits place names and indications are inscribed in the bowel-like meanders of the map, which taken as a whole, recalls the fleshy, dismembered calligraphy of Seng'An

Only a Daoist adept which possesses and is able to read such a map can traverse the landscape of Fengdu unharmed.

On the right is a 3D reconstruction of the main cliff at Hongding valley, produced by a collaborative project between the Shandong province archaeological office and Heidelberg University. The project maps sutra carving across China, using aerial photo-graphy, scanning and photogrammetry to record physical landscapes and carved texts.

Both representations below aim at an authenticity of sorts, and are recognised as authoritative by their followers. They construct a tradition of representing the landscape, and provide the basis for further expertise and research.

Just like Seng'An's Buddha Names, they construct a certain cosmology, promote a certain channel of interaction with the landscape, the privileged sense or rather, gesture, be 'climbing, meandering, or 'scanning'.



As for myself and Zhang Qiang, having gone through the alternance of actual fieldwork and fieldwork notes, climbing and sitting, action and report, we too translated our research methodology into a configuration of gestures of our own.



The encounter between myself and Zhang Qiang (march 2008) started at the very free and open level of painting, my landscapes and his figures negotiating the space of pieces which would gradually grow, by additions of Xuan paper leaves as a «cadavre exquis» does, to occupy the whole floor of our shared space in Huangjueping art district, Chongqing city, the previous campus of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute. Landscape painting contains, in a recombined fashion, all calligraphic gestures, the landscapes a «quatre mains» were thus an end run to a calligraphic collaboration which terms still needed to be defined.



Sichuan and its abundant, diverse and extremely inventive rock carved heritage which contains all variations of size, shape and relief one can imagine, served as a playground for our antiquarian endeavours. We would roam through the countryside with our rubbing material, and capture the shapes of imaginary architectures, tomb doors and anthropo-morphic apparitions.

The technique of rubbing consists in applying a sheet of pi paper with longer and more resisting fibers to the rocky surface of a cliff, stele or even small seal stone, to then ink the sheet, and take a life-size copy of the rubbed surface, intaglio lines becoming white, and relief parts, black.

Obviously, while deep intaglio is totally white and high relief, black, there is a whole realm of in-betweenness where the middle grounds, low relief and smooth concavities can only be expressed in shades of grey. Rubbing is thus extremely interpretative, despite it carrying for the literati minds through the centuries a 'superstition of exactitude', as Segalen puts it⁽²⁾.

It is even more so in the rounded, organic, and architectural shapes of Sichuanese rock-cut sculpture.

Rubbing also pushes the antiquarian to dwell in the space he is visiting, to retrace the gestures of past carvers by inking the paper with similar rythms and amplitudes, to look after the sensitive and fragile membrane of paper, to judge of the relative humidity of air, and to react when necessary and readily detach the paper from the rocky surface.

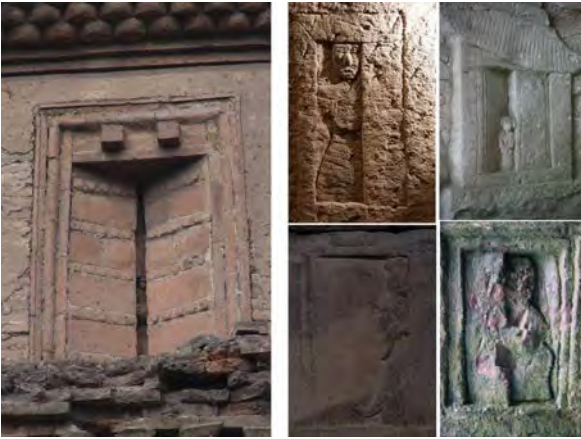
It is a true haptic exercise, where one feels like a blind contemplator, focusing on texture, depth of relief, sharpness of incisions, and where the intensity of rubbing gestures is scaled on the size and roughness of the carving underneath.



Motifs such as the half-open door, repeated as it was through millennia (below are examples from the 2nd century AD to the 13th century AD), in both Buddhist (on the left) and funerary (four examples on the right) contexts, retained our attention.

While the half opened door on each side of a Buddhist stupa reveals a niche where the Buddhas of the four directions can be glimpsed at, in the case of half opened doors carved at the entrance or on the back wall of Han tombs a maid stands at the threshold, a Demeter of sorts leading the soul to the underworld abode of the Queen Mother of the West, who reigns over the afterlife.

Both doors lead to another cosmology, and express their liminal position by playing between the third and second dimension⁽³⁾.



We aimed at positioning such a half-opened door between us two as collaborators, between two consciousnesses or worlds in themselves. The three following attempts, through the years 2008-2009, gradually shift from the free setting of painting, to the gradually more constraining format of the scroll, to the abandonment of colours for ink only, and to the decision of having a fixed position for the writers' duo.



In November 2009, we decided upon one formula, which we coined 'Biface Graphy', where a scroll hung between us two, vertically, the brushes thus not having to compete for a same surface, each one being able to freely occupy a whole side of the paper.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDTnA7Zlodk>



The 'Biface Graphy' studio gradually became more structured, with a wooden frame built between two platforms, allowing us to continue writing indefinitely, or as long as the hundred-meter scrolls would last. The rigid frame did not prevent the scroll, be it the industrial Xuan paper we started with or the hand made silk we ended up using more pervasively, to be extremely sensitive to pressure on both sides and convey the strength and darker spots of encounter as well as the depth of one-sided gestures.



Feeling that the scrolls always needed an explanation, or that they would not stand alone without the writing performance, we collaborated with a Belgian photographer

and filmmaker, Marie-Francoise Plissart. MF had started with the roman-photo format, building up or rather deconstructing narratives between figures and locations (See her book 'Droit de Regard', with a preface by Derrida). She also is known for her architecture and landscape photography. When faced with our work, she immediately proposed to film it, and the movie, which started with just the single writing session, extended to our fieldwork in the mountains of Shandong, on the tracks of Seng'an, and in the sandstone hills of Sichuan, from one Han tomb to another. The movie took a few travels to China for MF, and long nights of mounting, but it still lies unfinished after these years. (now a 50 minutes ours called 'La Pierre et le Pinceau')



The collaboration with MF, pushed us to animate not only strokes, but the scrolls themselves, and the spaces around us. Along with the shooting of the movie with MF, a series of installations which we called 'Open Scroll', brought our collaborative experiment into the industrial spaces of the Chengdu biennale, the urban margins of Chongqing city, the wooden framework of a Miao village house during a foundation sacrifice, a Qing dynasty Temple of Confucius transformed into a tea house after the cultural revolution, the Venice Arsenale and Lido, the cliffs of Linzhou were abstract calligraphy and landscape painting met for the first time in the 5th century AD, or beacon towers of the Great Wall...

A part from opening scrolls, we built more 'writing machines' such as the wooden one first assembled in our Chongqing studio. In Beijing, we structured our whole studio, a black and a white building, around a single bridge with a metal frame and a slot in the middle.



In open-air spaces, we used trees and other improvised frames to hang our writing material on.



As detailed above, our artistic project acts on 3 scales

- The brushes and strokes
- The scroll itself – framed by the size of our bodies and the wooden or metal framework/ writing machine
- The landscape --- only accessible by a far-placed photographer or privileged point of view

At a higher level, and in terms of temporal scale, the project extends over several years, where the interaction between the two calligraphers gains in depth and finesse, and where a common language is approached, rather than created, in an asymptotic fashion.



The cross-fertilisation happened both ways, Seng'An acting as a 'new ancestor', springing out of the black box of history, and his complex enterprise appealed to us as both being apparently the 'workings of one mind'. Following his steps, extending on 20 years of his life in a walkable landscape, the dominant scale of this research was that of a human/// regarding the social structures of language, calligraphy, architecture (monastery ruins?) Seng'an reintroduces a human scale, the scale of an individual intention.

Obviously, the contribution of research into the artistic project is more evident, but the very fact that such a work can now be presented at an archaeology conference says something of what such an enterprise could contribute to archaeological research methodology, fieldwork design and fieldwork report, as well as research outputs.

MATERIALS FOR AN ARTICLE:

Re-contextualising Calligraphy: the Literati Habitus and its Devenirs

Keywords

Literati habitus, Calligraphy, Epigraphy, Intersubjectivity, Intertextuality, Metal and Stone studies.

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1. Introduction/Abstract

Calligraphy is often presented as holding together the spectrum of activities designated in this paper as the 'literati habitus'.

Experiments in Modern Calligraphy have reached an impasse, located somewhere between the deconstruction of characters and abstract expressionism, stuck in a highly individual conception of the artist, and caught in the de-materialising/de-contextualising white box dear to Modernism.

It is argued here that Calligraphy, if it is to be transformed, needs to re-negotiate its relationship with painting, but also with seal carving, rubbing, epigraphy etc, the latter practices having the advantage to bridge the ink line with its material or contextual counterpart.

Moreover, the embedding of literati practice into epistolary relationships or festive gatherings needs to be addressed beyond the individual author, his studio practice and the public display of artistic production.

As a response to the above identified needs, two collaborative artistic projects are presented in this talk, both aiming at solving the divorce between matter and sign, and at re-creating an intersubjective notion of authorship.

The first project is entitled 'Biface Graphy/ Open Scroll' (2009-2015). Led with calligrapher Zhang Qiang, it involves the construction of a new calligraphic language, based on interactive writing and large-scale outdoor installations. The second project, led with geographer Rupert Griffiths and entitled 'Site_Seal_Gesture' (2013-2016) creates a dialogue between architecture and sigillography, through creative writing, mapping, casting and carving.

Both experiments run in parallel with academic research projects on Buddhist epigraphy and funerary art, looking into the unwritten Past to shape the potential *devenirs* of calligraphy. Materiality and context feed back into ink on paper, intertextually expanding the field of calligraphy.

Cross-fertilised results between contemporary artistic practice and the study

of the Past, confront modern Archaeology with the pre-modern Chinese discipline of Metal and Stone Studies, and hope to transform the literati habitus.

2. Literati Art Tripod: Seal Carving, Painting and Calligraphy

Calligraphy has a central and structural position in the panorama of the arts / Fine arts in East Asia. In that respect, it can be compared with Architecture. (my own experience going from calligraphy to architecture and back to calligraphy).

Le récit doit commencer par ma rencontre avec Zhang.

Ou par la rencontre de deux fleuves.

Les eaux vertes du Jialing rencontrent les eaux rouges du Yangzi au coeur brumeux de Chongqing.

Au bord de l'eau, en mars 2008, je rencontre Zhang Qiang.

Je suis alors en Chine depuis deux ans, en quête de mon double, du double de l'architecture, abandonnée derrière moi en Belgique, et j'avait décidé --- j'en suis toujours persuadée --- que ce double était la calligraphie, et que la clef de voûte de ma religion personnelle serait le sceau. Et que mon moyen d'action dans le monde serait la collaboration.

Architecture et Calligraphie. La cathédrale et le rouleau, espace et temps, deux pôles où aux extrémités du monde, s'engouffrent les arts mineurs et majeurs dans un grand mouvement centripète. Respectives mères des arts d'Orient et d'Occident. Infrastructures omniprésentes, fabriques de symboles, réseau de liens intimes entre forme et sens, approximations spirituelles de notre humanité, de notre pensée, coeur, et corps.

Elle seraient mes Leviathan, mon Charybde et mon Silla, et ma chute d'un côté devait être envol de l'autre. Elles ont besoin l'une de l'autre, comblent leur lacunes respectives, ensemble peuvent résoudre le divorce du signe et de la matière.

Après un apprentissage très traditionnel auprès de Rosa Lin, peintre calligraphe taiwanaise, et un passage à la Mecque des arts du lettrés à Hangzhou, je parcours le pays en manque de terre, de montagne, d'énergie sauvage, de virginité.

Je parviens mal à concilier ma recherche de liberté dans le geste, de pacte avec la nature, de profonde introversion, que j'associais depuis toujours à la calligraphie, avec les nouvelles contraintes, sociales avant tout, le caillou domestiqué, la superficialité que je ressentis dans

les milieux de la calligraphie d'aujourd'hui.

En quête de liberté donc, de montagne et de profondeur, me voilà au centre rouge de la Chine, une ville-chaudron, un noeud d'entrailles: Chongqing.

Chongqing n'a pas de mémoire, nul besoin pour elle d'un regard par-dessus l'épaule, car elle est la Méduse. Elle conserve son coeur reptilien, son charme est protohistorique. L'écriture est ici superflue, incarnée, charnelle. Un véritable charnier. La ville sent la chair et la guerre à plein nez.

Je suis obsédée dès mes premiers pas dans la ville par l'idée d'une tour, ma Babel, qui survivrait le déluge imminent. En effet, après un an, les Trois Gorges sont scellées, et mon atelier, inondé.

Je cherche à réinventer la roue, et pour un moment, je repose mes sceaux et pinceaux, pour me lancer dans l'apprentissage de l'imprimerie. Inversion, encre, dédoublement... une seule matrice pour une infinité de copies... et ma roue tourne au rythme de Chongqing, de la paire de cheminées noires du quartier d'artistes à Huangjueping.

Un soir, dans les bas-fonds de Huangjueping, je rencontre Zhang. Dans mon sac j'ai un gros sceau inachevé --- il l'est toujours d'ailleurs. C'est une esquisse datant des Royaumes Combattants. Je n'ai fait qu'entamer la surface de la pierre, et j'ai eu l'idée paralysante, jouissive, de creuser entre les caractères des gorges, canyons, falaises, des plaines et plateaux... qui demeureraient invisibles sur les copies imprimées, et dont l'unique matrice conserverait le secret. Je sors de mon sac ce sceau carré et lourd, comme un magicien de son chapeau un lapin.

Et Zhang comprend. Je sens qu'il comprend mes intentions, et il me semble, à travers une solitude interstellaire, sentir le souffle chaud d'une âme soeur, amie.

Quelques jours après, nos rencontres commencent, se succèdent à un rythme toujours plus serré, et j'apprends à connaître cet homme. Voilà dix ans qu'il répète le même geste, inlassable, il écrit sur des supports agités par des femmes, plâtre ou papier, et sur le vêtement ou le corps même de ces femmes, soie ou peau. Il me fait comprendre que le pinceau est un pénis, le pouvoir, l'autorité, et que son rôle à lui est d'incarner cela même, et de permettre aux femmes, toutes les femmes et n'importe laquelle d'entre elles, de participer à l'acte d'écriture. Simplement, elles ne pourront y participer qu'en tant que

femmes, qu’une seule fois par femme, et elles ne pourront jamais tenir le pinceau. Elle ne pourront qu’en dévier la ligne, en détruire la structure, mais leur traces demeurera en quelque sorte le ‘négatif’ de son acte d’écriture à lui. Son acte ne prendra jamais en compte la femme sur laquelle il s’exerce, car il aura toujours la tête détournée, jamais il ne regardera la femme ou le support. Et jamais il n’écrira deux fois avec la même femme, pour éviter que toute relation se construise.

Je regarde cet homme seul, approchant la cinquantaine, et deux sentiments s’imposent à moi, colère, pitié et empathie. Colère pour la froideur de ses règles, leur totale adhésion au seul coté cruel, autoritaire et systémique de l’écriture, pour son refus total de l’autre qu’il appelle encore ‘collaboration’, pour sa récupération douteuse du féminisme, pour... les corps désarticulés et la toxicité de son oeuvre. Pitié pour cet inlassable exercice qui l’a réduit en machine à écrire et bête de foire à la fois. Empathie pour la perception qu’il a et que je sens commune, des contraintes de l’acte d’écriture et de la distribution des rôles, du besoin d’en exprimer les abus, les limites, d’en explorer les possibilités.

Je me sens responsable de résoudre ce problème, soigner son mal et punir ses actes à la fois. Comme femme calligraphe, peintre et graveuse de sceaux, comme tripode en construction, comme montagne en devenir, je me sens en devoir de changer là quelque chose, absolument. Avec cette mission en tête, et au nom de notre amitié naissante, je lui propose de laisser un moment de côté la calligraphie, trop frontale à mon sens, et lui propose que nous commençons à peindre ensemble. Calligraphie, peinture et sigillographie sont les piliers sur lesquels mon tripode bien campé supporte sa montagne sacrée. La calligraphie seule ne peut changer, si elle ne retrouve le chemin de la montagne, de la matière, du corps.

(Beijing May 2016)

3. Quest for Ancestors: Seng’an Daoyi (6th century AD)

AnDaoyi est l’aboutissement du totemisme collectif, soit un revival totémique après les vagues han-mythiques-impériales et bouddhiques-médiévales-discursives.

En effet anDaoyi, au cours de son acte créateur/ a la recherché de matériaux purs, revient au substrat totémique proprement chinois.

Ce phénomène de retour aux sources se retrouve sous sa forme la plus aboutie sous les qing: etudes des pierres et métaux. Voici pourquoi il est a nos yeux un genre de ‘père fondateur’ de la discipline.

AnDaoyi se plonge donc dans l’inconscient collectif chinois, qu’il réinterprète/enrichit d’elements impériaux et bouddhiques. C’est a la recherché d’un totem valable qu’il se consacre dans ses années mures.

Sans doute les années de jeunesse, d’apprentissage, de grands projets impériaux, de grotte en grotte en contact avec les religions les plus diverse (religions compares), sont le chantier de ce totem final.

Nous, adeptes contemporains des pierres et métaux, suivons ses traces comme celles d’un maitre, ou d’un compagnon.

AnDaoyi, lorsqu’il forge son emblème, dessine une petite machine de capture capable de mettre le doigt sur la “religion des chinois”. C’est au moyen de la montagne et de l’inépuisable ressource calligraphique des idéogrammes, qu’il cristallise un totem. La tribu virtuelle de ses fidèles, auxquels s’adresse le totem, s’élargit a la mesure de ses ambitions: elle est comprise dans le Vide, sous les ordres du Bouddha-Roi...

L’identité reelle d’AnDaoyi, ses origins, sa biographie, nous interesse dans une certaine mesure, en tant que genese de l’oeuvre-totem que nous avons sous les yeux.

“ le grand dieu est la synthèse de tous les totems, et par consequent, le gardien de l’unité tribale.”

Dans l’époque fragmentée, de désintégration du territoire, déclin de la loi.

Chère MF

nous t'accueillons sous le signe de l'invitation au voyage.

notre livre sur ce calligraphe medieval venu du Shandong, la terre des magiciens située au nord-est de la chine, cette 'Bretagne inversée' selon les termes de Segalen, a pris une tournure particulière ces derniers jours, grace aux trésors des bibliothèques et musées parisiens.

nous pouvons a present relier son travail d'épigraphie monumentale, au fin fond d'une vallée aride et pierreuse, au grands mouvements méssianistes et millénaristes qui habitent depuis toujours le coeur des chinois.

Il a realise ce travail au quatrième siècle de notre ere, aux temps du Déclin de la Loi, fin d'un cycle, qui a vu fleurir une multitude de groupuscules prophétiques et apocalyptiques. retire dans sa vallée, ermite et visionnaire, il a voulu revenir au sens premier des idéogrammes, un sens qui saute a nos yeux d'occidentaux.

il a fait de cette vallée son propre corps, a la manière du 'pays intérieur' dont tu as découvert la carte l'autre soir, au coin du feu. sa calligraphie est a prendre comme un chemin du Retour vers la montagne, un passage vers une autre/nouvelle vie.

tu devines que ces découvertes sont intimement liées notre tête de nourrisson au fond des falaises du Sichuan.

—

Le 4 janv. 2012 à 14:06, Lia Wei a écrit:

Chère MF

Je viens de me rendre compte que les VI^e et VII^e siècles sont ceux de notre moine ermite chinois. Je reconstruis une petite séquence parallèle entre le monde romain oriental et sa querelle images, et la chine médiévale et sa calligraphie cachée dans les montagnes:

Des nestoriens arrivent jusqu'en Chine.

Or qui sont les Nestoriens ?

Ce sont des hérétiques par rapport à la foi chrétienne orthodoxe.

Ils prétendent que la vierge n'est pas mère de Dieu, mais qu'elle n'est que le réceptacle de la divinité incarnée. Autrement dit, elles mettent en doute la possibilité que cohabitent les natures divines et humaines du christ.

Elles mettent en doute le fait que la nature divine peut être atteinte à travers ses incarnations ou ses manifestations matérielles.

Les Nestoriens en compagnie d'autres hérésies, lancent le grand mouvement de l'Iconoclisme. C'est le plus grand débat sur les arts visuels de tous les temps, mélangé à des guerres, des épidémies, des famines, des séismes, contemporain de la religion dernière-née : l'Islam.

Or à ce moment-là, les paysans de l'empire byzantin, de la Grèce, des balkans, de l'Asie mineure, du proche-orient, de l'Égypte... adorent les images peintes au point de les réduire en poudre et d'en consommer les pigments, le plâtre, la matière même !

Et cela exactement de la même manière dont notre moine An Dao Yi tente d'incarner son Dieu à l'aide d'Idéogrammes revisités, les mêmes idéogrammes décomposés et recomposés en suites talismaniques sur des petits papiers pliés, brûlés, et consommés par le fidèle. Le même fidèle grimpera le long des idéogramme, touchera la chair de la pierre comme on ausculte une peau de dinosaure, et en aspirera une petite poussière immortelle. Nous savons que les pigments de la peinture de paysage (cinabre, etc...) entrent dans la composition de nombreux « médicaments », notamment la « poudre du manger-froid » (à traduire en chinois par « les cinq pierres/ dispersion »). Les ermites qui ingéraient cette poudre sacrée composée de pierres broyées ressentaient une chaleur terrible, ils leur fallait se déshabiller et courir en tout sens pour évacuer la drogue.

Les icônes sont brisées, les visages effacés, remplacés par des croix, des animaux, des feuilles de vignes.... Les moines et les peintres ont les yeux percés, les mains coupées ou les doigts brûlés.

En Chine, les monastères bouddhistes sont pillées, détruits, les ermites se retirent loin dans la montagne et se disent « peuple-graine ».

Puis l'amour des icônes reprends, après plus d'un siècle de persécutions : Les images vraies, comme le Mandyion ou le suaire, ou la vierge peinte par saint-Luc, étaient considérés comme les prototypes, modèles de l'icône. Le rapport entre le sacré et sa représentation existait dans la matière, sous la forme des écrits et des images, qui n'étaient que le « sixième et dernier degré de l'Image » (après « Le fils, image du père », « la connaissance, image des actes de Dieu », « l'homme, imitation de Dieu », « le monde, créé par les Ecritures », et « le futur, projection de la pensée »)

La généalogie des images, des rapports de l'image projetée à son créateur et source, est réaffirmée face à la révolte iconoclaste, et les icônes en sortent plus fortes et définies, mais aussi plus abstraites et arbitrairement liées à la réalité que jamais. Les icônes reprennent leur place face au texte, à son égal, et leur participation au rituel est obligatoire.

De la même manière, après la période troublée des ces quelques siècles-là, le langage calligraphique se stabilise, trouve ses canons et sa forme classique aboutie.

Quel est l'enjeu ?
Les images doivent-elles être vénérées en leur matière, ou simplement relayer l'attention vers Dieu ?
Comment sont structurées les images, quel est leur véritable contenu, comment sont-elles reliées les unes aux autres ?
Le fidèle est-il absorbée dans l'image même, ou aspiré vers un ailleurs ?
A quel moment la matière doit-elle s'effacer pour mener l'âme vers Dieu ?
Est-ce la composition des caractères qui importe, ou leur support, ou le divin auquel ils mènent ?
A quel divin mènent-ils et par quel chemin ?
La seule contemplation des caractères donne-t-elle accès au divin même sans qu'ils soient lisibles ?

CHAPTER 2 focuses on the interactions between the text’s materiality, and its semantic content.

To us, to the readers who only have access to dim traces on the cliffs, the primordial event of writing remains out of reach, and so does the hypothetical vision preceding it, as well as the way in which this text was supposed to be ‘read’. Seng’An himself, by organising such a textual scenery, may have confounded miraculous vision and sacred textual account all at once, thus creating the vision himself for a potential viewer. In those multifarious mountain sites, the textual interplay created by Monk An between the text and its audience, remains an unsolved enigma. The author of these texts is dead, leaving the text at his readers’ mercy, at the mountain’s mercy.

We do not see Seng’An’s legacy in the further development of Buddhism, and Calligraphic art. History remains mute about him. The few texts he has written, the Buddha names he invented, sticked to the rock they were originally carved on. Very few rubbings, no printed copies, and rare mentions among the antiquarians resulted in a ‘zero kilometer’ diffusion of the monk’s calligraphy. We would like to re-start history from the crossroads where Seng’An was forgotten.

Among the groups who were interested in the production and conservation of sūtra texts in the 6th century, some voices delivered unexpected messages. The text’s content and style were not yet standing for doctrinal distinctions, but were rather the fact of individual eminent monks with their group of followers⁽⁴⁾. Individual statements crept in the mass of carved texts, enjoying instantaneously the permanence and monumentality conferred by the mountains. Seng’An may be one of a kind, or, as we will see, one among the few who experimented their own style and prose.

This chapter will explore Seng’An’s own method of transcription of Indic texts into engraved calligraphy. His choices will be replaced in the wider context of long-established set of ritual practices around the act of writing. Translation theory and Literacy studies will constitute our main tools for analysis.

ESOTERISATION

First movement : the presence of the teachings replaces the Buddha, and the texts themselves stand for his body, or his funerary monument, the stupa. Buddhist sūtras, also known as « body of the law », are not only teaching textbooks, but also as a relic associated with the speech of the Buddha, thus object of ritual praxis ⁽⁵⁾. Shorter, indestructible groups of syllabs known as dharani often form the core of a sūtra, standing along written comments or indication for their manipulation⁽⁶⁾. Merit-

making acts as a motivation for printing and multiplying sacred scripture and Buddha images. In this transitory phase, the texts are thus fragmentary, symbolic, summarised. During the displacement and translation process, texts are subject to loss or diminution, and often what ended up in China was ‘a summary of a summary’. Moreover, their rearrangement can lead to change and invention of new religious forms. They can help syncretize buddhist thought to indigenous religious forms, integrating local divinities into a greater system. Orzech⁽⁷⁾ describes this process an ‘esoterisation’ of the text, the total teaching of which could now only be attained through initiation, or as a ‘mandalisation’ of the text, a stripping of it down to its esoteric essence. Esoteric teachings, according to Kukai, cannot easily be expressed in writing, but they can be completely captured and revealed in mandalas, the simple sight of which can bring one to Buddhahood. Dharani and mandalas can be the elements of ever-changing compositions, which can gain integrality and be systematised even if the transmission is incomplete.

Then comes a canonic phase of systematic production of integral texts, seen as teaching materials which are thus readable and didactic, and part of a liturgy (7-8th century). Texts are hierarchised and writing acts regulated by control over transmission. Secularisation processes are at work, too, reconverting religious values into aesthetic, or political ones. A second movement echoes our first stage of textualisation : it is the re-embodiment of the word into a divine person. This last movement can also be seen a process of esoterisation (9th century): here, the metaphor of the Prajna-Paramita as ‘Mother of all Buddhas’ becomes a goddess which has her own iconography and cult⁽⁸⁾. Wenzel already suggested that the concept of wisdom enjoyed the same status as some of the most popular salvific Buddhas, and that it may have been invoked orally in the same way these Buddhas usually are. And we have seen how the metaphor of the mother was already present in texts such as the Renwang Jing. Moreover, in some of the carved sūtra passages, prajñā-pāramitā is linked to the discussion of the real attributes (shixiang 實相) of the Buddha⁽⁹⁾.

So where do we situate Seng’An within these dynamics ? Quite similarly, Seng’An extracted meaning from the sutras, in the form of fragmentary passages, in the form of names and isolated sounds, creating his own esoterica words. In a second movement Seng’An re-embodies these creations into Buddha bodies, and specific locations.

A PROPHET IN HIS OWN LAND

CHAPTER 3 is about the act of carving from the living rock. From the landscape’s scale to the raw material, with a peculiar attention given to gestures, circulation, and views. Why was all this made possible only by the mountains, those mountains ? How did Seng’An build the relation between his brush, and the metal chisel ? And how are we recording this once again, back on paper ?

Spatial symbolism as analytical grid, thus applying concepts such s ‘sacred cosmologies’ or ‘pilgrimage’ on a site, has brought a revolutionary, inclusive, integral view on sites of religious activity. However, once the main narrative has been set, it threatens to become an all-encompassing, conventional explanation to the physical setting of religious art. Alternative

interpretative frameworks will be evoked in this chapter, which can re-orientate the observation of sacred sites.

Some are more directly connected with the body of the observer, thereby with the body of the makers and audience for the carvings. Others are function within the space of the pictorial representation. The historical context for the development of the notion of landscape in Chinese art, offers an example of how visual arts and religious doctrine evolve in mutual relation. Feedback effects of spatial representation on the Religious movements of the 6th century will be considered.

The emotional experience of space is fundamental to landscape painting's ‘yuanjin’ notion, that cannot be rationalised into the laws of perspective. Individual volumes interacting with the subject and interrelated in the five directions, never being objectified, that is the logic of the site as it is chosen and viewed by AnDaoyi's eye. Measuring, mapping, rubbing, photographing the site... All these movements do not encompass the essence of the site, and are unable to restitute the ritual field's efficiency. To describe a Holy Site, that is our present aim.

Engraved calligraphy remains central in this evolution, as ‘an uninscribed geographical site cannot be considered as a landscape’⁽¹⁰⁾. Conversely, ‘The inscription has no autonomous existence, but it is complementary to the site’. Our grid of analysis shall be based on the same constitutive elements that guided AnDaoyi's calligraphic choices. While studying the carvings, the researcher has to select his point of view and quantify the human intervention on the site. But an infinity of versions coexist in the experience of the site.

Prehistoric studies, since they cannot rely on written evidence, have developed a specific discipline called Paleospeleology⁽¹¹⁾, which studies anthropic appropriation of cave or open-air rock art sites. Wide open surfaces, protruding rocks offer spectacular locations where to see or to be seen, while difficult passages induce a selective effort for the wanderer. Technical information thus gives us an insight of the dweller’s project and arises questions of metaphorical topography, memory and transmission.

Seng’An as an hybrid figure between craftsman and literati.

A calligrapher engages into the reproduction of past gestures, previously recorded by the craftsman into stone. The ancient calligraphic models are only accessible through rubbings : imprints of stone carvings on inked paper. Antiquarians and literati traditionally collect these documents, often without a direct contact with the stone. This separation between the art of writing, and its material sources, mainly epigraphy on stone, has gradually drawn a strict cultural boundary drawn between the carver and the calligrapher, in the Chinese conception of ‘Fine Arts’. By looking at literati art as the cultural strategies of a group to transform matter into sign, we can understand how crucial it is for the literati to constantly revive the bond between paper and stone.

4. Correspondance MF

- 31 mai, chère MF :

l’archéologie : tenter de comprendre ces capsules catapultées en terre, en cendres que sont les sépultures de tous ceux qui vécurent avant nous. A qui s’adresse leur message ? si nous nous plaçons du côté des lecteurs, du côté récepteur, alors nous endossons le visage de la mort elle-même.

L’au-delà et le futur se confondent dans l’effort du tombeau.

Dans nos villes nécropoles à la transcendance dure, les vivants ne sont plus qu’un hommage aux morts.

Nos tombes en dur abritent les monnaies accumulées, disques de métal,

Ou alors les flux fous que nos druides lécanomanciens lisaient sur les rides de l'eau et dans le flou des miroirs,...

Ces courants algorithmiques au fil desquels nous nous laissons aller.

Pourquoi s'intéresser à l'écriture ? elle si cruelle, qui nous a séparés de la vie par un voile entrouvert.

Pourquoi lire des traces aux intentions supposées, alors que nos gestes mûrs et pulsatils brûlent d'accompagner le monde dans ses révolutions ?

De quels personnages mystérieusement absents notre ligne tracera-t-elle les contours ?

Où sont les personnes quand leur corps est là et leur esprit ailleurs ?

Quels signes sauront conjurer le néant mais exalter le vide ?

—

22 mai

Chère MF,

J'invoque ma formule-talisman :

Ce que j'ai à partager avec toi nous ramène à un vieux duel entre Arts du Lettré et Architecture, Artistes d'Orient et d'Occident. Nous verrons que si les réponses divergent, les défis se ressemblent.

« Ce peuple de Roues, ce peuple de Fer... » (A.Artaud, Lettre aux disciple de Bouddha, in L'ombilic des Limbes)

J'ai compris entre hier et aujourd'hui

Qu'il existe un âge entre la préhistoire et nous : une Zone de transit très peu pratiquée.

Cette Zone est faite de mouvement, de transformation réversible.

Après la pierre et le bois, matériaux travaillés « à froid », où nous nous limitons à enlever ou ajouter, prélever ou superposer, placer en somme... C'est au tour de la céramique, qui passée par le feu devient Autre, irréversible, comme morte, comme de pierre.

Enfin arrive le métal, seule matière réversible, qui peut accomplir un cycle, fondre, disparaître, changer de forme.

Avec le cycle du métal, s'engrangent tous les cycles.

Le soleil biface sur le chariot à deux roues en mouvement, tiré par le cheval, à Trundholm.

Le disque métallique de la danseuse d'Egtvedt, placé sur sa vulve entrevue au moment de la culbute finale.

La cuve immense de Vix, remplie d'hydromel, où la défunte lévite, perchée sur un chariot aux roues tournoyantes, circumambulant autour des tumulus coniques.

Disque de Nebra comme une boussole vivante.

Conjonctions de mouvements circulaires.

Dialogue avec le Ciel, après avoir parlé à la Terre si longtemps.

Nous n'avons pas accès aux récits, mais nous avons les dépôts métalliques volontaires en milieu aquatique, les trésors enfouis dans l'eau, les urnes, les chars entiers ensevelis.

Les objets aussi peuvent être « tués », certains sortent du circuit de la refonte. Ils sont abandonnés à l'eau, ils sont passés au feu, ils sont martelé, découpés, détruits. Après avoir été extrait de la terre, réduits en minerai, fondus, moulés, battus, mouillés, polis... voilà qu'ils accomplissent comme un trajet inverse, un « retour » qui n'est pas celui de la refonte. Seuls quelques fragments de ces épées, torques, chaudrons, miroirs,... sont choisis pour reposer au fond de l'eau.

Les associations muettes d'objets, les corps manipulés, les membres d'animaux soigneusement mis en scène... sont nos seuls interlocuteurs.

Si longtemps inhumés, les corps sont incinérés, « solarisés », en dernier recours.

Il n'en reste que des paillettes d'os secs et légers, comme une réserve de céréales.

Avant cela, ils sont exposés, décharnés, boucanés, décapités, tronçonnés, brûlés, pillés.

Mais aussi, ils sont sélectionnés. Seule une petite portion de miette d'os est rassemblée dans l'urne.

Les urnes nous parviennent comme des capsules qui ont traversé le temps, qui ont survécu à l'espace, destinées à d'Autres, c'est-à-dire nous, ou d'Autres, dans une ligne croissante de tumuli le long des crêtes, si bien que depuis tout espace habitable ils sont visibles, comme un nouvel horizon.

Au même moment, les SHANG, en Chine, de l'autre côté de la steppe, sur leurs chariots, avec leurs chevaux, avec leurs bronzes,...eux, inventent l'écriture.

Ou plutôt Soudain, l'écriture apparaît... comme une évidence.

Ce qui était laissé au hasard, aux accidents de la roche, demeurerait en deçà du signe écrit. Ce qui était laissé au rythme, comme une trace de pas ou des pointillé sur une céramique, se projetait au-delà, comme une plainte machinale.

Mais la question qui est posée, volontairement, les yeux au ciel, la question qui concerne les actes humains au résultat aléatoire, les actes qui appellent le projet, l'intention...

Cette question qui se faufile entre les craquelures de la carapace et le fouillis de créatures coulées sur le bronze, cette question nécessite une écriture.

Cette écriture est une suite de gestes. Une séquence dans le temps ou l'espace, avec une main, des traces de pas, un petit enclos, une substance animale, une goutte de liquide, des yeux sans visage, des têtes sans corps...

elle s'adresse à une entité invisible, au moyen d'une trace visible.

Un Geste, véritablement, unit la matière au monde invisible, et ce geste choisit de s'exprimer par l'écrit aussi.

Je dis aussi, car les chaudrons sont là : complexe résultat d'une inversion dans la terre ou la pierre d'un volume à assembler, de motifs à préciser. Un projet. Et sur le projet, une dédicace, inséparable de l'objet.

Un geste d'écrire inséparable du geste de fabriquer.

Les deux interdépendants, comme une nécessité. Un message au complet.

Des puissances qui coexistent.

Que dire de la peinture, la calligraphie, le sceau ? Aucune de ces trois disciplines ne transforme littéralement la matière.

Le couteau sur la pierre à sceau se contente de prélever un peu de poussière lithique. Bien entendu, ces cicatrices seront enduites de pâte de cinabre.

Le pinceau sur le papier se contente de déposer un peu de terre, un peu de bois calciné. Bien sûr, à l'aide de l'eau et de l'air, les particules pénètrent le papier où elles demeurent emprisonnées.

Ces lignes et aplats gravés, dessinés, peints, écrits... sont-elles si différentes que celles que l'on peut voir dans les grottes préhistoriques ? n'est-ce pas là aussi juxtaposition de matières froides, qui n'entrent pas en réaction l'une avec l'autre ?

Je nous propose de visualiser ce triangle du lettré sous l'aspect d'une boussole. Comme si ses parties interdépendantes nous permettaient de relier les éléments, pas directement entre eux, mais à des niveaux secondaires, avec la dérive inévitable que l'histoire a entériné.

Je rappelle les cinq éléments : métal, bois, eau, feu, terre.

À présent, que voulons nous ?

Déjà n'oublions pas le rouleau. Cet élément mobile, discursif, qui ressemble à un bâton, à une longue vue. Un élément fermé ou ouvert, vu ou caché.

Nous pensons que des liens peuvent être recréés. A partir de notre triangle, mais vers ses sources, les révélations de chaque matière, ses fusions et distances d'avec les autres. L'écriture est un élément, un pacte, un contrat, un chemin, une danse, un ADN partagé, une transmission, un nouveau-né, un ancêtre.

Depuis sa forme désagrégée, le paysage, à sa forme hyperstructurée, le sceau, la calligraphie se décline comme autant d'états de conscience de l'être, du plus explicite au plus abstrus, du

hasard exponentiel de la nature physique à une marche forcée au plus machinal des rythmes.

Revenons-en à notre Age des métaux, qui par un pas de géant au-dessus de la civilisation classique, au-dessus des âges médiévaux, des temps modernes... débouche sur notre temps. Un véritable envol. Depuis le geste qui a unit l'homme au ciel, jusqu'à la massification, la systématisation des gestes. Depuis le meurtre passionné d'un homme par un autre à la guerre totale, l'holocauste. Comme si le tribut demandé à la vie, la part d'énergie arrachée au carbone, nous menait depuis lors doucement à la mort.

« Nous menait à la mort » en barque ou en chariot. en barque tirée par les oiseaux d'eau, ou en chariot tiré par les chevaux. Un coffre, un caisson, une chambre, une cabane... mais en mouvement. Avec quelle énergie se déplace-t-elle ? Avec le corps de la « gorgone de Vix » défunte plongée dans l'hydromel de la cuve, posée sur le chariot. Avec le long processus de calcination des corps, jusqu'à ce que chaque particule utile et vivante ait rendu l'âme, solarisée.

Je pense à des véhicules lancés à toute vitesse, pourvus de réservoirs à énergie vivante. Je pense au charbon ou au pétrole qui n'est sont du carbone fossile, c'est à dire, des particules de vie arrachés à grand-peine à l'atmosphère du monde par les branchies, membranes, poumons, tout organe de dinosaure, insecte, algue bleue... Tout être vivant qui a vécu sur cette terre laisse une trace organique derrière lui. Les réserves de carbone du monde sont cette matière vivante qui est morte un jour.

Comment lier plus intimement au travail du métal cette idée de saisir la vie, ses relations, ses transformations ?

Un exemple : comment fait-on de l'acier à partir du fer ? On entoure le fer de cuir, végétaux et autres matières organiques... et on brûle cela, afin que les particules de carbone, particules de « vie libérée », ou « vie solarisée », s'attachent au fer et en modifient la structure, le rendant plus dur que jamais, mais aussi, attention, plus cassant.

Mais nous avons en tête ce moteur qui tourne, ces engrenages. Nous avons une horloge suisse en forme de char complexe, qui tourne autour du tumulus comme la lune autour de la terre. Nous avons la divination et les récurrences. Nous avons de savant et précis calculs, et le hasard nourricier.

Nous avons ces groupes d'objets métalliques muets, ces gestes qui demandent à être reconstitués. Ces enchaînements de gestes qui lorsqu'ils ont rencontré la pensée articulée, ont cessé de n'être que le prolongement de notre bras, pour devenir vecteur de matérialisation de notre esprit.

Nous voudrions qu'ils parlent, de notre grand divorce, du début de l'histoire, de nos discours sans fondement, de la matière face à nous, vivante ou morte, continue, et en nous, et du lien entre celles-ci, de la limite inconcevables qui nous sépare de la matière, limite qui disparaît avec la mort. Limite qui disparaît avec la fin des gestes. Mais qui subsiste sous forme de petites poches d'énergie en attente, de réserves réversibles, dans une conscience surhumaine du passé si lointain où la vie avait fonctionné au CO2, du futur où la vie devra à nouveau se passer d'oxygène, nourriture du feu et des humains.

—

Chère Mf ,

Je me penche ces jours-ci sur la copie et le faux.

Nous en avons un peu parlé, et je t'ai entendu à plusieurs reprises m'avouer que tu t'y intéresses de près : voici quelques réflexions qui peuvent nous être utiles à ce sujet.

Je me souviens qu'en regardant avec toi les résultats de l'exercice de calligraphie sur verre, à pekin, nous nous étions fait la réflexion que nos lignes respectives se ressemblaient, ou s'étaient rapprochées terriblement. Nous avons parlé d'une fusion dangereuse.

L'idée d'un exercice rapproché, en miroir, rejoint la nouvelle sur les « neurones-miroirs » : dans le pur réflexe physique, le geste d'un autre engendre chez l'observateur un stimulus correspondant à l'organe concerné par ce même geste, en lui.

Je lis un « dialogue entre le peintre et son disciple », où ce dernier situe l'essentiel, au moment de copier, dans la proximité visuelle entre le modèle et l'imitation en cours (la tête, au mieux, ne pivote pas sur le cou, de sorte que le

regard glisse de l'un à l'autre suivant une transition imperceptible, un mouvement minimal).

Tu sais, sans l'avoir vu de tes yeux, comment s'apprend la calligraphie : en imitant très minutieusement les estampages de stèles exemplaires, dans ce même mouvement de va-et-vient.

De grands scandales, des certificats d'expertises, des acheteurs paranoïaques et surtout, des faussaires de génie scandent l'histoire de l'art depuis la renaissance.

Avant cela, tant chez les antiques, que chez nos artistes du moyen-âge, la copie est vénérée au même titre que l'original, avec tout au plus une insistance sur la matière employée (du bronze au marbre, par exemple), sans plus.

Il semble qu'en Chine cet état d'esprit se prolonge jusqu'à présent.

Ce sont les vraies reliques, en commençant par le Saint Suaire, qui font les premières l'objet d'une quête de l'authentique. Les villes-cathédrales se disputent très tôt des morceaux de croix, des têtes ou des membres de saints. Mises bout à bout, les fragments de la vraie croix pourraient couvrir une forêt, et on ne compte plus les saints tricéphales, aux dix mille bras. L'obsession demeure, cependant, et il faut VOIR, à travers les reliquaires scellés, à travers les toutes premières vitrines en cristal de roche.

Ces objets ont touché le corps du saint, ils en sont l'empreinte, en transmettent la substance.

Désormais seul le Vatican aura le droit de consacrer les reliques, aucun objet ne pouvant être déclaré tel sans son assentiment, auquel cas il serait déclaré faux. Bien avant, au moment où la religion du Livre est née, ce sont les écrits des Pères du désert, témoignages de leurs révélations, qui furent déclarés apocryphes.

Impossible de ne pas penser à notre moine épigraphe, décidé, au moment où le taoïsme se constitue en religion, à rendre la révélation à son origine, la montagne, source des idéogrammes vivants. Déjà, sa calligraphie n'est plus digne d'être transposée, érigée en stèles aux quatre coins de l'empire, estampée et copiée par des milliers de mains, pendant des milliers d'années.

Impossible de ne pas penser à l'estampage, obsession du scalp, lente consommation du grain de la pierre par des calligraphes avides de modèles, de peau fraîche, de coups de ciseau encore lisibles.

Nous parlons de partage des sources, de transmission, et Françoise lorsque je la revois il y a quelques jours, déverse sur moi son aigreur à ton/notre égard. « J'ai passé ma vie à démystifier, dit-elle, je ne peux plus longtemps la/vous voir inventer un Chine, fantasmer une Chine. » Sa Chine. Un rêve somme un secret bien gardé lui échappe, cela lui est insupportable : elle se sent dépossédée. Dans notre réseau d'images elle voit l'oubli, le mensonge, la pensée désarticulée. Françoise droite comme une stèle nous voit d'un mauvais œil déterrer les apocryphes, rendre à la montagne ses révélations illisibles, laisser à l'entre-deux le soin d'exprimer ce qui n'est qu'une rencontre, une relation. Terrible relation où elle se donne sans accepter de recevoir.

Cette histoire d'amour entre toi, la lumière de la Chine, moi et lui, Françoise et sa stèle...

Cela ressemble à une peur du vide, ou une peur de l'espace soudain dégagé, lorsque les caractères rendus à eux-mêmes réécrivent la Chine.

Longue et dure fascination des idéogrammes, de leur apprentissage, de leur reproduction en fil continu. Etroite conjuration du savoir, des raisons de tel choix de lignes pour exprimer telle pensée. Un instinct du tueur en série, celui qui voudrait saisir la nature,... mêlé à l'espoir d'un taxidermiste. Une collection de masques effrayants, pour zhang.

Un initié pieds et poings liés.

Mais aussi : un chasseur qui rend hommage à sa proie, des figures vivantes sur une paroi mouvante. Plutôt que de les confier à la grotte profonde et stable, ces lignes saisies entre la vie et la mort : les inscrire au fond du cœur des hommes. Oui, comme un adn. Tous les caractères qui doivent être conservés et transmis, au-delà de ce que la reproduction nous accorde comme continuité. La parade amoureuse d'un oiseau jardinier.

5. Fieldwork/Writing --- registering/spatialising

1) Register directly a sensible experience. Avoid expression and its bias.

"Directly" contains the whole fact: to connect oneself totally on the brush, to forget both the self and the brush. What is the ultimate purpose of such a perfect tool as the calligraphic brush? It was certainly not conceived only as a source of successful aesthetic products.

The brush is hybrid to our flesh, along with the scent of ink, and the silken membrane. They form the "Treasures", like precious appendixes, or immortal organs.

2) Spatialise the resulting scroll, confront it to existing fields, such as mountains, great halls, or crowds.

As strokes cut, frame, structure our mineralised oriental atmosphere; we avenge and cut the stroke itself. We change it into space, make it swell. Nostalgic of colour and space, we inject them into the calligraphic stroke. As they do for vegetal hybrids, we cut its head and roots. Its plain trunk spins through many meters of scroll.

Without its swollen head and toes, its anchorage and back-thoughts, here it is, in suspense.

Why do we find correspondence between our attempts on inventing something "else", and the most ancient known taoist rituals on mount Fengdu?

We actually have no distance to tradition. Cruelly separated from it, or totally embedded in, we don't have the necessary distance to analyse our cultural DNA. We would prefer not to.

Left-over tools and structures, the Great Outside space, sensual experience..., we wish they could jump on, ride on calligraphy's unicorn back, let it breathe, enlarge its oppressive engine-like rhythm, the life-machine, and open the ten thousand alternatives to the strokes succession.

Enregistrer, c'est choisir. Un lieu, un geste : la ligne n'est que l'ensemble des points coïncidant entre le lieu et le geste. Qu'est-ce qui mérite d'être enregistré ? contenu dans un réceptacle, véhicule matériel ?

En fin de compte, c'est la pertinence de la trace retenue, le sens dont elle a pu être investie, car telle morphologie, tel tracé, telle situation l'a trouvée adéquate, suffisamment significative pour se faire réceptacle et véhicule d'une pensée.

Des qualités physiques « remarquables », conjuguant formations rocheuses rares, saillantes ou distinctes, un nœud dans circulation d'air, d'eau ou d'ondes sonores à tel endroit, ou le point de rencontre entre le mouvement du corps humain possible, nécessaire ou confortable : voici nos premières données.

Cette notion de sources primaires, directement liées à l'observation, l'expérimentation, et à l'origine du savoir, est au cœur de tout projet de recherche. Cette notion est bien plus pertinente à nos yeux que la notion d'« invention ».

Si une société ne peut se définir que par rapport à la nature, plus cette nature est lointaine, faible, interstitielle et incomplète, moins la société a accès aux données primaires, source de

régénération, de nouvelle naissance, de création en somme.

Plus cette nature est mise en exergue et exemplifiée, comme c'est le cas pour les cultures extrêmes orientales, si précoce et radicales dans leurs efforts d'« abstraction vivante », plus la distinction est floue entre sources primaires et secondaires.

L'inespérée fusion, l'union de l'homme à son environnement, se trouve à portée de main, mais le poids de la jurisprudence a alourdi nos pas. La quête fatiguée d'une Nature originelle aveugle nos choix : toutes les traces sont bonnes à prendre alors, illisibles et/car insensées.

La peinture de paysage représente l'un des défis culturels les plus pointus et diffus à la fois que s'est lancé l'homme. Quels paramètres choisir ? la forme de la montagne ou l'abre, la lumière ou le vent, la personne du peintre lui-même ou son modèle ? la ligne tracée doit rendre justice à la montagne, mais elle ne peut l'imiter. Saisir son esprit sans copier sa forme. C'est encore une relation qui unit l'homme à la montagne, qui se joue ici.

Encore une fois ici, le vocabulaire complexe des « cas » enregistrés, des modes d'expression du caractère « montagne », caractère toujours changeant, appartenant aux possibles qui refusent la fixité et l'inscription, la « gravure », le sort des communs mortels...

Ce vocabulaire constitue un précieux héritage, une trousse à outils aux infimes variations...

A savoir si la variation appartient à l'outil ou à la montagne elle-même.

Au peintre qui tient ce pinceau ou aux conditions de l'expérience.

Biopolitique = mesure de la vie. Comment rendre aux mesures ce qu'elles ont de culturel et d'humain, et par la même occasion, rendre au hasard sa puissance généreuse ?

Comment décider quand arrêter l'expérience, les éléments non significatifs, qui se passent d'enregistrement ??

les ou le détail négligés par l'enregistreurs deviennent les « graines » de la création future, comme les quelques rescapées d'une apocalypse hollywoodienne.

La paroi devenue surface, l'interstice devenu espace, l'oubli nourrissant le nouveau savoir, la création.

Notre « littérature secondaire », quant à elle, reprend tous les tracés, leurs effets, leurs ultérieures modifications, leur mise en relation. Une variété de tracés réunis dans cet espace, le temps d'une exhibition temporaire, expression d'un « mouvement » dont les membres sont unis par un réseau de relations, est un palimpseste en soi, une « grotte ». nous sommes reconnaissant à la grotte qui comme un chaudron au potage séculaire, demeure garant du « bon ou mauvais goût », du goût « orthodoxe ». et à la fois nous craignons cet espace, étouffant aussitôt, c'est pourquoi le transformer, y peindre, c'est une question de survie.

6. Biface Graphy: Building a Language

After Zhang Qiang's own experience in de-constructing calligraphy, ours was an experiment in constructing a language.

First Manifest
Chongqing-Brussels

Is there no female calligrapher ?

So was the question we had to answer last week, while we where visiting the « calligraphy » exhibition in Brussels royal museum of ancient art. The puzzled couple of middle aged b' Belgian citizens had just had an overview of China's most influent masters of calligraphy, from its very origin to its last representatives.

Is there no common writing ?

In dance, theatre and opera, male and female partners cooperate in an harmonious way, why can't we find such an example in calligraphic art ? Until today, the problem of participation of women to the act of writing as been pointed out, or them replacing the male in its dominant position.

We think that opening of the scriptural space means a face-to-face between men and women, and therefore do we set such a dispositive :

We stand on a same surface, our eyes fixed on the same sheet of paper, simultaneously we write, express ourselves, at the same time we mutually care for the other's line, we follow it and write together.

What is Biface Shufa ?

On 11 september 2009 at home in Chongqing, looking at some exercises of recto-verso writing in archaic logograms, we were seduced by their complex structure and ink variation. Conjunction in space awaited for meeting in time.

We thus hung a paper scroll and let it run in-between us, immediately trying to write on it in a strictly simultaneous way.

The fragile layer of paper as a white veil conveys light, warmth, and the other's breath.

Only the heavy black ink of the other, neat as mine on the soft surface, is allowed to pass through, only the brushes hair, to touch.

The pen follows its own mechanism, until the other's stroke appears : attraction, unexpected reaction, sudden distance, an infinite scale of variation and possible combinations is left half-opened to us.

The result of this relation on paper is essentially out of control.

Directing our attention on the meeting brushes, rather than on the appearing strokes, lead us to a more fluent rhythm, out of preconceived patterns.

Further discoveries and accidents await along the coming experiments.

What does Biface Graphy brings to Calligraphy SHUFA ?

The prevalent process brings calligraphy art to and end, or a new beginning. Here the Method FA who led the brush for thousand years, is no more a closed corpus of techniques and attitudes.

Biface SHUFA is not re-designing ideograms, it is not looking for an abstract rendering of calligraphy's beauty. It escapes from linguistic fixed structures but still expresses a relation between two distinct ensembles.

It also can, with pleasure, take a distance from heroic creators of limited expressive tools. Selfish empires of meaning sprout

everyday among the growing crowd of want-to-be Him, whose initiatives contribute to elaborate new dispositifs/apparatuses of control and loneliness.

With pleasure thus we propose our own version of the Book SHU.

(Brussels, 22 october 2009)

Ku Yishu interview

A: Traditional Chinese calligraphy is an extremely personal cultural expression of the literati's that is not supposed to be participated in by its spectator, but only to be appreciated and eventually evaluated by the connoisseur. «Biface Graphy» has overcome this rule, since one's movement determines his partner's behaviour, as in a dialogue or in an opera play. Do you feel that this attitude is the basis of your performance art?

B: Gatherings and common poetic creation actually represent a major part of the characteristic activities in the Chinese literati's culture. Both of us have agreed in considering the literati as an anthropologic category, a «kind» thus submitted to reciprocity. Mutual influence is a ground principle in anthropology, it represents the postmodern alternative to causal relations and allows an intersubjective experience such as «Biface Graphy».

A: As calligraphers, how would you describe the difference between your experiment and traditional calligraphy's ordered process? Chinese calligraphers made up a mental image of the graph to come and its position in the pictorial space before the act of writing,, but it looks like you two rely only on hazard while writing, is it?

B: Design has declared the death of art, and sociology's destructive side effects have turned the whole creative chain into a response to the consumer's need. Chinese ideograms, as the main tool of the literati, who is also the representative of the whole bureaucratic machine, are an early product of a chain of interdependence. While digging deep into our ideographic heritage, we hope to recall a state of things that relied on gesture rather than on effects.

A: According to the say «Calligraphy and Painting are originally one», could «Biface Graphy» be considered as abstract ink painting rather as an alternative to ideographic writing?

B: In its materialist acception, abstract ink painting has turned the «Literati's Four Treasures» into mere tools, subject to formal experimentation. «Biface Graphy» is an attempt in recovering the ritual gesture that lies beneath the «Treasures».

A: «Biface Graphy»'s writing process and «Open Scroll» sessions regularly happen to exit the literati's studio enclosed universe and invade open air landscapes or man-made architecture. How does the outside space influences your work?

B: We accurately chose every location. Each of these should in our view, be a self-standing example of totality, should it be an attempt to grasp the otherworld, such as in necropoles and Daoist ritual fields, or be an invisible projection, such as in the immemorial tradition of landscape painting.

A: Your making use of hundred meters of soft silken scrolls and the way you display them in open air is far from traditional calligraphy's bi-dimensional

secluded surface. How would you explain such a difference?

B: The scroll's structure allows our writing process to rely on uninterrupted gesture, letting hands lead our minds. Discrimination towards the artisan is a fundamental feature of Chinese literati's culture: accepting the priority of gesture is our way to denounce how literati's art has declined in maintaining its refusal of such a primary relationship.

A: The legends tell us that when Fuxi created ideographic writing, «it rained cereals and demons were relegated to obscurity», finally separated from human kind. Writing's mysterious power has been systematised into Daoist talismanic writing. How did you manage to give such a mysterious taste to «Biface Graphy»?

B: Hexagrams are the result of divination based on binary rule, and ideographic writing is but the historically contingent, arbitrary choice of such oracle responses. In the divination process, we have a question, an answer, and a third part which is played by nature's hazardous processes.

A: Your strategy, apart from destroying the characters structure through processual modification, includes attempts in gathering various domains such as ink painting, installation and conceptual art. It looks like you are not simply trying to produce beautiful calligraphic strokes, but rather to renew the domain we use to call «calligraphy»?

B: Our hope is not only to bring some fresh blood into the art of Chinese calligraphy. We also hope that our calligraphic attempts would enrich other artistic disciplines and help them revisit neglected branches of art history.

A: You seem to have a peculiar admiration for the epigraphic work of monk An Daoyi. Does this calligrapher from the medieval times has any influence on your work?

B: In Monk An's view, the mountain is not a mere geographical feature. He literally involves it into a dialogue, letting its curves and texture nourish his calligraphy. Furthermore, he assimilates himself to the stone peak, becoming the mountain itself, so that his writing gets an otherworldly taste. The existence of such a character in China's art history is a proof that idealistic attempts have always existed along the mainstream tradition.

A: «Biface Graphy» has been awarded during the Sixth Laguna Art Prize for its installation in the Arsenale, and is participating an open air exhibition on Venice's Lido in september 2012, on the occasion of the International Film Festival. How does a European jury or public understand your work?

B: «Biface Graphy» hopes to refresh Chinese tradition, but it may also help the occidental public to review some mental shortcuts due to so-called «orientalist» thought. Instead of feeding on linguistic discriminating obstacles, it offers a way to understand Chinese calligraphy with ingredients that are accessible to any cultural background.

7. Open Scroll: Context and the Conquest of Space

ONE

We have set our last installation works in two fields that may be viewed as

ruins. The first of them happened in Bishan city's Temple of Culture, now part of Chongqing agglomeration enlarged periphery, while the latest was located in Xijiang, the biggest Miao village in Guizhou province Qiandongnan region.

These two sites both preserved integral traditional architectures through their reconversion into public spaces (teahouse, theatre and local calligraphers associations have replaced the previous ritual and formalised activities of the temple) or touristic attractions (an entry fee is required at the Miao village).

Catching an ephemeral occasion, we participated in these mutating situations.

TWO

In Bishan county small city center, stands this Qing dynasty Temple of Culture (literally Temple of Wen: civilisation, script, ideogram), a Confucian institution centred on annual sacrifices to the master and his disciples effigies. After cults and rites being washed off by Chinese cultural revolution, the empty monumental wooden structure has been preserved by the local culture bureau: it is open everyday as a teahouse to the daily poker playing commoner, and hosts local Sichuan theatre troupes every week-end. Their impoverished performance, without make-up or peculiar dress, is sang by actors in blue mao suit sitting behind a table set on a naked podium.

THREE

Xijiang, the 'thousand families Miao village' is a model ethnic minority village. More than a thousand wooden familial residence nest in a concave valley, densely fitted in between the river on the bottom and the mountain summit on top. The whole organic mass forms a spectacular view for the tourist, which has lead the local authorities to enclose the complex, and build a few open squares with newly assembled features of the local totemic religion.

Chiguzang (literally: eat the drum concealed/interior) is each Miao lineage most important religious feast. The totemic animal of the lineage is celebrated on his venue, on every twelve years zodiacal cycle. Every family is expected to sacrifice one ox per capita, which means a few thousand victims for a whole village. The habit has been restored in the eighties, after the cultural revolution years, while oxes have been replaced by pigs.

FOUR

Facing these traditional spaces and 'ruins of rituals', we fell encouraged in participating in them. On the other hand, we wanted to limit our participations to an abstract behaviour. The inhabitant themselves, the local authorities, the passing-by tourist... Their role was concrete and permanently having a transformative action the sites.

We felt as the places had some preexisting connection with calligraphy, we looked for it, as a precedent to our act.

The unfinished wooden structure which we chose in Xijiang was to host a family soon, and the carpenter who accepted our intervention was the

pater familias himself. Completion of the house by the highest beam, which is to receive the future roof main weight, is the occasion to consecrate the house and assure its protection. An expert shall be invited then to write the propitiatory formula on a long stripe of cloth, which is to be hung on the main beam.

Bishan Temple was dedicated to culture and the ideogram, its pillars and beams still bore hooks and frames were monumental calligraphic titles and emblems carved on wooden panels once hung.

FIVE

We thus aimed at inscribing our act in a deeper way into these sites, or the other way around: these preexisting situations were to shape our intervention, which was to appear more as a juxtaposed 'commentary'.to what is evolving there indifferently anyway.

Our academic research, which departed from han cliff tombs funerary space and medieval buddhist monumental epigraphy is recently centring more and more on considering the construction of Daoist ritual field as a starting point. Its open-air spatial model involves the use of flags and silken scrolls bearing ideographic, pictorial or talismanic content, which unfolding and folding again mark the ceremony's process from beginning to end. The Daoist ritual thus generates its own ephemeral space-time continuum.

The same occurs in funerary sites, which are also aimed at constructing an abstract, parallel or metaphoric otherworld. Recurrent pair of holes in our ten to thirty meters long corridors suggested the hanging of successive layers of cloth, probably bearing diagrams or mythical designs, leading to the tomb most inner wall and its half-opened false door.

These parallels were indeed exciting to us, since the impulse of opening our calligraphic experiments in open-air was at first a more concrete reflexion about questions of scale and context.

SIX

Actually, framing our act in Xijiang and Bishan traditional wooden architecture, was for us a way to materialise our understanding of these structures. The other way around: the interventions could become our conceptualising tools, they could help us grasp the important quality of Chinese traditional wooden assemblage.

Not to rest on walls, which offer only one face and surface. Free-standing, autonomous frame. Generously tracing emptiness, offering pure space to the senses, expanding in the four directions. Transparency, as the 间 ideogram says: light filtering through an half-opened door. Permeating environment, harmonised by a well-chosen orientation.

Xijiang pine wood structures literally grow on the mountain slope, enclosed in light material it looked as monumental outdoor furniture, consciously facing three main summits across the valley.

Bishan temple leans on a small hill where fragments of micro-local spirits from the surrounding countryside have been reassembled in a contrasting pantheon. The platform on which they

stand corresponds to an interstitial empty stripe that runs all around the temple's roof, letting the inside breathe and the outside wind blow in, a characteristic of those south-western wet and warm climates. Symmetrically placed on each extremity of the highest beam, which bears a central Taiji diagram, two circular openings stand for the moon and sun.

SEVEN

During our early fieldwork in Han cliff necropolis of the former Ba Shu kingdom, we always found ourselves facing the wall carvings, until we fell on that incredible central pillar. We immediately sensed it as a concrete model of han times spatial world: a free-standing pyramidal trunk supporting a symmetrical, curved beam, then expanding in the four directions.

It could easily be connected to a processional feature often represented on han funerary carvings: 建鼓, a free-standing pillar supporting a double-sided drum on its middle, and a four-sided flag on its top, the whole structure mounted on a a tiger or some other animal. A pair of drummers stand aside, letting us uncertain if to be regarded as two separate, rigorously symmetrical entities, or as the projection in space of a single drummer.

From this mobile structure, a ritual tool, to our funerary abstract central pillar, we felt the association shift to concrete pillar and beam structures of traditional houses and temples.

EIGHT

Closer to our own performance of double-sided writing process, the neutral point where our two brushes meet, is also the point form where one calligraphic stroke will expand in space. Only by hanging it through spatial frames like those we have chosen to exhibit in, can our work be read at it was meant to be, in the way it was written.

Our aim, through this writing process, and through its unfolding in such situations, is to open an abstract alternative for the calligraphic act.

First, through a chain of immediate response to a still-to-be-formulated sign, to abandon one's responsibility in writing, this almost contractual threat set on any signifying act.

Then, through a ephemeral version of our own temple, to conceive a simulacre for the literati's powerful rite and attitude to the written medium.

Finally, through the display of an abstract colophon where a readable one was expected, to deceive the commoners belief in efficacious consecrated formulas.

Escaping our responsibilities in such situations is our attempt on awakening deeper shapes of the calligraphic act, which existed or could have existed before its complete hardening into fixed rules, or elsewhere.

NINE

If our intervention was ignored enough by the poker players to be allowed to mingle in their own lively movement, hesitating hands choosing, hopefully smashing unreadable cards on the square bamboo tables, to sit among

the crowded diviners’ club playing with destiny all day long.

Actually, such expanding of the calligraphic stroke hopes to involve also what has been left on its own, in a raw state, or other chains of interactions that share our basic binary calligraphy, or simple movement that we like better because of their intact force, and spontaneity. At the risk of contributing ourselves in immortalising those soft realities.

(Paris 10th of April 2011)

8. Materiality: Seal Carving and Metal and Stone Studies

A calligrapher engages into the reproduction of past gestures, previously recorded by the craftsman into stone. The ancient calligraphic models are only accessible through rubbings : imprints of stone carvings on inked paper. Antiquarians and literati traditionally collect these documents, often without a direct contact with the stone. This separation between the art of writing, and its material sources, mainly epigraphy on stone, has gradually drawn a strict cultural boundary drawn between the carver and the calligrapher, in the Chinese conception of ‘Fine Arts’. By looking at literati art as the cultural strategies of a group to transform matter into sign, we can understand how crucial it is for the literati to constantly revive the bond between paper and stone.

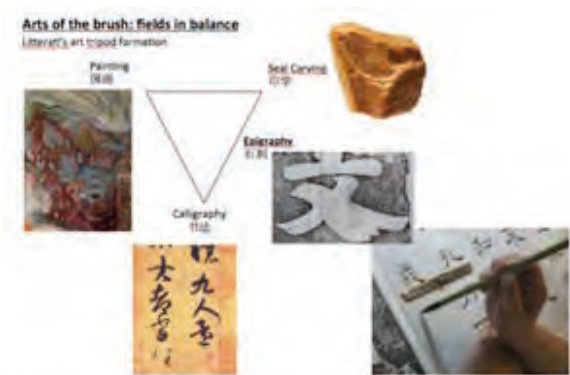
To explain the sentence ‘Its Excellence Surpasses Wang Xizhi And Wei Dan’ (精跨羲誕) written in praise of Seng’An in the ‘Stone Eulogy’ (石頌) on Mount Tie, Ledderose has recently pointed out the story of Wei Dan as an archetypal case of heavy physical work required from a calligrapher. After writing a few monumental characters required for a building’s name tablet at a breathtaking height, in an uncomfortable working position, the calligrapher is said to have been traumatised by the task⁽¹²⁾. According to Ledderose, this precedent influenced the later Wang Xianzhi’s refusal to accomplish physical work of such dimensions, and Seng’An’s praise of surpassing Wei Dan and Wang Xizhi may have something to do with this⁽¹³⁾. All artistic disciplines, such as painting in its beginnings, or seal carving, had to overcome its connection with craftwork in order to become a fully recognised activity for the literati class. Most scholars wouldn’t carve their own seals, not willing to engage in this skilled, time-consuming exercise, hard to attribute to an ‘overflow of literary activity’⁽¹⁴⁾. In his ‘Writing with Cinnabar’ chapter, Jiang Kui warns the aspiring epigrapher or seal carving by saying that ‘writing this way requires much energy and is very exhausting’⁽¹⁵⁾. Hard material supposes a kind of skill to be associated with craftwork. Seal carving tools belong to the category of metal chisels. The later use of soft stone holds a pivotal role in seal carving’s shift from craft to art : time and effort-consuming casting and jade polishing techniques accessible to a few skilled craftsmen are replaced by the free use of the ‘metal brush’ by any trained calligrapher. In his study on the Literati environment, Watt stresses how ‘The necessary condition for the birth of this new art form, or rather the transformation of an ancient craft into a medium of literati expression, was the use of soft stones for seal carving’⁽¹⁶⁾. Yuan literati Wang Mian (1287-1359) was the first literati to use soft stone to carve his own seals, overcoming the challenge of animating or conveying life to stone. Seal stone is extracted out of renowned quarries : its softness and fine grain, comparable to skin or paper, is able to confer to the carved lines a fluidity comparable to brushwork, or what has been defined as an ‘unconsciously running dancing knife’ (行而不知，谓之舞刀)⁽¹⁷⁾.

The ‘increased physicality’ introduced by this practice in the literati’s somatic attitude, allowed a firmer grasp on material, acting as a mental refuge encompassing all senses, including hearing the ‘sound of carving’⁽¹⁸⁾. Referring to Shen Fu’s understanding of brushwork as muscular, kinetic device, Billeter highlights the direct contact with the stone as the ‘best way to reach that primary realm where the act is still only a concentrated, almost static nucleus of energy’⁽¹⁹⁾. The seals reduced size and maniability would make them occupy an unprecedented place in the literati’s set of treasured objects, ‘permitting a more constant and intimate contact between person and object’⁽²⁰⁾ than any other valuable, large and fragile other object. Bodily metaphors in a Chinese context, rather than drawing on anatomy, see physical organs as energetic functions. It is thus not the corporeal volume of the seal, but rather its energetic configuration, direction and effect that embodies the written sign. The ‘relation between inner store and outer manifestation’⁽²¹⁾, is here crucial, be it the relation between the stone’s mass and its carved surface, or between the matrix and its printed result.

Seals to capture carving gestures

The privileged relation between calligraphy and epigraphy was partly restored through the spread of the discipline of seal carving. Conscious of the risk to divorce totally from matter, the literati had chosen to miniaturise ancient traces into this little known tradition of stone-working. Sigillography pushed them to look for the raw material directly in the few renowned quarries of high quality pyrophyllite soft stone, from Balin, Inner Mongolia, to Shoushan, Fujian province. The carving of stone seals lead them to reconstruct the chain that brings a seal from a mountain, to the literati’s studio. It also revealed a precious tool to echo the gestures of ancient epigraphers.

Miniaturisation is associated with mastery, comforting knowledge and the feeling of « owning » the world, as opposed to the gigantic, which offers a feel of awe leading to open perception⁽²²⁾. Chinese literati such as Zheng Wie (1693-1765) or Shen Fu (1763-1808) compare seal engraving to the principles of garden design⁽²³⁾: ‘ This space of one square inch naturally comprises hills and dales’⁽²⁴⁾. Echoing Ledderose’s attempt in relating landscape painting to three-dimensional landscape art in material culture⁽²⁵⁾, seals can be perceived as a kind of ‘monumental art’ or ‘architecture’, because of the way they associate the raw material’s constraints, to compositional requirements⁽²⁶⁾. The synthetic aspects of seals can be traced back to their first apparition. Early seals belonged to the category of jade and bronze, and they were somehow a powerful synthesising tool, a kind of synaesthetic visual expression. Song scholar Liu Cheng-fu (1062-1119) explicitly attests this analogy, by ‘...looking at characters from the past as looking at Tsung and ting (bronze vessels)’⁽²⁷⁾. The synthetic role of bronze vessels as a power object was later played by the ‘Maps and Documents’ (tu shu 圖書)⁽²⁸⁾, which further evolved into ‘Calligraphy and Painting’ shu hua 書畫). The three versions of a powerful combinations of image and text share the imperial concern about harmonisation and unification and corresponds to the voluntary blurring of calligraphy, charts, maps and figures in Taoist paraphernalia, a fact which clarifies the self-explaining evidence of ‘common origin of painting and writing’. A comparable synaesthetic role was played in Western civilisation by architecture. And Seng’An’s monumental, sculptural carvings of sacred texts should find its position among their precedents, and successors.



Site_Seal_Gesture: WWII Bunkers on UK coast and 2nd century AD burial caves in SW China

Recent collaboration with Rupert Griffiths on potential bridges between Architecture and Seal Carving.

Tunneling between sites/// intertextual landscape

9. Conclusion

Once re-integrated into the literati habitus, it can become/devenir. Future springs out possible pasts, like when looking for etymological possibilities in designing seal.

Deeper and archaising traditions contain the seeds of change.

Cross-fertilised results of such experiment, between ancient epigraphy and contemporary ink painting, thereby confronting modern Archaeology with the pre-modern Chinese discipline of Metal and Stone Studies, a form of Antiquarianism.

⁽¹⁾ Wong, Chinese Steles

⁽²⁾ Cite Segalen

⁽³⁾ Cite Hay about the ontology of 2nd-3rd dimension.

⁽⁴⁾ Tsiang 1996:253.

⁽⁵⁾ See Sharf 1999 :75-99.

⁽⁶⁾ See Copp 2008 :493-508.

⁽⁷⁾ Orzech 1996:304.

⁽⁸⁾ Kinnard (unpublished) cited in Tsiang 1996 :256.

⁽⁹⁾ Wenzel ??

⁽¹⁰⁾ Escande 2005:240.

⁽¹¹⁾ Rouzard 1997:259.

⁽¹²⁾ Ledderose 2013 :55.

⁽¹³⁾ Ledderose 2013:51.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Cahill 1964:77-102.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Jiang Kui, « Sequel To The « Treatise On Calligraphy » (Xu Shu Pu) Translated By Chang And Frankel 1995 :29.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Chu And Watts 1987:11

⁽¹⁷⁾ Deng Sanmu 1979 :413

⁽¹⁸⁾ Bai 2003 :52.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Billeter 1990 :287.

⁽²⁰⁾ Bai 2003 : 51.

⁽²¹⁾ Hay 1983 : 89.

⁽²²⁾ A Seminal Work By Susan Stewart On Miniature Was Brought To Our Attention By Nixi Cura : See Stewart 1993.

⁽²³⁾ Kuo 1992:48.

⁽²⁴⁾ Van Gulik 1958:422.

⁽²⁵⁾ See Ledderose 1983 :165-186.

⁽²⁶⁾ Billeter 1990:288.

⁽²⁷⁾ Mok 1999:178.

⁽²⁸⁾ Clunas 1997:81.

P.M. for «Peregrinations of the Image»

1—*Say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still.*

All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho* (9)

2— Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project (study of urban transformation of Paris in 1830-1870 which he was working on from 1927-1940):

—A research index made up of copied samples of books consulted at the Librairie Nationale [a fieldwork approach to books]

—A scholarly index [sic] of piecemeal and multi-facetted ideas for the magnum opus on Paris changing.

—A system of signatures used to annotate and process the corpus of his writing [cross-indexes the researcher and the scholar].

An archaeological material? a) the magnum opus was never completed, b) an element of core importance to his work disappeared with him when he ended his life in Portbou.

The materials of the Arcades Project were edited and published fairly late, but neither the German Suhrkamp edition in 1991, nor the English language Harvard/Belknap Press edition in 1999 included the signatures.

The question is whether it is the 'same Benjamin' that comes out of the edited versions that went to print, and the manuscript version in which we find Benjamin as a 'librarian', a 'graphic designer' and a 'stage director'.

If the «hands-on» Benjamin is someone else than Benjamin's «philosophy» as constructed by his text-based exegetes, leaving out the Benjamin's sensorial practice might be a text-book examples of epistemic violence.

3— I have two sub-questions:

—Can we foresee a theory-development that is experimentally driven, rather than irrevocably conceived as an interpretive quest?

—Could this approach to theory-development be congenial with theory-development in groups, rather than conceived in the auteur tradition?

In short: if the direction research is taking in archaeology—the comments I got during the poster-presentation-slot, here in Kyoto, certainly indicate this—is to work with distributed observational networks on the past, as Diane Gifford-Gonzales said in her address in the plenary on Monday this week, or to work with archaeology in the extended field (in which museums are also included), then we must ask—how do we work with theory-development?

I will use this presentation to conduct an experiment, which is to line up a series of experiments and use it as a support-structure (Celine Condorelli), in developing a

readiness for the core operation, which is to shed light on the questions raised concerning Benjamin's Arcades Project.

4— I reflected on the size of the area allocated to the poster at WACo8, by making it exactly in that size, to explore the concept of affordances: that is to parse the human scale of use. It turned out that it fitted perfectly into the door-frame to my room at the Ryokan, which is standard for all the rooms.

Since the contents that introduce the poster invite the reader to take into consideration the relation between the poster, his/her body and its location in space, this experiment did not only convey a satisfactory sense of precision, to something clearly contingent, but also to consider the door-post as such.

That is the door-post as a threshold in which the body, the materials and the site meet, and in some sense collapse. The precision that experiments yield in the sensorial registre of understanding, what the conciseness of words never can render. The bottom of the poster is curling a bit up, but it fits.

5—Noblesse oblige. I extended the idea of using the Kyoto-map as a support-structure for the poster, by creating a travelogue of my journey to and inside of Kyoto. During the 5 days of this second experiment, I used a discovery procedure that follows a standards set of steps. These steps are:

1) attempt; 2) try again; 3) do something else; 4) return with a new perspective; 5) unlearn. Five standard steps of artistic research carried out—one at a time—each consecutive day—from Tuesday to Saturday, making the flyer entries to the travelogue after nightfall.

The experiment included finding a print-shop in Kyoto, which I did: Kinko's On Demand Solutions on the Kamasuma—on the road that continues downtown, past the gardens of the Imperial Palace. They offered a variety of paper-qualities and produced two-sided colour A5 prints on the spot.

6— The next experiment was to test some nitril-rubber stamps I brought with me from Norway—that I have developed for annotation—and try them out on a calligraphy paper that I bought at a Washi paper-shop here in Kyoto. I was unfamiliar with the paper's properties, both being difficult to fold and being extremely ink-absorbent.

The sheet to the left shows the individual stamps—or, signatures—of the set, while the right sheet is for the legend, which changes with context—the task and occasion—of use. Here I use the legend as a way of modelling the way the flyers can be organised. The experimental point is to engage thinking with local materials.

Essentially, the relation between the legend-sheet and the flyers is as between the poster and the door-post. On the legend you see not only that the flyers are indicated with each their number, but that reference is made to the materials constituted jointly by the flyers and the stamped sheet, and the choices/decisions related to both.

7—There is not only the idea of match—or, fit—that makes the two pairs relate in a similar

way, but also the fact the door-post and the legend become included into the working-materials, not only because they too are subject to artistic choices/decisions but also become the vehicle of these. They feed forward. Jointly.

8— And, as you can see, the dotted tapes indicate that the stamped sheets are made into envelopes that fit the flyers. So, I made 5 envelopes with a full set of 5 flyers in each. As you can see, the signatures are now applied to the flyers, and used to annotate them with some key-words.

These experiments show how a relatively idiosyncratic travelogue-format as the flyer, is transformed into a personal item that can be circulated in a larger group: e.g., a 'research common' of the type evoked as 'distributed observational networks' earlier. The stamps are the foot-prints of/path for the common.

So, by creating a container for the travelogue-flyers—featuring as content—I have decided that the flyers could a certain range of circulation beyond my keep—it is like the door-post at the Ryokan: it is not only for me, but for a somewhat wider range of people, even during my stay.

9— I therefore adjoined them to the poster—which is part of the poster-exhibit at the Ryoshin-Kan facility at the Doshisha University, as a sequel to or extension of the triangulation between body, site and material experiment with the poster.

Since we are gathered here in the context of work—presenting work and working together for a tad—I will distribute a copy of these to the participants, so that we have one each. And my reasons for doing so is specific: it is to model this session—hypothetically—as a special kind of work-place.

10— Books like these are often preceded by situations we are in at this session. It is a collection of essays in experimental archaeology that was published at Cambridge Scholars' Publishing Last year. So, what is the relation between content and container in this case?

11— This is the list of essays and authors contained by the anthology, and as you can see I wrote the preface. So, I had the pleasure of digging into very different life-worlds of research in which trained archaeologists were discussing matters relative to the topic.

In my paper for this session, I have not only rewritten a synoptic-reading of each contribution, but I have also stamped them. This is rather detailed work, and there is not enough time to give each of the articles the attention they deserve in this place (showing the room).

But I will nonetheless share an observation with you that I had while writing the preface to the anthology: I certainly felt that I was working with a group, but they were not working with me—it was a one-sided relationship—I was working with a group, but not in a group.

12—The idea that I was working from—and which I am presently pursuing in my paper for the present session—is that restricted circle of people who make contributions to a book like this, and the more extended group of people that are part the research context, have something important in common.

Today—and, I think also, in the past—they can be characterised as contact-zones. That is, where differences, and clashes, are met with existing repertoires and experiments, and result in the production of cultural materials and a range of decisions/choices & assessments relative to these.

The group in the image is extrapolated from anthropologist Lévi-Strauss reference to the Klein's groups (from Felix Klein, the mathematician) defined as: 1) a term; 2) the opposite and 3) their inversions. This is a logical definition. Instead of taking them back to math, as Lévi-Strauss, I ask: why not art?

Bringing logic from mind to matter has some very immediate impacts, because there are specific choices linked to a material in becoming that eschews math (which aspires to be immaterial). The difference is particularly evident in the contrastive relation between imagination and image.

In the HEX-model presented here imagination can be exercised abstractly like in math, for instance, but when the elements in the big hexagon occasionally collapse around the imagination-hexagon, then an image is formed: an image of the type that contains its own reality, and surfaces in the maturity of time.

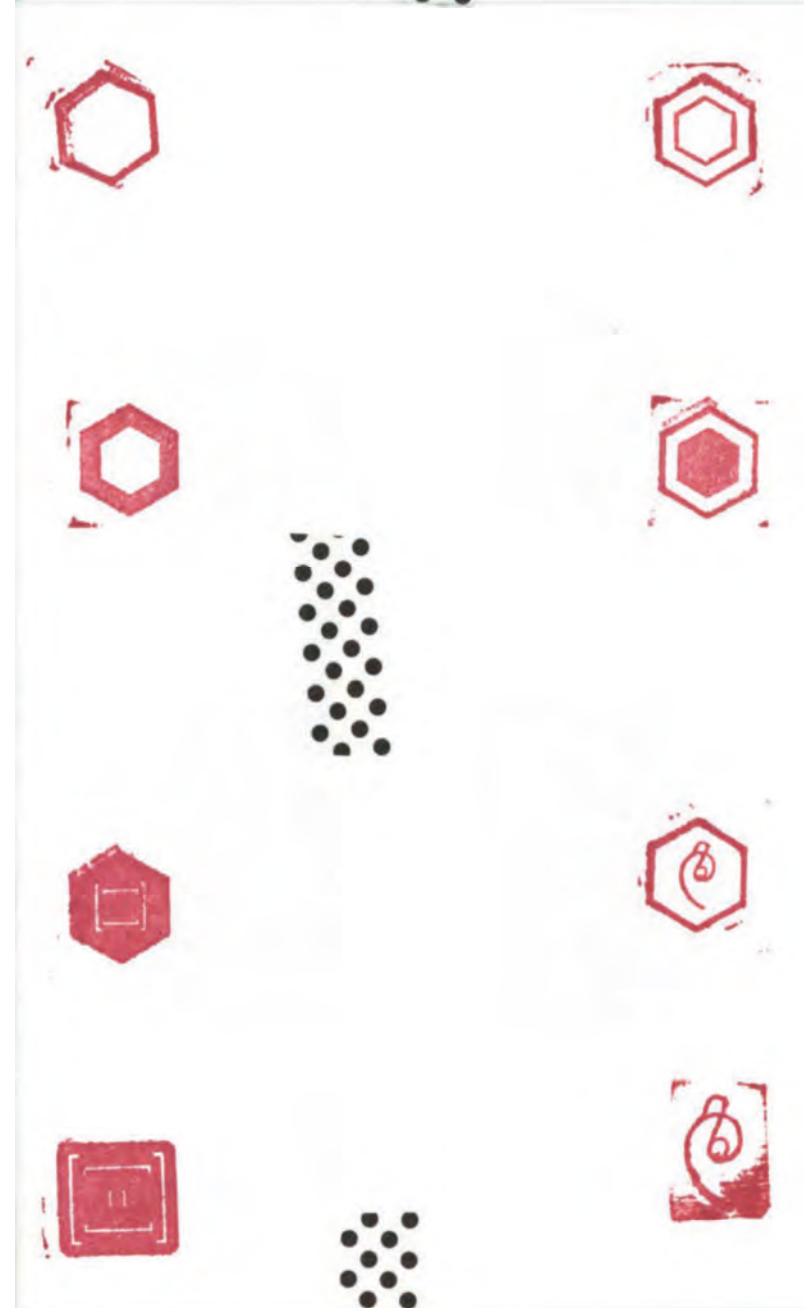
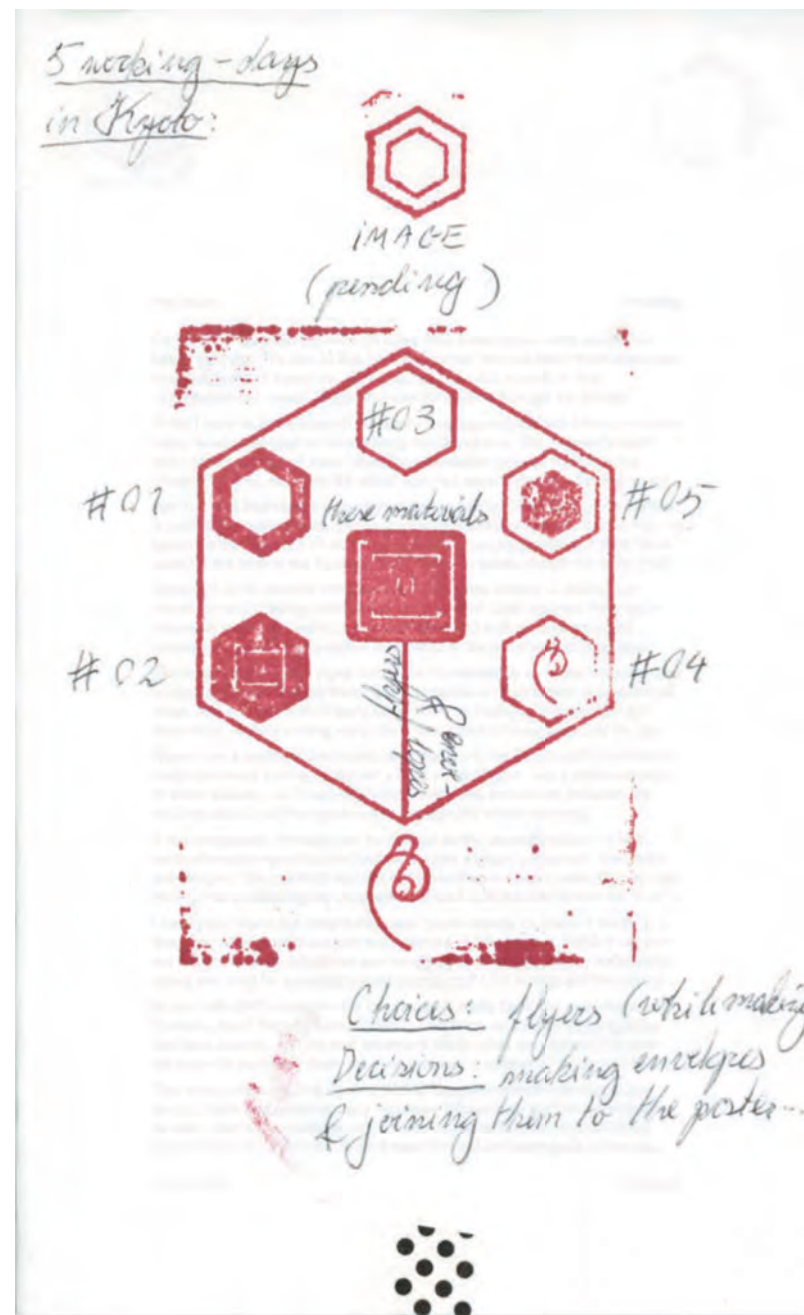
13— As with Benjamin, this happens occasionally in some work—while in other parts to the work, not necessarily the least significant ones, it never happened; which incidentally happened to the Arcades Project as a corpus.

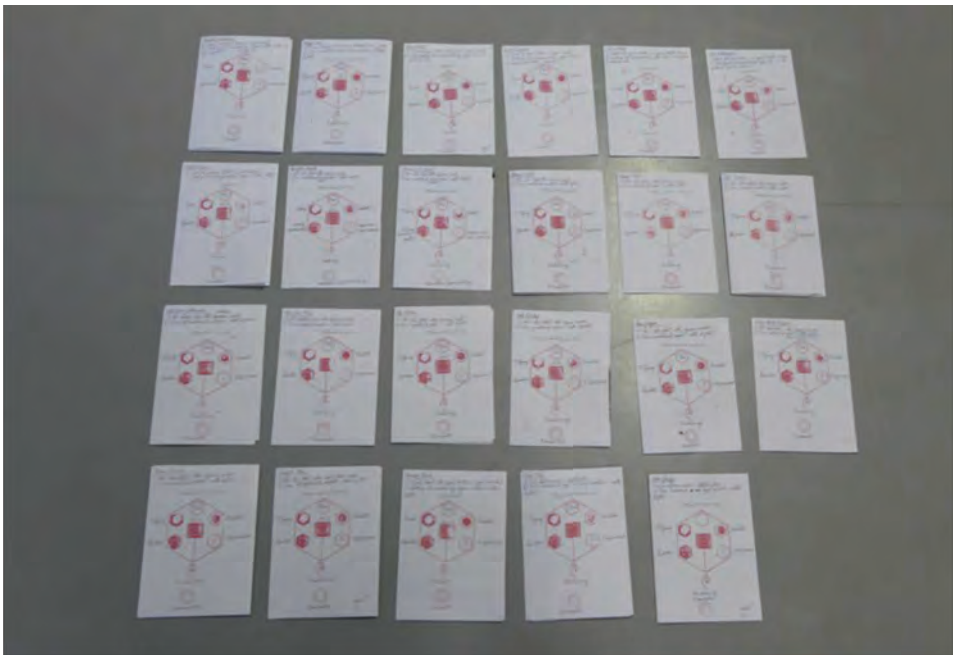
On the flyer devoted to cultural stereotypes/ imagination about Japan—featuring Zen-temples & gardens and the Manga museum—I have left the image pending: here imagination has the function as a placeholder for the matured image, that rises from contradiction, repertoires and experiments in time.

So, what has this experimental query brought us with regard to the initial questions raised regarding Walter Benjamin's work? Well, to Benjamin, the notes he takes as a researchers and the ones he files as a scholar, are interspersed but still distinct. It's like fieldwork and deskwork.

After this exercise, I feel that they open the boundary-space—between his particular line of fieldwork and deskwork—between his research notes and and scholarly musings, and that at this crossroads they operate as a mix between traffic lights and an abacus, essentially a mimetic contraption that can create mediations in the materials that were unimagined by Benjamin himself (though, I think, with his blessing).

④ Beckett, Samuel (2009) Company / III Seen III Said / Worstward Ho / Stirrings Still: WITH III Seen III Said AND Worstward Ho AND Stirrings Still, Faber & Faber.





Transformation of creative writing exercise into group-work in a Master-class in design at KHiO [Oslo National Academy of the Arts]

«Say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still.

All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.»

Samuel Beckett, Worstward Ho (2)

Peregrinations of the Image(1)

Abstract—The decolonization of the senses arguably is a premise for their realignment to other human realities, where the items—or things—exist within the relationships of a phenomenon, and do not exist as pre-established identities. If our queries into the past will take this into account, we should take interest in artistic methods where means can be cultivated without a predetermined end, as a fund of provisional understandings needed to understand the past. The way archaeologists work to structure their world, the imprint of their sensory memories and their social and moral standards are topics relevant to further the discipline.

The paper will serve to pitch the session by using Dragos Gheorghiu & Paul Bouissac’s book *How do we Imagine the Past? On Metaphorical Thought, Experientiality and Imagination in Archaeology* (2015). The session’s discussant will use this book to explore a particular class of imagery generated by experimental approaches to archaeological fieldwork and the variety of combinations with digital tools, to compare it with recent developments in the art-field. The paper will attempt to narrow down the discussions to those phase-transitions where images that are non-instrumental, and produced without initial communicative intent, tie up with broader scientific goals.

Keywords: artistic methods, provisional understandings, decolonisation.

Preamble—On Experiments in Arts & Humanities

The way to the final draft of this paper—to the point it is presented here in Kyoto—has known some twists and turns. In an earlier version, that was circulated to Profs. Gheorghiu and Pellini, an attempt was made to merge the topics of artistic methods in archaeology (T14J) and sensorial archaeology (T09C). The background for this attempt was to see if it was possible to design a context that would make it easier to stick to the point—in this sense the design—of each session.

Since I was asked to act as a moderator/discussant for the two sessions, this appeared to be a sound way of proceeding. However, since then, it became clear that T14J and T09C would be separate sessions, and after I had been working with a volume published by Prof. Pellini, it became obvious to me that it would be more difficult, than what I had thought initially, to develop a common framework: with the exception of the Profs., the contributors to the topics were really different groups.

As an anthropologist, I realise that I should have asked: if the groups are different, what brought them together in the first place? And then to realise how important conferencing events like WAC are, in creating opportunities for publications and the kind of group-processes these entail (if sometimes reduced to an editorial process). This grouping—sometimes re-grouping—around a shared topic, in the agora of archeologists, is the context I relate to as I take on the task of my present role.

By now it must be crystal-clear that I am myself no archaeologist. I am brought in to assist two sessions at WACo8 on account of a previous collaboration with Prof. Gheorghiu, where I wrote a preface to his and Paul Bouissac’s book *How do We Imagine the Past?* from 2015. There I was bent on doing what anthropologists do beyond fieldwork: comparing. Comparison is a way of study in anthropology which is an attempt to remain true to empirical findings, while developing a broader understanding.

It aspires to constitute a ‘third way’ between the universalism and particularism, between generalisation and the literary unique. Anthropologists are narrators more than authors, in the sense the Walter Benjamin put into that term. That is, a way of conveying story in which the sharing of advice is the core driver, both in fieldwork and in professional relations between anthropologists; in the aspect that has to do with the developing skill. Telling and comparing therefore are at the basis of the discipline.

Telling and comparing texts, as I did in Prof. Gheorghiu’s volume, of course, is a secondary order comparison—in which I am not located, positioned nor situated as a fieldworker, but one concerned with developing understandings at a theoretical level. These can develop in conversations with abstract theories, but is itself not abstract, since it seeks to devote itself to the analysis of specific materials presented by different authors, and share an organic and 3D comprehension of these.

My mentor Prof. Fredrik Barth [no relation] recommended that while doing fieldwork and while doing deskwork one should compare as actively as possible in the analysis of each separate case: comparison is specific. The compound understanding does not claim a broader validity than a model in architecture/design. The function of theory in anthropology is proportional to the case: theoretical abstraction has a clearly formulated purpose, and its extent is not greater than required.

So, it is fundamentally devoted to the development, sustaining, nourishment and refinement of skill. This brings me to the opportunity I see in gathering with archaeologists, whom—from the enskilment perspective—are cousins of anthropologists, more than, I’d say, sociologists with whom anthropologists frequently are confused. Speaking the the skills base, a different picture emerges of the broader class of academic crafts wo-/men to which archaeologists and anthropologists both belong.

And it is in an active dialogue with Dr. Peter Bjerregaard—the University of Oslo’s Museum of Cultural History—that a renewed perspective on how experimental exhibition practices, engaging both archaeologists and anthropologists, can prompt a museum, which within an older set of practices had become obsolete, in ways that involve audiences actively. The museum is in the process of restructuring its permanent exhibition, programming temporary exhibitions and working out a Red Zone.

The Red Zone is an experimental space which, in time, is expected to innovate the ways the permanent and temporary exhibitions articulate as a whole. Which means that the museum organises around a core which is substantially defined and concerned with experiment. I think that the idea of the Red Zone is transportable, and that the work I did in Profs. Gheorghiu and Bouissac’s book as well as in my role as a mediator/discussant (let’s say convenor, for brevity) the possibility to facilitate a Red Zone in Kyoto.

This makes sense from the point of view of Prof. Gheorghiu—who proposed and organised this session—as his engagement with the use of artistic methods in archaeology is precisely experimental. Since I am an anthropologist working at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, educating designers in research-based theory development, there is a rather obvious confluence between our substantial concerns. However, empirical methods of experimentation in arts & humanities begs for clarification.

What do we mean by experiment—a term mostly used for empirical research in natural- & technical sciences? And what do we think that the epitet ‘artistic’ adds to the notion of experiment? Finally, how new is this query if we look back in history? In my view, these are important issues to illuminate through the presentations and discussions in this session. Starting with an outline of the last question: no this is not new... a notion of experiment in the tradition of arts and humanities was founded by Goethe.

The didactic mid-section of his *Theory of Colours* (2006 [1810])(3) is experimental in a sense that inspired the Bauhaus milieu in the 1920s, continues to have a foundational importance in the arts&crafts, and has a direct relevance for us here, in this session. His experimental concept was very simple, yet resolutely different from Newton’s conception of experiment in natural science. Goethe’s experiment is defined in the service of human experience, it’s function is to educate the human senses in prompting memories.

As pertaining to one of Prof. Gheorghiu’s chief concerns, Goethe’s method was immersive: it was founded in empirical experience—of phenomena related to colour—which then only was produced experimentally. Though produced in laboratory settings, the function of the experiment was not to generate new phenomena, but to appropriate phenomena originating in live experience. It was mimetic in the non-trivial sense of creating connective affordances for new experiences: a haptic readiness.

We recognise the interest of this topic way into our own time: e.g. Johani Pallasmaa's thesis in his book *The Eyes of the Skin* (2005)⁽⁴⁾ where the *haptic sense* is considered to be the mother of all senses, and the other senses, concomitantly, are specialised from the haptic sense. In this determination, Goethe's experiment—because it has to be operated, and in this sense performed—assimilates the experience through specialised senses—vision, hearing, smell, taste—to the haptic base: the syntaesthetic linker.

Goethe's haptic base [the experiment] becomes vision-centric because his interest is colour. His study yields a special case of synaesthesia as the perception of colour, when produced experimentally, is fed with the haptic connection to new colour experiences. But, obviously, there is no reason why this notion of experiment—with its haptic appropriation of sense-experience—should be reserved to vision alone. The real challenge lies in how Goethe's experimental approach is *empirical*, rather than *interpretive*.

It is at this point that my interest in experimental archeologists becomes specific, because they are specialised in working at the other end of the alliance between human beings and artefacts, than anthropologists normally would do. For anthropologists the human life-form is the point of entry to understand the human alliances with artefacts (Miller, 2009)⁽⁵⁾; for archaeologists it is the opposite: the starting point is with artefacts as human associates. This is potentially a refreshing approach.

The working-assumption appears to be that we know that the tools, materials, objects and edifices—being handled and crafted by humans—are human associates in a sense that has to be determined empirically. In the eyes of an anthropologist, therefore, the experimental archaeologist is a professional working with a kind of 'empirical semiotics'. It is this aspect—the hands-on experience-based experimentation—that makes certain archaeologists interesting for a design-anthropologist.

I know that archaeologists are looking to anthropologists for theory these days. But I can assure you that this interest is reciprocal. It is not only on account of my connection to the design-field that makes this interest real. It is of interest to any anthropologist working with contemporary studies where understanding a variety of media—an mediation—is the context of live-studies of contemporary social forms. Especially in urban studies, but also in the wake of the techno-cultural revolution of digitalisation.

So, the idea I want to probe—and challenge—is that archaeologists are necessarily people that study old things. Of course, the study of pre-historic life-forms is a training ground for acquiring a certain set of skills, that concern me here, just as materials pertaining to non-recorded history, but the form of archaeological knowledge relating to its potential fruitfulness to anthropologist lies, arguably, elsewhere. And it is to this contemporary relevance I want to devote some effort here.

The idea that human senses become educated through material practice, that what we observe in traces of human life-forms is somehow the aggregate of this material practice, and we add the idea human senses can be educated experimentally—to take a different direction than the current social context (Goethe)—and thereby tune into the production of the material residues under observation, then it is possible to 'decolonise' our senses, and develop an imagery connecting to such materials.

When talking about imagery, I am concerned with a class of images that we do not recognise as our own, and that are the subject matter of discovery. And it is the production of images as the result of our senses feeding back to our senses—through the haptic base of the experiment—that images are intercepted: sensing ourselves sensing—educating the senses—and the readiness to intercept images are related. That is, images of the other, not our own images: sensing someone else sensing.

Here the idea of the image lies in the presence of something that has already been sensed by someone else. If we accept that this is the nature of the image—seeing something that has been by someone else—then the "mystery" of *mimesis* lies in this nature of the image. It is not something we add to the image, but is intrinsically part of it. If brought down to its haptic base it is the nature of the image that it is not a private phenomenon but one emerging that the brink of self-and-other.

Then the question is: what is the tool-kit and practical repertoire that brings us to this threshold of a specific and knowing relationship? I would say that Prof. Gheorghiu's tools and repertoire is exceptionally vast. My reason for focussing on the research-log—or, field-record—is that I am assuming that it is the least common denominator shared by all archaeologists and anthropologist, that it is easy to overlook because it is a standard practice, but also because this is my field of specialisation.

Even when defined completely by routine—and strict rules—I argue that the research record used to log findings with regular entries, has an experimental value in appropriating that we are experiencing through the senses under field-conditions. It is true to experience in producing faithfully our impressions but it is clearly separated from our immersion into daily work and experiences, on account of the techniques, materials and skills involved in keeping a log. What is acquired is taken into possession.

As time goes by, this daily exercise also becomes immersive. And, like Prof. Gheorghiu's richer palett of experimentation, it defines a secondary level of immersion. That is, the process of keeping a daily record, at some point, shifts to become a form of replay in which we intercept observations that passed unnoticed unto that point. This class of

observations feeds forward unto our inquiries in the field. Then we are already in the loop of educating our senses. Nothing mysterious about this, but maybe awkward.

We know that Christopher Langton⁽⁶⁾—in his early experiments with ALife [Artificial Life]—produced the learning-loop experimentally: he video-taped a live record of fish in an aquarium and fed the video-record back unto the screen with the fish. The result was an organic and 3D rendering in which the screen appeared as a "new aquarium" [not just a live record of an aquarium]. So, it would appear that when keeping a field-record shifts to replay experiences, then something similar happens. Replication.

The weak link in how records—or, more, generally techniques of monitoring aiming for objectivity—are conceived: that is, as passive and rather static material that accumulates to exist outside of human agency. Whereas, in reality, the recording routine becomes an associate to the inquiry, as it shifts from the function of reproducing experiences to replicate them. That is, from actual experience a virtual experience starts developing experimentally, as a parallel and ongoing process in the inquiry.

By the time we are within reach of a break-through in our fieldwork—and to make new discovery—the record has lost everything that makes it into a passive and serial drill, and partakes generatively of trailing, sometimes stalking, a discovery. Perhaps it is less interesting to discuss why dynamics like these, that enter into the life-cycle of research projects, are awkward to some scientific minds (though not by others), and rather focus on factors that canalise research as a generative process.

It is at this point that artistic choices become interesting—paradoxically—because they come up with systematic approaches that derive interceptions at the image level, and, at that level, work according to a logic of transmission (rather than a logic of self-reflection, which is often imposed by the context of discourse in which artistic practices are constrained). That is, they often work at the "other-end" of imagery (*supra*), rather than engaging into reflective processes that point back to themselves.

I am aware that I am taking a risk by making this proposition, since it is against the mainstream conception of what artists do. But in my work with artists—that is, not only with designers but also with arts & crafts people—it has become increasingly obvious to me that their work is oriented by a different impetus than the self-reflective frame which often is imposed on them by theorists. This explains why, to keep it relatively simple, I am focussing on artistic choices that can be assimilated into log-keeping.

It is on this basis that I have been working on a system of signatures—according to a concept I have introduced in my poster T14J13P—aiming at charting a track-record of imagery, following the steps from imagination to image, as something distinct from the track-record of experience: that is, a track record of what, in different stages, is being fed forward to experience as the set of usually hidden backdoors to the decisions we make on where, and in which direction, we chose to pursue our inquiries.

This is to launch an agenda for experimenting with marking and trailing in timescapes, as a realm which is not really uncharted, but where researchers often develop personal systems that are rarely discussed, and put on the table, because they appear to be idiosyncratic. However, if understood as artistic methods the become subject to the kinds of professional commons found in the studio-crits we have at art-school, where conversation led narratives develop on the backdrop of a kind of professional listening.

When Prof. Gheorghiu talks about the use of artistic methods in research—or, where I come from, we talk of artistic research—it will appear, to a number of people, as a contradiction in terms. Such attitudes may have a number of articulated and legitimate reasons. But one explanation is the existence of a cultural schema according to which there is "a good and a bad end of the stick" (which, in English, after all, is a standard expression). But this schema does not apply universally.

It is therefore a strike of fortune that this conference is taking place in Kyoto, Japan. Here it appears to make little sense talking of a good or a bad end: what counts is whether the stick is well balanced. If art and science are two ends of the stick, this may give us a better lead than if we venture that the one must be claimed against the other. It means that—with its two ends—the stick can be balanced according to a variety of very different designs explored through practice (that, moreover, it is fruitful to compare).

The martial arts in Japan demonstrate how different designs these designs can be, at the level of the stick. Moreover, designs tend generally to bring together non-same elements in forms of balance that are appreciated or abandoned. The stick provides us with a good working-metaphor, because it invites a straightforward distinction between this end and the other end—between the same and the other—and how they are brought together in complex and adaptive ways.

Of *Mimesis*—The Legacy from Walter Benjamin

I will attempt an argument than an archaeological approach to the contemporary can be determined as kind of 'empirical semiotics'. This follows from the preceding, in that experiments regularly lead to discovery. And discovery—in the arts and humanities—can e.g. be certain kinds of systems: or, rather, feature systemic features that

cannot be assumed but must be discovered. Here mimesis determines a class of procedures that we use to obtain either corroborative or corrective experiences.

The anthropogenic venture of building profiles of human life-forms from their remains, will draw on mimesis in one way or the other. But if we accept that they have in common a joint attention to what is going on at both ends of the stick, to use the imagery concluding the previous section, it suffices to grow wiser on how different choices— the decisions we make—can bring us in very different directions. Then we can at least grow wiser on the variety thus obtained. They may be windows into a complex system.

Elsewhere (To9C), I have responded to a discussion in mediaeval archaeology (Born, 2016) in which a point is made of the distinction between media and cultural techniques. I argue that reversibility— playback—may serve to define media, in counter-distinction to cultural techniques, so that concept of media does not have to be tied to modern/post-industrial electronic products. That the simple act of reading is a form of playback, as is copying; also the Antique rhetoric feats of reciting backwards.

Rewinding time as connected to remembering—rather than rituals of inversion—is typical to the birth of media, I argue. It is the kind of exercise we may engage in, all be it ritually, as we fill in our diaries, notebooks, logs, sketchbooks and the like. We are looking back. And when we are finished we are looking forward again. But in a different way. It is at this moment, where the modus operandi of a specific log-entry transits into opus operandi of a task completed, that we are at liberty to proceed.

That is, we are at liberty to proceed with our work. But frequently with the blue-print of the exercise we just completed that prompts us to see new possibilities, other lines of inquiry. It is this sort of transitive logic—that a modus operandi worked up at one level, when it shifts into an opus operatum as the task is completed, hatches a novel modus operandi—that is my analytical proposal for what Walter Benjamin’s notion of mimesis, which proliferates in his work, can be about if conceived concisely as a method.

The important thing is that the mimetic trope—the point where it turns, or tips, from modus operandi 1 to modus operandi 2—cannot be predicted while the entry is being worked out (i.e., modus operandi 1). It has to be completed before its virtual backdrop appears, in the form of modus operandi 2. Moreover, just as the threshold we cross when the work is completes pitches the virtual discharge of a novel sensory prompt, the transition from fieldwork—or, the dig—to deskwork features a similar transition⁽⁷⁾.

Working with writing, images, sound—or, any kind of record—brings to mind a number of things that we did not feel, nor more broadly sense, when the happened in front, or around, us. That is, our senses were not open do them while on the job—in medias res—and revealed to us only in playback. So there are thresholds we cross—linked to the completion of task, and entering a different mode of work—where our “eyes are opened”, is one commonly says. There is a kind of mediation taking place at this threshold.

Moreover, it goes both ways: a) as we work in medias res and move unto working ex medias res; b) as we work ex medias res and move unto working in medias res. As you may have noted, this terminology—which in our current vernacular would be alternating between working in the field and out of the field [or, oscillating between fieldwork and deskwork]—does not help us move beyond polar constructs, such as the good and the bad end of the stick. Instead of considering that we are not moving in nor out.

Perhaps a better model would be to consider that we are moving alternately on two sides of a Möbius-band, and at the said threshold we simply switch sides. A plainer way of talking about this problem is to consider that we are combining assets in ways that human beings always have done. That is, if human beings develop a knack of becoming absorbed in core operations, they always have support-structures that they use in order to guide such core operations. And they can switch.

That is, what features as 1) the ‘core operation’ and 2) ‘support structure’ can switch. That we use a GPS console as a support structure while steering a wheel [which is a core-operation of driving]. But we can then work with the settings of the GPS, using our experience in driving as a support structure. As we move back and forth we develop a model-understanding feeding and being fed by experience. And in older parlance, the difference between core and support, would be tool and instrument.

Notions as ‘core operation’ and ‘support structure’ are children of the user-centred world, and our current concern with usability. Instrument and tool are notions that presuppose learning by ‘show and tell’ (rather than ‘plug-and-play’ as in our day). The relation between instrument and tool was often not reversible, and could be strongly hierarchised. For instance, the difference between media and cultural techniques may be defined along these lines. Reversibility, per se, is not a new thing.

But its proliferation, to the extent to ubiquity, is something new. Computers are both conceptually and functionally reversible devices, and the mobile devices expanding this property in space and time to become a part of our culture. This is tricky terrain, and the pitfalls are many. But the reward, I expect, is considerable. Because, both presently and in the past, we have lost sight of the threshold—where we switch and learn—as such. What it is, and what we can learn if understanding it properly.

What I am suggesting in this paper is that the threshold—though it is object-like—is not an object. As we pass the threshold we are unconscious, and as we cross it we become conscious about the world, its events, and our priorities in it of which we were previously unaware. Our world is expanded in way where the properties of the world as we knew it are kept, by the means of a special entity: what we, up to this point, have called the threshold, but also could be the Lacanian objet petit a.

The origin of this idea goes back to Felix Klein’s transformational geometry⁽⁸⁾, which was later picked up by the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss—the pontiff of French structuralism in anthropology—in his magnum opus Mythologiques (1964-71) in which we can follow how he starts out with a small corpus of Amerindian Myths—based on ethnography written by others—and gradually expanding the analysis from the Amazonas, via South America, and ultimately encompass the Northern American native groups.

His work is very systematic (too systematic according to a number of critics): at the core of set of myths there would be a Klein’s group—a principal myth, its opposite and their inversions—and then there would be a reference myth—a point by point reverse myth of the principal myth—that would allow the analysis to proceed beyond the original group of myth, and so on (till the entire continent was covered). His argument is that when different people retold each other’s myths they would tell them in their own way.

That is, they would be at odds, breaks and negation with their neighbours. Not in the sense of contradiction—«contredire s’écrit aussi conte-redire»—but in the sense that retelling the story of the other would inevitably yield another story. Which brings us back to the notion of mimesis in Benjamin. In Lévi-Strauss’ anthropology the ambition of charting, or mapping, the progress of understandings conquered by analysis, was accompanied with a system of marks, which were derived from mathematics.

He sums up the insights won—at different stages—by the use of mathematical formulae. But why math? Why not art? There is a long pedigree of discussions of this question that followed in the wake of Lévi-Strauss’ structural anthropology in France. Lévy-Strauss described the Amerindian societies that mostly captured his interest, as a Mediaeval society that had not known its Rome. After his short and deleterious experience with fieldwork in Tristes Tropiques, he focussed his attention on the remote.

In certain sense, he had the mind of an archaeologist. An archaeologist concerned with recent history. Not unlike Michel Foucault in the domain of history. The latter’s archaeological interest was in the archive. But not the archive in a material sense, but rather as an object of philosophical inquiry. Neither were scholars of a sort we would qualify as having “dirt under their nails”. Benjamin had dirt under his nails, as do some of his more recent epigones: e.g., Giorgio Agamben and Georges Didi-Huberman.

That is, they are people who work with archival detail, object collections and art-works: not unlike anthropologists who insist that you have to do fieldwork—walk the arduous path to write the ethnography—and then develop theoretical understandings. Which is why, in my own work, I have returned to the question: why not art? Why not work with the notions of the Klein’s group—as briefly exposed above—in a way that one gets dirt under ones nails. Which is why I have started to work with signatures.

More precisely, an experimental set of signatures that a) preserve the property of the Klein’s group; b) articulates the difference between the verbal definition and the iconographic definition that I propose; c) establish a material practice that establishes a contact zone around the previously defined threshold. It is there all the time—as we switch our modes of knowing—so there is no use in pretending it is not there. I propose a layered approach based on what Mary Louise Pratt called the ‘contact zone’ (2005: 519)⁽⁹⁾:

«I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today. Eventually I will use the term to reconsider the models of community that many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today.»

Of course, I am making this reference to Pratt’s explication because it is of conceptual value to the current state of things, but also because we—as researchers and scholars—live and work in that zone, whether the idea we have developed of human societies at present or in the past, as their contemporaries. In the oecumene of archaeologists and anthropologists, our working space is one of ‘contentious multivocality’ (Shryock, 1987: 221)⁽¹⁰⁾. If accepted it has some interesting consequences.

One relating to the status of the image—understood as a multi-sensory gestalt—as a glimpse of the passing threshold, in the flash of the moment; what Walter Benjamin understands with his notion of ‘dialectical image’. This is the sort of image that flares up as knowledge is embodied and passes unto the body proper, as its silent repertoire of skills (or, “skills-bank”). A momentary calibration between our patterns of perception and our patterns of behaviour. The dialectical image is not a theory, but a model.

It is not identical to the imagination working in us as we do fieldwork, deskwork and alternate between the two. We know that our imagination is our own—as persons who are members of a culture—while the dialectical image is contained by and pointing to its own reality. It is the

passing image of the other, or the threshold. It articulates at the brink of reversible time, and irreversible time, and defines the training-ground of availability and mobilisation, similar to professional listening in music.

One variant of this conscious readiness—which is sensory, muscular and bodily—is what I call the art-school phenomenology, which is sure to have its equivalents in all forms of learning where apprenticeship still exists (which, incidentally, is also in the realm of academic research [not to mention medical science, and of course art & design]). A peer group trained in these ways will have a sense of where a certain work is at, in this particular aspect. It may have indisputable merits yet fail at this point.

A way of turning failure into merit is to make this visible to oneself, and choose an approach that a certain work that has not reached the maturity of the image—and decantation into the pool of skills—is not wasted. It can hatch in time. It is for this reason, and because the image enters in odd ways that hinges on the subject matter and the personality of the researcher & scholar, that I have chosen the title of the paper: the peregrinations of the image. It will not turn up the same way twice.

Which is why I have chosen to conduct my inquiry on an anthology of essays in experimental archaeology. It is the same procedure that I have used in my paper submitted to José Pellini's session, on sensorial archaeology (To9C). Here, I will concentrate on the book edited by Profs. Gheorghiu and Bouissac (2015) referred to in the beginning of this paper: How do We Imagine the Past?—On Metaphorical Thought, Experientiality and Imagination in Archaeology.

I prefer to proceed in this fashion, in order to build a bridge between my own domain of expertise, and what is currently going on in archaeology, in the experimental camp. I define myself as being in a learning process—learning from people and their work, in this part of the field—while making the contributions to its development, with the baggage I bring with me from artistic research at my own institution: Oslo National Academy of the Arts. So, the studio-crit is my training ground.

This is an institution devoted, not to art criticism, but engaging an interaction that can hatch new repertoires. It is non-directive. Yet, inhabiting the work, finding a hatch and sharing it with the maker, can reach the critical threshold where a new repertoire is hatched⁽¹¹⁾. In art-school, this is not a solitary venture. But a process which Chris Thompson has adequately coined as 'theoria'—referring to ancient Greek etymologies—and the 'theoros', the one who undertakes the journey (Thompson, 2011, Kindle)⁽¹²⁾:

"The early Greek theoria was not a private matter, an individual intellectual or professional path leading away from home and tradition. It was, instead, a circular journey, beginning and ending in a rootedness and commitment to one's native place, family and community, and supported by them every step of the way. Theory, the journey to new and more comprehensive insight, and practice, the living of daily life, were not divorced. Theorizing did not lead only outward and forward, in the linear style of modern thought, but back to the hearth and the polis."

From this point on, I see the development of theory as something text-based in our time, as somewhat problematic. Conversation (Marcus, 2005)⁽¹³⁾ has the potential of a vehicle for theory development, in disciplines as our own, because it is also open to materiality (whether it is defined as objects, practices and also text). Such a theoretical practice, as I imagine it, has the potential of developing peer-to-peer relationships in areas where people are largely used to work on their own. It can change our work.

In relation to this, the system of signatures I have developed to extrapolate Lévi-Strauss' usage of Klein's groups into the artistic field, is intended as a support-structure for the development of conversation into a vehicle of theory-development. That is, to facilitate a development within the form of conversation which is devised for entirely practical means, and does not require a further inquiry into formal logic *per se* (though it, of course, does not forbid it). It is intended to give access to the 'threshold' as a material.

Agamben (2008)⁽¹⁴⁾—referring to the work of Enzo Melandri on analogy, or analogical thinking—defines the signature as a special class of sign, that operates as a sign within the sign; and that, outside of this context, is silent. Like a lute, it has to be picked up and played. In other words, in the terms outlined above, it does not lend itself to core operations: it is an instrument and not a tool. Which means that it is more like a musical instrument, than e.g. a navigation device. It is, in some aspects, completely passive.

It features the presence or possibility of consciousness in a material form, relating to a specific world of signification. Which, in the sections below, are the contents, field, materials of specific archaeological queries. The use of the signatures will not judge between presence and possibility. Since the characteristics of the presence of something like consciousness, is never moves completely beyond the possibility. It's function is to facilitate to conduct and inquiry in groups.

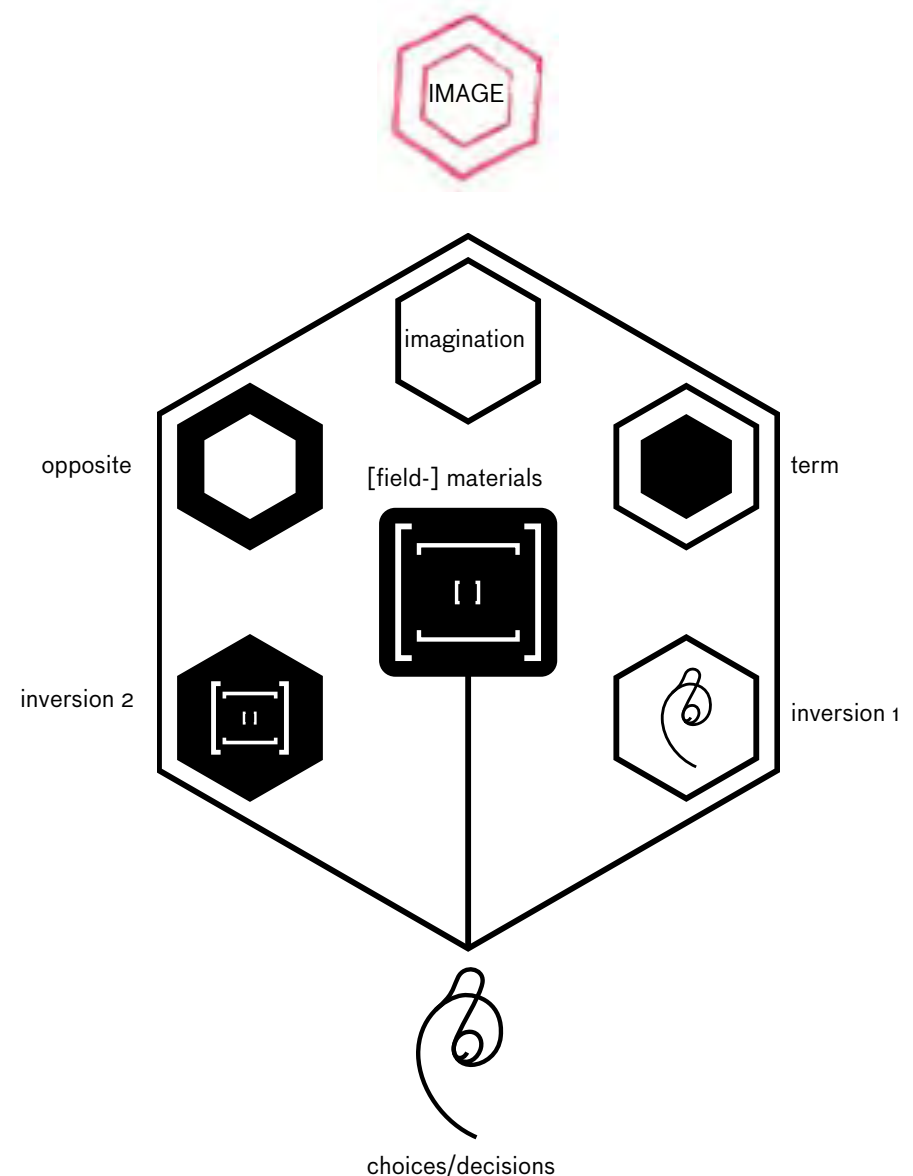
Which is why I have compared the signatures with 'a signages for way-finding in timescapes'. Because it does not take off in speculations on a mathematical lingo, in the area of arts and humanities, it does not colonise the senses: though it adds materials, and a special kind of material to the senses. It transposes the work of mimesis as a solitary query, into the realm of a common: the oecumene of research, where presenting in groups—as we do here—is a preferred method, but not necessarily working in groups⁽¹⁵⁾.

Taking off into abstractions that summon the solitary genius may well be one of the tropes in the colonising of the senses. Working in groups—with conversation as a vehicle of theorising that will host the materials at hand in a satisfactory way—does not have to relinquish the quests and queries of theories, but it will do so by other means, and with awareness of the impact of mediations: that is, the designs the emerge from the domestication of specific joint uses of tools and instruments.

the HEX-compound:

Basic legend of signatures

[as a support-structure the HEX-compound can have several context specific legends]



'As if studio-crit'—«How do we Imagine the Past?»

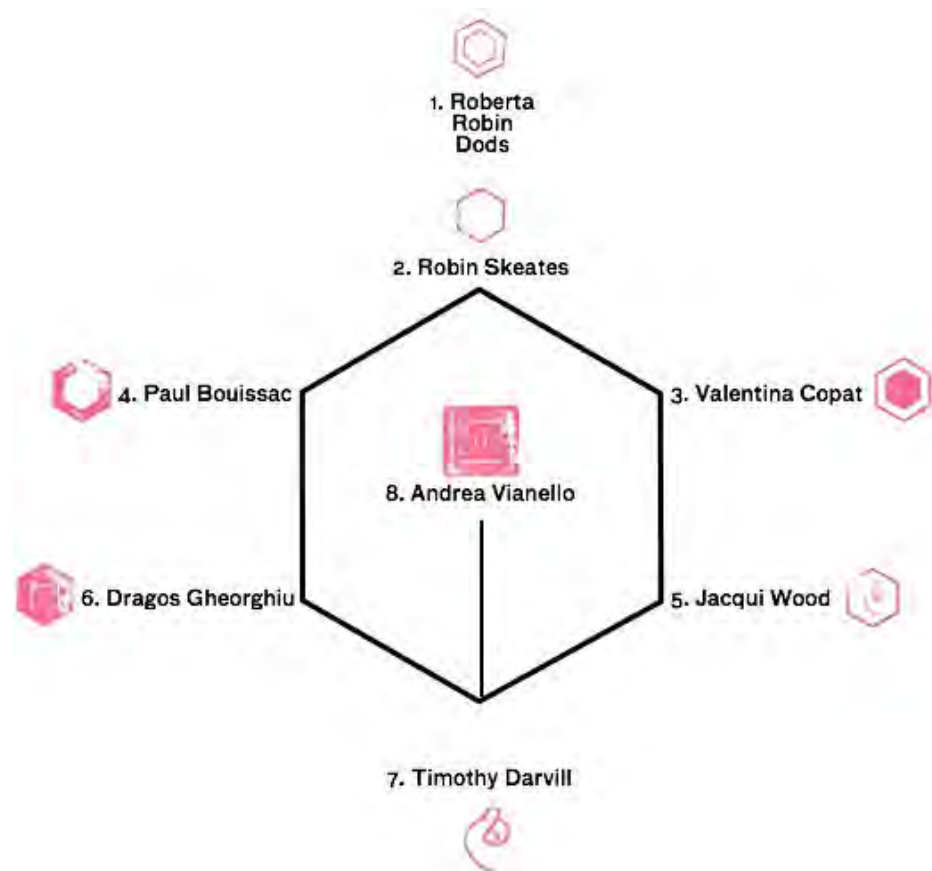
"One can see the pattern. Where Rabinow endeavours to move onward to explore the new, Marcus, asks for bridges and connections and wonders how Rabinow's project can be integrated into anthropology. On this level the two meet, challenging and following each other, thereby gradually exploring—and inventing a common space. The conversations gradually come to consider the virtues and possibilities of the design studio, in which possible aims, concepts, and methods for the anthropology of the contemporary are developed, tested, doubted, improved, and left in their unfinished state for others to take on. Hence the title of our project: Designs for and Anthropology of the Contemporary."

(Tobias Reese in Rabinow, Marcus, Faubion & Reese, 2008, Kindle)⁽¹⁶⁾

In the dummy below, the articles in the anthology (supra) have been tagged with what can be seen as their dominants signature. It is not intended divide the anthology into tidy sectors, but to indicate that each article—in which all the signatures are implemented—still are pitched by a dominant one. The chart below does not contain all the papers, for reasons that will be indicated below. The ones that have been included have been selected because they lend themselves to a possibility study of this kind.

The purpose of the exercise not being to come up with the ultimate sign-language, but to provide an experimental basis for further experimentation in this direction. The direction being the type of group-work that does not focus on singular contributions—though these provide specific materials to the discussions—but focuses on emergent properties of system (or, the systemic features that can emerge when

work of different purpose and origin come together, and point out conjointly in some direction).



In the anthology *How do we Imagine the Past?* (supra)⁽¹⁷⁾ the article written by Roberta Robin Dods is that one that most obviously relates to the topic of the reality of the image—she analyses a case of optical illusion in ceramics—and its relation to an analytical work that involves the senses. Similarly, in his contribution to the anthology, Robin Skeates highlights how the senses—in his case, smell—can involve imagination in ways guiding his search to ask questions that help define the analytical task.

Again, Valentina Copat brings the readers' attention to how contact with skills is key to the perceptual acuity needed to make details in archaeological finds perceptible, that will escape coming generations on account of the lack of emphasis on such training in the current educational systems. As for Paul Bouissac, he points how incomplete command of data often is supplemented with ideologically motivated narratives, and proposes instead a culture of data-sharing in simulation experiments.

Then Jacqui Wood surveys how experimental crafting/making—ranging from basketry, needle-making, weaving, lighting working materials such as bone, flint, grass, lime-baste, wattle, daube, soft rush and pith—can help the research cut clear of blinkered approaches and partial/biased outlooks into past societies. Dragos Gheorghiu, on the other hand, uses a GoPro video camera during experimental manufacturing processes, to develop an understanding of ancient skills through augmented reality.


The kinds of emerging repertoires demonstrated by this approach come to the point of the kinds of decisions archaeologists face, discussed in Timothy Darvill's article. The unilateral emphasis on data-collecting lead to a blind overproduction of data, while a more wholesome harvest can be achieved by methods of rehabilitation and occupation. Finally, Andrea Vianello's article relates to the core problematic of the archaeological field, as such: the importance of handling to the focality of objects.








George Nash's and Xurxo Ayan Vila's articles have not been included here, because the conceptual and practical frameworks proposed in them are enfolded into the explanation of the logic and use of the HEX-signate in the next section. The function, moreover, of this mock-up signage is to constitute a preparation for the processing of the articles that are submitted to the session on the future archaeology of the senses at WAC-8, in Kyoto. In this synopsis the articles are arranged as indicated above.

Evidently, the world does not fall into such neatly divided sectors as above chart might suggest. It is displayed in this fashion here in order to familiarise the reader with how that signage works visually. For the same reason the explanation of the signatures—pertaining to their visual logic—has been placed after the cases, in order to allow the readers to familiarise themselves with the practice of signage as sensory containers involved in the analysis of contents, and demonstrate their virtues in stalking & making paths.




*






1. **Roberta Robin Dods:** «Seeking the Mind of the Maker»

Image—		<p>The article is a comparative study of ceramics with similar form and motifs from New Mexico: the Pecos bowl (16th century) and Salinas bowl (17th century). The Pecos bowl is unique in that the motif of a bird painted along the rim, is extended by the motif of a human-like silhouette when the angle is changed, propelled by the rotation of the motif along the rim, as though extending from the making of the pottery.</p>
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Imagination—		The Salinas bowl features the same elements, but they are not combined in the same way, and hence does not produce the optical illusion. The dating of the bowls suggest that the Pecos bowl is somewhat older than the Salinas bowl. The author uses the context to shed light on the aspects in which the two are identical (the making) and different (the composition). She sees the Salinas bowl as an act of remembrance.
Contact—		A remake of the Pecos bowl from 2010 constitutes the contact-point from where the author picks up on three dimensions involved in the making of an artefact: the physical characteristics and measurements involving in the making, the general cultural information pertaining to motifs and material culture, the idiosyncrasies of the maker.
Access—		It appears that in the contact with the colonising powers, the war-ridden Pecos pueblo had a more articulated history of resistance, than the Salinas community which evolved to become an important settlement of the Catholic Church. She discusses the possibility that the making of the Salinas bowl was an act of remembrance that led up to a rebellion in the native population in 1680.
Experiment—		The article is a theoretical experiment in the sense that it draws up a problem of space-time involved in making, where at the interstice between the <u>chaîne opératoire</u> , Bourdieu's habitus and narrative knowledge the artefact becomes and exists and a space-time without an inside nor an outside, like a Möbius strip coiling endlessly on itself. Exchanges at this level are more transpersonal than interpersonal.
Repertoire—		She ponders on the differences between the intricate knowledges of manufacturing processes—like ceramics—and the understandings of time and space with which they co-exist. The author relates an episode from her parallel career as an anthropologist: an informant asked from how far away she had come; she used an orange as a 'globe' to show the distance, but it was the simile of a 400 days walk that came through.
Decision—		Two kinds of «dépaysement» come out quite clearly in Roberta Robin Dods' article. She uses the cross-pressure between these perspectives to come up with a the idea of an inter-subjective space that constitutes a worthy subject of inquiry. It brings intelligibility to a manufactured life-world where not only making <u>proceeds</u> by bricolage, but <u>determines</u> how it communicates as a document.
Field—		Her discussion of the two bowls from New Mexico rounds up the broader experiential backdrop, from which she develops her article, in an analysis of traditions that are carried and transmitted by women. The focus that emerges at the level of the field of inquiry also is reflected in the way she approaches it. Her article is piecemeal in its bricolage, yet holistic in the way her <u>materials</u> and her <u>approach</u> are homologous.





2. Robin Skeates: «Imagining the Sensuous Cultures of Prehistoric Malta»

Imagination—		This article focusses on sensuality—more specifically on smell—and articulates a critique of a scholarly tradition of analysis that privileges sight. It is the connection to mortuary rites, ritual passages from mortuary caves and pungent burial sites that involve smell most directly. However, the imagination of smell based on evidence from findings is a powerful bridge to ideas about the past based on these findings.
Contact—		The author's broad reflections on sensuality in archaeology follow the narrative trail of his fieldworks on archaeological sites in Malta. He invites the reader on an imaginary walkabout, which summons the full array of human senses that do not add detail to a growing database of facts, but adds to their synthesis a notion of situations and life-ways of yore, that prompt analyses of how much of it is in reach of our senses.
Access—		When he stops to discuss particular sites and their items, it is in order to ponder over research methodologies, and the sensory attitudes that link up findings and theories that limit the scope of archaeology. He discusses Geertz's (1973**) notion of thick description as a point of access from where sensory resources used by people at a given time and place connect to the significance they had for those people.







Experiment—		The experimental focus in the article is on creative writing and how it provides the occasion not only to span and cross the bounds of literary conventions, but also to «incorporate the senses in imaginative scenarios intended to stimulate new thoughts and questions about what life felt like in the past.» Which is essentially to shift writing from a meta-linguistic processing function, to join the action of realigning the senses.
Repertoire—		His wider outlook on experimentation features a potential of research activities in the future; and at present the outline of a methodological repertoire, in which he foresees «the reconstructions of the design, production and use of these stone tools might shed light on their original makers' and users' sensory, and especially tactile, engagements with the materiality of such artefacts.» He outlines an agenda.
Decision—		The inventory of the senses is a detailed analysis of the sensory profile of a particular culture, is the focus of inquiry in Robin Skeates pitch for an archaeology of the senses. He argues that the foundation for this research direction already exist in what archaeologists are studying anyhow, on account of their empirical concern with detailed description of food remains, and other residues of human life-forms.
Field—		Though his field on present day Malta is based on research on remains from the past, Robin Skeates is singularly interested in the living, and the tracery of human life-forms of yore, as a living knowledge in the present of sensory life-worlds in the past. He argues for a deep immersion in the realities of the material evidence which is gathered studied and imagined. A meaningful dialogue between ideas and evidence.
Image—		In his sensory inventory of the mortuary complex of Ħal Saflieni [from the 5th-4th millennia b.c.e.] in Malta, the cross-pressure between the inventory of findings and the process of exploration yields a locus for an image that is dislodged from its place archaeological discourse—without an inside nor an outside—and acquires a mode of literary existence, that marks the narrative as much as it is related by narrative.



3. Valtentina Copat: «The Sensorial Experience of Food Preparation and Consumption in the Late Bronze Age Site of Oratino – La Rocca (Campobasso-Southern Italy)»

Contact—		Here the query into the experience of cooking spurs an analysis of shape, dimensions and location of ceramic vessels. The detailed analysis that drives her query constitutes the main contact point to the digs and finds in the late Bronze Age. She evidences a level and variety of detail that brings the reader beyond common sense. While her query into experiential dimensions of the past also shows how they would compare.
Access—		The context in which we live influences our daily imagination and in consequence the way we observe the past: we are losing «...from generation to generation, the skills and experience that were available until a few decades ago, from manual abilities, knowledge of plant and animal cycles, perception of territory, to the capacity of orientation in space and time.» It affects how we collect data, how much and whether.
Experiment—		Her experiment lies significantly in how an anthropological query will add to the analysis of findings and spur research that is needed in our knowledge of ancient societies. It interlinks the analysis of situations related to cooking—related to senses—and the ways in which group differences may have been experienced and told. Whether the contacts between the groups were indirect or direct.
Repertoire—		Though her analysis demonstrates a considerable repertoire in her knowledge in the above mentioned areas (manual abilities, plant and animal cycles, perception of territory, spatio-temporal orientation), her point is that the limits of our current repertoire is also defines our limits not only in analysing the past, but even in perceiving and recording data relevant to forms of knowledge beyond our scope.









Decision—		She trains herself in the use of transdisciplinary perspectives and sensory imagination, but limits herself to the ones that will hone her analysis and hands-on understanding of the archaeological findings. And her approach to how remote and proximal relations may have functioned in the past, is consistent with how theories and observation interlock in her own analysis. They are in both cases productive.
Field—		The idea that not only utensils are produced and crafted—but also ways of living and societies—indeed brings a different horizon to how social situations and techniques related to cooking, would have produced social life forms in real time, in the sense of generating an outlook on other groups within the range of experience. Her case for theorising in the field as an analytical driver in fieldwork services to demonstrate this.
Imagination—		The productive relationship between knowledge and understanding, transforms imagination into a vehicle of hypothesis (in a context where both the present use and query on senses in the past serve to augment the analytical power). It removes imagination from the realm of empty speculation to feed the parallel development of enskilment and perceptiveness in what remains an empirical discipline.
Image—		In her article the detailed knowledge of finding fuelled by the sense experiences that are contiguous to them, transforms the analysis of cooking-situations and -sites, into ethnoscapes, with the value of a plausible social currency at the time of their making, and in the context of our current understanding: the value of the mark which is produced without communicative nor instrumental intention, but authenticates exchange.

4. Paul Bouissac: «The Grounding of Archaeological Representation: From Imagination to Simulation»









Access—		The way we imagine the past is not only hostage to the form of knowledge we have as breaking members of the contemporary society, but also the quantity of available data in technologies of storage way beyond the narrative format. With the databases that currently exist the problem of the sample for narratives that still convey our knowledge is a core issue: especially with regard to inherited stereotypes.
Experiment—		The use of narrative as part of the fieldworking archaeologist's tool-bag reframes imagination as simulation experiments. It is in this sense that computer-simulation can aspire to become the new narrative. Simulations allow us to imagine the counter-intuitive; and replace the painstaking efforts of the human brain to manage the current surfeit of data and overcome stereotypes and ideological prejudiced narratives.
Repertoire—		Currently simulation is used to forecast future developments: «Simulation software, though, is mostly used to anticipate the future. These programs enable the experimenters to visualise the long-term effects of variables which are virtually introduced into a system. Ecologists thus can predict climate evolution.» But the power of simulation to transcend the limits of imagination also applies to the past.
Decision—		To forestall a stock of knowledge based on sketchy contextual outlines and representations based on unsupported assumptions, archaeologists should bend their efforts: «The first step should be the merging of data coming from the collections of prehistoric artefacts and the recording of rock arts which have been a constant preoccupation of prehistorians since the inception of this branch of archaeology.»
Field—		In some sense the author prefers the terra nulla/-incognita approach to the field and a tabula raza of assumptions of what we will find. In other words, brings the scientific values of the laboratory experiment —and their confinement in controlled conditions—unto the study of open and complex dynamics with a command of an unlimited store of facts, at the human scale, to come up with simulation beyond human imagination.
Contact—		In the scope of this article our contact with the past and future is better prompted by the counter-intuitive scenarios that come out of computer simulation, than with a piecemeal command of facts and cultural and ideological assumptions (e.g., on how homo sapiens, or creatures anatomically closer to modern humans, overtook the Neanderthals in a history of evolution where the latter are divested of humanity).

Imagination—		In this scope, human imagination—fed by counter-intuitive scenarios—is prompted to make a certain number of priorities with regard to data-base management and directing further archaeological research. In the author's perspective one might say that the role of the experiment is ubiquitous, and that the outlook of human experience shifts to data-base management and field-operations carried out with precision.
Image—		Our imagery generated by such arrangements our scientific culture does not have to be credible in order to be valid. The resilience of the image and the rigour of the procedures that generate it creates a validity for an image that exists in its own time. The time of simulation. The article brings the reader squarely into the dilemmas of human belief: believing too much, believing too little and the logic of contingencies.


5. Jacqui Wood: «A Holistic Approach to Experimental Archaeology»








Experiment—		In her article, the author relates an itery of experimental making that closer to the contemporary approach of the designer than the craftsperson of yore, in the sense that the rich variety of making processes in which she engages are carried out with the joint ambition of learning the skills and exploring the process. Her experiments are characterised by her facility at acquiring skills, but also by first practice learning.
Repertoire—		The fund of learning-outcomes reaped from the experimental making is significantly concerned with contingencies both in the context and in the process of making. Together with her repertoire of ancient skills grows a repertoire of «finding out», which in her perspective, is a repertoire just as important to understand ancient cultures as the set of skills, techniques and materials recorded as «data».
Decision—		Her inquiry in the article focusses on the first hand experience of navigating between what is enough to make skills, techniques and materials come together and what is sufficient for the purposes at hand. In other words to use skills, techniques and materials to explore the realm of human contingencies constrained by these. A query into human cognition, beyond the short-lived and brutish stereotypes of the past.
Field—		A field-observation: «Whilst as far as I know there is no evidence in the archaeology for such a practice I am sure that someone might have thought of the same idea in prehistory when they saw how well it did the job with a minimum amount of effort. If one does not try all manner of research such as this one is not going to discover the plethora of activities that might have been practiced throughout prehistory.»
Access—		Using anomaly as her point of access to where practices of making take a different direction than one which is confined to single techniques, she notes: «If one is blinkered in one discipline such as textiles or ceramics one sees a settlement situation through a very narrow window. Recycling is not a new concept and so many broken and discarded artefacts would have been utilised into new tools and products.»
Contact—		Contingencies of making run across time: «Most students acquiring spinning skills find that they can easily spin an even yam at their own personal thickness, some very fine yarn and some much thicker. Whereas a skilled spinner can spin any yarn thickness to order, the average spinner tends to spin always at the same thickness. I suggest that therefore there were four distinct spinners making the yarn for the hood.»
Imagination—		The most detailed case in her article, which is rich in examples of making, is the manufacture of a chevron striped hood from the Orkney islands, weaved from different thicknesses of yarn. Her analytical focus on the detail making process, fuel an imagination of people as makers: «It is a popular misconception I feel to assume that prehistoric people were so very different to ourselves.»
Image—		The connectivity of anomalies and the contact zone of human contingencies define a realm between random processes and cultural beliefs, summoning an image of dynamics and energies, where indexicality and mimetics combine and narrow down the options to those that our found useful. This image featuring an human œcumene of making—poiesis—is one which is clearly recognisable/pervasive at art schools.

6. Dragos Gheorghiu: «Immersive Approaches to Built Contexts. Constructing Archaeological Images and Imaginary»



Repertoire—		The discussion of repertoires is brought to a new level in the anthology with Prof. Gheorghiu's attempt to involved digitised 3D to the immersion in traditional contexts. Here the notion of repertoire departs from the focus on research methodologies, and first practice learning, to focus on how the layered structures of archaeological finds in Vădastra (Southern Romania) can be matched by layering museum displays.
Decision—		The author proceeds to weave computer-based technologies into the fabric of real-time experience, whether involved in acquiring new knowledge or understanding archaeology as a process. The analysis of materials, technologies and skills are driven by an inquiry into the knowing body. Imagining the past and conceiving the knowing in a contemporary perspective are therefore joined in the framework of this article.
Field—		The archaeological site here becomes subject to the variety of staging used in a museum. The difference between emic and etic perspectives—i.e. «native» and «foreign»—are no longer confined in the finery of anthropological discussions, but to a demonstration that makes it available for the discussion of a broader audience than one limited to specialists (and closer to the etic/emic meaning in linguistics).
Experiment—		The topics of computer-supported 3D simulation and immersion are broad and, to some extent, autonomous fields of inquiry. The author's objective is to combine them in experiment: «This is the reason why I have searched for alternative methods of representation and immersion, which would allow the user to develop his/her own image of the subject experienced.» The experimental immersion in a foreign body.
Access—		The experiment grew out of a concern with studying technologies together with their cultural context (i.e. both the emic and the etic): «The approach to imagining the layers of occupation of the site started with experimentation with regard to the materiality of each layer, i.e. of their characteristic technologies.» The wish to establish a cross-emic/etic cogency in this regard, is also the point of access.
Contact—		The point being that between the emic-practice and the etic-context there is not an abysmal gap: «Another reason for selecting Vădastra was our goal of working with the young villagers whose imaginary had not yet been totally altered by the cliches of the modern epoch.» <u>What is absent from our practice is often present in our context, and vice versa.</u> This is the analytical reason to distinguish between access and contact.
Imagination—		«A result of this augmented reality (Azuma 1997; Azuma et al. 2001), or mixed reality process (Papagiannakis et al. 2005; Costanza et al. 2009; Benford and Giannachi 2011: 165 ft) which combined the phenomenological experience of the body with the dematerialised experience of the space in Virtual Reality into a new type of embodiment.» Indeed, it cultivates the imagination of being inside a foreign body.
Image—		Hence the imagery: «I used an HD Hero 1080 head mounted video camera, to record the images exactly as seen by the actor-experimentalist, and to erase the actor-narrator duality, thus offering only the emic vision of the performer [...] the observer sees and moves through the body of a different person, generating a situated cognition as well as an embodiment in a body other than that of the receptor.»







7. Timothy Darvill: «Observation, Analogy, Experimentation, and Rehabilitation during Archaeological Excavations»

Decision—		This article directs the reader's attention to some examples of decisions made in an archaeological dig —e.g. in Billtown Quarry Site, in the Isle of Man—to supplement the stratigraphic sequence of recording the spatial disposition, with other forms rehabilitation of ancient grounds: the rationale being that time of the excavation is disproportionately more lengthy than the social time of life spent: now and in the past.
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Field—		It adds to a field under conditions where: «Events that took place within a matter of minutes, hours or days can sometimes take weeks and months to investigate and here we have to be careful not to invest aspects of the past with an importance inflated by the efforts needed to comprehend them in the present.» What rehabilitation adds to the site is a context of social contingency, rather than adding new research practices.
Repertoire—		The idea of rehabilitation on excavation sites is not based on a interpretation of the past, but rather stimulate such interpretations. This way of proceeding forestalls ready interpretive agendas, that are prompted by theoretical discourse: «At the same time there are signs of a regress into increasingly abstract theory where the model provides the interpretation long before any real data are introduced.»
Experiment—		In this setting, the experiment can involve the senses analytically: «Brought together these strands of thinking provide an active approach to rehabilitation where actual and authentic materials can be used to partially recreate space and place within an actual archaeological site as a means of stimulating interpretation and reducing the range of possibilities to a selection of probabilities.» His concern is for accountability.
Access—		Hence the insight: «Critical here is the idea that excavation is not simply the mechanistic uncovering, recording and sampling of archaeological deposits but a creative process (Carver 1989; 2009: 375). Excavation, recording, and sampling require the interpretation of deposits and remains as the process unfolds, and it begins at the edge of a trowel, knife, spade, shovel, pick-axe, or JCB bucket.»
Contact—		What appears with a singular clarity from this article is that there are not data 'out there' ready to be collected, but that data (pace Augustin, in Todorov, 1977*) are crafted in one way or the other, in more/less accountable ways. The author contributes with a perspective where a proposal for accountable crafting is explored in broad daylight; keeping in awe the difference between data and information.
Imagination—		Hence the imagination, in this case, is located in the decisions that are made to temporary occupy the grounds of an archaeological dig with current contingencies (be it to drive poles in the ground where there are holes, or to organise a party where the grounds appear the mesh of social closeness and in night conditions). The point being that there is no assumption prior to the decision of what this should lead to.
Image—		The image is emergent: «The light from the first burning fire in the slight hollow was fully contained by the low earthwork with almost no spillage into the surrounding landscape. Anyone standing outside the henge saw a bright disc of light in a sea of darkness, an effect that would certainly have been enhanced if the whole internal surface had been skimmed in light-blue clay.» The workings of a monument.

8. Andrea Vianello: «Reliving the Past through Senses and Imagination while Researching Material Culture»

Field—		In the broader field «...modern humans can learn something about the ancient use of artefacts by acting themselves as instruments of research by recording their use of ancient artefacts. The experience resulting from such tests and practices have relevance in the present, but they also reproduce the past with adequate precision. By handling objects, or replicas where handling an original would be inappropriate, archaeologists have a chance to experience the materiality of the object...»
Decision—		Sensory archaeology is a specialised approach that needs to connect to the core of the field, the author states: «Many theoretical approaches in archaeology are borrowed from social sciences and they are legitimate methods in archaeological research, provided that the resulting discussions remain informed of the boundaries of data-driven narrative ends and expanded narratives.»

Repertoire—		In the broader scope: «The chaîne opératoire used to produce an artefact, or the physical and mental process of acquiring an object are as important as the original ideas from which the object took shape or the reasons for its consumption. The material culture is physically present, and as such has mediated through human senses that have not changed significantly in the last few millennia.»
Experiment—		Description: «No interpretation or generalisation can be satisfactory if the data gathering process has been poor. [...] By describing the gesturing and thinking that accompany the handling of artefacts, it may be possible to improve the description of artefacts and ultimately their interpretation. This method is best applied with artefacts that have been cleaned, are ready to be stored or are on display.»
Access—		The context of use and making: «The most pressing concern when studying pottery, and material culture in archaeology in general, is categorising artefacts. Placing an artefact within a category is often considered the same as explaining it. [...] Although categorisation provides an important way to understand artefacts, it is not the best way of presenting artefacts which are not mass-produced by machines.»
Contact—		«I have handled many ancient pots and other artefacts during my career, approaching them in different ways: as a curiosity, a mystery, an ancient version of a similar modern artefact, or as a ritualistic object, i.e. a category of artefacts on its own that cannot be rationalised in meaningful or "scientific" terms. For instance, miniature vessels, if they were not toys, then they may be easily categorised as non-functional.»
Imagination—		«a glittering crown could be imagined on the head of a person seated on a throne [...] Was it the focal point, or just a piece of the kit? Was the person wearing it wise and just or a scary dictator? Could an individual get close to such a person, enough to see their face, or would the crown and similar paraphernalia be seen from a distance, almost merging their attributes to those of the figure wearing it?»
Image—		The image, in this work, is the 'intra-subjective' space-time linking the human body and the artefact: «The method presented here assumes that a human body, bonded together with an original artefact, forms a single entity that does not change significantly over time and is not tied to a specific body. Thus, the entity can be reproduced diachronically, and it offers the possibility to reconstruct the past.»

*

«Mémoires d’outre-tombe»

It is said about Chateaubriand (1768-1848) that he at first hadn’t thought he would write his memoirs. But then, one day, walking in the Montboissier park he heard the song of a thrush, which reminded him of his childhood ant prompted him to go back working on this task. Following the same vein, I thought my flyers—a favourite format for a long time—had lived their time, and were about to wane into the flow of time-tide. But then I came to Kyoto, and discovered their relation to the signatures in the HEX-model.

This relationship is more concise than the one loosely applied on the chapters in Gheorghiu and Bouissac that I have parsed above. And the signatures are indeed intended and adapted for work on the ground, and not on finished academic papers. Moreover, they are also intended at bringing the question on the table—what designs can we think of signage for way-finding in timescapes, that would contribute to indicate the footsteps and paths of larger communities than the ones doing and owning the research [if we think that theory-development from empirical materials can be developed through conversation]?

Levi-Strauss’ canonical phrase that stones, plants and animals are good to think—which translated from French ‘bonnes à penser’ also could also be apt to think, potential thinkers, or the servants of thinking—could be translated to signatures: which ones are good in the sense that we can vouch for them. Here the connection and distinction between natural and cultural history comes to a point of clarity: good signage would have to involve art in some way, while the mode of connection should be the way we can connect to stones, plants and animals. I have no opinion whatsoever as to whether I have achieved this.

This is at level of signage/signatures as containers. At the level of content, the difference between imagination and images is similar to the difference between the works of man and the works of nature, and this is also where Benjamin moves at the brink of natural history (cf, Buck-Morss, 1991)⁽¹⁸⁾. But in his perspective, the natural historian is not only

given to the analysis of the works of nature, but also the remains, residues and ruins of human pasts. In this sense, his concept of natural history bypasses that of Goethe, owing to his particular take on and contribution to dialectical materialism.

The dialectical image is at the brink, or threshold, to the other. Not the other as in you are someone else than me—and vice-versa—but the other as the third. When we are here at WAC we may be so absorbed by professional dialogues, and various drifts of thought, that we gradually grow forgetful of the people who are not here (past or present), even though this is basic to a number of our practices and included into our policies and strategic goals. The openness to the third is rare—not in the sense that it is infrequent but that it is valuable, and that something we stop at. But we could benefit from reminders.

The signatures I have introduced in this paper, and tested out experimentally during the days in Kyoto, is a candidate to such reminders. Not only in live fora like WAC, but also in regard of other similar attempts with an historical precedent, like the signatures used by Benjamin in his researcher-scholar cross index. The experiments in Kyoto has sensitised me, or tune me into, their importance not only as a mysterious ways of annotating his own work, but as an instrument of thinking in itself. It is necessary, in incomplete works like the Arcades Project, to include it into an integral edition of his works.

(1) Methodologically, this paper is written in preparation for my acting as convenor and discussant at the 'future archaeology of the T14J session at WAC-8 in Kyoto. In the aftermath of the WAC-8 session, the learning outcomes reaped from the conference will result in a review and rewriting of this paper. This version of the paper therefore should be read as a proposal that will be iterated in a new copy after WAC-8. The explanation of this approach will emerge in due process from the following.

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(3) Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (2006 [1810]) *Theory of Colours*, Dover Publications.

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(6) Waldrop, Mitchell (1992) *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos*, Viking

(7) Bergson, Henri (2012 [1908]) *Le souvenir du présent et la fausse reconnaissance*, Paris: PUF.

(8) Klein, Felix (1974) *Le programme d'Erlangen*, Paris: Gauthiers-Villars.

(9) Pratt, Mary Louise (2005) «Arts of the Contact Zone» in Bartholomae, David & Petrosky, Anthony (eds.), *Ways of Reading – An Anthology for Writers*, Boston & New York: New York/St. Martin's, pp. 517-530.

(10) Shryock, Andrew (1987) *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination: Oral History and Textual Authority in Tribal Jordan*, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies, University of California Press.

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Cf, also Agamben, Giorgio «Archeologia di un'archeologia» in Melandri, Enzo (2004) *La linea e il circolo—Studio logico-philosophico sull'analogia*, Macerata: Quodlibet.

(15) Bion, Wilfred (1998) *Experiences in Groups*, Routledge.

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(17) Gheorghiu, Dragos & Bouissac, Paul (2015) *How do we Imagine the Past? On Metaphorical Thought, Experientiality and Imagination in Archaeology*, Cambridge Scholars' Publishing.

(18) Buck-Morss, Susan (1991) *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, the MIT-press.

preliminary considerations on a modern legacy

—the decolonisation of the senses—

T14J01—Art as an Inspiration for Archaeologists

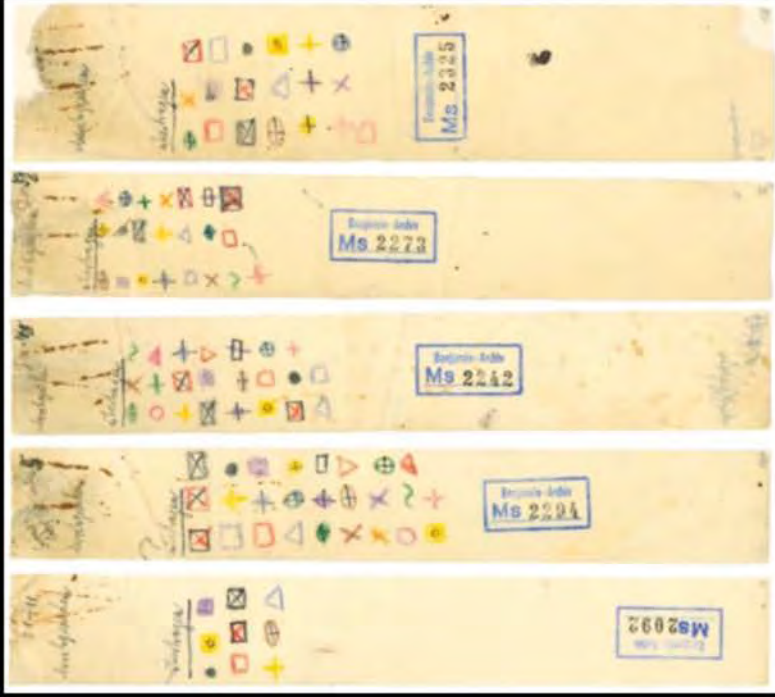
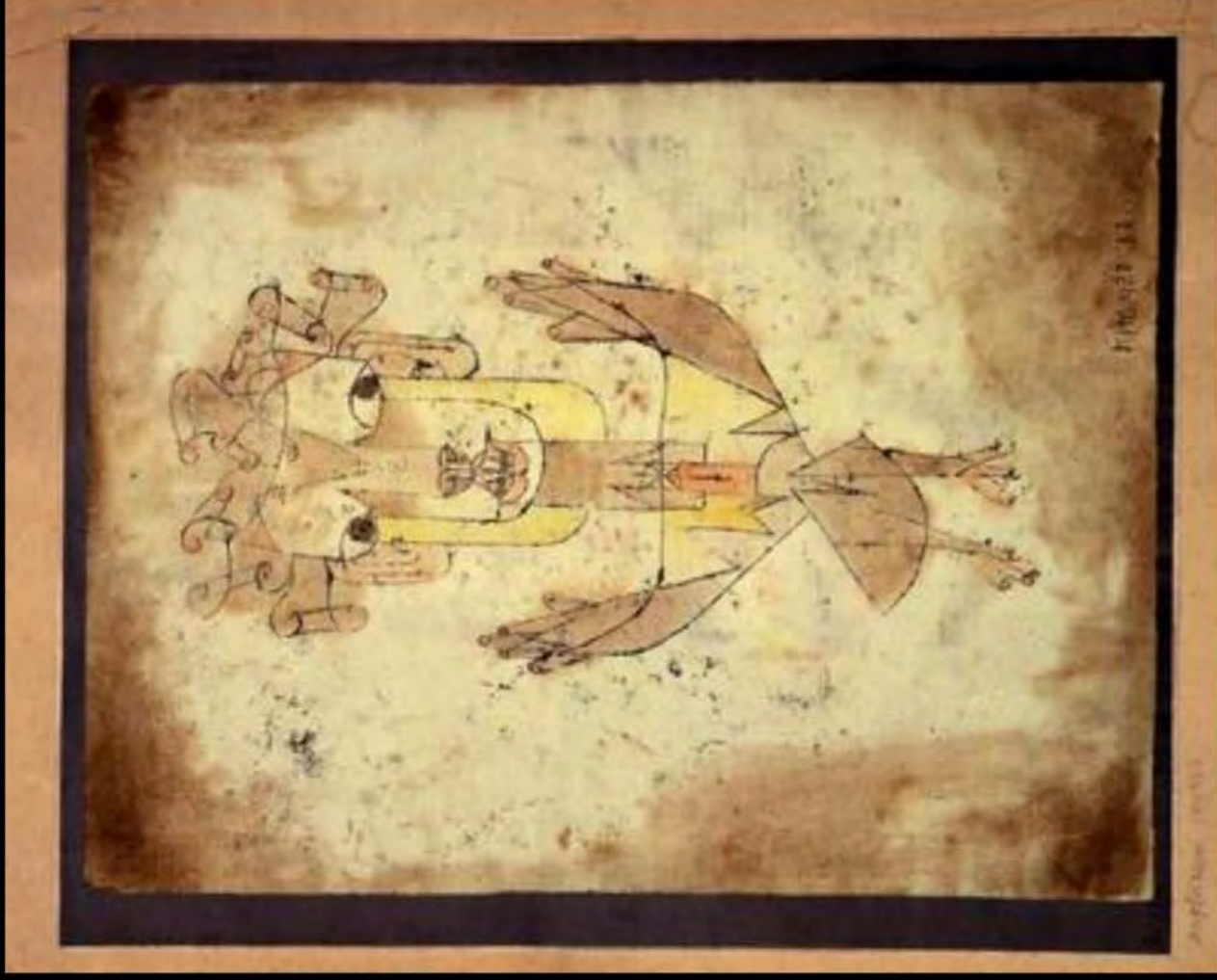
T09C—A Future Archaeology of the Senses?

theodor.barth@khio.no

prof. theory & writing
dr. philos. anthropology
oslo national academy of the arts



sixth element





the door a my room in a Ryokan



a perfect match with an unusual poster format
[180cm x 90cm]

5 WORKING DAYS IN KYOTO
<travelogue>

#05
<unlearn>

#04
<return with a new perspective>

#03
do something else>

#02
<try again>

#01
<attempt>

<recto...>

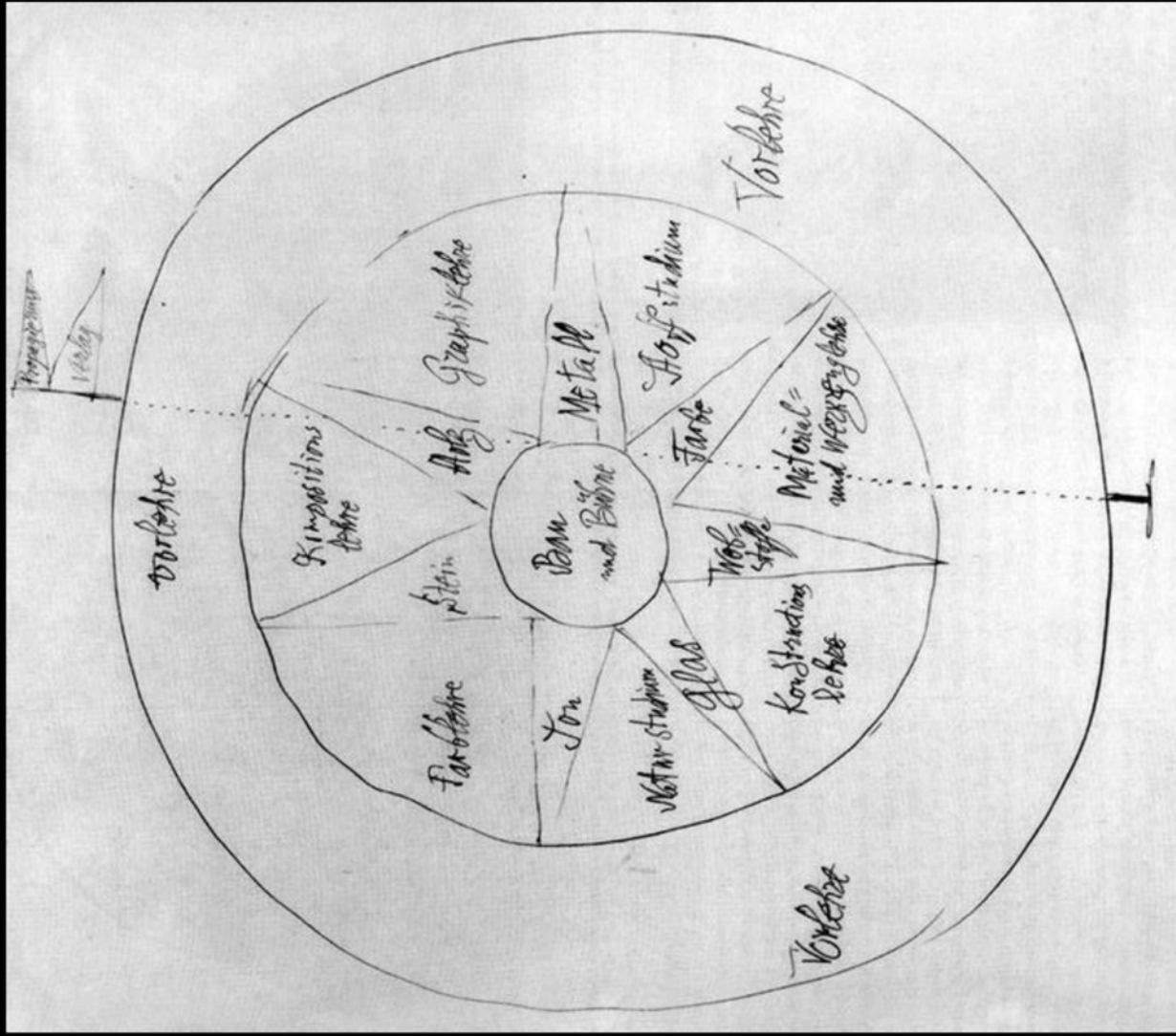
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<verso>...

...<flip side>

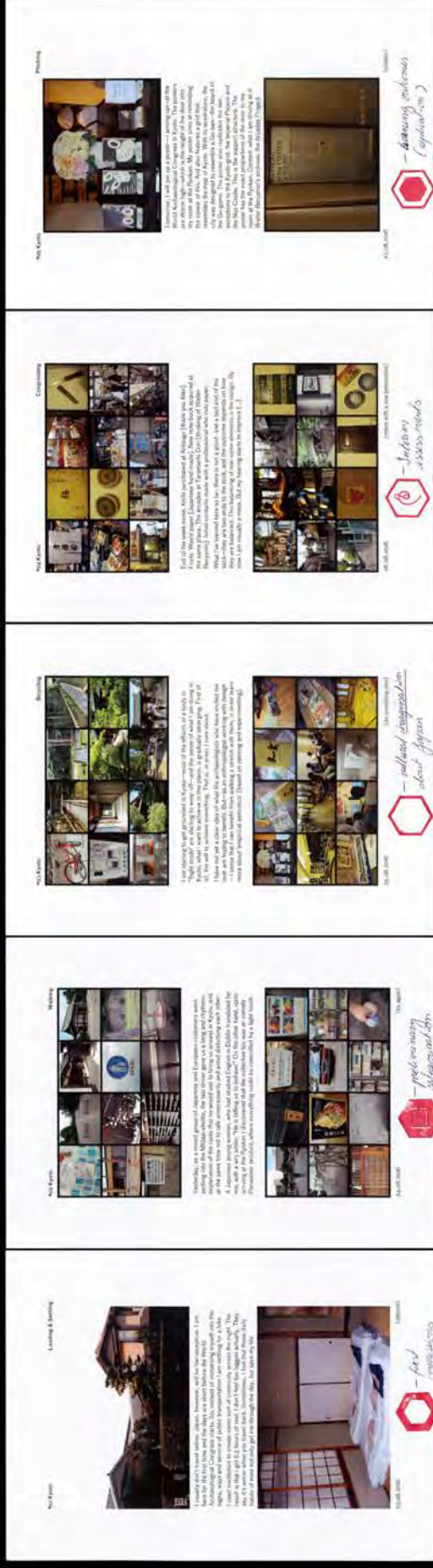
«Say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still. All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. Ever again. Fail again. Fail better.»

Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*

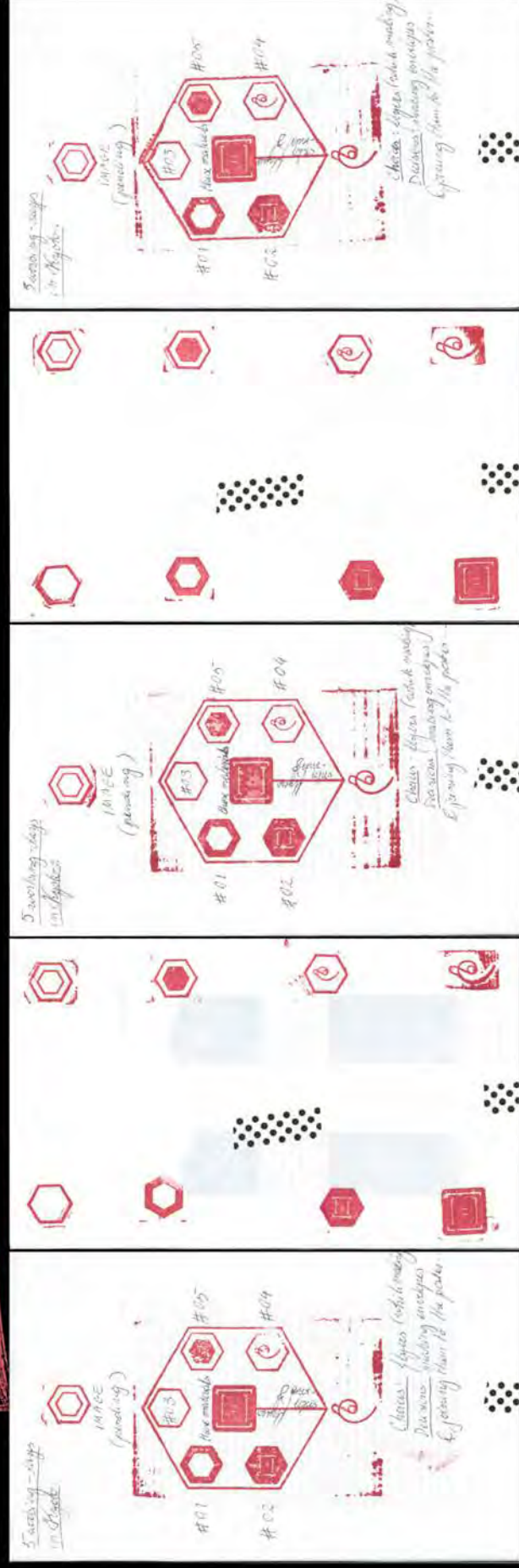


What would be the equivalent in the arts and humanities
of current attention on «footprints»?

- #01
<attempt>
- #02
<try again>
- #03
do something else>
- #04
<return with a new perspective>
- #05
<unlearn>



(... X 5)



5 envelopes
with a set of
5 flyers each

5 X

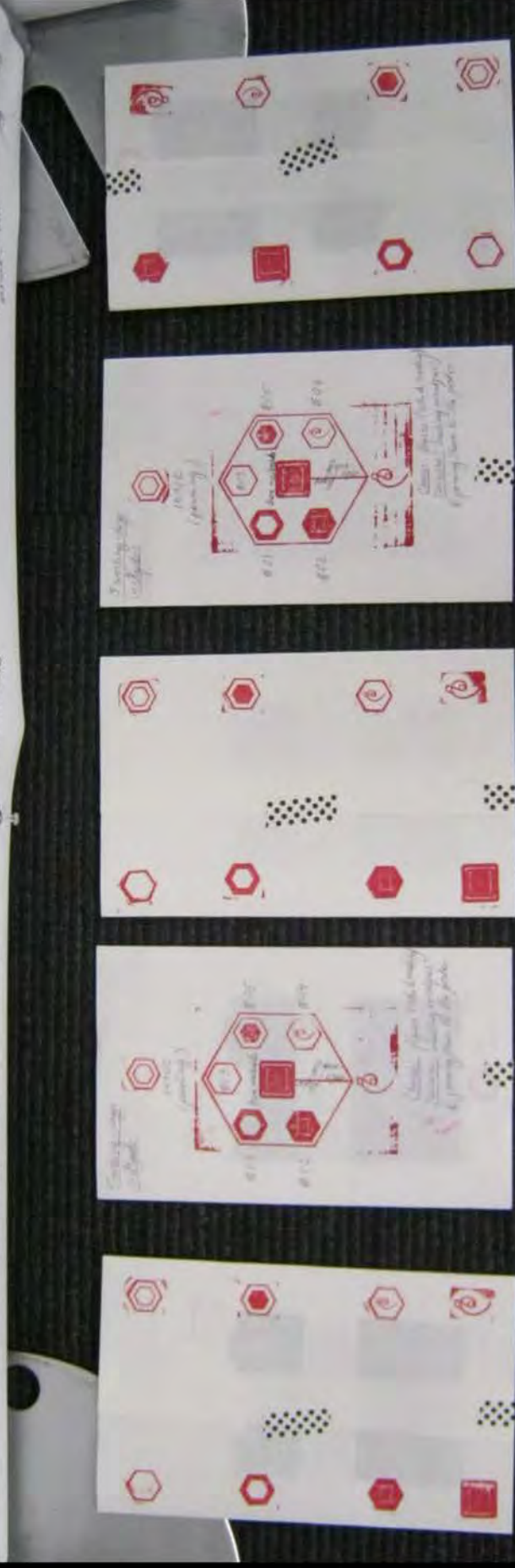
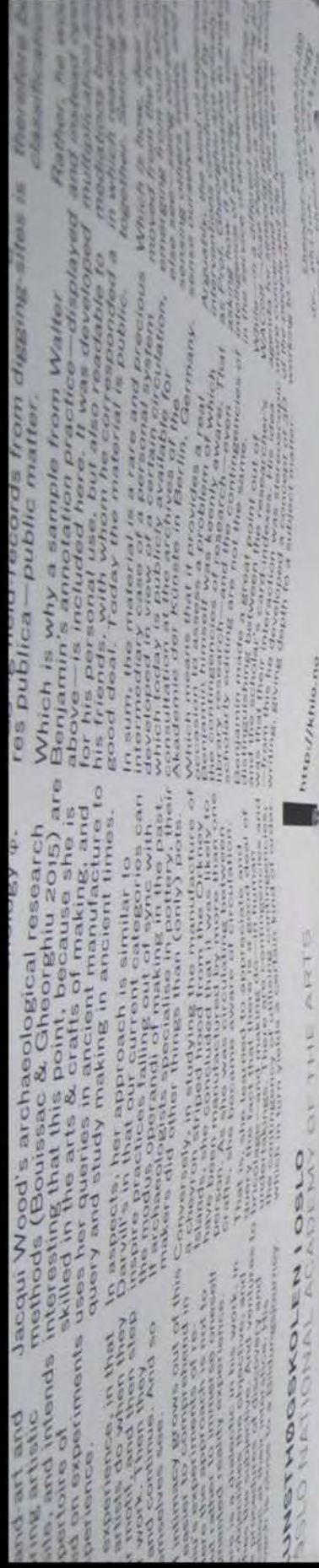
5 X

5 X

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5 X

sixth element



30/08/2016 03:56

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HOW DO WE IMAGINE THE PAST?

*On Metaphorical Thought, Experientiality
and Imagination in Archaeology*

Edited by

Dragoş Gheorghiu and Paul Bouissac



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HEX model

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CONTACT ZONE:

«I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today. Eventually I will use the term to reconsider the models of community that many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today.»

Mary Louise Pratt (2005) «Arts of the Contact Zone»

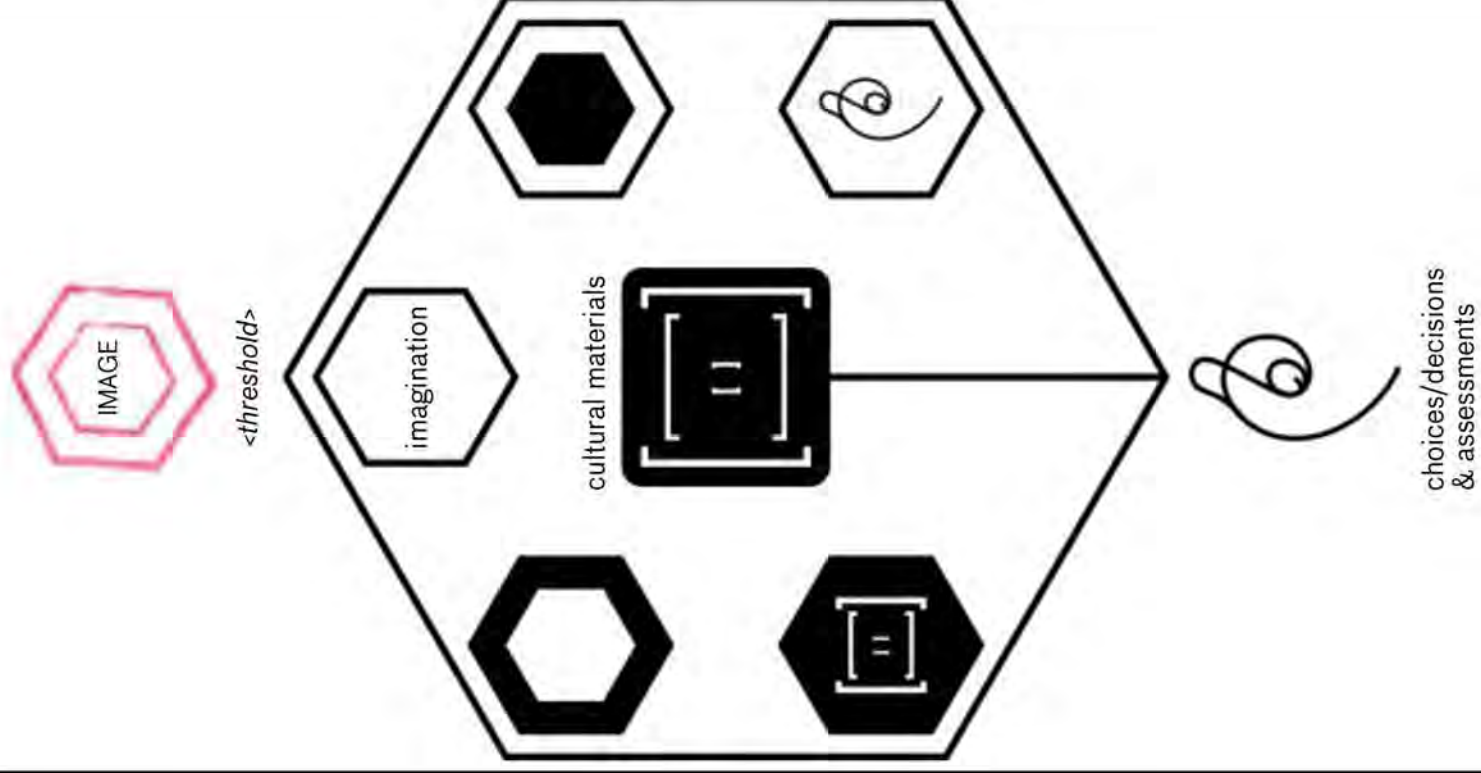
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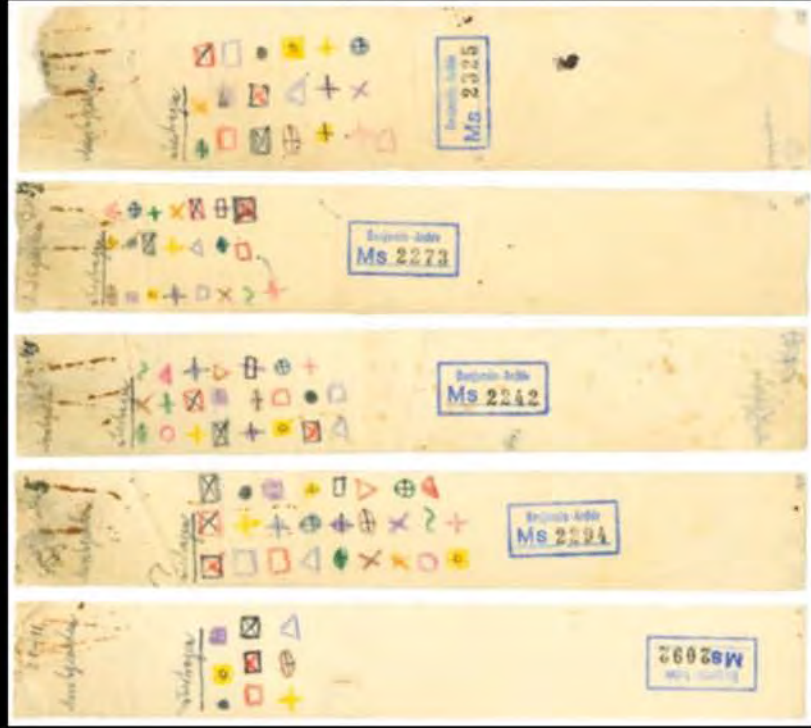
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repertoire

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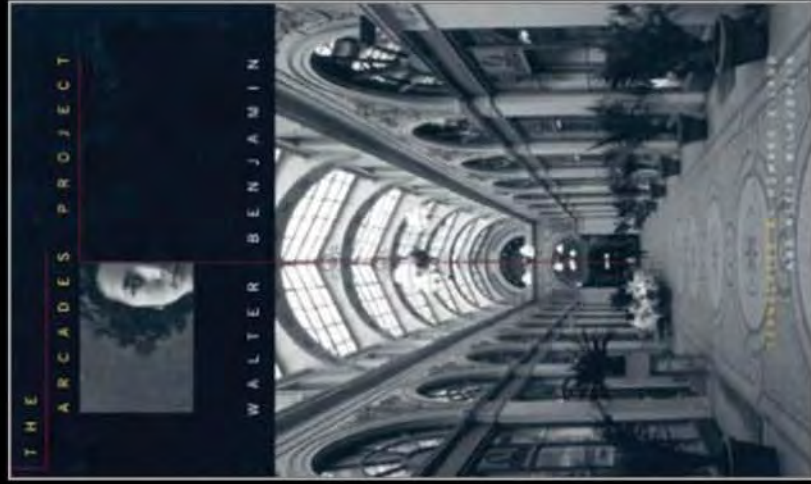
opposite

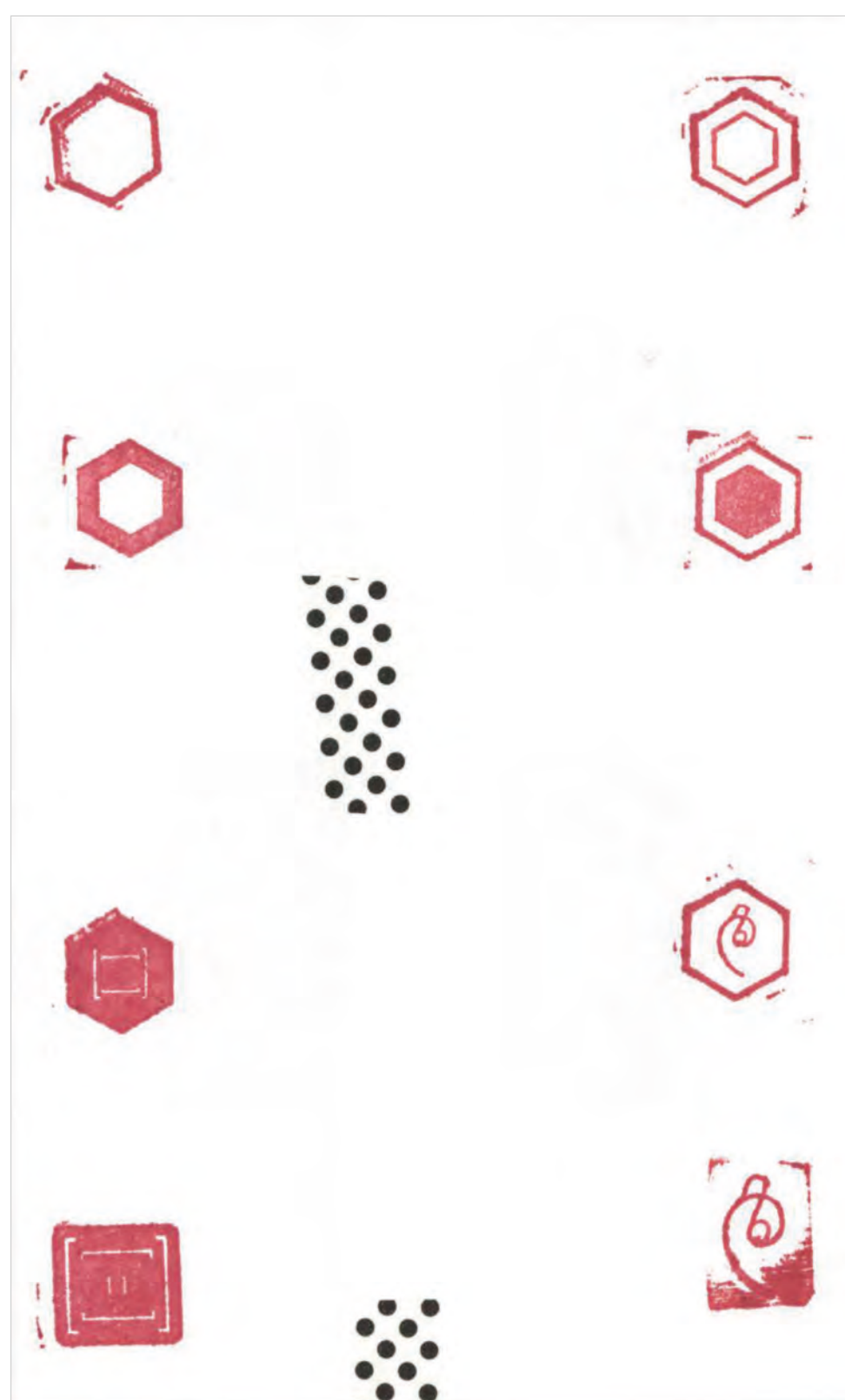
inversion 2:
experiment





FIN







The coloured palette of signatures used by Benjamin for organising his materials in visual cross-references: particularly in the manuscript version of the Arcades Project (1991) [Germ. Das Passagenwerk], which is an unfinished book/archive. It is language of signatures as embodied ordering system. It is regularly removed from the printed editions of the Arcades Project. **Beneath:** «Die Mühsal der Flucht» [Eng. the hardships of the escape].

The Decolonisation of the Senses

Preliminary Considerations on a Modern Legacy

Preliminaries

I have been invited into this forum [TJ 09-C] as a social anthropologist. All of my research are queries into the contemporary. It might be part of current the expectations in archaeology that social anthropologists are valid conversation-partners that can probe the applicability of anthropological perspectives on the findings in archaeological digs; thus, conceived as fieldwork-sites. A tantalising possibility. However, I will here proceed in the opposite way. By deriving an approach from current discussions in sensorial archaeology on a modern “archive dig”, I will seek to probe and query the fruitfulness of this approach to my colleagues in archaeology.

There are two working-assumptions that I bring into the bargain by thus proceeding: **a)** that the contemporary need not be a time-frame of what is near in time (Agamben, 2006)⁽⁶⁾; **b)** that conversation is a contemporary vehicle and container of theory-development (cf, Marcus 2005)⁽²⁾. And that, correspondingly, the present text is conceived as a ‘conversation piece’, in the sense of being authored with the purpose of bringing it up in conversation, as a material sample, in a collection of

other samples that hopefully will turn out to include a larger number, in the context of the conversations that I have in mind before WAC-o8.

This take on ‘conversation’ follows extends from what I provisionally will call “the phenomenology of the art school”⁽³⁾. The phenomenology in question is linked to a norm of emptying the mind in search of a ‘ground zero’ of perception—a radical state of availability & mobilisation—at which formal qualities of an art-work are allowed to affect a specialised audience as directly as possible, without entry-assumptions of received notions on genre and style, historical precedents and discursive categories. This starting-point will then prompt a critique, in view of hatching new repertoires or previously unseen potential.

In anthropological terms this ‘art-school’ phenomenology features a case of what anthropologist Fredrik Barth⁽⁴⁾ called a ‘tradition of knowledge’ (F, Barth, 2002)⁽⁵⁾. In these terms, the said phenomenology does not result from a methodological reduction—as the working assumption of a philosophical project (E. Husserl)—but as a skill for which there is a tradition in art-schools. It is a skill developed through practice and through the participation in “crits” which some years back was proposed as an approach for teaching ethnography by George Marcus (2010)⁽⁶⁾. Using “studio-crits” to develop another set of skills: those of fieldwork.

Hence the possibility of a bridge between two domains of enskilment: 1) the enskilment in the availability and mobilisation at the “ground zero” of perception [art-school phenomenology]; 2) the enskilment in fieldwork as an art or a craft. Attempts at theorising from these foundations of professional practice are e.g. found in 1) architectural theories that link up the legacy outlined above, with phenomenological theory in philosophy (examples of this are found in Johani Pallasmaa⁽⁷⁾—whose present relevance in art-schools is undeniable; and Christian Norberg Schulz⁽⁸⁾); 2) in Richard Sennett’s much quoted essay on The Craftsman (2009)⁽⁹⁾.

If a special prominence is given here to Walter Benjamin’s French version of an essay on the narrator and -narrative (1933)⁽¹⁰⁾, it is on account of its contribution to the academic precedents in Richard Sennett’s approach⁽¹¹⁾. That is, if seen as extensions of an art-school phenomenology—that can be compared to the education in listening, which is part of the professional education among musicians—that not only departs from a skills-based phenomenological practice, but also enacts it in how it develops an insight into the workings of a narrative in text, extending from experience as a practice-based skill: phenomenology ϕ .

Of course, this point of departure in narrative—rather than discourse—has but a limited relevance in a broader inquiry on sensoriality in archaeology. So, it is introduced with the expectation that it will have a comparative relevance as an empirical case. According to a notion of comparison, facilitated and hosted by conversation, which in turn afford an approach to theory-development in which empirical materials are not set aside, and neglected, but accommodated in such ways that theoretical insights are never left to abstraction, but take place in proximity of its materials (and as a host in the two inflections of the term).

This is the background for my having chosen to pitch this essay with a counterpoint. On the first page, the system of signatures that Benjamin used an ‘ordering system’⁽¹²⁾ (Schmidt & Wagner, 2004)⁽¹³⁾, developed for the combined purpose to navigate in the archive—as a material artefact in its own right—and to classify the findings in his historical study of capitalism: in the Arcades Project, the materials for the study the urban transformation of Paris from 1830 to the 1870s, a stretch of 40 years when Paris developed to become the Capital of Modernism. Benjamin was working on this from 1927 to his death in 1940. 13 years.

Though the signatures appear in many of his manuscripts—particularly the manuscripts of the Arcades Project (cf, f.n.8)—they have subtracted from the major integral publications of the Arcades Project⁽¹⁴⁾. The published versions are accordingly printed matter in black-and-white. However, we must step gingerly, as according to the prevailing practices in the field of book-printing—which is now under change, on account of technological developments—they were not added. So, from the point of view of Benjamin’s manuscript practice they have been subtracted, whereas from the point of view of the book printers they were not added.

At the time they were printed in their first editions, an archive in the bound format of a book, the colours would have been expensive to the point of reducing the public availability and -circulation considerably. However, if considered as germane to workings of the Arcades Project—as an abacus of sorts, a technological invention that transforms an archival compilation into the body of a collection [that starts living when put to use]—then there is simply a potentially important aspect of the work put into the Arcades Project by Benjamin, that was later been left out: the one that involves the senses and hinges on artistic practice.

That is, a contraption (Marcus) made of shapes and colours that provides the compounded archival material with a body, the accordingly constitutes the Arcades Project as a ‘body of knowledge’; transforming a compiled research material into a corpus. If seen as an artistic choice, the alternatives of adding or removing the system of signatures from the volume, to some degree corresponds with the addition or subtraction of a body (in the sense that the Arcades Project constitutes a corpus of a) findings and b) knowledge; which evidently not the same). It is a case in point of colonisation: a sensory subtraction for the purposes of print.

Here a case could be made for the hegemony of print—in the sense of text—in an increasingly visual culture throughout the 20th century. But

THE FIRST AGITATOR to the young comrade:

If you are caught you will be shot; and since you will be recognized, our work will have been betrayed. Therefore we must be the ones to shoot you and cast you into the lime-pit, so that the lime will burn away all traces of you. And yet we ask you: Do you know any way out?

THE YOUNG COMRADE: No.

THE THREE AGITATORS: And we ask you: Do you agree with us?

Pause

THE YOUNG COMRADE: Yes.

THE THREE AGITATORS: We also ask you: What shall we do with your body?

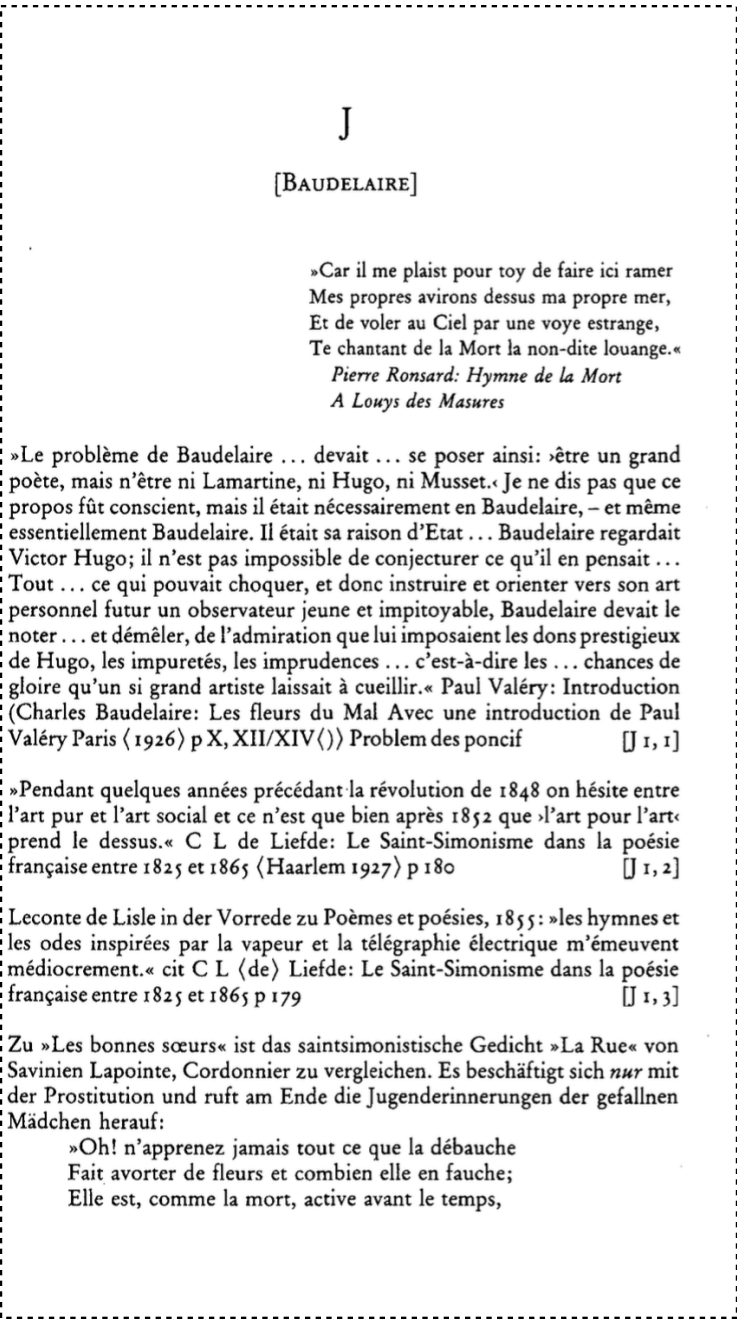
THE YOUNG COMRADE: You must cast me into the lime-pit, he said.

THE THREE AGITATORS: We asked: Do you want to do it alone?

THE YOUNG COMRADE: Help me.

THE THREE AGITATORS: Rest your head on our arm...

... Close your eyes.



Excerpt from *Konvolut J* on Baudelaire in *Walter Benjamin's the Arcades Project* (Germ. edition [ed. Rolf Tiedemann 1991, Surhkamp]). Printed matter: black & white.

THE YOUNG COMRADE unseen:
And he said; In the interests of Communism
In agreement with the progress of the proletarian masses
Of all lands
Consenting to the revolutionising of the world.

THE THREE AGITATORS:
Then we shot him and
Cast him down into the lime-pit
And when the lime had swallowed him up
We turned back to our work.

THE CONTROL CHORUS:
And you work was successful
You have propagated
The teachings of the Classics
The ABC of Communism.

Berthold Brecht (2001 [1929/1930: 33-34]) "The Measures Taken", with S. Dudow and Eisler [music], in *The Measures Taken and Other Lerhstücke*, Arcade Publishing. THE THREE AGITATORS: No."

*

Berthold Brecht (2001 [1929/1930]: 10) "The Measures Taken", with S. Dudow and Eisler [music], in *The Measures Taken and Other Lerhstücke*, Arcade Publishing.

the detail of how a certain range of artistic choices extend the phenomenology ϕ are likely to me of greater interest for this community of readers, than indulging in overarching generalisations. The point being that the scope of artistic choices largely exceed the ranks of professional artists and designers; with the number of consequences that yet follow from artistic choices. We must attempt to clearly distinguish between 1) making artistic decisions and 2) being trained at them⁽¹⁵⁾.

At this juncture a certain caution with regard to visual sensing is well advised: as the outline above serves to demonstrate that many of the observations that can be made in regard of a) the role of sensing in research, and b) the development of theoretical understandings, are already made here on account of vision. If one wishes to make a case of the cultural hegemony of vision—for which there are strong arguments—one must nevertheless avoid the conflation between writing and e.g. colour [alongside drawing, charting and the development & use of signatures]. And we may avoid some confusion by turning to the image, at this point.

Since the image—e.g. in linguistics and semiotics—is not limited to the visual sense, nor to visual images. And when the concept of image, in these fields, ranges from ‘acoustic image’ to the semiotic qualia that determine internal states in human being, the ‘image’ serves to determine how a whole range of cultural codes—in social life-forms we know, in space and time, from around the world—“graze” off our neurological senses in highly selective terms, to determine what we talk about as ‘sensing’ (in terms that beg to be clarified). Fortunately, there is not semiotic enclosure that succeed in keeping human sensing captive.

Even if there are aspects of sensing which is determined by human imagination—both at the individual and the cultural level—the image includes basic uncoded contents that are locked to materiality. When the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev (1943)⁽¹⁶⁾ spanned the boundaries of linguistics—extending into semiotics—he considered the outer boundaries to give unto perspectives beyond linguistics (Eco, 1975)⁽¹⁷⁾, which requires knowledge that would have to combine physics on the one hand, and social anthropology on the other hand. The question that I want to ask is whether this combination might be found in archaeology.

Evidently, to be brief, this combination features in knowledge of e.g. carbon-dating in combination with cultural organisation in human life-forms of yore. But, as I have attempted to argue above, Hjelmslev’s list could advantageously be increased to include aspects of artistic enskilment—the ones linked to experience, extending from

phenomenology ϕ , which will be our focus here (while ones linked to artistic methods in research will be subject to a separate treatment in an essay for TJ14). Which entails a query into added in and subtracting in the realm of mediations when they are understood as something else than a decorum.

Overview

This provides a background for developing a platform for conversations, by using a book-survey as an exemplar to feature different positions on the matter sensorial archaeology, grown out of an experience-base linked to empirical inquiries, rather than featuring a range of abstract positions. The volume selected for this purpose is the still recent anthology of essays (2015) edited by our host—Prof. José Pellini—and his associates, Andrés Zarankin and Melisa A. Salerno, entitled *Coming to Senses: Topics in Sensory Archaeology*. The emphasis in this first section (infra) will be on the de/colonisation of the senses.

In order to hone a discussion relating to mediation—since a range of the above essays involve the use of current media that are themselves subject to archaeological inquiries—I will go into some depth of Erik Born’s essay (2016), that seeks to compare and discuss mediaeval and early modern mediality, in the article “Media Archaeology, Cultural Techniques and the Middle Ages: An Approach to the Study of Media before the Media”. Here the aim is to focus on ‘artistic choices’ extending from phenomenology ϕ , to a) define and b) approach a particular dilemma between choices that solve problems and such that yield conclusions.

In the third part—“Benjamin’s Grave” refers to Taussig’s book (2006)⁽¹⁸⁾ with the same title—I will attempt to define and approach a “wicked problem”: choices, present or past, that neither lead a to a conclusion nor brings a solution to a problem, but in which all the focus i on a situation where the addition or removal of sensory mediations constitutes the entire dilemma⁽¹⁹⁾. Where making oneself available and mobilised for the perceptual ground zero— phenomenology ϕ —constitutes the (artistic) choice. That is, placing oneself in a monadic spot of neither-nor where the image will make specific claims before the general irresolution⁽²⁰⁾.

A Synoptic Replay—Positions in Sensorial Archaeology

London, February 2, 1861

Dear George,

Mary and I are worried about you. Maybe you have stayed too long in the forest, and it is time for you to come back. I will prepare everything for your return. I beg you to stop this madness. Your position at the university will be secured. What you need is to get married and have kids. Mary knows the Mayor's daughter. She is single and cooks like an angel. She loves our stories. Come back and we can arrange everything for you."

("Letters from a Past Present" in Coming to Senses, 2015: 5).

Coming to Senses arguably ends where the TJog session starts, and puts me—commenting the anthology— José Alberione Dos Reis shoes, but in reverse order walking backwards: starting with Alejandro Haber's essay "Making Sense out of the Senses: Thingness, Writing, and Time"—since it hits the three key-words posted together with this session (Sensorial Archaeology, Senses, Decolonising), and ending up with Andrés Zarankin's piece "Archaeology of a Tear: Delusions in a Tent in a Stormy Day in Antarctica." When reading through the book, I found that a reading against the sequence to yield a preparation for TJ-ogC.

The prologue to the volume—"Letters from a Past Present"—could have been placed either in the middle, at the end or in the beginning of the book. Since it posits, in its narrative function of pre-history to the anthology, the basic terms of a problem the provides the dimensions of comparison, in the sense of an invitation to compare as actively as possible in analysing the articles separately⁽²¹⁾. Indeed, a historical correspondence between a certain George, travelling with his expedition in the Amazon, with his Alphonso back in London, features George's Bildungsjourney into his senses, local bonding and the two friends drifting apart .

The elements that are adjoined to George's ways of knowing—that also will transform them in the 4-year period (1959-1863), while he sustained his correspondence with Alphonso—are precisely the ones that Alphonso zealously thinks should be removed from a scientific inquiry, and from which a researcher like George should abstain (both for reasons of intellectually integrity, morality and sanitation). In the anthropological colloquial lingo could hold that George "went bush". But what is that? There are similar tendencies reflected in Walter Benjamin's correspondence⁽²²⁾... the lateral drift in his intellectual friendships.

In writing this essay, it is timely to make this point: drifting off to the arts—in intellectual Europe—has some points in common with "going bush" while doing fieldwork abroad. It can have very similar connotations of corruption of character, moral disaster and intellectual impurity⁽²³⁾. For this reason, the correspondence between George and Alphonso features the gradual process, a movement of internal change, in a friendship. Which is almost archetypical for a change, of a certain type, in a relationship based on friendship. Which is why it provides the anthology with a 'wandering viewpoint' in terms laid out by Wolfgang Iser (1974: 116)⁽²⁴⁾:

"Every articulate reading moment entails a switch of perspective, and this constitutes an inseparable combination of differentiated perspectives, foreshortened memories, present modifications, and future expectations. Thus, in the time-flow of the reading process, past and future continually converge in the present moment, and the synthesising operations of the wandering viewpoint enable the text to pass through the reader's mind as an ever-expanding network of connections. This also adds the dimension of space to that of time, for the accumulation of views and combinations gives us the illusion of depth and breadth, so that we have the impression that we are actually present in a real world."

This is not what is contained in the prologue—the correspondence—but rather illustrates its intertextual impact on the anthology, or, if you will, what the "Letters of a Past Present" does to the readability to the rest of the anthology. It helps to prompt a synoptic reading. Starting with Alejandro Haber's piece (ibid). It is of particular importance to my present purposes since it deals with some rather tricky issues of mediation.

He draws the reader's attention to the etymological roots of the concept of vestigium, which denotes at once the foot—an extremity of human body—and the footprint—at the extremity of human movement.

The choice of this particular term cannot fail to be of relevance to a inquisitive human endeavour such as archaeology, since it relates what we are used to think of, in a general fashion, as vestiges, or remains, from the past. Beyond grounding the term in the body and its material path, he relates the concept to human tasks—such as the vestigator, the 'spy' and the investigator that follows in his/her trails—emphasising that what is mediated to us as a spatiotemporal rupture (op.cit.: 168) "... seems to tell us that there is immediacy between what presents itself to us mediated by a rupture in time-space and the investigation."

That is, an assumed unity beyond the time and place of a human agent and the investigating profiler following in its trail. Haber's article starts with a rather curious story about a entomologist named Carlos Bruch—whose standards and approach as a researcher would have earned the approval of the London-based Alphonso some years earlier (supra)—who in 1897 was out collecting natural history objects for the Universal Exposition in Paris. He walks up the trail of this journey which, in the

way Hr. Bruch dealt with a group of natives, demonstrates the workings a certain colonial regimen in the categorisation of people.

Categories run deeper than grouping people into locals and colonisers. Haber shows how the decisions he makes to accomplish and conclude his research mission—collecting and retrieving natural history objects—constitute powerful mediations through which locals are defined epistemologically (they inherit their ancestors' [cultural] patrimony and their social [cultural] difference), while the colonisers are defined ontologically: in other words, they inherit their ancestors' (economic) patrimony, which in turn determines their social being. He charts a class of mediations that facilitate Carlos Bruch's conclusions.

He then contrasts what he qualifies as 'epistemic violence' with an alternative approach, in which local practices and research activities develop alongside; and the local practices cleave to the research activities, in such a way that they collude (i.e., in unstable compounds in further query). Local ideas and customs thereby became involved in a process of preparing an archaeological dig, scoped by Haber to recognise local land-rights and include the regimen of customs that would come with such an act as digging a hole in the ground, to query the past in the presence of spiritual mediators (antiguos) to that past.

One may ask: what would be achieved if the two instances of mediation—to which Carlos Bruch's story, as related by Haber, and Haber's own story, stand as tokens—are two different types of mediation. That is, on the one hand the mediations that facilitate concluding (what should be selected for and discarded from a collection of natural history objects?), on the other hand the mediations that facilitate problem-solving (i.e., how to conduct a dig in such a way that a richer cultural material is generated as a ground-work for a dig, conducted much like anthropological field-research)? As we shall see, this is a recurring dilemma/gap.

Hence the question: what kind of mediation facilitates queries in which being-in-relation constitutes crux of the matter, that would combine with the type of mediation that facilitates a conclusion (that may be required to discuss the in-relation with a group of people—e.g., research peers—who did not partake of the relation)? In other words: what are the designs for a sensorial archaeology that will afford not only the inclusion of the senses in our ways of knowing, but actually demanding it? Lourdes Conde Feitosa and Pedro Paulo Funari's essay on "Feeling the Roman Skin: Unsettled, Conformed and Plural Bodies" serves to hone this question.

This chapter pays tribute to how carefully the introductory exchange between George and Alphonso was selected to prompt the reader on the comparative dimension that finds different inflections in each of the articles and makes them readable, almost as chapters in a book. As the authors follow the trail of documents on how skin was experienced by humans of different classes and stations in Ancient Roman life—spanning the topics of bodies and skin, feminine beauty, the aesthetics of the male universe, and the realm of human feelings—the dividing line between the ruling class, their servants and slaves too is determined.

The women of high virtue and standing would celebrate the whiteness of their skin—being sheltered by domestic lives and relieved of sunny outdoors activities—distinguishing them from working-class women, who would be tanned and lustful. Distinguished males, however, would be tanned through athletic activities—a hygienic regimen also preparing them for the battle-field—and poets as Ovid would at that time celebrated the merits and attraction of skars on a male body (from wounds received in battle). Eloquence and skars could make up for a lack of male beauty in both his young and especially old age.

In the present discussion, it is interesting to note how bringing gender into the bargain can greatly facilitate the demonstration of how the categorisation of people—beyond belonging to different groups and having different identities, defining their modes and ways of being—works, in some sense, in the terms laid out by e.g. Bourdieu (1979, cf, f.n. 23) as the compound defined both by the sexual division of labour and the division of sexual labour. In the sense that the mediations that enhance being-in-relation (the poetics of love and attraction) and the mediations that facilitate the mingling of the "right" sort of people, conjoin.

But at what level? In the article "Sensing the Past: The Sensorial Experience in Experiential Archaeology by Augmenting the Perception of Materiality" Dragos Gheorghiu provides the reader with materials that are particularly rich in mediations: both the ones facilitating problem-solving, and the ones prompting conclusions. In addition, however, he adjoins a third class of mediation linked to ritual practice, instantiated by evoking a core practice in Polish post-dramatic theatre director Jerzy Grotowsky, who determined elementary techniques that would conjure a ritual trope whether on/off stage (Slowiak & Cuesta 2007:106):

The soundscape includes singing, chanting, roars, purrs, and a myriad of inarticulate sounds uttered by the actors, as well as the rhythmic clomping of the wooden shoes, a melancholy violin, and the harsh metallic clang of hammers and nails. Each sound, spoken or otherwise, was precisely coordinated with the physical action⁽²⁵⁾.

To a certain degree, this third mediation-type could be seen as specifically the compound of the afore-mentioned. However, there are aspects—related to ritual, ritual and role-enactment—that have nothing to do with relation-building and problem-solving in the social world, nor with concluding matters that allows a certain category of people to lift themselves above the former (in research, trade, politics etc.), but rather is locked to the imagery produced by the kind of staged

behaviour, which Gheorghiu uses in the part of his vocation as an archaeologist devoted to art-practices. Evoking Leach’s definition of the ritual (1964: xiv):

‘Ritual’ is a term which anthropology uses in diverse senses. My own view is that while we only run into paradox if we try to apply this term to some distinct class of behaviours, we can very usefully think of ‘ritual’ as an aspect of all behaviour, namely the communicative aspect.

Gheorghiu relates how a ritual—in this definition—is a third kind of mediation that facilitates immersion; which is a state of augmented receptivity to the built context, material qualities, light, atmospheres and sound that affords a corporeal readiness for involvement in a sensorium—a phenomenological warp (Φ)—in which the senses are placed in a mode of availability and mobilisation, in range which is outside the habitual. The experiential dimension is active at both levels that I have previously discussed in terms of mediation: a crafts mediation (problem-solving and relational) and an interceptive mediation (concluding and selective).

From what I have seen of his earlier work, he insists on the autonomy of the image—in the complex way that involves all the senses (as outlined above)—in the sense that the image claims its own reality, and has no message, nor function, beyond what it reveals in itself. In this sense the image is transcendent, while it is immanent in the sense that humans are ready to comprehend images (as such). The enactment conveyed in the anthology of course spurs the imagination of the participants who are vested in Roman garbs, performing demanding crafts in a reconstructed settlement, as it spurs the imagination of the readers.

However, it clearly appears that Gheorghiu in his emphasis on the involvement in a sensorium, in this project and others—and the kinds of projects that he attracts in his publications—imputes a special significance to the importance of the image-as-such in expanded ways of knowing—including the arts—that we cannot do without. The question of whether this third class of mediation can be mobilised to communicate this project, to a larger audience, tends to challenge the format of the book (at least the academic book-standard). And has brought him to experiment with video, web and mixed realities as part of his domain of research.

So, when we come to Marcia Bezerra’s article “Touching the Past: The Senses of Things for Local Communities in Amazonia” this is—in my reading—a turning point; because it manages, through the mediations of tactility, to distinguish between immersion (through which senses are enhanced) and possession (through which appropriation becomes sealed). Though people currently living the Amazonia may collect remnants of the past that they find in the ground, their interest in the objects may be descriptive in such terms that touch brings together the two afore-mentioned mediations in a single gesture (op.cit.: 110):

The description of the piece is accompanied by the fingers of Dona Darlete, who scrutinises the ceramic in order to recognise its shape, following its reentrance. In this way, she tries to understand a sherd which is naturalised by sight, turning it into something strange, ‘detached’ by touch. The act repeats itself on many occasions.

She concludes by underscoring how appropriation should be seen in relation with the way people engage with the things they have collected. That is, as perceptual forms. To which we may add a brief, but concise, discussion of Tim Ingold’s critical address to works in sensorial anthropology, in which she draws the reader’s attention to the active and exploratory engagement of the whole person “...entangled in a technic-symbolic network”, of which the tactile exploration, related above, is a case in point. Hence the relevance of restoring the virtual worlds of sense “to the practicalities of our sensing of the world (Ingold 2011: 317)”.

The point of lingering over these instances where something is shed while the contact remains—what Bezerra felicitously determines as detached by touch—evokes a moment of shedding, that becomes particularly poignant in Melisa Salerno’s article “Sealers Were not Born but Made: Sensory-Motor Habits, Subjectivities, and Nineteenth-Century Voyages to the South Shetland Islands”. Since we here are presented with an instance of radical human change—in Bourdieu’s sense (ibid.), a change of habitus—comparable to a molt (the change of skin found in certain animals). This article connects to Haber’s in a particular way.

Arguably, it connects what in phenomenological parlance is called embodiment—cf, somatic modes of attention (Csordas, 1993)⁽²⁶⁾—with a “life-philosophy” in the flesh (cf, Lakoff & Johnson, 1999)⁽²⁷⁾, in the sense that phenomena that appear to the knowing subject as endowed with corporeity (such as footprints in their relation to the body that made them would form a corpus [thus ‘embodied’] without being a body in the carnal sense), and the body proper (with skin, hair [and teeth] in Sloterdijk’s sense⁽²⁸⁾). When human beings engage in a process where they consciously and voluntarily change into another body, then these aspects combine.

In Salerno’s article relates the physical transformation of sailors who embark on hunting expeditions in the Antarctic—devoted to sealing and whaling—as ‘green hands’: the hardships they go through to become hardened sealers and whalers is beyond imagination; a willed transformation going to the essence of who and how they are as humans. The sealers and whalers embody what the ‘green hands’ aspire to. While the habitus they acquire by their training, in this male world of yore, makes them immediately perceived as such by anyone on land

(once their transformation is completed, after months in the ice and the cold austral seas).

The appearance they gradually achieved, through their hardships, was the footprint of their own work in enduring the hardships on a hunting vessel; they put themselves—or, were put in—in a situation where the body also became a kind of material to work on, or on which work left its irreversible imprint. It involved them epistemologically and ontologically. The article describes this in great detail, allowing the reader to follow the process step-by-step where the transformation of these workers at sea—the once ‘green hands’ and now ‘sealers’—as a process underlying the shifts of fortune and the makeshift weather in the Antarctic.

How surprising is it not that the next article—in this reading sequence—then turns to the topic of psychic connection with the past is the topic of Michael A. Cremo’s article “J.T. Robinson’s Use of a Psychic for Archaeological Research at Sterkfontein Caves, South Africa”? In his introduction he quotes Haber in the following citation (2012: 55): “‘The definition of material remains explodes other-than-material remains from the past.’ He believes nonmaterial remains should be included in archaeology”. And it becomes his point of departure for a query on the association of an archaeologist with the Theosophic Movement.

This strand of Robinson’s life-project—if not in all of his career as an archaeologist—was with him to the end of his life. But in Cremo’s article, it is his association with the psychic Geoffrey Hodson, in the period when Robinson, as a young man, was working with Robert Broom. His venture with the psychic is in line with the kinetic-haptic mode of accessing knowledge—underscored both by Bezerra and Salerno in their articles—on account of the psychometric techniques that were used in sessions where Hodson was tested on the floor of the Sterkfontein Caves, placing items handed to him by Robinson, on his brow to look into their worlds.

In contrast with the molt of the green hands—who groped their way in the darkness of becoming sealers—Hodson’s psychic experiences were all light, colour and detailed in contextual cues that could have not connection with his own experience, his body and his life. Psychometry is based on the idea that all things have an emanation and that it is possible for gifted psychics to read them. Cremo does not make a case for the validity of such techniques himself, but follows the trail of this association—in ways of knowing—in Robertson’s life as an archaeologist and theosophists (an association that also interested Gurdjieff⁽²⁹⁾).

This article is probably the book’s difficult one to comprehend, save by adopting a sense of the fragment as a shard of a monad, that the psychic connects to the constellation from which it is torn—whether shed or ripped by the work of time—though mimesis. But then as an instance of a broader way of knowing proper to humans, and not something requiring special psychic talents or the belief in parapsychic theories underlying psychometry. Walter Benjamin, for instance, was recognised by his friends—e.g., Adorno—for having special talents as a graphologist (deriving personal profiles from samples of hand-writing).

The connection made by Benjamin between Schriftsbild (writing-as-image) and Denkbild (thought-image)—cf, Buck-Morss (1989)⁽³⁰⁾—might arguably similar to the archaeological sample and intercepted images used in Robertson’s tests with Hodson. “The immediacy of the vestige, the complicity between discontinuous time-spaces, the bodily commitment of investigation that displaces it where the footprints lead it...” in Haber’s terms (“Making Sense out of the Senses”) places the vestigator’s past in the investigator’s future, as s/he follows his footprints. This futurity of the past is also its virtual load, in Bergson’s terms⁽³¹⁾.

In terms of the comparative dimension emerging in the step by step rewind of Coming to Senses Hodson’s psychometric readings appears at the opposite end of the scale from the ‘green hands’/sealers, since neither feet nor footprints are relevant, but the images he intercepts (p. 71): “On being questioned closely while not actually carrying out an investigation, the clairvoyant explained that, having achieved the correct state for making the observations, it was as though he was looking through a tube in his head and observing an animated scene in full color at the other end of the tube.” Hence, what is at stake is whether such an image is assumed to have a documentary value, or it enters into the inquiry as an image (with its own reality).

It brings us to consider the insecure ontological status of certain elements—such as footprints—that are not connected by necessity to our walk, but adjoined to it. Like coloration added to an object, it can also be not added. The same goes with sound, with taste and of course also with smell. Every query has its other. It can abandon the other, and linger in the same. The effect of abandonment—or, subtraction—will not be felt, or recognised immediately, since the other, in the sense that I am pursuing here, isn’t entirely external. Nor is it entirely internal. It is other. The articles in the anthology display the modalities of ‘same | other’ (‘O | Φ ’).

What I am suggesting with this somewhat arcane notation, is the possibility of adopting a position—featuring the phenomenology Φ —which is adopted voluntarily (a bit like the ‘green hands’ opting, at some time in the past, to become sealers) offering resistance to the realm of the same, from which it may be discarded at any time (though never quite as efficiently as imagined since it is not opposed but a potential associate). Not much is gained by labelling it as liminal—or, in limine (on the threshold)—since the alternative to this suspended/virtual state, then, will not appear. Which is a key to how I read José Pellini’s article.

In a lopsided fashion “Remembering through the Senses: The Funerary Practices in Ancient Egypt” bring us to the heart of the matter—in the present essay—which is the narrative. The piece is experimental in the sense that it brings a narrative on ritual journey of a man and his son, unto the threshold to the realm of the dead. Their visit to funeral feasts and to some graves of renown sets the stage for a father’s instructions to his son concerning his own funeral site, and matters concerning death. The story, related in dialogue, initiates an experiment through which Pellini explores the relation between memories and the senses.

The dialogue is used as a vehicle to convey a range of metaphysical concepts emerging from the study of Egyptian language which in/ around tombs is linked to matters concerning death. This dialogue, however, is written in the present tense and with the personal pronouns that are involved in any conversation—I and you. First and second person. In the story, we are not in a virtual realm belonging to a distant past reverberating into a remote future, but we are located in a story with an actual conversation between a father and a son. The story does not only relate metaphysical knowledge but also practical knowledge from Ancient Egypt.

Though the story is not in the present, we are invited to read the story in a contemporary mode. The narrative is then extended by an episode from the present, in which a connection is created by the intermedium of an Egyptian barbecue, in which more is at stake than the well-known connection between smell and memory (cf, Sperber, 1975)⁽³²⁾—i.e., the prompting of specific memories by certain smells—but a process in the slow-time of preparing and entering the realm of cooking and eating, in which a rich variety of sensory inputs become stringed to smell. As the following passage may serve to demonstrate (p. 47):

When Hassan tried to light the fire, he was immediately reprimanded by Ahmed, who had asked him to calm down. Ahmed was trying to teach his brother all of the barbecue ritual, which for him is a slow and rhythmic performance, where everything happens in time. What Ahmed sought was to awaken our senses to every step of the barbecue’s preparation. From the texture and the smell of the wood, through the heat and the glare of the embers, up to the smell of meat and burning fat. I began to understand that the barbecue was not just about eating, but feeling every moment and every instant.

This is the ground zero of availability and readiness determined here as ‘phenomenology ϕ ’. But here it steps out of the virtual realm and into the actual. The passage serves to demonstrate that—unlike in the philosophical reception of ‘phenomenology’—it is not a mental construct but an awareness summoned by concrete acts in a situation where materiality, body and site are brought into a single constellation, through the acquisition of implicit influence from (p. 49) dispositions, skills, and costumes etc. The barbecue serves to exemplify the transformation of something trivial as a meal, into something more magical as an aura.

Julie Dunne’s piece “When the Cows Come Home: A Consideration of the Sensorial Engagement between Pastoralists and Their Cattle” relates a world extremely rich of connections of this type, which thereby are not locked to the exceptional, but bring to awareness those human life-ways in which everyday matters can become a source of marvel. Especially, as the species-interdependence engages more than food and protection, but when the cows become a subject of contemplation, as for instance of Nilotic populations for whom (p. 27) “cattle are primarily a feast for the eyes, and only secondarily a feast for the the stomach.”

The perception and interaction with cattle amongst pastoralists are informed not only by vision, however, but through the haptic, aural, olfactory and visual senses, in a relationship where the animal is an actor. The species-interdependence is shaped by differences in sensory acuity, as e.g. cattle have a better hearing the humans. From a neurological perspective the senses within a species are not up to the same speed, and sensory-motor connections are differentiated in terms of readiness potential (Libet, 1985)⁽³³⁾ and reaction time. Which means that there is a complex terrain of sensory acuity and dissynchrony within and across species.

Out of this wealth comes a sense of presence—which once more is not constructed as a philosophical abstraction—in which not only other humans, amongst pastoralists, but also the cattle is part of a life-world, in ways much similar to how it might have been, or is even likely to have been, in the past. In contrast, the short piece by Andrés Zarankin, that concludes this synoptic rewind of Coming to Senses, is telling a very different story—since it tells the story of an apparition—but relates to the same basic processes of how human cognition can have intimations that can be linked/removed from its sensory associates.

In “Archaeology of a Tear: Delusions in a Tent in a Stormy Day in Antarctica” conveys a story on the exertions archaeologists sometimes must endure. He distinguishes between stories as projections, in which the archaeologists attempt to project themselves into the context that they are studying; and transversal stories in which archaeologists are attempting to get themselves involved in the stories they are telling. To readers who are not from the field it appears that archeologists can work quite hard to produce the kind of immersion, which in some cases they deem necessary in order to understand the past.

The case of the sealers in the Antarctica they belonged to a subaltern group that were silenced in official historical accounts, and the documents of their life-conditions and work are sometimes scarce. In a transversal story in which he is confined in a tent—during a night with stormy weather in the Antarctic—he relates how the experience

challenges any written record reduced to descriptions of the lay-out of a camp, equipment, clothes and other resources. He asks (p. 15): “... what is the purpose of producing descriptive, formal information which does not provide a real understanding of the essence of a people?” and then:

Suddenly, as part of a bizarre delusion (something common in Antarctica) Binford materialises in my tent to remind me of the limitations of the archaeological record (Binford 1983) (...). He talks to me about archaeological layers, and why it is impossible and absurd to worry about what people felt in the past. I thank him for his words, but I tell him that I have already sold my soul to Hodder! He vanishes in the air with a threatening look.

What does it mean to be part of a story that one is telling, versus removing oneself from it. It appears that the option of including—rather than removing—the person who is telling the story into the elements that make up the story, not only will bring to the fore the human limitations, linked to human nature, that will shape the further course of knowing (instead of hiding them and scoping their knowledge projects beyond measure), but also the enormous potential of story-tellers thereby bound to narrate themselves in moving from abstract self-reflection to the experience of being a transmitter in experience-based communities.

This reading of the anthology—Coming to Senses—is a against the grain in the sense that it has fostered a different learning outcome: while the original reading, which occurred in the designed sequence, was topical when matched to the introductory exchange between George and Alphonso; reading in reverse order highlighted the dimension of the anthology featuring the narrative (as a practice more than a topic). It also serves to probe the anthology as a corpus—a perceptual category of embodiment (Csordas [Merleau Ponty])—with that particular property of being revertible. Which is tangential to the irreversible and existential.

If matched to the painstaking and slow work of excavation (Darvill, 2015)⁽³⁴⁾—which is yet a major fieldwork practice amongst professional archaeologists—the narrative appears on the backdrop of a crafts dimension of the profession, which is readable to the professional audience (only exceptionally to non-professionals). In Paul Rabinow’s terms (2007)⁽³⁵⁾ the essays appearing in the anthology comes out as pausing in the day-to-day progress of hard work and accountability: whether in the slower time of the field, or the hustle and bustle of contemporary academic institutions, they defy the linearity of time. But what of the compound?

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As a medium, however, the icon in Cusa’s experiment does not function in the sense of Marshall McLuhan’s famous understanding of media as ‘extensions of man,’ but as an exempt of the divine, which serves to generate the category of the human according to Friedrich Kittler’s dictum that ‘media determine our situation’ (“Grammophone, Film, Typewriter xxxix”). Ultimately, the sacredness of the omnivoyant icon does not lie in any concept of an icon, iconoclasm, or iconology; it must be produced through a particular artistic technique and a specific viewing practice.

Born, Erik (2016, p. 109)⁽³⁶⁾

In this short section, I will attend a question relating specifically to mediality and time, in Mediaeval setting in which the narrative genre appeared on the backdrop of an artisanal society. The background for the discussion is an article of Erik Born (2016) “Media Archaeology, Cultural Techniques and the Middle Ages: An Approach to the Study of Media before the Media.” His objective is to span productive points of contact, contention and possible exchange between mediaeval and early modern mediality in the framework of an ongoing debate in new German media theory; with Wolfgang Ernst, in particular. The pitch (op.cit.:107)

“Of the many unusual ways of viewing an image, one of the most remarkable comes down to us from the threshold of modernity. Asked in 1453 to explain the opaque subject of mystical theology in more accessible terms, Nicholas of Cusa provided the following instructions in the preface to his treatise On the Vision of God (De visione Dei): mount a particular kind of religious icon on the wall and have three monks observe it from the front and the sides; next, have them walk around it in a semicircle while keeping their eyes fixed on the eyes in the icon; and, finally, have them discuss their experience of this experiment. The eyes in the icon should seem to follow the viewers around the room. Although each monk may perceive the icon’s frontal gaze to be directed at him alone, the monastic community can extrapolate from this individual experience to an understanding of mystical theology. Just as the icon’s gaze is addressed to each viewer simultaneously at every position in the room, so too, Cusa explains, does the benevolent all-seeing gaze of the divine accompany all creatures everywhere and at all time [...]”

Part of the explanation of this procedure can have been a problem of illiteracy. However, Michel de Certeau understands the procedure as an invention whereby an experience—that each monk got out of the experiment—prepares the him to be introduced to the discursive space of the treatise that follows. Born argues that this experience hinges on a pictorial artefact, and that the reality of the image piercing-the-object is a condition for the panoptic of the all-present eye to occur. Clearly, if

considered as a moment of an image being used as a media—thus a vehicle of certain mediations—MacLuhan's definition of media as extension of the human body are challenged. Embodiment, then, is not an extension of the human body⁽³⁷⁾.

It is rather the other way around—the divine body made flesh—that featured the Christian spiritual mind-set of the Benedictine order at that time. If McLuhan's definition indeed determine modern media, then this alternate mind-set creates an obstacle to discuss this particular example in the framework of modern media. Therefore, Born attempts to use a different template, and ventures—tentatively—to articulate the example as a case of cultural techniques (Germ. *Kulturtechniken*). With this cautionary measure, he aims at fleshing out a new frontier of research in the study of cultural techniques beyond images, words and numbers.

And with this precaution he argues that there is a reasonable chances that a fruitful exchange may emerge between media- and cultural studies. He then proceeds to survey the variety of reasons for media-theorists showing reluctance against using the concept of 'media' to elaborate on Mediaeval cultural techniques. And the background of this cautionary critique is avoid inflating the concept of media. Stefan Rieger states that the body "Nichts ist kein Medium" (the body is not a medium). And Ernst proposes to reserve (op.cit.: 110) "...the concept of media strictly for the study of electronic technology," and otherwise use cultural techniques.

However, Born argues that this distinction may foster a false sense of clarity—by opposing, or contrasting, these two concepts—since he deems that concepts of media and cultural techniques are each of them problematic. For one the Mediaeval world is replete with notions of transmissions, or mediations, between the heavenly and worldly realm. Just as data denoted intentional signs (Todorov, 1984)⁽³⁸⁾ information, writes Born, is determined the imparting for form to matter. While in the electronic age (Shannon) data denote what is transferred through a channel, while information determines the noise on "the line".

Born concludes that both the notion of media and of cultural techniques have been insufficiently theorised, it is not enough to sharpen the contours of the disciplines. And Born particularly emphasises the need to consider the slow change in the domain of media (p. 114): "...new media do not simply replace old media in a singular historical moment: the transition from one medium to another is always a more gradual and complex process, a mixture of tradition and innovation, more evolution than revolution." The real concern is for respecting the alterity and allowing for historical difference, and avoiding anthropological universals.

The term 'anthropological' here is used in the philosophical sense. And the comparative methodology in social anthropology may offer a third—yet, not considered—alternative: that is, pace F. Barth (2010, f.n. 17), comparing as actively as possible in the analysis of separate cases; which is likely to hone the detail of empirical differences, rather than blurring them, while letting the dimensions of comparison emerge from empirical analysis (as subject of discovery). In the the previous section, for instance, we have discussed mediation before discussing media. And in this discussion the image clearly emerges as a candidate media.

The image here does not extend the human body (pace Born's critique of MacLuhan) but rather reveals itself at the threshold between 'embodiment' (Merleau Ponty) and the carnal mentation of 'the flesh' (Lakoff & Johnson). At the brink of learning—with the flash of an insight— a new repertoire is hatched, decants into a pool of 'tacit knowledge'⁽³⁹⁾. The narrative holds the power of innervation: the innervation of repertoires from this pool. The phenomenology ϕ is a readiness—availability and mobilisation—to immerse oneself with the experience-based expectation that samples of a repertoire to be triggered, or a new one to be hatched.

A readiness for the world as it is; to take the dip or make the leap. How to locate phenomenology ϕ ? Who can acquire it? Is it accessible at any time and any place? Or, is it locked to triangulations between site, body and matter? If not freely transportable—i.e., transmissible from one site to another—is it malleable and adaptable? Or, subject to emergent connections? Can it be taught, or can it only be related in narrative? Can it be learned, or must it be discovered? Is it reversible? All these questions are somehow related to time: phenomenology ϕ is located at the brink of time... between reversible time and irreversible time.

Immanuel Wallerstein (1991)⁽⁴⁰⁾ differentiates between changes in time—i.e. whether historical and cyclical (both being reversible)—and changes of time: that latter applies to phase transitions in which bifurcations and the amplification of fluctuations, precede the configuration of a new pattern that precisely does not evolve from a preceding one. And if reversibility is a distinguishing feature of 'media'⁽⁴¹⁾—evidenced by the possibility of playing them backwards—then the boundary areas where they graze off irreversible time, where phenomenology ϕ hatches and evolves, may be more difficult to spot as our media proliferate.

*

“Benjamin’s Grave”

THE YOUNG COMRADE: We can’t go on. There is disorder here and want: too little bread and too much fighting. Many of us are courageous but not many of us can read. There are few machines and few of us understand them. Our locomotives have broken down. Have you brought locomotives with you?

In the essay called Le narrateur because it was written in French, Walter Benjamin analyses story as a form of communication, in which the narrator, the narrative and the narration are all part of the story. The story-teller takes a keen interest in practical life, the story-teller will therefore give advice—receive advice—s/he will relate how s/he got to the story and also how s/he got to the place where story now is told. As s/he narrates herself this is a vehicle—it warms the audience in their seats: the community of human experience is that each one’s experience is unique. Narration, therefore, is collective, communicative and transitive.

The story, in Benjamin’s conception, is a counter-point to myth. It flourishes in the artisanal society and is seated in cultures where death is not private moment. It therefore belongs the Mediaeval society in which there were few homes in which someone had not recently died. The societies in which narrative goes in desuetude—says Benjamin, with the advent of the modern novel (Cervantes) and the newsreel of information (the gazette)—are also the societies in which the streets are cleaned⁽⁴²⁾, people are hospitalised and death is gradually removed from public view. Advice is displaced and survives in correspondence.

In the novel, the matters of life and death are conveyed to the realm of individual readability. And in writing the novel the author is confined to isolation. Information—here understood as the newsreel of the press—derives its purchase from being credible; and accordingly Benjamin is early to detect the tendency of the journalist to feed the audience not only with the news but also with the experience (usually his/her own experience masquerading as a psychological series that provides a key to the news). The ranks of the narrators among writers are growing thin, but are rich, he argues, among peasants and sailors.

Nevertheless, if peasants and sailors have been the masters of story, Benjamin claims that highest education in narrative belongs to the crafts. This would seem to include a range of authors. But in the light of the present essay, the ranks of crafts-people also would appear to include both archaeologists and anthropologists. In art-schools it would include the arts & crafts milieus and the designers. For non-obvious reasons, despite his association with Brecht, Benjamin does not mention theatre. Yet, the trope of stopping up, giving advice and listening to the audience, is a clearly recognisable theatrical trope that goes way back.

Tore Vagn Lid’s introduction to Brecht’s play *The Measures Taken* and the Fatzer fragment (2012)⁽⁴³⁾ significantly overlaps with the terms Le Narrateur—without any intention of accounting for Benjamin’s world of ideas, but developing his approach (as a theatre director) to Brecht’s epic theatre. Of course, it is well known from Benjamin’s correspondence—and other sources—that Adorno was weary of Brecht’s influence on Benjamin. And some of his scepticism is owed to his distrust in theatre to conduct inquiries on the terrain of philosophy: such as major issues that Adorno raises in Negative Dialectics (1981)⁽⁴⁴⁾.

The entanglement between Adorno and Benjamin in the project of ‘negative dialectics’ has been duly analysed and discussed (Buck-Morss, 1979)⁽⁴⁵⁾. Which may be why Benjamin avoids the topic of theatre in his essay Le Narrateur. Yet, in Brecht’s piece Measures Taken it is quite clear that Brecht is not only is concerned with dialectical materialism, but with the main point in negative dialectics: i.e., between the Hegelian thesis and antithesis there is no synthesis. In the play, the thesis is related by a) the introductory epigraph to the present essay, while the antithesis is related by b) the epigraph to this final section.

As the reader will notice the observations and demands of the young comrade is passed over by the three agitators (b), and it is nowhere present in (a) the legal process conducted by the control chorus, at the request of the three agitators. Yet, the twists and turns of the events in the play take place in the tension between these two elements (a&b); in the general irresolution the multiple mediations between the conflictual terms proliferate. A similar pattern can be observed between Benjamin’s assertions on the researcher and the scholar, that remain unresolved in his opus magnum, the *Arcades project* (Benjamin, 1996: 456)⁽⁴⁶⁾:

The card index marks the conquest of three-dimensional writing, and so presents and astonishing counterpoint to the three-dimensionality of script in its original form as rune or know notation. [And today the book is already, as the present mode of scholarly production demonstrates, an outdated mediation between two different filing systems. For everything that matters is to be found in the card box of the researcher who wrote it, and the scholar studying it, assimilates it into his own card index.]

Hence, Benjamin’s system of signatures—displayed in the frontispiece to this essay and outlined in the introductory discussion—may constitute an instance of mediations between contradictions that will not be resolved in a unified synthesis. Philosophically speaking, it does not exist: on the one hand, because the *Arcades Project* was never completed, on the other hand in the form that it would have had to be achieved if completed. No matter how sharp the philosophical exegeses of the legacy after Benjamin, it is not likely to determine issues that might have simply emerged because Benjamin had moved *beyond* philosophy.

Another question is—inspired by the work discussed here in this essay—where we would end up if we studied this legacy in a triangle were body, materiality and site constitute the basic constellation: reading the *Arcades Project* in the triangle between Benjamin’s work with librarianship, graphic designs and theatre. The almost flowery multi-coloured sheets of his manuscripts, his involvement with books as a collector, and his direct involvement in stage work with Brecht, gives a very different picture of his work, than the thin air of his printed black and white of his published essays. Which might be enough to warrant a sensorial approach.

And the concept of ‘signature’—as outlined by Agamben (2008)⁽⁴⁷⁾ in reference to Enzo Melandri’s definition—affords this alternative usage: the signature is defined as a sign within the sign, which is a loose end unless it is activated (like an unplayed musical instrument or, actually, a lute [sic]). It is a sensorial category. The task of making this part of an inquiry could have been an anthropological endeavour, if Benjamin was alive—and the apparatus needed to do so I have attempted to outline in this essay—but the circumstances of his death are as unresolved as the legacy that he left behind, and may summon an archaeological approach enhanced by the sensorial approach, outlined in this essay. He left Paris in 1940 after the Nazi occupation of Paris.

Benjamin wrote a letter in which he informed a friend of the decision to end his life. He gives no explanation. It ended in Portbou—a town at the frontier between France and Spain—after a journey over the Pyrenees, where he lugged a voluminous black bag with documents, that he explained to his guide were more important than his own life. Though he was in poor health, and had a heart condition, he carried the bag across the mountains. When he arrived in Portbou he died of an overdose of Morphine. No one retrieved the bag. His remains eventually were transferred to a mass-grave. He disappeared. The bag disappeared.

These are the facts. To many people who have visited Portbou—like Hannah Arendt, Gerschom Scholem, Michael Taussig and myself—the triangle of the materials, the body and the site feature in the site of Portbou, the materials in the bag, and Benjamin’s body conveyed to the earth, in a graveyard where he was registered as a Catholic (under the name of Benjamin Walter). Michael Taussig is the one to have inquired into Benjamin’s suicide, which—if one sticks to the facts—rather comes out as a disappearing-act. Though well-versed in Benjamin’s writings, Taussig does not engage in an exegesis of his philosophy.

His delving into the circumstances of departed Benjamin, is a point of exit. From Europe and from philosophy, at least in a modernist sense of the term. So, after he devotes a chapter on going into the details of Benjamin’s last days and resting place, Taussig takes his reader’s to South America. More precisely, to a part of the Amazonia located in the presently Columbian territory, where he studies the history of agricultural practices starting out with a collective of former black slaves. From where he moves unto a narrative on the effects of the sun, followed by some experimental writing, on magic, excess and the language of flowers...

⁽¹⁾ Agamben, Giorgio (2009) “What is the Contemporary?” in *What is an Apparatus and Other Essays*, transl. Michael Hart, Stanford University Press.

⁽²⁾ Marcus, George & Mascarhenas, Fernando (2005) *Occasiō—The Marquis and the Anthropologist*, Alta Mira Press.

⁽³⁾ The author is a Professor of Theory & Writing at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts [KHiO].

⁽⁴⁾ Prof. Fredrik Barth is not a relation of the author’s, though the have collaborated on a translation of Fredrik Barth’s essays. Fredrik Barth also acted as the thesis director of the author’s doctoral work.

⁽⁵⁾ Barth, Fredrik (2002) “An Anthropology of Knowledge” in *Current Anthropology*, Chicago University Press.

⁽⁶⁾ Rabinow, Paul; Marcus, George; Faubion, James and Reese, Tobias (2010) *Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary*, Duke University Press.

⁽⁷⁾ Pallasmaa, Johani (2008) *The Thinking Hand*, Wiley

(2012) *The Eyes of the Skin—Architecture and the Senses*, Wiley

(2011) *The Embodied Image—Imagination and Imagery in Architecture*, Wiley.

⁽⁸⁾ Norberg Schultz, Christian (2001) *Genius Loci: Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, Rizzoli International Publishers.

⁽⁹⁾ Sennett, Richard (2009) *The Craftsman*, London: Penguin.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Reference to the author’s own manuscript copy of element WBA Ms-0096-0140v in the Walter Benjamin Archive in the Berlin, which was later checked against the French edition in Walter Benjamin (1991) *Écrits français*, NRF, Paris: Gallimard. The discussions can (and will)

refer directly to the manuscript, thanks to the Walter Benjamin Archivie at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin.

⁽¹¹⁾ Richard Sennett was never formally a student of Hannah Arendt, but fell under her influence, as he states in a number of interviews.

⁽¹²⁾ <http://benjamin-passagen.de>

⁽¹³⁾ Schmidt, Kjeld & Wagner, Ina (2004) "Ordering Systems: Coordinative Practices and Artefacts in Architectural Design and Planning", in *CSCW* (Computer Supported Cooperative Work), Vol. 13, Issue 5.-6, December, pp. 349-408.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Signatures not printed in Rolf Tiedemann's edition in German published by Suhrkamp in 1983, and from the English translation published by Harvard University, The Belknap Press, in 1999.

⁽¹⁵⁾ L'orange, Mette (2016) "Who is Afraid of Red and Blue?—Teaching Colour in Art and Design Today", Paper for AIC Santiago. Proceedings (forthcoming).

⁽¹⁶⁾ Hjelmslev, Louis (1953 [1943]) *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, Baltimore: Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Eco, Umberto (1975) *Trattato di semiotica generale*, Milano: Bompiani.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Taussig, Michael (2006) *Walter Benjamin's Grave*, University of Chicago Press.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Cf. Frisvold Hanssen (2015) makes a distinction between seeing with vs. through the machine (GoPro video in the movie *Leviathan* [2012]) with the point of showing how seeing from a distance, yet becoming immersed in what is being seen (Taussig 2009:99), become linked by the intermedium of colour which is entangled between what is recorded, the technical process of the recording, and the replay before and within the human spectator.

Frisvold Hanssen, Eirik (2015) "His Eyes Are Like the rays of Dawn"; Color Vision and Embodiment in *Leviathan*, in *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 31: 1, Spring, pp. 20-26.

⁽²⁰⁾ Cf. Pallasmmaa (2011) *The Embodied Image—Imagination and Imagery in Architecture*, Wiley Publishers.

Barth, Theodor (2015) «The Anthropogenic Imagination: A Synoptic View of Research Designs in the Aesthetics of Experimental Archaeology» in Gheorghiu, Dragos & Bouissac, Paul (Eds.) *How to we Imagine the Past? On Metaphorical Thought, Experientiality and Imagination in Archaeology*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

⁽²¹⁾ Barth, Fredrik (2010) "Comparative Methodologies in the Analysis of Anthropological Data" in Bowen, John & Petersen, Roger (eds.) *Critical Comparisons in Politics and Culture*, Cambridge University Press.

⁽²²⁾ Benjamin, Walter (1994) *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin 1910-1940*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann, University of Chicago Press.

⁽²³⁾ Siding with the senses and the body—siding with life as it is—is also siding with the unfortunate: the poor, the sick and the war-struck. Which is why sensorial and embodied approaches to knowing, readily will be perceived as plagued by those who are glad to keep their distances. We see the contour of an analysis in which Mary Douglas' perspective in *Purity and Danger* (where the point of departure is ritual in "primitive society") are combined with Bourdieu's *Distinction* (**where** the point of departure are symbolic currencies in the analysis of the variety of capital that structures human life in group-, age- and gender-relations).

Bourdieu, Pierre (1979) *La Distinction: critique sociale du jugement de goût*, Paris: Minuit.

Douglas, Mary (1984) *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of the Concepts of Purity and Taboo*, London: Routledge.

⁽²⁴⁾ Iser, W. 1974. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

⁽²⁵⁾ Grotowsky quote cited from Dragos Gheorghiu's essay in the *Coming to Senses* anthology (2015).

⁽²⁶⁾ Csordas, Thomas (1993) "Somatic modes of Attention" in *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 8, No. 2, May, pp.135-136.

⁽²⁷⁾ Lakoff, George & Johnson, Mark (1999) *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*, Basic Books.

⁽²⁸⁾ Sloterdijk, Peter (2000) *Critique de la raison cynique*, Paris: Broché [(1988) *Critique of Cynical Reason*, University of Minnesota Press.

⁽²⁹⁾ Gurdjieff, George I. (1985 [1963]) *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Penguin.

⁽³⁰⁾ Buck-Morss, Susan (1989) *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, the MIT Press.

⁽³¹⁾ Bergson, Henri (2012 [1908]) *Le souvenir du présent et la fausse reconnaissance*, Paris: PUF.

⁽³²⁾ Sperber, Dan (1975) *Rethinking Symbolism*, Cambridge University Press.

⁽³³⁾ Libet, Benjamin (1985) "Unconscious Cerebral Initiative and the Role of Conscious Will in Voluntary Action" in *The Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 8, 529-526.

⁽³⁴⁾ Darvill, Timothy (2015) "Observation, Analogy, Experimentation and Rehabilitation during Archaeological Excavations" in Gheorghiu, Dragos & Bouissac, Paul (eds.) *How do we Imagine the Past? On Metaphorical Thought, Experientiality and Imagination in Archaeology*, Manchester: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

⁽³⁵⁾ Rabinow, Paul (2007) *Marking Time: On the Anthropology of the Contemporary*, Princeton University Press.

⁽³⁶⁾ Born, Erik (2016) "Media Archaeology, Cultural Techniques and the Middle Ages: An Approach to the Study of Media before the Media" in *Seminar* 52: 2, pp.107-133.

⁽³⁷⁾ Rather, it vehicles a notion of the Divine body as the following introductory lines from Robert Grosseteste's treatise *De Luce* from some two hundred years before may serve to illustrate: "The first corporeal form which some call corporeity is in my opinion light. For light of its very nature diffuses itself in every direction in such a way that a point of light will produce instantaneously a sphere of light of any size whatsoever, unless some opaque object stands in the way. Now the extension of matter in three dimensions is a necessary concomitant of corporeity, and this despite the fact that both corporeity and matter are in themselves simple substances lacking all dimensions. But a form that is in itself simple and without dimension could not introduce dimension in every direction into matter, which is likewise simple and without dimension, except by multiplying itself and diffusing itself instantaneously in every direction and this extending matter in its own diffusion. For the form cannot desert matter, because it is inseparable from it, and matter itself cannot be deprived of form—But I have proposed that it is light which possesses of its very nature the function of multiplying itself and diffusing itself instantaneously in all directions. Whatever performs this operation is either light or some other agent that acts in virtue of its participation in light to which this operation belongs essentially. Corporeity, therefore, is either light itself or the agent which performs the aforementioned operation and introduces dimensions into matter in virtue of its participation in light, and acts through the power of this same light. But the first form cannot introduce dimensions into matter through the power of a subsequent form. Therefore light is not a form subsequent to corporeity, but it is corporeity itself."

Grosseteste, Robert (1942 [1225]) *On Light [De Luce]—Or, The Beginning of Forms*, Mediaeval Texts in Translation, Marquette University Press.

⁽³⁸⁾ Todorov, Tzvetan (1984) *Theories of the Symbol*, Cornell University Press.

⁽³⁹⁾ Cf. Boehme, Gernot (1993) "Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics" in *Thesis Eleven*, Sage Publications, pp. 113-126.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Wallerstein, Immanuel (1991) *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-century Paradigms*, Temple University Press.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Here the reader will remember that the mnemotechniques used by the rhetoricians in antiquity allowed feats such as reciting Virgil's Aeneid backwards; adding a layer to the Virgil's epos, in which Aeneas' own view moves forward and backwards through time; Squire, Michel (2014: 394) "The Ordo of Rhetoric and the Rhetoric of Order" Art and Rhetoric in Roman Culture Elsner, Jás and Meyer, Michel (eds.), Cambridge University Press, pp. 353-417. So the phenomenon of reversibility is not new. In this sense, writing is in the present essay understood as a media. Media need not have been multiple and ubiquitous in order to exist. What seems to be characteristic of our era is the multiplication and proliferation of media. Wherever there is a record that can in some way be replayed there is also a rewind (whether available to everyone or controlled, as here, by specialists).

⁽⁴²⁾ Laporte, Dominique (2003) *L'histoire de la merde*, Christian Bourgeois Éditeur.

⁽⁴³⁾ Vagn Lid, Tore (2012) "Innledning" in *Avgjørelsen [N. Measures Taken] / Fatzer*, Oslo: Spartacus.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund (1981) *Negative Dialectics*, Continuum.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Buck-Morss, Susan (1979) *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute*, Free Press.

(46) Benjamin, Walter (1996) *Selected Writings*, Volume I: 1913-1926, Bullock, Marcus & Jennings, Michael W. (eds.), Cambridge, MA; Belknap Press of Harvard.

(47) Agamben, Giorgio (2008) *Signatura rerum—Sur la méthode* [Eng. Signatura Rerum—On Method], Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques, Paris: Vrin.

P.M. for «Decolonisation of the Senses—Preliminary Considerations on a Modern Legacy»

1—I have been presenting two papers here in Kyoto. They are both devoted to the topic of ‘decolonisation of the senses’. The first paper is devoted to the aspects of the topic related to artistic research, and the apparatus of experimentation (Foucault) as a support structure for theory-development.

I define a core-operation—in counter-distinction to a support structure—as the sink-or-swim issue of knowledge ventures that we choose embark on. And the relationship between the support structure and the core operation is similar to the relationship between instrument and tool.

Today a state-of-the art example would be the relationship between GPS console in a car (a navigation instrument) that acts as a support structure for the wheel (as a tool) and the actual driving being the the core operation.

2— So, on my paper I am attempting to home in on the core operation that this support structure is intended for. Moving from the apparatus of research, as it were, to more discursive matters related to Sensorial archaeology as a theory for the future. Let us start with the contemporary.

The contemporary, in Giorgio Agamben’s notion, is not tied to the present and near past, but constitutes a lopsided participation in the past, present or future. A bit like Augustine’s idea of the presence of things present, the presence of things past and the presence of things future.

The contemporary therefore is the uneasy co-existence with any time-zone, including the present. Certainly the past, in regard of Agamben’s philological queries in antique texts from Greece, Rome and the Talmudic lore. But also the future.

3— In Walter Benjamin’s work, moreover, one might say that one of the major tropes is the futurity of the past, it gathered the two axes of his thought—Marxism and Messianism—in an unstable compound from which the dialectical image—and its peregrinations—is hatched and constitutes the trope of sensorial mediation. In 1921 Benjamin acquired Angelus Novus, a print by Paul Klee from 1921, on account of which he wrote the following lines in 1940, in Theses on the Philosophy of History:

“A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.”

Making whole, in this sense, was core to Walter Benjamin’s project. Lending his senses to the debris and fragments of progress, with an idea of redemption where whole would be the work of a human mind devoted to the imagination of what cannot be restored. His idea of redeeming the past goes two ways. Through the process of being made whole, the debris and fragments of the power, would release their utopian power of futurity. I guess this is a flowery way of bringing up some of the things that we are here to discuss.

There is a part of Benjamin’s work that presents a promising framework to understand a core of art-school practices, akin to professional listening in music, and the kinds of alignment of the senses and gestures, based on years of professional practice, that one finds in professional archaeologists.

4— Where I come from—teaching theory of writing at an art-school—involving writing in artistic practice is one of the chief challenges that I have to meet. I am not teaching artists to become artists to become academics, though in some cases they may become, or are, intellectuals. Therefore relating to what is going on at the edge of writing, where it borders unto live and ongoing experience, makes it a passenger as much as a vessel. Sometimes like a stowaway.

What I mean by this is that both our senses and written practices know latency phases, where what is learning through the senses—i.e., aesthetically in the sense of Aristotle—sometimes is ahead of what we are figuring out in writing; by days, weeks, months and even years. This is perhaps a little less trivial than the opposite process, where the travails of acquire knowledge through written media, turns up in our sensory understanding with a similar kind of postponement,

A difference, however, is that the senses don’t readily anticipate that the understandings they convey eventually will emerge in writing, and our written intelligence doesn’t readily see it coming either. In other words, we are in for surprises. A possible explanation is that that world of sensory learning, processing and transmission—once it caught adrift—is relatively more autonomous than writing, which is always, and fundamentally, a dependent. Yet, dialectically, it behaves as if it were the master.

5—In the art-school setting, however, there is almost a signed contract that this hegemony of writing should not have a right of existence there. Instead, there is a culture of immersing oneself in work, and then taking a step back learn everything anew—tuning in on the work as though one was experiencing it for the first time. Among artists and designers this is a working habit, but also a faculty prompted at professional community events such as art-crits.

It is something that you have to learn at art-school, no matter what you are teaching, otherwise nobody will listen to you. Teaching theory I have to start here. Move into the “ground zero” of perception, where the availability and mobilisation to the work done someone else, is the point of entry to all the following discussions that might concern it. It resembles professional listening in music. It must be practiced to improve, and is not

universal. Rebuilding this capacity e.g. here in Japan is hard work.

Then I am talking about my own work to reconstitute this ability that I need as a convenor/commentator in this place. Which is a tribute to the fact that it is somehow built into society, it does not exist in a bubble, and what I have called art school phenomenology—or phenomenology Φ —is something that we not only are likely to find outside of art-school, but across the world, and certainly here in Japan, but it will be caught, live and evolve in a different socio-material mesh.

6— I think that Benjamin formulates this difference between a cheap universalist—most certainly colonial and hegemonic—understanding of history, and the particular take on historical materialism that he developed in his work, as he states in his manifesto-like statements in the concept of history:

“XVII

“Historicism rightly culminates in universal history. It may be that materialist historiography differs in method more clearly from universal history than from any other kind. Universal history has no theoretical armature. Its procedure is additive: it musters a mass of data to fill the homogeneous, empty time. Materialist historiography, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the movement of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly comes to a stop in a constellation saturated with tensions, it gives that constellation a shock, by which thinking is crystallised as a monad. In this structure he recognises the signs of a messianic arrest of happening, or (to put it differently) a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. He takes cognisance of it in order to blast a specific life out of the era, a specific work out of the lifework. As a result of this method, the lifework is both preserved and sublated in the work, the era in the lifework, and the entire course of history in the era. The nourishing fruit of what is historically understood contains time in its interior as a precious but tasteless seed.”

In Benjamin’s language the cracking skin of the ripe peach is invariably transformed into the furling cape of a king. But essentially, what he writes about here is what Agamben belabours as the ‘contemporary’.

7— The rind-area of language unto the realm of our sensorial intelligence manages to parse the scope of phenomenology Φ in terms that manages to cut clear of the deeply ingrained ideas we have of a universal human mind—at least residually cast in philosophical terms—to which we would invariably confess, if we only had the honesty of embracing common sense. I think that all of us have hear this tune, and we also tend to speak each our dialects of this lingo of universal reason.

I argue that we can abandon this idea that we are the same human mind, only living at different historical times, with different resources, technologies and languages. This is the historicism which Benjamin attacks in the passage I read from the concept of history. All our practice indicates that reaching the place of the other—the other human—is an extremely arduous task, if left to the

mind. With the senses it is another matter, and the senses operate in their own time.

It takes the time it takes—quick or slow—this is part of the phenomenology Φ which is not an idea of mental contents but rather a practice of emptiness that occasionally may ready us to intercept such contents. These are ideas that we find in authors like Johani Pallasmaa and Richard Sennett, for instance, but their writing, perhaps on account of its being concise, has its priggish and narrow aspects precisely with regard to the senses which they intend to defend.

8—I propose that it might on account of precision that we may embark on the varieties of journeys—or, Bildungs-journeys—in educating our senses and developing a repertoire of skills, that are to the point when we develop understandings, where the development of theory takes place on the backdrop of empirical inquiries. That, is to go through the labours and struggles needed to make ourselves available and mobilised to empirical inquiry at hand, that motivates us as researchers and feeds our passion of knowledge in a community of peers.

In the unstable—but still quite safe—environment of the art-school, seating oneself in what I have called phenomenology Φ , is a matter of going everyday to work, once you have been there fore while. But getting to this point of readiness in various context outside of such school-settings, we are challenged to realign our senses, and invent ways of tuning in, educate our senses and skills, to make ourselves ready, available, mobilised and empty.

This is where I find Benjamin's take on dialectical materialism interesting, because it is not like we are given to this openness by an open attitude and a state of mind, but getting there is sometimes hard work, at other times easier, but always and invariably requires that we put in the effort. The construct that allows this lies in the education of the senses, the enskilment of our bodies and their wiring these in a sensorial readiness to receive and react to the site, till we eventually reach a holt.

9—This idea of stillness linked to our project of knowing things is both a resource and a threat. A threat because the stillness of phenomenology Φ may well contain the seeds of notions of a universal mind—which Benjamin links to historicism—but if it is understood in a dynamic way, it may help us progressing whether it is in the field or at our desks. Here I am thinking of keeping notes, diaries and logg-books as a kind of playback, which (at least among anthropologists) is a daily ritual.

Among artists stepping back and looking at work in progress—with sense of detachment and receptivity—is often aided by the use of taking pictures of the work. Sometimes videos—as William Kentridge does in documenting drawings as the evolve—eventually yielding animation videos. He even goes one step further and runs the videos backwards and incorporates this sort of material in his video-works. It calibrates his senses to the nature of what he is doing.

There is not doubt that Kentridge's core operation lies in drawing. Yet, in his work, it is the support structures he develops and the core-operation jointly that yield the

understandings he shares in exhibitions, and ventures transmitting to his work. He's working with a kind of feedforward. If we accept this a artist-proposition to a sensorial style of knowing, then what we are looking for is not a successful core-operation alone, but balanced diet that includes the support structure.

10—We desperately need to keeping our comprehension of what unfolds and enfolds at the boundary between of the senses and language—between writing and sensory analogues—and to make it our frontier. I think that the complexity at this frontier which deserves the name 'sensoriality'. This is my understanding of José Pellini's initiative to front the archaeology of the senses, And in my paper I am attempting to give substance to this by carrying out a synoptic reading of a book he has edited.

My readings are not extremely detailed, but too long to be accounted for in the fairly short time we have for presentations. All the essays in the book deal with senses in archaeology, in one way or the other, whether it is the senses of the archaeologist as a vehicle of research, studies of the sensoriality in past life-forms, or it relates to the politics of excluding the testimonies of the senses, in the wake of a colonialism based on the idea of the universality of Western reason.

11—What I do, experimentally, in the paper is to read the book backwards, emulating William Kentridge's bag of tricks—so to speak—because, in my experience, this way of working my way through a book, as a professional reader, very often gives me valuable information of how the book is made. That is, how the book comes out as an compound from the point of view of the editors and their team of "book-builders".

And working through Coming to Senses in this way, I was not disappointed. When I read the book the first time—in order to go into each of the papers—I read it in the edited sequence, but when working to probe the intentions with the volume—going from the content to the container, as it were—it made sense in a completely different way. If it was edited that way, it would stand in the way of the papers, which deserve to be read individually. Which is the core operation.

But in the second round of reading, using the method of reverse play made me assess the aspects of the book's support structure, which after all is the purpose of editing a volume. We need to relate to both registres, if not as professional book-readers, in other ventures of knowing. And is a dialectic process, where striking a balance where we can reach the availability and mobilisation—the readiness of phenomenology Φ —is the proof of the pudding.

12—In what I have proposed here as a way of thinking in sensoriality—rather than thinking about sensoriality—brings us back to Benjamin's notion of the dialectical image. Here the image is a sensory compound at the brink between the same and other, which is not tied to any particular sense, but rather to unique wired combination that comes about through tensions, conflict and their crystallisation through experimentation and the mobilisation of our sensory-practical repertoires.

Before I in the paper return to Benjamin, however, I have put in a detour: discussing a critical essay by Erik Born on media in Mediaeval Archaeology. I am using his discussion as a opportunity to reassess what distinguishes media from cultural techniques, and venture a definition of media related to reversibility. There I suggest that what distinguishes media from cultural techniques, is their reversibility. So media are as old as reading—and memorising—backwards.

13—It is with this sensory-practical repertoire that I propose as an alternative framework to inquire into Walter Benjamin's copious production—in an ongoing project involving the archives of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin—by considering his work in the light of his triple vocations as a librarian, a graphologist with an appetite for graphic form, and a theatre director (as a persona developed from his association with Berthold Brecht), rather than submitting his archive to a philosophical exegesis of the literary theory style, as an act of decolonising the senses: in this case the sensoriality of a thinker that may have moved beyond philosophy, and to do a case-study of the epistemic violence of his peers.

«Archaeology as aesthetic: Visual understanding of the creativity in the archaeological practice.»

Theodor's round-up

José is parsing facticity—a mixed regime of fact and fiction—in archaeology, by proposing to compare it with the field of artistic production, thereby establishing some dimensions of comparison homing in alternately on installation- and performance-aspects (with examples from e.g. fine art and film). In the presentation, placing archaeology in a framework of conversation with contemporary art was proposed as a support structure for a core operation: the training of younger generations of archaeologists to develop fieldwork skills in situ.

His proposal combined the potential laying in a «dialect» of community-involvement, by drawing on modern art as a cultural discourse, with the concept of archaeological preservation by the intermedium of mock-up/-dummy digs (e.g., using present-day urban construction sites—layered by recent traces of urban living—to educate the sensory-motor skills needed to tune in on layers in a dig; or, another example, breaking an industrially produced modern vessel in order to work with the shards; and, again, unearthing entire dinner-tables fictionally swallowed up at the time of the meal).

Introduction

Since some time we have seen the apparition of new terms to define the appearance of artistic practices and ways to think in archaeology using the artistic propositions. Although it seems to not to be something new, the awareness about this is a big step that has been taken in other fields of science and now in archaeology. It will allow us to understand better what we do when think in archaeological terms. In this paper, I will point out my experience doing this kind of artistic propositions in the archaeological practice, mixing it with public archaeology and education in the creation of fake archaeological sites to carry out excavations inside courses of archaeology.

The term «creative archaeologies» in Europe, «art & archaeology» in other regions, has been used in recent times ironically to delimit the exercises that want to blur the frontiers between art and archaeology. Artists and archaeologists have coincided a long time in the treatment that gave rise to concepts and topics profoundly related to the heritage from the past as well as to the present, before reaching the point of convergence in methods, techniques and ways to understand reality.

Archaeology is a source of inspiration for artists, and although we as archaeologists have used the artistic techniques in our visual work, we have failed in the dissemination of our reflections on the past to the larger society, something which art has achieved from its practices and discourses. This is an interesting point to start removing the permeable frontier between art and science, created in the attempt to avoid any trace of subjectivity. Now things have changed, also with the apparition of New Humanities and the use of artistic methods by the scientists adding immaterial levels to descriptive, analytical research.

Nevertheless, in archaeology we are currently a step behind, in which subjectivity and immateriality today are dangerous issues.

Beyond Representation

I started to research about this topic analysing the image of archaeology, a transversal topic in the archaeological science due to its applications to know how we study the past as well as to take position

in the present for our work, in a world where archaeology is placed among so many stereotypes (Carvajal et al. 2011; Tejerizo 2011; Mármol 2014).

The image we project as archaeologists to our colleagues as well as to society contains a great part of the aesthetic born with the stereotypes, and it is interesting to study how we empower the aesthetics against which we are fighting. It is a condition also in the way we approach the past, on account of the aesthetically given set the ideas and practices we call scientific. With my work on this line, I found that the visual serves to build archetypes about how we must be to be considered as archaeologists, and of course it affect how we are perceived, the importance give to our work, and the image we perceive of ourselves and that affects to how we do archaeology in all the faces. For these reasons, we must take care of the image we project beyond the descriptive, cinema, or iconic analysis, which have been the basis in the analysis of the image of archaeology.

It is common to observe figures as Indiana Jones, sources of other 'echo' images as the one of the summer volunteer or those of super-archeologist (González 2013). The image of the archaeologist on fieldwork is heir of the ideas of 'discovering', 'ancient', or 'exotic', which make come together a lot of professionals who don't have any common professional or deontological union. The problem is that the image of how is an archaeologist and what he/she does affect directly the ways we research the past, how we see it, and what kind of projects we do. In a science that aims to a discuss objectivity (supported by unlimited techniques) this is at least a problem in praxis and in general discourse. The figure of the archaeologist has been based on the media and cinema, as Indiana Jones based on Hiram Birgham and the archaeologists of the early XX century. We find different images related to the places archaeology acts. The past is shown as a non-place where all is possible, where we put all our contemporary worries (Molina 2008; Comendador 2013), and which is neglected to a space of evenemental history, of facts. In this sense, in the visual, the archaeologist works with what doesn't exist, reaching the point to trespass the frontier of the represented and reality by representing with tricks what is fake, as the image of the shooting of 'Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark' in which we can see the shadow of the Ark representing with two wooden-sticks and a piece of carton (figure 1). Like this pic, the image of archaeology hides the heterogeneity of several perspectives, ones against others, on the practice.



Figure 1. 'Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark' making of (1985).

The image we have of ourselves allows us to unravel what determines our discourse and the methodological steps we use. To this, it is necessary a bridge between the strictly scientific and the heterogeneous perspectives to understand things, mainly developed in artistic practices. This bridge also connects two worlds: the past and the present. The apparition of the artistic to do archaeology is on the line to understand archaeology as a tool to solve the conflicts of

the present; but also to study the immaterial world visions of the past, as well as to decode the thinking processes of the past people which now we call as practical, artistic, etc. We need to add to the scientific thinking, mainly descriptive, the flexibility of art-thinking, based on what has not be confirmed, to carry out research of these different worlds. By the way, the New Humanities are working on this topic, proposing multidisciplinary approach including artists to promote useful release to the scientific knowledge, in a world where every scientific paper is read by an average of 10 people'.

Art & Archaeology

Since some time, there have been attempts to blur the frontier between art and archaeology, showing the permeability between both fields. It is a new-born term in the context of the post-processualists approach, as the addition of the senses (Hamilakis 2014 et al.), the peripatetic (Weebmor 2005; Witmore 2006), the aural (Witmore 2004), etc, at the time to access to the memory of the materiality of the past, trying to point out the difficulty of the inscription processes based on the text and the observable (descriptive) to recover and document all the things occurred in contact with materiality and the qualities of materiality itself (Hamilakis 2014; Hamilakis & Anagnostopoulos 2009; Hamilakis, Pluciennik, & Tarlow 2001; Hamilakis, Anagnostopoulos & Ifantidis 2009; Tilley,Hamilton, & Bender 2000; Edgeworth 2003, 2010; Castañeda et al. 2008; Van Dyke 2006; etc).

Archaeology has taken a creative sense through these contacts. Art and archaeology and other brands reaffirm the wider influence of archaeology in the reconstruction of past societies through its material remains, to all the things that cannot be inscribed as normal. The study of the materiality of the living societies guide us to a kind of activism based on questioning the immovable convictions which implies the division of past and present (Millán Pascual 2015: 56-58). The political and social character of the archaeological practices must move to the construction of past knowledge which is produced and reproduced (Edgeworth 2010: 65).

In my experience I tried to delimit the term because the epistemology of archaeology is creative, since all the practices we engage in are solutions to problems given (the 'creativity' as a efficient way to solve problems). Nevertheless, the term makes reference to a kind of archaeological thinking which goes beyond the traditional, understanding of the artistic as a heterodox and flexible approach. The heterogeneity of approach is combined with archaeological theory, due to its present a reflection about archaeological concepts as time, experience, space, or memory, adding other concepts at the edge of the scientific and the artistic. This allows to embrace elements to inspire the research as well as in social modes (as street art does, re-defining the space with new meanings and experiences, creating opportunities space to local communities; which gives us new ways to interpret prehistoric art).

The relation between art and archaeology serves a richer discourse, to unsettle concepts, open new ways to present information, etc. Rather than confront the artistic with the scientific, they complement each other. While science present a kind of knowledge «propositional» of facts and «truth», the artistic provide a «non-propositional» knowledge, practical, what doesn't have to be confirmed. Prescription over description (Víctor Fernández, on conference 2012).

archaeology has been understood as creative archaeology.

What makes this didactical space suitable, to experiment with art and archaeology, are the several sceneries it represents in the creation of the site, and the whole creative processes behind it, the excavation and the teaching that follows. Since there are some processes as to the conceptualisation of archaeological practice, to teach it, the process of creation of complex spaces and the performative acting represented by the excavation and recreation, after the fact, of a 'past people' movements, this activity is a good example of mixture between art and archaeology and represents very well the use of the imaginative thinking. Also, documentation in this context was based on photo-ethnographical records, archaeological classic records, and other kinds of artefacts with two purposes like ethnographic and archaeological at the same time (on the line, see Moreno 2013; Hamilakis & Ifantidis 2016; Mármol 2016).

The process of creating the site involved several processes and personal evolution, through the several acts we did; as collecting the materials, the destruction of ceramics, building the structures, earthing, and finally the excavation. Also, with this activity we promoted the multivocality and multi-temporality of the spaces, taking into account the history of spaces built at present along with the last 50 years, during the life of the students' parents whose past lives they would excavate on the site. The construction of the site in a marginal space of the town was very interesting from the point of view of the creation of relationships between the students, several local communities and the creation of new spaces of opportunity. Also we can create personal relationships respecting the cultural diversity, the immigration and the protection of heritage spaces.

Beyond this, we could have an artistic understanding of the space. For example we can cross where before there was nothing, through the imagined 'door' of the house between two walls which divide a 'garden' and the interior of the house with several rooms as a 'kitchen', 'bedroom', an 'aisle', etc.



Figure 8. 'False dig' in the Archaeo-drome.

Ontology of Artworks

Among the artworks produced in the first phase of the process, I point out three pieces.

The first was called 'Three ages' (figure 9). It consist in the record, photograph and video, of the process of destruction of the pottery to be earthed in the site. This shows a reflection on the archaeological processes of destruction and collection as well as several ways to act in the construction of material culture in the present. The point is to see materiality in perfect conditions and the processes, involving human experiences and techniques from imagination and intuition, to destroy and earthing the materials.



Figure 9. 'Three ages' (Mármol) (2016).

The second piece is «The brick-stone» (figure 10). This is a stone we used to break the bricks to construct the walls of the structures of the site. By documenting this process, the first time, and then recording archaeologically the stone after the breaking, is a way to reflect about archaeological aesthetics, which can be applied to any material reality. A series of photographs using archaeological record complement this artwork are online.

The third artwork is a kind of performance, performed in the structures once had been terminated (figure 11). These performative acts put on relevance the apparition of new meanings (practical, symbolic) upon a space where before there was nothing. The work is based on the use of this spaces to represent the past people's movements and attitudes, and, in the present, to try to think in Michel Foucault's 'heterotopy'. Finally, this performance serves to mix the several structures (floors, walls, materials), done by several people using their imagination and experiences, setting unitarian meanings from the former heterogeneity.



Figure 10. 'The brick-stone' (Mármol) (2016).



Figure 11. Performance in new spaces (Mármol) (2016).

In the second, final, step of the process, the course itself, I did several artworks, mainly visual through photographic artefacts.

We can point out the photographs representing the «performance» of the excavation, where the corporeal movements, the situation of the volunteers (ones digging and others in the cabinet out of the trench), etc, are a kind of archaeological acting. In this sense, I used the photo-ethnography to record all this movements and dissonances on the practice, that in a wider sense represent a landscape of the site and the students (figure 12).

Other kinds of visual artefacts were the photographs of the excavation, which are archaeological and ethnographical records, showing more beyond the represented. These pieces served to get closer to the local community, through website and physical exhibitions, in a social point of view (figure 13).



Figure 12. The performance of the excavation. The landscape of the practice. (Mármol 2016).



Figure 13. Archaeological/Ethnographical records. (Mármol 2016).

Last but not least, visual artefacts with an artistic intention were done too. Photography, video, painting and sculpture done by the collaboration hand to hand, with the students, to create this works concerning archaeological concepts as memory, experience or time reinterpreted after the excavation by the students (figure 14). This is an art born in the archaeological context and in the processes of recovering material culture from the site, specially the archaeological documentation of simulated materiality to reflect about issues along the line of archaeological theory.



Figure 14. 'The hand'. (Mármol) (2016).

Conclusions

To conclude, I want to point out the value of the visual artefacts and senses to reflect and to record what happens on the site at an immaterial level. The ways of thinking emerging from art are important to decode the processes of understanding the materiality of the present, and it represents an epistemological approach developed in several fields as photo-ethnography, always under theoretical frameworks in archaeology integrating the descriptive and technical apparatus with the non-inscribable information and the representations of reality art provides. Understanding the archaeological practice as an artistic action ruled by the artistic thinking can allow us to reinterpret past peoples' creativity, based on the processes of survival, removing the classical frameworks of interpretation in question.

Archaeological practice, as an aesthetic practice, can be conceptualised in visual artefacts that unify a heterogeneity of several practices considered as 'archaeological' which define what is an archaeologist. There is an archaeological creativity in all the processes of archaeology, as doing art with the archaeological, with the creation of a modern site, with the drawings, photos, etc, in the past as well as in the present. This gives us several keys to understand the limits of our approach to the past and the sense of our interpretations to an abstract aspect of the past, in the artistic as well as in a wider range of human actions.

Last but not least, what this allows is to develop the divergent thinking against a kind of convergent, monolithic thinking which limits our ways to access the knowledge, avoiding to establish artificial frontiers between archaeology and the contemporary world. This is important when performing communitarian actions with the communities through archaeological activity, as art does. To put light on the heterogeneous archaeological record analogue to the heterogeneity in present times (for example the presence of one community in the past and nowadays in the same place) it is important to work on the re-signification of the sites and archaeological work spaces. Here archaeology has to use the propositions of its own nature, that is so related with art and street art.

Nevertheless, we should work on the development of the epistemological, theoretical framework of the creative archaeologies / art & archaeology, if finally we decided to continue with this way, mainly to research about the ontology of these practices in the present and its useful applications of the study of the past.

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¹ <http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/prof-no-one-is-reading-you> (24/07/2016).

² www.arqueodromo.blogspot.com (25/07/2016).

01. The journey does not stop here. But having reached a place where some undeniable insights have been won, but yet with an uncertain future—how to proceed from there? You have arrived at a certain depth. But you are at the bottom of a well. Will there a spring to bring up unto the surface?

02. The well digs unto its own depths, the spring emerges from a sources beyond that depth. The image—what was explored in the Kyoto essays as the ‘real image’—contains these principles: the point and the counterpoint conjoined. But so does, perhaps more surprisingly, our conversations.

03. What is a conversation? Or, to be more precise, what do we do as we converse? All too often, we confuse and conflate conversations with dialogue. But think about it! How often is it not that what we call conversation is the juxtaposition of more than one dialogue? We have another dialogue in mind!

04. While we are engaged in dialogue with someone else, we are parsing another—parallel—dialogue in our minds, without revealing this to our peer. And our peer is, more often than not, doing exactly the same thing. Our conversations contain our current dialogue, and the dialogues it contains.

05. The actual dialogue is a container for more than one virtual dialogue. This is a likely and robust definition of conversation. It is the corollary of inter-textuality: while you are reading these lines, you are not
- thinking of this text alone, but import—in stealth—a number of other texts, like a Trojan horse.

06. Which again is similar to how we both can intercept unconscious images from a mental space (well)—as revealed by handwriting—at the same time as we can relate to the gestural aspects of that same hand-writing: its force, personality and ductility in the written medium (spring).

07. In Walter Benjamin’s ideas on graphology (1999) ^(a) these approaches were contrasted as new and old: the new linked to the territories opened by psychoanalysis, the old the ones prompted by an interest in personality, which he conceived as ‘right wing’ (for example, Ludwig Klages).

08. But are oppositions like these credible to us today? Opposing the new to the old, the ideology of the left to the ideology of the right, the collective to the individual, our unconscious drives to the personally articulate (etc.) is likely to obscure the instances where these correspond.

09. That is, they correspond in the sense that they communicate, in that moment when we are enabled to take the position of the third: neither in the first nor second person, but an inflection of the person in the third tense. The conversation becomes a training ground for certain important civic virtues.

10. One being the ability to take a stand which is neither interested (in the first person),
- nor comprehending (in the second person) but intercepting a ‘third person’-objective (being at once of and for the third person): both in terms of being amendable to third party interest and of mediation.

11. So, conversation may hence be seen as the training ground for basic ‘civic values’; in a theoretical framework in which the pronominal categories of person—i.e., grammatical categories—are understood in each one their framework: phenomenological, pragmatic and semiotic combined.

12. The first person (I) is then our phenomenological tense. The second person (you) is our pragmatic tense. And the third person (s/he) is our semiotic tense. It brings us into some important ontological clarification, since it is in the definition of the real third person to be absent.

13. Absent in the sense of being removed from the current exchange (in a remote place), or present, but in a marginal capacity. The semiotic third is hence a [virtual] ‘placeholder’ for the real—or, actual—third. On the back this ontology, the semiotic third becomes invested with an epistemic load.

14. This epistemic load is variable both in scope and in depth. Today, this is the substance of political life (rather than the left- and right-party dividing lines of yore). And the new dividing lines goes between political interests that are vested in blurring/clearing the pathways of ‘civic values’.
15. Today this is a logistic question, rather than a subject to be located in public institutions—such as schools—and political parties; and is inextricably bound up in our platforms of transaction and mediation, which in our era are characteristically combined. They are no longer separate.

16. The ‘third party’ point of view on interests—in which various kinds of exchange are combined with communication in the real world—also conveys and indicates the pathways of third-party interest, since the effort at understanding and the acts of mediation have become combined, if not con-/fused.

17. So, even if we lack the category of a ‘third person elsewhere’—in most languages—we have to develop sense of this category of personhood, and ways of accounting for our exchange in regard of that category of personhood (i.e., a real person somewhere). This is the challenge.

18. F. Barth (1966:15) attempted to define this challenge: «Human behaviour is ‘explained’ if we show (a) the utility of its consequences in terms of values held by the actor, and (b) the awareness on the part of the actor of the connection between an act and its specific results» ^(a).

19. But today this effort at comprehending a human third party, in terms of its behaviour (a-b) is effectively connected to the third party as one involved in what we then conceive as transactions in knowledge. That

#01 WAC o8

Pitching



Support structures can sometimes take over—bureaucratic structures have this knack—and overshadow what might be called our core-operations. I give an example of this in this flyer, by drawing attention to the demands that can be placed on professionals before the are able to initiate the activities that are of substantial importance. How do we make sure that support-structures are supportive? One of the big questions of our time...

5. Special Presentation: The Life of a Tayū in Costume.

Speaker: Hanaōgi Dayū (Yoshiko Hattori).

Born in Higashiyama-ku in Kyōto. After graduating from college and raising a family, she began her professional training in 1976, and in 1980 received the title of Tayū (the highest rank of all the classes of traditional courtesans and entertainers) and the name Hanaōgi Dayū. She has since then worked tirelessly within the oldest entertainment district in Japan - Kyōto's Shimabara - at a time of major upheaval in the lives of Maiko, Geisha, and Tayū.

Having also studied the history of Japanese customs at University, the speaker now seeks to preserve the centuries-old customs of Shimabara through practice and is the author of an autobiography. She will wear the full costume and ornaments of her role, while introducing her life and work.

Location: A private historical machiya (townhouse) between Takasegawa canal and Kamogawa river, Kyōto.
Venue host: Mrs Maekawa.
Date: Sun. 4th Sept. 2016 Time: 1.00 – 3.00 pm.
Maximum 20 participants
Fee: a contribution to support the work of our speaker (1,000-2,000 yen suggested)
For reservation, please apply to 'Life of a Tayū' c/o pjim@idc.minpaku.ac.jp (WAC participants),



29.08.2016

[attempt]

#01 WAC o8

Pitching

The WACo8 event has had two very different modes. On the one hand, what I would call the roaming mode. The information about the congress was announced in forms on a Internet portal. With no site-map, it seemed piecemeal and contrived. It fundamentally lacked a sense of cogency.

It is likely to have organised the sectors of responsibility from the organiser's point of view, with a weakly formulated intention of communicating. On the other hand the congress gradually shifted into the local mode, here in Kyoto. Starting with my own complimentary registration as participant xxxx.

In the process of landing the organisation of the conference, I had to be located; spending time in a separate line-up, where I finally met with one of the local resources with whom I have been exchanging a few e-mails. Makoto Tomii—I was so happy that I gave him one of the boxes of fish I brought over.

I asked him if he had lived in Kyoto for along time, he gave me a long answer, but the answer was yes. So, I asked him if he was related to the people running the Tomii Dental Clinic, on one of the main roads down-town. He was a bit surprised by the question, but also—I think—happy.

It turned out that this Tomii name was carried by a different family than his own. It was apparently a relevant question, though, as he underscored that the Tomii name is not a common Japanese name. The detour at the registration, though, made me come too late to for the Tayu session.

This was a session in which a Geysa, of the highest rank—who had also studied Japanese traditions at a university level—would talk to us about the institution, in a full traditional dress. I was very sad to have lost out on that remarkable occasion, organised by Peter Matthews (part of the staff here).

I was led to think about colonisation in the the terms of the kinds of processes are in right to claim a share of our time. In itself the time I spent at the registration was useless. My benefit from attending the Tayu session would be incomparably more beneficial to me. Still I had to prioritise the former.

The structures around us are strongly biased and we are brought to make choices in apparently non-directive ways. Nobody shakes hands here, but they walk in each other's shoes—and they bow. Anyone can take the role of publicly giving directions to someone else, within a limit of competence.

In this way, the directions given do not only come from the variety of uniformed personell that we find here—ranging from taxi-drivers, via security personnel to police & military—but from whoever has the competence. Such competence may range from extremely narrow to wider portfolios.

At Doshisha the hierarchy between the volunteers is very clear, from the ones that have one job to do, to those who can handle non-routine requests. The people directing the participants with posters to their allocated spots, needed a registration number (they were e.g. not acquainted with the catalogue).

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[attempt]

is, all transactions, are presently also transactions in knowledge; with entailments on status.

20. We can no longer treat the third—3rd party interest—as foreign to our transactions. And it is this foreignness which the process to and from Kyoto, relates to in this report-essay. The third party is not the person we are talking with, but nevertheless emerges from the interferences in conversation.

21. This is the semiotics of the third party. When it is hinged to the pragmatics of the third party (a) [supra] and the phenomenology of the third party (b) [idem], then we are talking of the inner workings of something as apparently ephemeral as intention. That is, an aspect of design.

22. The journey inward to a core—or, the depth of the well—is similar to that of drawing: the kind of intelligent filtration process that occurs when an idea ventures the test of reality. The first flyer series relates to this phase. The second flyer-series, here, relates to the enfolding of intention.

23. These are two aspects of design, in the sense of the Italian Renaissance definition: Vasari (1511-1574) notion of 'disegno' (Italian)—which determines at once drawing and purpose—as the animating principle of all creative processes⁽³⁾. Which clarifies a certain number of things.

24. Design, in this notion, is somehow—and somewhat paradoxically—within and

beyond art: that is, art as the subject matter of art history. This could explain why the attempts to place design within the framework of art-history, has been strenuous and a battle lost in advance.

25. Simply because design—in the above definition—determines that aspect of artistic practice relating to 'natural history', rather than to art history. That is, an account of history relative to nature, rather than relative to culture. An historical account as seen from a third party. Nature.

26. This is an account that will follow in the wake of the anthropocene; and where the perspective on human ideas & works relates to these as ruts: that is, courses of events linked to complex processes in which the factors interact—including human thought and agency—to transcend the human level.

27. How do we relate to the ideas & works of human beings beyond the level of individual contributions—or, behaviour they engage in, as members of a culture—to see them at a level where they are expressions of a species, that is affected by them as one amongst a great variety of species.

28. Thirdness here transmutes from being a category branching to semiotics (if absent from grammar), and foreign/marginal locations, to become an embodied state of mind: the elopements of the creaturely (Stewart 2010, f.n. 8) moving beyond the body as a social and psychological entity.

29. Beyond understanding thirdness—in the embodied mind of the creaturely—as 'being the other to oneself', which Bourdieu (1979)⁽⁴⁾ confines to the charismatic, the substance of the creaturely is to embody a contraption of the kind we find in 'theatre'. What we might call a third nature.

30. That is, a contraption allowing for life itself to be invented (Artaud, 1972)⁽⁵⁾, given to developments and expressions that find place on stage. The point being that our notion of the stage—in theatre and at large—is going through a massive up-cycling these days. The stage is being invented.

31. The traditional theatre translates—in local terms—what is otherwise achieved by travelling, or embarking on a journey. These generations of the theatre were contraptions working on condition that they were confined spaces. It can no longer be held to be true. Today theatres are ubiquitous.

32. Our smart-phones are theatres held in the palm of our hands. The problem is that we are developing uses of these, as though they were not theatres. Which means that we are developing theatrical practices without awareness—and even denial—of what they are. Reality becomes play.

33. These disseminated spaces have had an interesting parallel in theatre proper, where the performances of free theatre groups have been staged on a varieties of sites—from industrial to natural—accumulating a

wealth of experience that currently is shaping the institutional theatre-stages.

34. This trend has been pointed out and reflected in both the works of Georges Lavaudant in France (2003)—at e.g. the Odéon Theatre in Paris—and Tore Vagn Lid (in Germany and Norway) whose re-functioning of the theatre-space transform it into a contraption for a non-discursive political critique⁽⁶⁾.

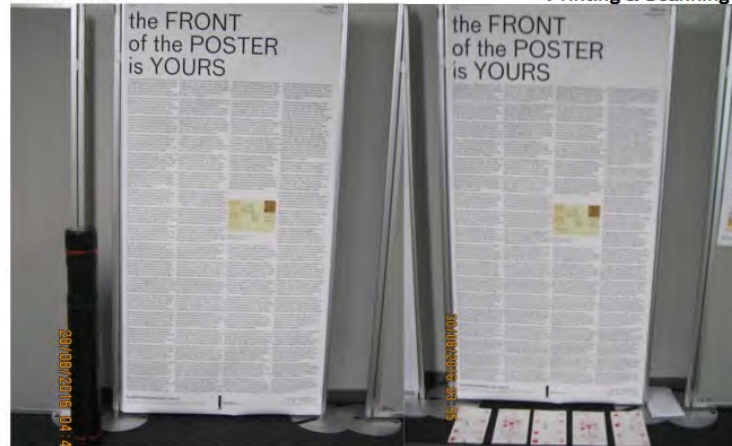
35. These tendencies converge with what we seeing in the fine arts scene, where camp-sites devoted to political protest have been conceived as 'embassies' of marginalised life-forms; the criticality of which does not only related to their presence in public space, but also to the hatching of new repertoires.

36. Concomitantly, a number of curated exhibition spaces—like recently at documenta 14, in Athens—feature camp-sites as hosting-arenas for events of a complex nature, operating as cross-roads for quite diverse affiliations and affinities brought together in commons of making and performance.

37. The space created under Joar Nango's lead, in Athens, reflects this tendency and is also clearly manifested in the title of the work: European Everything. These tendencies in the performance world—whether in theatre or in fine arts—manifest emergent norms & forms in public space⁽⁷⁾.

38. Joar Nango's project has appropriated the notion of 'third space' according to a logic that

#02 WACo8 Printing & Scanning



What I intend by core-operations are the kinds of errands linked to work that hatch initiatives and decisions taken on the spot, for which there may be no support structures [and for which new ones have to be invented at the spur of the moment]. Working one's way through such situations may be of key importance to what Heidegger meant by dwelling, building and thinking, if defined on the backdrop of a fieldwork approach based on making.



22.09.2016

[try again]

#02 WACo8

Printing & Scanning

I would opt not to attend the Tayu-session [#01] more than once. It appeared that there were more people that had missed the first occasion, and a second invitation came along with the time-and-place for a walkabout. But by the time this happened, I was tied up with my own work and its detours.

The point being that my discovery of the tight fit between the 180cm x 90cm poster and the door-frame at the inn where I was living, brought me one step further into the exploration of the affordances of the city [cf. the topic of the poster] than I had just by using the pattern of the Kyoto-map for the poster.

Not only was the city itself built according to the grid of a Go-board, but the houses were built from the surface of tatami-mats [-7,1" x 35,5"], which in turn corresponds with the measurements of the door-posts. I became interested in pursuing the communicative impact of these correspondences.

A sense of correspondence quite close to that of writing letters and delivering the postage—at the time when people wrote and mailed letters—and seeking to coordinate them to the point of making them coincide. In Japan, the unit of measurement (Ken) coincides with the dimensions of the building materials.

Which means that C.S. Peirce's notion of 'thirdness'—the notion that the map and the territory can be brought to correspond—is not exceptional, but a kind of ground-rule in Japan. That is, the notion that the representation also is an agent of mediation. A spot on the map put on the territorial spot it denotes.

This kind of correspondence can constitute a Leitmotif in a society—as an ideal—and its terms will never coincide perfectly [as Jorge Luis Borges' essay On Exactitude in Science will serve to evoke] and will break apart at some point. The question then is how one works with such discrepancies.

One may wonder whether the driving myth of the Internet—dreaming of a global map parsing the universe—will come to this breaking point soon. In Japan, this dream has but little purchase, for reasons that made me curious during my stay: it's life-worlds are not organised by the same meter.

Just as the fax exists and is preferred over email and the Internet, in relationships where commissioned services are bound in contract [as with hotels and transport], hand-writing and calligraphy belong to yet another realm [where paper-standards like F4 are ISO-standard but only de jure].

From Bjørn back home, I heard that the F4 format was generally unheard of, but that that he had come across it in vintage books as a standard for paper-planes. I found the F4 calligraphy paper—which is common in Japan—difficult to fold and extremely ink absorbent. The resistance of material culture.

At the university I found that none of the digital copying machines, despite their USB sockets, could scan materials I manufactured from F4 sheets and intended to use in my presentation. After a long query up and down the university's information hierarchy I was directed to the local Family Mart.

22.09.2016

[try again]

is similar to the tiers état in the French revolution (1789), and Sauvy's/Fanon's concept of the tiers monde—the third world⁽⁸⁾—where other claims than those of the power that be and the dominating class are expressed.

39. The 'third space', however, is not an estate in a static sense of space: in Joar Nango's take it is fundamentally a nomadic space, which has two main characteristics: **a)** in relation to static space it is an encampment; **b)** it is site-specific in relation to place. The two are inter-dependent.

40. As a requirement for a site-specific requirement on the current grounds, the encampment makes certain aspects of dwelling—of inhabiting the world⁽⁹⁾—active. It is neither implicitly authentic nor explicitly constructed, but results from the work and art of local and temporary settlement.

41. In Tore Vagn Lid's Machiavelli, for instance, the theatre is transformed into a green-house: at the centre of the space there is a miniature model of the theatre-building made of plexi-glass, which is filled with water. It is an aquarium and a water-reservoir for the garden: the fish-stool feeds the plants.

42. Save an oblique reference to the lush Tuscan landscape, the connection between the garden and Machiavelli's Il Principe—the Prince, his realm and their governing principle—is accidental. It is a connective device between the actors and the audience: planting and naming twigs in the garden.

43. The garden is also a place in which there could be pigeons. Greenhouses and dovecotes are congenial, even though there is no necessary relation between them; gardens and green-houses afford dovecotes—and vice-versa—and their relation is therefore connective and robust.

44. In the prelude to Vagn Lid's play, the house of Machiavelli—the Albergaccio—is a house of pigeons. They come and leave constantly, against all odds. On the sills outside the windows of the National Theatre in Oslo also, in spite of being armed with bird-spikes, some pigeons did hatch and dwell.

45. The point being that the logic of combining **i)** the encampment (the garden) and the site (the theatre) is the same that connects **ii)** the dove to its hatching-place. In the language of 'functional programming' is called a monad⁽¹⁰⁾. It joins **i)** the components and **ii)** links in a live & robust way.

46. So, while the elements of the monad [**a**] and **b)** in #39]—they each constitute **a)** an encampment and **b)** they are site-specific in their taking place—they feature a singular and underlying unity as they are joined and connect in a way that reaches the core of the matter, and also beyond it.

47. This sort of joinery is called mimesis, and is of a kind that we find thickly theorised in Walter Benjamin's work⁽¹¹⁾. It is also representative of how the relationship between tasks and occasions are currently being

designed in relations of co-work in office landscapes with flexible furniture situations⁽¹²⁾.

48. That is, in professional milieus that we included third-space designs in their repertoires; with the working hypothesis that the ways that such work-place facilities are taken into possession, have consequences—in terms of values held by the actors—for the awareness of the task.

49. For the awareness of the consequences of the task to be specific, there are certain aspects of the work-place facility that are determined as they are built, and defined as they clarify what is the occasion for the task at hand. Such work-processes are concerned explicitly with intentionality.

50. The crux of the matter is that what we here understand with intentionality is not exhausted by the mind-set of pragmatism—or, pragmatic philosophy—but are in part semiotic in definition, in part phenomenological. The result is a kind of pragmatism that is at once augmented and enhanced.

51. Augmented by the kinds of semiotic contraptions defined above as monads. Enhanced by the passive elements of all human sense-experience, that resist our notions of 'being' and thereby make claims on place and positional value in our field of perception⁽¹³⁾. Wired to semeíon and phenomenon.

52. Which means that for each series of consequences that reveal the practical scope of our understandings, there is a

semiotic-phenomenological program to sequence it. There is no scope of consequence, without a sense of a road that underlies and informs it. Every consequence has a sequence.

53. Evidently, the idea of a program which is formulated here belongs primarily to the realm of human agency and understanding, and secondarily to computers. But what is also evident is that it may have taken computers to reveal the aspect of human behaviour that involves computing.

54. Computing does not use the same part of our cognitive apparatus as sense-making and narrative. Neither is it locked to mathematical symbols and figures. But rather the dimension of figuring out our environment—and acting in it—that involves us emotionally. It belongs to our primal nature.

55. The 'ground zero' of consequence is reflected when Pico della Mirandola writes that [ET]⁽¹⁴⁾ occurs twice in the first sentence of the Torah—«in the beginning God created [ET] heaven and [ET] earth»—and states that «I believe that [...] the natural order preceded that of the heaven and the earth.»⁽¹⁵⁾

56. It is a Renaissance idea: both Niccolò Machiavelli and Pico della Mirandola were Florentine noblemen who lived and worked under the aegis of Lorenzo of Medici. Niccolò was born in 1469, Pico in 1463. 6 years apart. They lived at a time when Hebrew and Latin realms were mapped unto each other⁽¹⁶⁾.

#03 WACo8

Bikes & Bananas



If crossroads have become the subject of logistics and traffic regulations in the West—and correspondingly abandoned by the trickster-mythologies of yore—the taxis in Japan [of which the black MK-taxis with the neon-lit heart on the car-top are perhaps the most iconic] are not merely means of transportation but are wormholes between public transportation and the private sphere: they look like love hotels, but the driver is discrete and stern.



23.09.2016

[do something else]

#03 WACo8

Bikes & Bananas

Clearly, the cultural resistance that appeared the most relevant to my queries in Kyoto, were not of the most exotic ones. Yet, they seemed to probe a deeper level of the cultural stuff—because they were subject to discoveries, rather than cultural events programmed for foreign visitors.

Scanning at the Family Mart/Convenience Store—the Japanese term for “drugstore”—caught my interest because the way the transactions were structured and multiplied in smaller operations, reminded me of the ritual at cashiers and the operations of the cash-dispensers. Except for one thing.

They were dysfunctional: the machines accepted an unlimited payment in ¥ but apparently had a very limited RAM [delivering 2 high quality scans and losing the rest]. I concluded that I may have scanning for an entirely different use than the local [e.g., scanning a couple of IDs & documents].

On the other hand, the printshop—Kinko's on Demand Solutions—provided services that were better and swifter than the printshop that I am using in Norway. The choice of paper, colour and print-quality was done in a minute by the customer, and the prints delivered instantly. Rather costly, though.

But it saved me the trip to a back-street alley where I had peeked into a workshop with a cutting machine; where they did the F4 paper that I bought in the Wash-shop. The operator there was difficult to communicate with, and I had the host at the Ryokan write a note with a cutting-sketch for A5.

Detours like these are not unwelcome, however, since they spur our imagination of how to proceed when deprived of verbal language and we are reduced to the intelligence of our senses and the purpose of our choices. Without resistance we fall into the panoply of the mainstream.

In Kyoto, the mainstream manifested a the ubiquity of bicycles & bananas, which were everywhere to be seen. Both were available everywhere and affordable to anyone. Both poor and rich took advantage of them: downtown Kyoto is flat and bicycles are convenient; bananas are good in the heat.

But there were also other combinations like these. For instance, a shop-sign was advertising for a haircut and a pair of glasses for ¥ 3000 [about € 27, or NOK 240]. Everyone needs a haircut, and near everyone needs glasses. This shop is not ready to go out of business. The miracles of ordinary life.

The miracle does not stop here. I was told that when you go the hairdresser, or barber, in Japan, there are places where—when your head is shampooed—your hands are also massaged: but then they cover your eyes. The reason given is that you should not see the person who gives the massage.

Seen in this way, the mainstream is a threshold to realms of differentiated personal relationships. It keeps them together, while—at the same time—keeping them separate. I am attracted to the ancient, traditional and spiritual Japan. Yet, I was continuously drawn to the cogwheels of the contemporary.

23.09.2016

[do something else]

57. This particular blend between a ‘computational (Hebrew-Latin) humanism’ at the face of ‘dystopia’, we also find in two German contemporaries—Agrippa von Nettesheim and Albrecht Dürer—but also in the more recent (late modern) works of both Walter Benjamin and Giorgio Agamben⁽¹⁷⁾.

58. Whether these observations are considered too broad or—on the contrary—overly reliant on circumstantial detail, depends on how we understand mimetic joinery (a sequel to monadic programming). A nomadic understanding of mimesis, will contrast with e.g. a static conception of it.

59. Joar Nango’s idea of nomadism as a site-specific approach, that hinges on the specific work of encampment, will assert that the procedural aspects of this work, and its encounter with the pitiful state of the world, will have mission that will—in the post-historic era—take a documentary form.

60. However, the nomadic concept of inhabitation may be derived from the example of Vagn Lid’s doves, if we only take one step beyond it: that is, from animal nature to the intellect as a thing of nature. The basic behaviour of the dove being to fly between the places they are 1) born and 2) fed.

61. The one (the hatching place) is passively imprinted into the dove⁽¹⁸⁾, while the other is linked to the activities that will make it live. In going and coming between these two distinct raison d’être is what, in

the human perspective, makes the dove succeed in its ways: it can carry messages.

62. It is at this level that designing programmes finds its playground, and where humans determine the matter that it turns into a subject of its natural intellect, which is emotive rather than speculative. That is, a kind of agent intellect (Aristotle) that move agencies before they become actions⁽¹⁹⁾.

63. So, in terms of their functions and values—at the level of animal natures—monads are split at their core, but are shaped into singular pathways through the mimesis of the agent intellect, which is also a thing of nature, that joins and programmes them. This is the essence of nomadism.

64. In its joinery it will combine different elements of animal nature, and proceeds to move through the realms of creation, moved by any form of philosophically argued meta-physics. Its basic principle extends from the depth of perception and can be comprehended as interception.

65. The monad is grounded in analogical thinking—even in its analytic definition (e.n. 9)—and mimesis in allegory. So, at their roots, programming and computing are based on analogy and allegory, and the interception between the ‘nest’ and the ‘feed’ is prompted by colour and parsed by drawing.

66. This is basically about solving kinds of problems which the symbolic and linguistic

faculties in humans singularly complicate: to a degree we would gladly leave such trivia to machines. The transposition of Nango’s and Vagn Lid’s projects, unto these written §§, would serve to illustrate this.

67. However, we can become better at it by developing a symbolic-linguistic practice in the region of human intelligence that verges unto drawing and coloration. This is what I have been attempting here; both in formulating linguistic sentences in close relation to visual manufacture, and otherwise.

68. The stamped signs that you are sure to have spotted as a kind of progress-indicator on the flyer-series in the introduction of this volume, as well as here in the conclusion, features this boundary-onto-drawing-and-coloration, that makes analogical and allegorical thinking available.

69. That is, as an active asset pertaining to what might be understood as ‘operational semiotics’ and a passive impetus in what might be understood as ‘contemplative phenomenology’, placing our aptitude to build up actions, in the «mean», where they can be augmented and enhanced.

70. This is where beefing up the impoverished realm of human experience (Benjamin) can be currently envisaged—for instance, through the mediation of avatars—but constitutes first and foremost an interesting strategic realm for developing new designs for how we think and act in the world.

71. We need to invent the human life-form. The idea that we can continue to disseminate technologies that people—leaders, owners and users—do not comprehend, with large scale consequences that we cannot, or do not, manage, seems to be at a point of near collapse, or self-dismantling.

72. The large mouthful of global challenges that have followed in the wake of «progress», appears to be way beyond anything that we can handle. And it would therefore appear that we would have to bridle our ambitions on the one hand, and expound and expand them on the other hand.

73. We must be able retrace our steps and follow our own progress, in a global adventure of which are very much a part. We are deeply implicated by it, not accidentally involved in a reality that «reboot». We must unlimit our responsibility, to determine what it is, and cease to invent managerial detours.

74. That is, we must cease to use managerial detours to walk around our problems & challenges, and remit them; develop a viable critique of the current pragmatism that drives stubbornly and indifferently on its self-defined freeways, past its borderlands unto semiotics and phenomenology.

75. With the help of figures posing as facts, but with no real math. And with the help of rules that are always on the way to implementation (therefore they can be corrective, limiting or prohibitive). Much of what goes

#04 WACo8 Sessions Art & Senses in Archaeology

RY107	T05O	T05O	T05O	T08L	T08M	T08O	T05D	T05D	T12C	T12C
RY201	T09J	T09J	T09L	T09L	T09A	T09A	T09E	T09E	T09C	T09C
RY202	T06L	T06L		T10C	T05M	T05B	T09F	T09F	T10K	T10K
RY203	T06U	T06U		T06K	T10O	T10O	T10B	T10B		
RY204	T10G	T10G	T10G	T06T		T05H	T10Q	T10Q	T13F	T13F
RY205	T08Q	T08Q		T09K	T06E	T06E	T13D	T13D	T14K	T14K
RY206	T10I	T10I	T10I	T12H	T12H	T05A	T05A	T05A	T05E	
RY207	T06I		T06W	T06G	T10N	T10N	T06F	T06F	T05N	T05N
RY208	T14A	T14A	T08H	T08H	T08G	T08G	T08J	T14J	T14D	T14D
RY301	T04F	T04F	T05I	T04D	T04A	T07H	T10E	T10E	T07D	T07D
RY302		T03J	T03J	T03N	T03L	T03I	T03M	T03H	T03K	T03O
RY303	T04I	T04I	T04I	T15F	T02R	T15G	T15D		Ethics	T15C

As time went by in Kyoto, my first impressions of post-industrial fragmentation—relating to how the Internet portal of a huge international event like WACo8—receded somewhat, to give way to the mixed feelings of alienation -and-attraction of the industrial society. On the one hand the dwarfing feeling of everyone and all contents represented by a number and letter code; the attraction of printed matter and maps on the other hand.



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#04 WACo8 Sessions Art & Senses in Archaeology

It took me a while before I realised that certain graphic interfaces—used at the WACo8 conference—that appeared alienating and impersonal at first, changed in aspect when I started to look at them as interpersonal crossroads, switchboards or thresholds. I learned this by partaking of the life in the city.

From my status as a visitor and foreigner in Japan, I chose the citizen- over the tourist-approach: without being formally a Japanese citizen, it is possible to run the streets and become—tough, in a humble and very limited way—streetwise. A citizen is also one who dwells in the city and makes her cut.

1600 people—from 80 different countries—attended the congress. 1263 of these were listed as first authors. There were ~175 sessions organised under the heading of 15 broader topics. 1263 were listed as first authors. Presentations and posters were also listed. Some presented in several sessions.

The corridors of the Ryoshinkan building at the Doshisha University were crowded with posters. While the rooms put at the disposal of the numerous sessions were generally over-sized, with small sessions counting sometimes 5-10 participants in auditoriums with some 600 seats and huge screens.

In some cases, the auditoriums were equipped with a double set of projectors to be visible across the entire space, but also to facilitate split-screen presentations. As a consequence, the hum and buzz in the corridors, became contrasted with the comparatively serene atmosphere of the lecture-halls.

Doing a poster-presentation—which I did—gave opportunities for a series of one-to-ones, that gave the opportunity to span the connections between who came to listen and which sessions they were going to. Most of the people who came to talk to my poster were people working with community heritage.

With one exception—Prof. Ezra Zubrow—who spent a generous amount of time to decorticate my poster; which was challenging and exciting. It provided me with some contextual input on professional assumptions, that would prove quite useful to prepare the two sessions that busied me later.

Though he is based at the University in Buffalo, he was currently on a residence at Cambridge [and, as it eventually turned out, was on a shorter stay in Norway]. I told him the rationale for my being in Kyoto was to bridge a gap between my interests in diaries, annotation and Walter Benjamin.

Prof. Zubrow showed me his diary and passed over a number of drawings which we called ‘diagrams’. His level of skill would have been appreciated at art-school, and the visual contents would have been called sketches. Archaeologists are often allied with the arts without identifying themselves as artists.

This was certainly true of the small troupe that gathered in the session T14J, where I was stepping in as organiser for Prof. Gheorghiu, while the session T09C—on sensorial archaeology—was about the same size, but with people belonging to Prof. Pellini’s circle. Their approach was rather anthropological.

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as management today are clearly avoidance/reluctance behaviours.

76. We can query them at the verge of semiotics and phenomenology: what are they producing and who are they seducing? They must be made accountable for where they steer, and also what their foundations are. And how the store of pragmatic intelligence is impoverished in their wake.

77. Clearly, we cannot exhaust this issue. But we can be weary of projects where an attempt is made to combine performative goals and documentary objectives in a single process—and a singular idea of progress—which bridges the realm of personal- and historical experience.

78. Because this is really the core of the issue, isn't it? The status of our historical experience in relation to the developments in our natural habitat, and our future as a species. There is no job-mobility—within or between jobs—that will change this. We will always leave a trail.

79. Steinar Laumann's project Fjord Cow (2017)⁽²⁰⁾ is exploring the kind of combined performative and documentary immersion. Steinar Laumann is an artist who is also a mountain- & glacier-guide, who has also guided three groups equipped with skis and toboggans across Greenland. And the fjord-cow.

80. The fjord-cow project combines a web-page access to

the a 3 month trekking, following a traditional route from Stryn—or, Greidung—in Western Norway, to Oslo. The historical droves could count 3-400 animals, while on this journey there will be 1 (tops 3) cow/s. A «cowboy» route.

81. Anyone can access the drove through GPS and join the party for as long as they wish. The historical background, the project and the instructions for access are disseminated at an url—garenturmedkua.no. Some of the people joining the drove are invited to give a talk-as-they-walk: a conversation.

82. The conversations are recorded and broadcasted to the web-page; no images just sound. The sound is recorded with the help of small microphones attached to the cow with a halter, in such a way that it will go unnoticed by the cow, but will record the sound of its movements and breath.

83. Hence the walk-and-talks will come through to whoever listens to the broadcast, from the «cow's perspective», as it were. The project aims at a symbiosis between slow-radio and the summer season (which is quite slow in Norway). The cow moves slowly, and the walk takes about 90 days pluss...

84. The full implications of what the journey & its apparatus entails, is the line of pragmatic consequence for the sake of which trekkers embark on such journeys. The time of journey—in real time—will be augmented by its virtual extension, owing to

its slow-time transmission, and enhanced by the train of guests.

85. Both of these—the one linked to the semiotics of transmission, the other to the phenomenology of the unique inertia in the small crowds that will take the relieve from one another, along the path—are as unpredictable as the pragmatic concerns and turns of the drove and journey.

86. The utility of the consequences in terms of values held by the Steinar Laumann lies in acquiring experiences in facing the consequences: this is their utility. While the awareness on the part of Laumann on of the connection between the act and its specific results emerges from the slow-radio broadcast.

87. If the explanation of human behaviour is made up of these two conditions, it means that the project Fjord Cow (2017) somehow will be self-explanatory (and not require outside assistance to be explained). Which means that it is a tributary to a category of mediation of a special kind.

88. It goes beyond the exchange of some quick views on the idea, and a sample of standard indicators as to its success in meeting the challenges of the road. The mediation itself becomes part of the compound of the idea and the challenges met on the journey: the work of walking.

89. So, is is with the present report: it is written in the form of an essay, because it wants to convey the sense of the journey

as a special form of labour, which adds to the work on ideas and the work of the journey, and adds the work of mediation itself. It does not proceed by rote transmission.

90. Rather it seeks to establish a relation between the values of a performance—making as a form of encampment (monadic analogy)—and documentation; rounding up the specific results (mimetic allegory). And a readiness in the act of mediation for the transition to new sites as specific affordances.

91. The nomadic ides of movement comprises two tasks both relating to assemblages: a) the assemblage of the encampment; b) the assemblage of breaking up, and moving on. Both relate to the agent intellect's work of joinery. But in two very different modes. As exemplified in this volume.

92. The introduction and conclusion is concerned with these different phases—or, modes—in travelling. We may be growing out of fixed identities, unto to more complex and dynamic forms of belonging. Or, at least, this is an option on the contemporary scene for whoever works on it.

93. If people are dividuals, in Marilyn Strathern's terminology⁽²¹⁾, they will look for unity beyond the confines of personhood. They will pursue it through the kinds of work that leave readable trails in their wake—in real or parallel time. Perhaps this is what Joar Nango calls indignuity⁽²²⁾.

#05 WAC8

Working with Groups as a Techno-Cultural Experience



The experiences I bring back from the archaeology congress in Kyoto, appear on the backdrop of earlier experiments: 1) one artistic research project on the sociology of corridors [Commons in Transit, 2015]; 2) a synoptic essay in which KHiO features as overbuilt arcade [Kunst & Kultur 2016]. The experience in Kyoto—in the city and the conference—added novel insights on the boundary dynamics between crowdsourcing spaces [corridors & streets] and specialised professional and personal spaces.



#05 WACo8

The purpose of my journey to Kyoto was to link up with an academic milieu in which artistic practice was adjoined to a university based university tradition. It came about, first and foremost, because of Prof. Dragos Gheorghiu's motioning to have me invited, and included, at the WAC8 conference.

The secondary purpose was to spur an artistic research project proposal devoted to a widened understanding of marking—or, annotation—in artistic practice, its importance to artistic practice as well as in artistic research projects. With W. Benjamin's annotated manuscripts as a boundary case.

One univocal conclusion that came out of my journey—to Japan and into archaeology—was that artistic practice is not excluded from the archaeological profession, nor is it encouraged. It develops alongside the professional repertoire of academic research, and is optional.

At the outskirts of the art-school there are milieus where artistic practice is frequent—even common—without being mandatory. Parts of this practice is a boundary-phenomenon within the milieu, and is not always seen as artistic practice. But as part of a complex and gregarious research culture.

Within the art-school milieu artistic practice is mandatory. Research practices, on the other hand, are developing adjacently to the groundwork of artistic practice. But this is not to say that the relationship between art and research is symmetric in the two academia; for methodological reasons.

'Adding & removing' is methodologically intrinsic to artistic practice: adding or removing artistic practice itself, as a marginal case [as Marcel Duchamp demonstrated]. But research, at least conceptually, is cumulative: either it is historical [idiographic research]/looks for regularities [nomothetic research].

Research covers—at least in principle—everything that has been found and studied. Whereas artistic practice is developed through a process of selection and rejection. However, in the no-man's-land between these two very traditional ways of conceiving art and research there is something else.

Archives, libraries and museums manage sometimes enormous collections of items according to different regimes of storage, retrieval and display that are specific to each of them; relating as much to professional practice and human-architectural spaces that today have become subjects of research.

In the wake of the Internet, these storehouses have become part of a much wider cultural repertoire than before. Weber's notion of 'mechanism'—regularities in historical context—may be better suited to study such regimes, than historical development and natural pattern, if based on comparison.

Comparison is what anthropology adds to the ethnographic method. It is similar to artistic practice in that it proceeds by addition and subtraction, and can itself be removed. In this volume, I have experimentally merged the method of comparison with making as a discovery procedure and critical practice.

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[unlearn]

(1) Benjamin, Walter (1999) «Graphology—Old and New» in *Selected Writings 1927-1930*, Vol. 2, Part 1, The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press.

(2) Barth, Fredrik (1966 [1965]) «Anthropological models and social reality», the second Royal Society Nuffield lecture. In *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological Science* 165 (998): 20-34. Lecture delivered October 26th, 1965.

(3) Vasari, Giorgio (2008) *The Lives of Artists*, Oxford World Classics.

(4) Bourdieu, Pierre (1979) *La distinction: Critique social du jugement de goût* (The Distinction: Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste), Paris: Minuit.

(5) *Who am I?
Where do I come from?
I am Antonin Artaud
and if I say it
as I know how to say it
immediately
you will see my present body
fly into pieces
and under ten thousand
notorious aspects
a new body
will be assembled
in which you will never again
be able
to forget me.*

Postscript to a poem on the Theatre of Cruelty, in Artaud—Artaud Anthology (trsl. Jack Hirschman, San Francisco: City Lights, 1972).

(6) Lavaudant, Georges (2006), «L'édifice et l'abri: notes sur l'espace théâtral» (Eng. The Edifice and the Shed: Notes on the Theatrical Space) in Berthoz & Recht (éd.) *Les espaces de l'homme*, Colloque annuel Collège de France, Odile Jacob.

—*Fyrsten/The Prince* (May, 2017);
Direction: Tore Vagn Lid;
Scenography: Kyrre Bjørkås;
Actors: Hanne Skillel Reitan, Ingjerd Ekeberg, Anders Mordal;
Musicians: Marita Kjetland Rabben (Keyboards); Tomas Nilsson (Percussion)

(7) Fischer, Michael (2003) *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice*, Duke University Press.

(8) Fanon, Franz & Sartre, Jean-Paul (2001) *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin Modern Classics, Penguin.

(9) Cf, Heidegger, Martin (1971) «Building Dwelling Thinking» in *Poetry, Language, Thought* New York: Harper Colophon Books.

And:
Ettinger, Bracha (2015) «Carriance, Copoesis and the Subreal» in *SALTWATER CATALOGUE*, 14th Istanbul Biennale 2015: Istanbul.

(10) **Monads** are a way to build computer programs by joining simple components in robust ways:...

- An endofunctor, $\mathbf{T} : \mathbf{X} \rightarrow \mathbf{X}$ (a type constructor of kind $* \rightarrow *$ with a **Functor** instance \mathbf{X})
- A natural transformation, $\mu : \mathbf{T} \times \mathbf{T} \rightarrow \mathbf{T}$, where \times means 'functor composition' (also known as **join**)
- A natural transformation, $\eta : \mathbf{I} \rightarrow \mathbf{T}$, where \mathbf{I} is the identity endofunctor on \mathbf{X} (also known as **return**)

(11) Stewart, Elisabeth & Buck-Morss, Susan (on monads and mimesis), Giorgio Agamben on Analogy.

(12) Lanier, Jaron (2011) *You are not a Gadget*, Kindle version, Penguin.

(13) Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1985) *L'œil et l'esprit* (The Eye and the Spirit), Folio.

(14) ET: Hebrew pronunciation of the letters aleph and tav (first and the last letters of the alphabet); they have no intrinsic meaning, but are found seasoned all over the Torah (Old Testament); if the Torah is the supreme container, accounting for the creation of the world,, the ETs denote everything that is in it (...the world): i.e., the historical contents.

(15) Cf, Waite, A. E. (2016) *The Kabbalistic Conclusions of Pico della Mirandola*, Kindle edition.

See also: della Mirandola, Pico (1996) *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, Kindle edition, Regnery Publishing.
And: Idel, Moshe (2011) *Kabbalah in Italy, 1280-1510—A Survey*, Yale University Press.

(16) Cf, Lucchese, Filippo del; Frosini, Fabio & Morfino, Vittorio (2015: 262-264) *The Radical Machiavelli: Politics, Philosophy and Language*, Brill.

(17) A sample:

—Dürer, Albrecht (2008) *Memoirs of Journeys to Venice and the Low Countries*, Kindle version, Echo Library.
—von Nettesheim, Agrippa (1993) *Three Books on Occult Philosophy: A Complete Edition*, Kindle version, Llewellyn Publications.
—Benjamin, Walter (2009) *On the Concept of History*, Classic Books America.
—Agamben, Giorgio (1995) *Homo Sacer: Tome 1, Le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue* (Eng. Homo Sacer: Volum 1, The Sovereign Power and Bare Life), L'ordre philosophique, Broché.

(18) Lorenz, Konrad (1982) *The Foundations of Ethology: The Principal Ideas and Discoveries in Animal Behaviour*, A Touchstone Book.

(19) Aristotle (1987) *De Anima/On the Soul*, Penguin Classics.

(20) <http://garenturmedkua.no/wordpress/nb/>

(21) Strathern, Marilyn (2004) *The Archaeology of Personhood: An Anthropological Approach*, Routledge.

(22) Joar Nango: <http://www.documenta14.de/en/artists/1405/joar-nango>

In an introduction to his self-published catalogue of compact galaxies, Zwicky (1971) evoked his colleagues as ‘scatterbrains, sycophants, and plain thieves... (who) doctor their observational data to hide their shortcomings... (and publish) useless trash in the bulging astronomical journals’» (sic).

Today, Zwicky is acknowledged as one of the forerunners in theories in astrophysics on ‘dark matter’ (which is dark on account of being indicated but unseen by what can be observed through telescopes). His diatribes with his contemporaries and his discoveries raise a basic issue.

Thus, the topic of this postludium to the KYOTObook: what are the chances of intermediary positions—perceiving them, developing them and holding them—in such realms of knowledge inquiry where there are no syntheses, and where we have to be content with mediations?

Clearly, without affirmative action, findings in these «murky waters» run the risk of not being recognised. Not from the lack of talent, moral integrity and bad habits—as Zwicky indicates—but rather from the lack of certain basic understandings, intellectual motility and practical creativity & formal elegance.

Instead of celebrating their co-existence in certain privileged periods as the Renaissance, it is probably more timely to point out the possibly catastrophic implications of their scattering in our time (while celebrating the signs in some milieus, that the point being received and understood as constellations).

Though the ruts of ‘natural history’ are relatively easy to identify—with its inception, in modern times, with Goethe—its representatives in modern times are as different, as Benjamin and Bateson. And we are not talking about differences of degree and variations on a scale, but about really different paradigms of human thought.

So, it is clear that these forms of knowledge—with their different store of artistic affordances and clusters of academic ownership—can make claims on the tributaries of natural history, only when the knowledge form appears as such if combined with motility and enskilment.

And that outside of this association these knowledges—as cultural constructs—cleave to very different routes, muster

very different clusters of professional associates, and will even stand as ideologically opposed to one another, when brought to compare on the scale of critique.

For this reason, natural history will readily be considered as politically suspect. Running this risk, we cannot today afford to leave any stones unturned. But then we have to know what we compare. We compare forms of knowledge inasmuch as combine understandings with motility and enskilment.

It is basically what Bourriaud asserted in *The Radicant* (2009, cf, the prolegomenon). Zwicky’s morphological analysis can claim a place amongst the ruts of natural history, because it is a practice-based theory of dynamic systems, based on intermediary forms, can be identified and managed.

But it is not very clearly expressed. However, this idea is clearly expressed in Fredrik Barth’s idea of applying the geological concept of ‘disordered systems’ to social phenomena², in a way that certainly is similar to Zwicky’s attempts at applying his concept from astrophysics³.

Again, the diversification of Fredrik Barth’s conversations with select individuals, who were living and thinking at the outskirts of the societies he studied as an ethnographer, are extending fieldwork unto realms on the verge of professional exchange (rather than the ethnographic study of culture)⁴.

But it never surfaces in these terms. However, this idea is clearly expressed in George Marcus’ idea of para-sites (as a way of re-functioning fieldwork and the norms & forms of ethnography). Nevertheless, in the successive efforts of conceptualising intermediary positions the three are linked⁵.

Not ideologically, in the terms of critique & political discourse, but in the way they connect certain basic understandings with intellectual motility and skill. The 3 are all trained researchers—it is a meta-skill—they use their specialisations to knock on other doors; their understandings include form.

So, the present attempt is not one of rapprochement. They stand in very different places: both in terms of interest, experience-base and political positioning. But then, why compare them at all? Well, it may be argued that the three of them are interested in variation, complexity and change.

Of course, there are a number of other people who share this interest. But the point here is to select 3 people, who may not have gladly dined together, and yet can be fruitfully compared. This is, of course, an unusual claim in the age of social media. But is concerned, in aspects, precisely with this.

What characterises our selected 3 is a talent, curiosity and intellect for interests in people and territories beyond their academic precincts and their followers. In other words, they share the knack of picking up the trail of 3rd party interest. An interest and a talent not necessarily shared by others.

For instance, there is precious little left of Zwicky’s idea of ‘incommunicable truth’ in his self-determined epigone Tom Ritchey groundwork for the Swedish Morphological Society, where morphological analysis is pretty much reduced to a strategic decision-making protocol⁶. It became formalistic.

The problem is precisely not whether the follower is true to a master—as for instance, Fredrik Barth’s school of ethnography in Bergen/Norway—but that there are aspects of human knowledge that cannot be followed. In these cases, faithfulness and following are clearly not the same thing.

The bond is created and grows through the unique combination of inventiveness and moving on—making and moving—where whoever is beyond the bounds of the current, of work and one’s fellows, is the prime motivator; their interest in the contemporary is the seal and signature of their vocation.

Our current plight is such that this unmistakable sign of excellence, is that the lack of it may well lead to the unmaking of these traditions of knowledge. If so, it would not be the first time that great ideas are threatened, brought to their demise by their followers. So, what is there for us to «get»?

In Nietzsche, the moment of *Gay Science* (1991 [1882])⁷ is when knowledge passes unto song. It has a counterpart in Benjamin’s work on the *Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (1998 [1928])⁸. Here, the moment of ‘sad science’ is when knowledge passes unto redemption. Transmuted.

In both cases—with the tune and the image—the moment of transcendence is when knowledge transmutes into something else; crosses over its own bounds. Not in an act of

transgression but one of fulfilment. Symptomatically, the language most appropriate to evoke this is eschatological.

The language of death, judgement and final destiny. Not lending itself appropriately to the mundane concerns of art, knowledge, science and research at large. However, an alternative might be found by focussing on ontological mediations, that are constitutive of what we understand as form.

That is, rather than looking for object-like qualities when looking into the nature of form; as though form resided in certain object-properties, looking for certain instrumental connections of what we may understand as operational semiotics: the spanning ontological mediations.

The simple option is looking to the triangle between text, image and paper—or, writing, drawing and making—to reconfigure our notion of knowing. However, artistic research brings us a second, more demanding leap, to define a different triangle: adjoining phronesis to ontology and epistemology.

It is here that the challenge of adding a third form of knowledge—to gay and sad science—in the arts and humanities, comes to stand a test. That beyond writing, drawing and making, another triangle defines in which ontology and epistemology no longer are contrastive pairs.

That is, no longer are defined in the terms of structural linguistics, as binary oppositions. But instead are in their foundations are bound to a third, which is phronesis: practical experience. Which brings us back to Fritz Zwicky, Fredrik Barth & George Marcus, in terms of what they have been prepared to do.

The 3 have always had a parallel design—which, as a method, we could name ‘para-design’—which is to step out of the comfort-zone, and into the contact-zone⁹, where deskilling is the premise for reskilling: the equivalent of the phenomenological reduction in phronesis (cf, phenomenology φ).

This ground-zero of practical experience—the design of deskilling and reskilling—brings the practitioner to the brink of capabilities, knowledges and memories they cannot have, but yet emerge in the permutable constellations of new ontologies, their epistemes and phase-shifts of practical investments. This defines para-design.

¹ Buck-Morss, Susan (1979) *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodore W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurter School*, Free Press.

² Barth, Fredrik (1992) «Toward a Greater Naturalism in the Analysis of Social Organisation» in Kuper, Adam (ed.) *Conceptualising Society*, Routledge.

³ Cf, the prolegomenon in this book.

⁴ Cf, Barth, Fredrik (1988) *The Last Wali of Swat*, Columbia University Press.

⁵ Marcus, George (2005) *Ocasão—The Marquis and the Anthropologist, a Collaboration*, Alta Mira Press.

⁶ Ritchey, Tom (1998 [2013]) «General Morphological Analysis—A General Method for Non-Quantified Modelling», Swedish Morphological Society.

⁷ Nietzsche, Friedrich (1991 [1882]) *The Gay Science* [with a prelude in rhymes and and appendix of songs], Random House.

⁸ Benjamin, Walter (1998 [1928]) *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, Verso Books.

⁹ Pratt, Mary Louise (1999) «Arts of the Contact-Zone» in Bartholomae, David & Petrosky, Anthony (eds.) *Ways of Reading*, Bedford/St. Martins.

EXIT

The question of what happens between the act of storing something and the initiative to retrieve it, is more complicated than the file-and-folder system on a computer would seem to suggest (i.e., the user-interface provided by most computers). If it, in Freudian parlance, is comparable to peekaboo (Germ. Fort-Da), it summons the big problem of object-constancy.

The idea of work-in-progress would appear to tap into this dynamic—closing/saving and opening/working on a file—at difference stages, or aspects of process. A similar argument goes for editing one/several files: what is added and/or removed, will go through phases when nonsame elements are conjoined, though they might separate/adapted further down the path.

This clearly the case in the KYOTObook. The relations between the topics are cogent enough to be bound together in a book, as a sequel to the kind of travelling-companionship that emerges at a conference, and is further enhance by the sessions we got to work together: the sessions were, in this specific sense, understandable as workshops. Binding them in a book is one step forward.

The shock of the new that comes with the f/act (Germ. Tatsach) of binding—the contactmetaphors that come about through the existence of the volume—is the topic of each of the two article-drafts written by the the editor (they analyse two books and the connectiveness of their contents), but also ensues from having included the materials from Lia Wei and José Marmol.

Contact-metaphors of this sort are contingent both on the journey and on the book: that is, on the conjunction of the material content (the journey) and the material expression (the book), to employ the layers of Hjelmslev's semiotics that he assigned to physicists, on the one hand, and (social) anthropologists, on the other hand. Their conjunction lends itself to artistic research.

It is interesting, from this point of view, that the term 'reverberation' (Norw. 'forplantning') has both human and physical determinations in both English and French. What Bourdieu coined—in an early version of his outline of a theory of practice—as what communicates from body to body, before words and concepts, seems to cover both: it is physical and it is embodied.

To the more refined dialecticians this notion of 'materialism' often is denounced as too gross. They might have a point if we limit our scope to the notions of materials—and their exegesis—in authors like Walter Benjamin. But if we widen the scope to their material practice (such is found in archives and indexes) the strictly dialectical notion of materialism seems to be too narrow.

A wealth of insights deriving from such index & archive materials can be derived if we sustain a semiotic, pragmatic and phenomenological approach alongside dialectical materialism (in the sense of critical theory [Benjamin, Adorno...]). It appears that a number of valuable and practical insights can be reaped from this approach in Benjamins involvement in theatre (Brecht).

In the semiotic registre the relation between content and expression is coded, in the pragmatic registre it is much less so, and in the phenomenological registre connections between content and expression is loose to the point that they may travel & work freely and follow independent itineraries. Their coming together, however, is not random. Rather, it is contingent.

This defines the realm in which we act on meanings (altering them, or creating new ones). This track defines what Adorno and Benjamin thematise as 'mediation': the backdrop that develops as negative dialectics (Adorno) fails to achieve/claim a synthesis. Hence a question is posed as to what can be achieved in directing convergence at this level, or through other forms of design.

How do artists generate a surplus? How do we move from stacking this surplus, possibility of overflow of contents trickling unto more humble containers? What is the importance of neuro-diverse in connecting to depth? Do we connect the deep by making it more known, or less known? What is readability—and hence the interest—of these matters to a third party?

With certain contents we are brought to parse their expression—their containers—we are brought to enfold this expression and traverse realms of hitherto unrelated contents. These are specifically human capabilities, but they are sometimes weakly stated (in theory and practice). They beg for further inquiries into the monadic, the mimetic and their yield of knowledge.

Theodor Barth

