

**Resonance, ecology and imagination:
A practice-based enactment of imagining as an eco-ontological process**

by

Connie Michele Morey
B.F.A., University of Lethbridge, 1996
M.Ed., University of Victoria, 2007

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Abstract

My interest in this research was first stirred by three key influences: Jan Zwicky's (2003) publication: *Wisdom and Metaphor*, my past interest in post-colonial and feminist studies, and an essay I came across at the beginning of my doctoral studies by Sheridan and Longboat (2006) which critiqued imagination as an anthropocentrically and individually centered notion of colonial nations. The later text was central to motivating the study, which overtime, has grown into a project that focuses on envisioning and enacting an ecological sense of imagination *as imagining*. By situating ecology as an ontological position that recognizes both the complexity, distinctness and interdependence of all cosmological forms, and the porous inter-constitution of forms as lived environments, this dissertation adapts Jan Zwicky's notion of resonance to theoretically, poetically and visually probe imagining as a complex collaborative process involving diverse emergent variables. As a practicing artist, writer, teacher and researcher, I combine theoretical research and (visual arts) practice-based research to posit a sense of imagining that is unsituatable. The structure of this dissertation is grounded in the form of the essay (as a "try" or an "attempt") which adapts explanatory text, metaphorical text and visual elements as a way to expand qualitative practices that have engaged critically with the politics of accepted forms and structures of academic writing. The project is intended for an off-line format, as a series of six distinct yet interdependent hand-made books that focus on: (1) An Emergent Methodology; (2) Ontology, Form and a Reconstitution of the Individual; (3) Zwicky, Thisness, Ecology & Ontological Ethics; (4) Zwicky, Imagination and the Image; (5) An Envisioning of Imagining as a Resonant Ecological Process and lastly, (6) Moments

of Engaging Eco-Imagining in the Post-Secondary Classroom. The research-writing expands a body of work, through visual-textual, theoretical-metaphorical form, to enact imagining as a resonant ecological process that unfolds through the emergence of a complex comingling of a deluge of variables.

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Book 1
Methodology Moves:
Modus Tabula – Motus Tabula

Connie Michele Morey

Methodology Moves
Modus Tabula – Motus Tabula

Connie Michele Morey

“How can you understand technique as more than just a bag of tricks?
As witness, and cosmology, and desire?”
(Lee, 1998, p. 19)

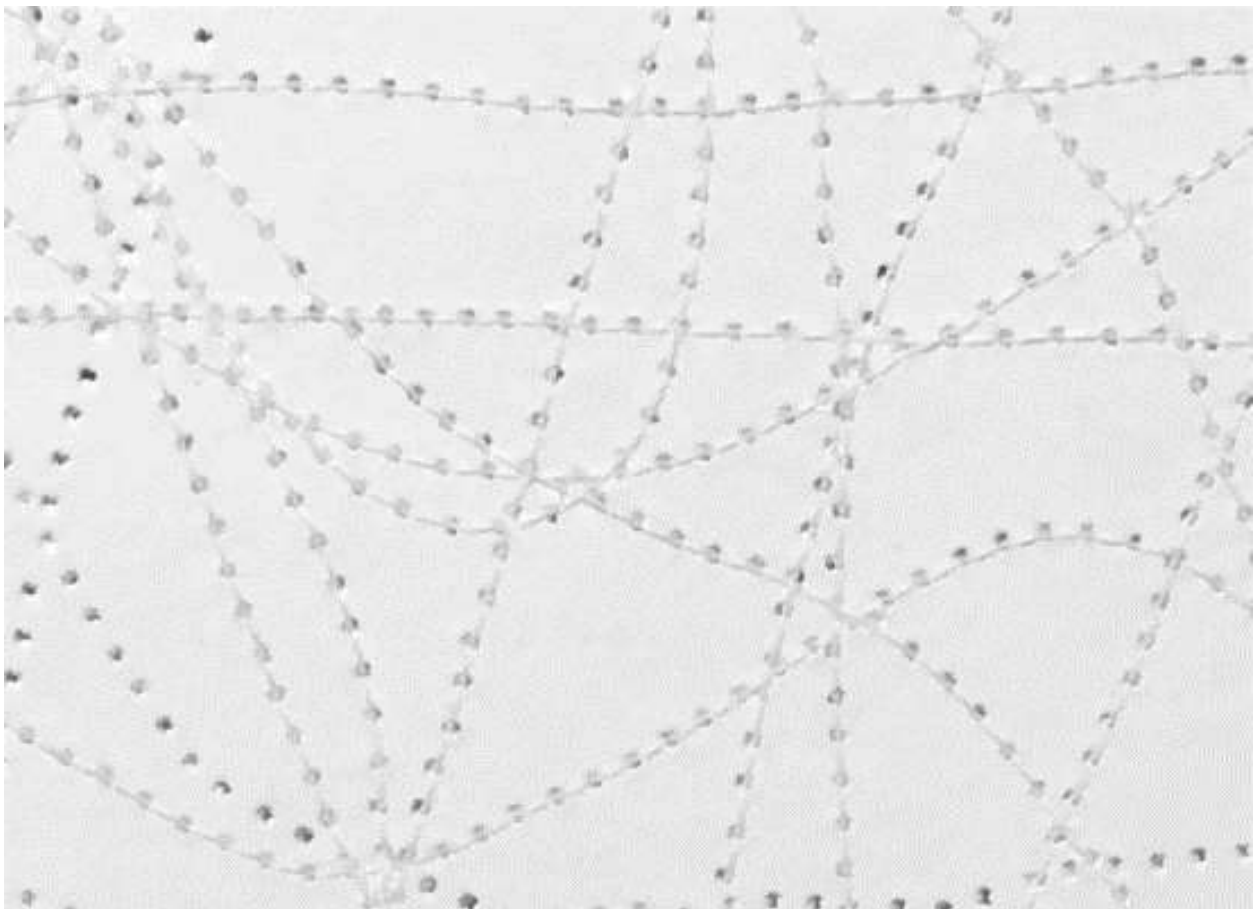


Figure 1. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

We might consider methodology as a path or a way. Some paths give the appearance of linearity, of a sense of order that makes it seem as if the universe is in our hands. Others are more Dionysian in approach in that they acknowledge the complex variables at play in the forming of material and immaterial forms, of organism and idea in a web of entanglement. This project falls under the latter.

The research unfolds from three starting points. (1) The written component of my research works to envision an ecological sense of imagining through attentiveness to and an adaptation of Jan Zwicky's notion of resonance. (2) The studio work furthers the research by attempting a methodological 'enactment' of an ecological sense of imagining and (3) in a third turn, the research methodologically explores how diverse visual methods can inform text-based methods while acknowledging some of the points convergence and divergence.

Given the centrality of arts-practice to this project and the emphasis on the politics of form (that the form (not just content) of our articulations are key to communication), it seems important to situate myself within the varied arena of what is referred to as arts research. My objective, in doing so, is not to provide a justification for the methodology itself within the qualitative arena, but rather to position the project within this diverse domain and to give some background on my reasons for strategic methodological choices. Although what is known as arts-practice as research (practice-based research or more generally arts-based research) is still emerging within many institutions across North America, it has a longer, more established history at institutions in parts of Europe, the United Kingdom and in Australia.¹ To situate the work, I will begin by giving a short overview of the different types of arts research in a global perspective and then locate my work within that arena giving reasons for my position in relation to the project.

There are a number of ways that arts research can be understood. Borgdorff's (2006) earlier writing adapts Frayling's (1993/4) trichotomy to include: (1) research *on* the arts, (2) research *for* the arts, and (3) research *in* the arts. Research *on* the arts includes practices that examine art from a theoretical distance; exemplified through the work of musicologists, art historians, theatre studies, media studies and literature. Research *for* the arts is comprised of investigations that are technically oriented and help to advance knowledge of the tools, materials and instruments that are used in artistic production, for example: material investigations into the plasticity of particular properties of clay bodies used in creating clay-based sculptures. Research *in* the arts refers to artistic practice itself as: (a) the research process (data collection, analysis, and interpretation) and (b) the research results (representation and dissemination). Borgdorff believes that research *in* the arts is "the most controversial of the three types" (2006, p.6). Borgdorff's reference to "research *in* the arts" is the broad methodological category that this

¹ In the article "Migrating Boundaries" (Morey, 2010), I discuss earlier developments in arts-practice as research in Europe and its oft cited emergence with Frayling's (1993/4) article titled "Research in Art & Design". Soon after, a number of scholars in art education, art therapy, women's studies and the fine arts began to engage more actively in discourse on studio-practice as a form of research (Art Education: Andrews, 2009; Barone & Eisner, 2011; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Springgay, Irwin & Wilson Kind, 2005) (Art Therapy: McNiff, 2008) (Feminist Studies: Leavy, 2008) (Fine Arts: Borgdorff, 2006; Candlin, 2000; Candy, 2006; Elkins, 2009; Frayling, 1993/4; Morey, 2010; Sullivan, 2005). In 2009, James Elkins' published "Artists with PhDs" which traces established studio PhD programs around the world, documenting the resistance of such developing formal programs in North America and reasons for that resistance. Although a number of individuals are cited, or have made claim to beginning the movement, this claim does not seem particularly important, in terms of who was first, but rather is significant in adding insight into key figures and into the complex collaborative factors at play in developing arts-practice as a research method. Frayling himself did not claim to be the originator of the method, rather he was later noted as the first one to publish on an already collaboratively emergent topic. It seems logical to conclude that his work is indebted to other less formal discourses emerging on the topic at the time. It is my perspective that discourse emerges within a gradual paradigm shift that is indebted to multiple factors and individuals across disciplines.

research project is situated within. Narrowing it down further, we can refer to different variants of research *in* the arts, including arts-based research and practice-based research. Arts-based research is a slightly broader term, referring to a range of qualitative research practices engaging arts practice as part of the research in disciplinary areas in the humanities and social sciences, notably in women's studies (feminist studies) and education with a proliferation in the last twenty years within art education (Andrews, 2009; Barone & Eisner, 2011; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008, Leavy, 2008; McNiff, 2008; Springgay, Irwin & Wilson Kind, 2005)².

Arts-based research involves "the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies" (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 29). An arts-based research project can vary in the methods and materials of dissemination and in the degree of writing involved in it.³

The term practice-based research, as a form of research *in* the arts has grown largely out of the fine arts, including music, theatre, visual arts, creative writing, and architecture and design. "Practice-based research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. In a doctoral thesis, claims of originality and contribution to knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes in the form of designs, music, digital media, performances and exhibitions. Whilst the significance and context of the claims are described in words, a full understanding can only be obtained with direct reference to the outcomes" (Edmonds, 2016).

There are overlaps between arts-based research and practice-based research with reciprocal contributions to discourse in each area, however, practice-based research differs from arts-based research in that it has grown out of disciplines related to studio practice in design, visual arts and theatre, is more prominent at institutions in the UK, Europe and Australia than in North America and has had a more direct focus on the creative artefact as a basis of knowledge contribution and form of articulation (Edmonds, 2016).⁴ While a research focus on the creative artefact can also occur with arts-based research, arts-based research encompasses a slightly broader focus on possible disciplinary modes of knowledge contribution and articulation.

² A specific area of arts-based research that has emerged within art education and impacted discourse around the globe is known as A/r/tography and was initiated by Rita Irwin and Kit Grauer of the University of British Columbia on the west coast of Canada. "A/r/tography as a term is developed purposefully to include the '/'. The '/' is used to present an equality and coexistence between the three identities that create the term – artist / researcher / teacher. Alongside this the notion of 'graphy' makes associations with text and thus, presents a connection between the art and text, aligning the arts alongside the narrative as a joint initiative". "A/r/tography is a coming together of art and graphy, or image and word" that commonly emphasizes narrative voice and theoretically the work of Deleuze and Guattari. (Springgay, Irwin & Wilson Kind, 2005, p.900)

³ "Because writing is a foundational element in the presentation of research, most of the beginning works of arts-based research focused "on the use and analysis of literary art forms in the human sciences with nods to music and the visual arts" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 6). Over the past decade, the field has been opening to a variety of visual, performance, and literary-based theories and methods. This history is still being written with arts-based research practice." (Andrews, 2009)

⁴ See Elkin's (2009) "Artists with PhDs" for a list of institutions in different countries offering studio-based PhDs.

This project is situated within the arena of practice-based research, in part because of its emphasis on the politics of form, particularly with a weighting of the metaphorical creative artefact as the basis for research, knowledge contribution and form of articulation. An intended outcome of focusing on a methodology more commonly employed within the fine arts, while researching within art education (in the social sciences) is an opening up of opportunities for cross-disciplinary exchange between visual arts and art education, while also offering a firm counter-balance to the privileging of logical-linguistic-explanatory modes of articulation that are common in the social sciences. Additionally, using creative works as a mode of articulation is an intentional strategy inherently related to the collaborative activation of teaching practice that is key to engaging an eco-ontology in the classroom setting. By leaving an interpretive space for others to enter, through metaphorical (visual and textual) modes of articulation, both the audience and the student are given active roles in the creation of knowledge in the dissertation; this act makes a strategic move towards collaboration acknowledgment of the ecology of the classroom as fundamental to knowledge creation.

There are several key factors which drew me to practice-based research in the first place, these include: (1) my background training in the fine (visual) arts, (2) early investigations into practice-based research, (3) an awareness of biases against visual arts as a graduate method while studying art history, (4) later research into arts-based research and practice-based research as distinct and complementary methods, (5) the importance of employing a method which provides an overt counter-balance to logical, linguistic and explanatory modes of research articulation, (6) the importance of providing a method which is integrally linked to the topic of the research, that of an ecological sense of imagining, which allows for its activation through the readers engagement, as a form of pedagogical practice.

My initial interest in practice-based research began some time ago. In 1995, I obtained a BFA in Visual Arts; this practice is fundamental to my identity as a teacher and researcher and until 2004, most of my work and research focused primarily on the fine arts. In 2000, my then partner was looking for a way to pursue a PhD while engaging in studio-practice and through research, I began to become aware of early practice-based programs in Australia.⁵ This led me to engage in additional research and develop curriculum for a course on practice-based research for the University of Science Malaysia, where my partner worked. I returned to Canada in 2001 to pursue a Masters in History in Art, and became aware of certain biases against students taking visual arts courses as graduate course options within History in Art. Given my and other students backgrounds in the visual arts and that we were studying visual art from a historical perspective, this bias fuelled my questioning of the privileging of logical-linguistic modes of learning and challenged my interests in artistic modes of articulation within the program. In 2004, I transferred to a master's program in Art Education at the University of Victoria which had (and maintains) a strong studio focus in both its undergraduate and graduate programs. At this time, I became aware of arts-based research in education. It wasn't until I began my PhD in 2009, at the University of Victoria, that I began extended research on both practice-based research and arts-based

⁵ "Practice-based PhDs began in Australia in 1984, when the University of Wollongong and the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) introduced Doctorates in Creative Writing. Graeme Harper obtained the first such degree in Australia from UTS. He is currently at the University of Plymouth in England, where he is very active in promoting practice-based research. Two current UTS professors, Theo van Leeuwen and Ernest Edmonds, were active earlier in such UK developments." (Candy, 2006, p. 4)

research. In 2010, I published an article on “Visual Arts Practice-based Research in the Qualitative Arena” and shortly thereafter began this project.

I am particularly interested in how my early roots as a visual artist, my academic background in art history and my graduate studies and teaching practice in art education can inform each other through cross-disciplinary exchange. I am also interested and motivated by the politics of marginalization. Focusing on practice-based research provides an opportunity for me to bring my early roots into the arena of the fine arts while providing a voice for marginalized methods and a counter balance to more traditional qualitative research methods. It also provides an opportunity for me to employ overt methodologies of articulation that are integrally linked to an ecological sense of imagination (the topic of my research). Given that imagining is an eco-ontological process of thinking through the world to notice existent threads of relationality between apparently distinct phenomena, engaging opportunities for the reader to engage in a collaborative (ecological) process of thinking through the writing to notice their own threads of relationality is integral to the project; it seemed to me this was best done through metaphorical modes of knowing which open up possible meanings rather than focus or limit possible interpretations. Additionally, given my work as a teacher within the field of art education, intentionally focusing on practice-based research (and the production of creative works as a mode of research articulation) provides an activation of vernacular teaching practice. Through collaborative pedagogical processes of imagining, a space is provided for the reader to engage in meaning-making with open ended metaphors while considering the arguments presented through the text.

What follows is a specific practice-based articulation of how method has unfolded through this project. In the writing there is an intentional reverberation of form *with* content, theory *with* practice and textual *with* visual. The specific methodological sets that structure the writing and make up this practice-based articulation denote a subversive multi-linear reference to a history of classification, a dynamic web of lines and intersections and as such are a reminder that, like taxonomies and other epistemological structures, methodology *moves*. Through my process, I've become aware of how methodology is a kinesthetic form; there is a rhythm to its unfolding. Even when the liquid of ink has congealed as print on paper, it is continually syncopated with various unavoidable polyphonies of engaging with the world.

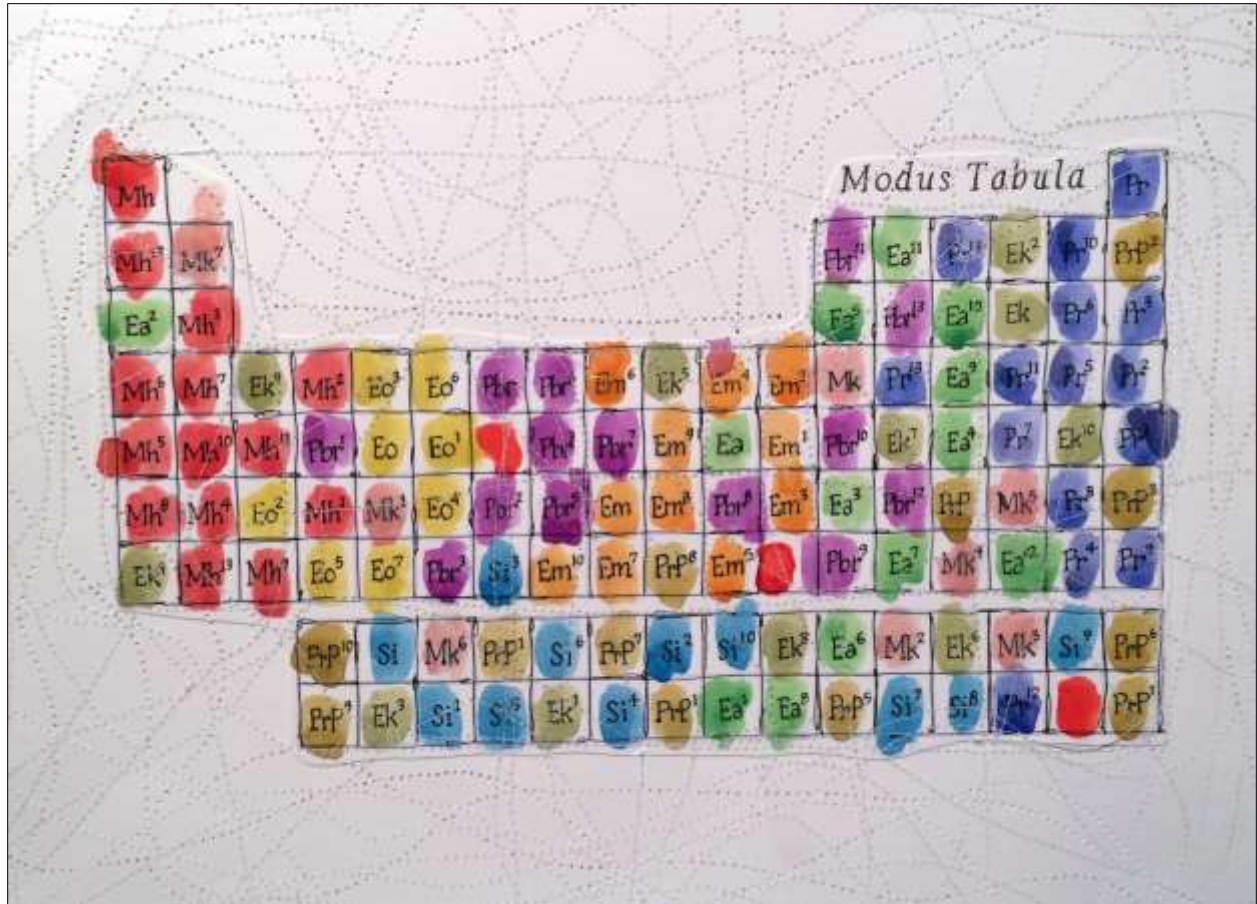


Figure 2. *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

The form of the writing is structured in such a way to make reference to the interdependence of the traditions of science and art and as a way to engage with rigorous research processes that are both logical and metaphorical. Through my process, I became interested in the periodic table of the elements and began reading the history of its development, considering its divergence and alignment to systems of classification, its metaphorical and philosophical potential and through this wondered about our tendency, as human beings, to negotiate the fine lines between knowledge and power in attempting to both make sense of and control that which is comprehensively beyond the limits of knowing. I began thinking about the parallels between the porosity of systems of knowing and the complex variables at play in the research process; they both seem to me to be dynamic processes rather than stagnant containers.

Creating a metaphorical/artistic periodic table that is interwoven with stitches, helped me to reflect upon the un-quantifiable interdependent nature of lived research, which is enriched by elucidation and interpretation. The table and the slight reference to Wittgenstein's use of logic and aphorisms play with form as both poetic and logical. The categories on the table reference key terminology and methods that emerged through the research, including: Mh (Methodology); Eo (Eco-ontology); Pbr (Practice-Based Research); EM (Essay as Method); Ea (Eco-attention); Mk (Metaphorical Knowing); PrP (Polydimensional Research); Ek (Embodied Knowing); Pr (Prosodic Rhythm); and Si (Silence). Through

the writing of this section on methodology, my own limits of knowing continued to be pushed, as I noticed the rhythm of the writing and reflected on the emergence of key themes and their intersections.

Rhythm deserves special mention in my experience of lived methodology. While cadence has impacted the unfolding of my doctoral research over time, I only became aware of its import through ongoing conversations about my studio research with Bob Dalton, my supervisor, and with committee members: David Blades, Mike Emme and Klaus Jahn. It seems to me that rhythm is an ever present variable of living and in research provides an oft unacknowledged structure for the emergence of overlapping processes. Of noteworthy mention here, are the rhythms of the emergence of ideas, the paces of analysis, the tempos of art making, and of thinking through the body, through others, and through materials. Because of this, I took up reading Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, which explores the rhythms of life, I began playing Djembe, which makes extensive use of syncopation, and I started Flamenco lessons, a dance form originating from Spain which introduced me to *contra-tiempo* and other improvised rhythms.

As I reflected through the research, I realized that rhythm, regularity and syncopation were integral parts of the complex processes of researching and writing through visual, material and textual practice. In December 1993, I initiated a collaborative exhibition with artist Sarah Cowan titled *Oscillatio* that focused on the rhythms of unfolding art practice with life and in 2014 initiated the exhibition *Pulse* with four other artists that deals with the reverberative processes of engaging with materials and their relation to the rhythms of being.

Contra-tiempo and syncopation emerged as necessary parts of this lived methodology. It's possible to see predictability in methodological rhythm as a result of research that is overtly goal oriented, so much so that alteration and possibility are limited. My research and writing practices have been constantly syncopated by inspirations in the world around me, by others' writing, artists' work, conversations and the syncopations of life: of teaching, the caring for children and friends, a need for balance in life, and of great importance, a need for sleep.

Sleep has been a silent but present pause in the cadence of my research and has been essential to the development of ideas, not only because sleep rejuvenates but also because it provides a rest from a forward pressing rhythm and allows ideas to emerge without force. Many insights, associations and syntheses of ideas occurred in the early morning, upon waking up. So much was this the case that a friend suggested that I keep a grease pencil in the shower to write moments of clarity down while they were fresh.

In researching, the regularity of rhythm is disrupted by the accidental which can provide an opening to a new perspectival window. Each conclusion, each beat, spills out of itself because prosody is relational. Syncopated prosody engages a process of asymmetrical rhythmic relations. Rhythm in this sense is the interplay between regularity and irregularity in the unfolding of different movements and senses of time.

“Acts of rhythmic attention comprise a syntax for knowing the world” (Lee, 1998, p. 198).

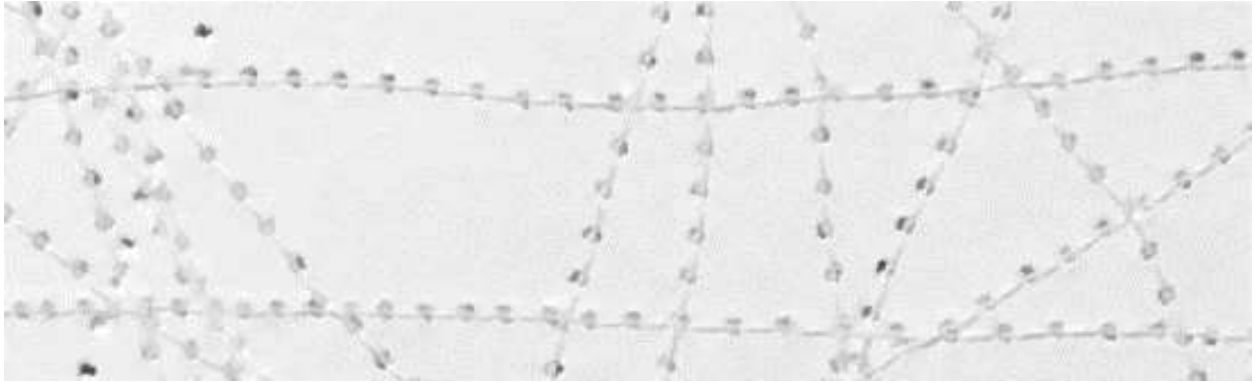


Figure 3. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

Mh

It began with a loose plan and then it moved, as life moves. My process of thinking with methodology enacted a change in methodology itself. Thinking through the topic of ecology (as a dynamic system) and the variable methods of studio-based and theoretical research, it became clear that methodological integrity emerges in the intersections between content and form where an ecological sense of methodology must leave space for diverse, unknown and accidental variables to enter and organically alter the process.

Mh – Method emerges from f. *metá* – about- + *hodós* –way (method, 1996).

Mh¹ – A methodist, in an early sense of the word, is “one who follows a certain method” (ibid).

Mh² – It seems that methods overlap, are indebted to other methods and are, in some sense, open systems. Methods are porous membranes.

Mh³ – In the Greek tradition, method comes from *méthodos*, referring to a “pursuit of knowledge” or “mode of investigation” (ibid).

Mh⁴ – Generally, an investigation is interpreted as the “the making of a search or inquiry, systematic examination and/or careful and minute research” (investigation, 2014).

Mh⁵ – Etymologically investigate emerges from the L. *investīgāre*, f. in + *vestīgāre* – to “track” or “trace out” (investigate, 1996).

Mh⁶ – Rarely, investigation has been used to refer to “the tracking of (a beast)” (investigation, 2014). In tracking or tracing we follow a path that leads in many possible directions. It is difficult to know where the beast will take us.

Mh⁷ – The less common definition of “tracing of (a beast) leaves room for the unknown elements of research and for unpredictability in process, of going in unfamiliar directions and altering the research through a responsive process.

Mh⁸ – Simone Weil reminds us that: “ All wrong translations, all absurdities in geometry problems, all clumsiness of style, all faulty connections of ideas in compositions and essays, all such things are due to the fact that thought has seized upon some idea too hastily, and thus being prematurely blocked is not open to the truth. The cause is always that we have wanted to be too active; we have wanted to carry out a search. (Weil, 2002, p. 62)

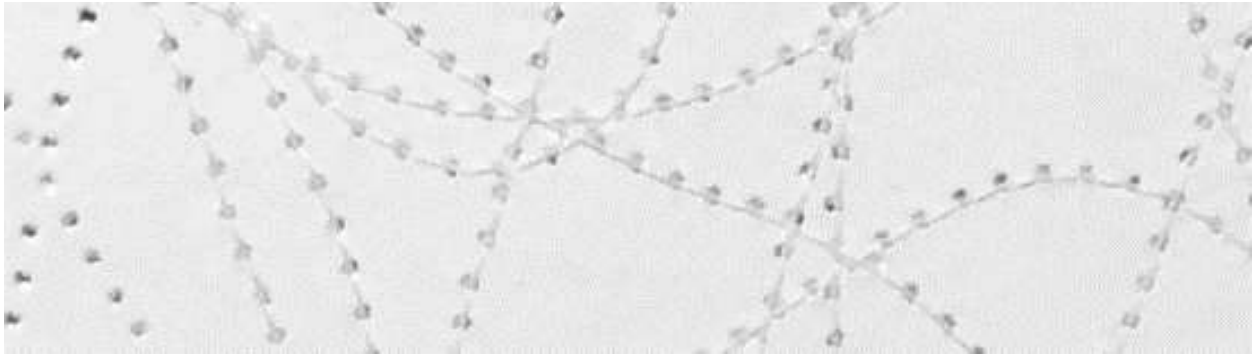
Mh⁹ – In researching through a method, in tracking through a way, one hopes to gain insight or truth(s), to gain understanding.

Mh¹⁰ – Truth is the unknown of research, that which is tracked or traced; and truth be known, truth is often ill-defined.

Mh¹¹ – The process of searching for truth, in all its' plurality, is a malleable practice that engages intuitions and postulations, it is a process of sense making, from certain standpoint, within a particular field of perspective.

Mh¹² – Truths are an essential part of methodologies or ways; research is saturated by the history of truth(s) which are in turn drenched by rationality-with-belief and the presence of being-with-the-world.

Mh¹³ – “Truth is the result of attention. (As opposed to inspection). Of looking informed by love. Of really looking” (Zwicky, 2003, p. 102L)



Eo

*This lived methodology surfaces from an **eco-ontology**. Through a view of the world as becoming, complex, distinct and porously interdependent methodology mutates prolifically, in continuation.*

... the lovely puzzles, the enchanting beauty, and the excruciating complexity and intractability of actual organisms in real places. (Gould, as cited in Bennett, 2004, p. 1)

Eo – An eco-ontology acknowledges the porous inter-constitution of forms as living environments.

Eo¹ – The world viewed thus is in a continual state of becoming – becoming distinct through a web of interdependence.

Eo² – Interdependence is not a joining of all into one, nor is it merely a form of biophysical dependence; it is rather a recognition of the complex entanglement of biophysical forms and consciousness, of substance and idea.

Eo³ – A view recognizing that the complex many that constitute porous wholes to “make consciousness possible” (Haraway, 2008, p. 4).

Eo⁴ – The compositional boundaries of consciousness extend beyond anthropocentric means and are implicated by the interchange of all forms of life. Consciousness thus, is not autonomous.

Eo⁵ – “What is the source of this impulse to colonize the world psychically, bending otherness into human form?” (Lilburn, 1999, p. 7).

Eo⁵ – Forms of life are akin to Bennett’s notion of thing-power through which “the lively energy or resistant pressure that issues from one material assemblage is received by others. Thing-power, in other words, is immanent in collectives that include humans... (and)... emphasizes closeness, the intimacy, of humans and nonhumans” (Bennett, 2004, p.365).

Eo⁶ – Methodology in integrity (a whole) with ecology argues that complex variables are at play when the researcher is a part of a material assemblage with the world. This lived methodology submits that materials assemblages make consciousness possible.

Eo⁷ – “This is not a world, in the first instance, of subjects and objects, but of various materialities constantly engaged in a network of relations. It is a world populated less by individuals than by groupings or compositions that shift over time” (Bennett, 2004, p. 354).

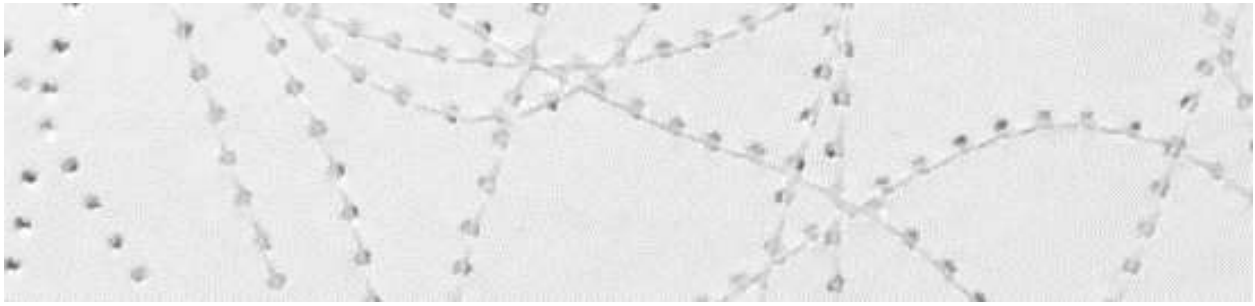


Figure 5. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

Pbr

January 26, 2015. *Researching in the studio.* Wool, resin, paint, wood... each material carries its own history. These materialities interact even when left to their own devices. Overlapping, malleable or rigid compositions, varying weight, translucence, chemical properties, and functions. Each with its own metaphoric-literal pull. The context of the room, light from the window, the parking lot below, a homeless woman with a dog, cars being washed, people passing, the radio plays on. Thinking through all of this while hands engage with materials, with motion, in the repetitive rhythm of felting, this over-nurturing, of sanding wood with an electric sander, of pouring resin, releasing air bubbles with heat, noticing how materials relate, the distance and proximity of things, overlapping, retreating, advancing. Metaphorical potential in thinking through materials. Researching through medium, through form, through content.

Pbr – In simple terms, **practice-based research** can be understood as research through studio practice.

Pbr¹ – The term ‘research’ is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing, and other creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional “scientific method” (The Dublin Descriptors, cited in Borgdorff, 2009, p. 13).

Pbr² – Practice-based research is not new to the academic research arena yet, despite its long standing existence, it still is met with some resistance.⁶

Pbr³ – Considering the creative nature of practice-based research, its relationship to imagining and the necessity for flexibility and variance in its application, it is necessary to question the various meanings of rigour and consider which meanings apply or can be adapted to suit Pbr. As Zwicky asks: “What,

⁶ It has been over 20 years since practice-based research in the visual arts first became visible in the qualitative arena (Frayling, 1993). Scholarship on the topic proliferates yet the majority of writings indicate some resistance (Borgdorff, 2004; Candlin, 2000; Elkins, 2009; Jones, 2009; Morey, 2010; Sullivan, 2005). Practice-based doctoral programs have been instituted in at universities around the globe, including Australia, Canada, China, Europe, New Zealand, and the United States (Jones, 2009; Elkins, 2009; Garman, McMahon & Piantanida, 2003; Leavy, 2009).

indeed, do we mean by 'rigour'? (Or perhaps, what is it that we want to mean? -- And why?)" (2003, p. 40L). Zwicky echoes and extends Madigan's (1986) call for a critical reformulation of the notion of rigour as a way to address limiting modernist objectives and the residual and institutionalized effects of colonial agendas that have kept marginalized subjects and groups at bay.⁷

Pbr⁴ – Rigour here is akin to Biggs and Büchler's (2005) process-oriented definition as the "capacity for original and autonomous thinking, an ability to command a field of knowledge, research skills (the ability to frame and explore research questions, and the ability to frame and test a hypothesis and manage a project), an understanding of the appropriate research methods, the ability to produce a cogent argument and, conversely, to engage in critical thinking, and an ability to communicate at a high level" (p. 5). In which an argument involves emphasizing the ongoing process of 'working things out' - to engage multi-perspectival questioning while acknowledging complexity and offering alternate position(s).

Pbr⁵ – Because of the peripheral position of practice based research, it is uniquely positioned to inform, challenge and shed new light on more accepted or traditional modes of research practice. Being on the "outside" looking in, not only offers a new field of view, but the unique perspectives and methods of practice-based research, their emphasis on interpretation, the questioning of objectivity, rigour, form and content, Pbr offers new ways of seeing and knowing that can enrich research discourse and practice across disciplines.

Pbr⁶ – Pbr in this study is understood within an Eo framework (eco-ontological).

Pbr⁷ – Within an eco-ontological framework, the research and figuration processes of practice-based research do not develop as autonomous forms originating from the individual or 'creative genius', but rather emerge from a complex entanglement of influences.

Pbr⁸ – Figuration here is akin to Haraway's use of figures which "are not representations or didactic illustrations, but rather material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings co-shape one another. For me, figures have always been where the biological and literary or artistic come together with all of the force of lived reality. My body itself is just such a figure, literally" (Haraway, 2008, p.4).

Pbr⁹ – The complex entanglement of influences and the creative nature of studio practice can result in methodological variance in the application of Pbr.

Pbr¹⁰ – In the case of this particular study and its rooting in an eco-ontology, practice-based research has included key methodological considerations including what I am referring to as: (1) eco-attention, (2) metaphorical knowing, (3) polydimensional process, (4), embodied knowledge, (5) prosody and (6) silence, as key parts of an emergent process.

Pbr¹¹ – Some of the complex variables of influence at play in practice-based research may not be known or articulable through explanatory modes. They may be, in the words of Rushdie (1991), a P2C2E (a process too complicated to explain). Other variables may be understood with varying degrees of articulation.

⁷ Please see Morey, C. (2010). Migrating boundaries: Visual arts practice-based research in the qualitative landscape, *The International Journal of the Arts in Society*, 5(1), p. 19-29.

Pbr¹² – Within an ecological framework, practice-based research challenges traditional research taxonomies of research/representation; practice/theory; visual/textual/ and form/content by being attentive to “contact zones” where each categorical pairing is porously entangled (Haraway, 2008, p. 4).

Pbr¹³ – Engaging with practice-based research, through this study, has provided a methodological ‘enactment’ of an ecological sense of imagining through which attentiveness to the rhythms and complex influences at play in thinking through materials and images in the studio has symbiotically shaped the unfolding of the writing and the methodology.

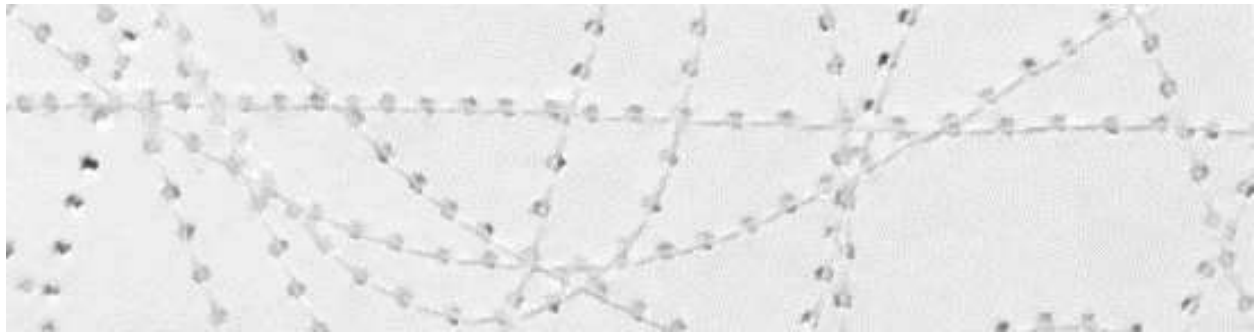


Figure 6. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

Em

Given the subject of my research, the focus on ecology and the cross-disciplinary nature of practice-based research, all of which point to emergent interrelations, the structure of the written component of my dissertation is based on an adapted form of the essay as method. As both Adorno (1984) and Zwicky (2003) emphasize, there is an ever-present inter-relationship between form and content. In this way, adopting the ‘essay as method’ challenges conventional academic assumptions of “the separation of knowledge from art” by acknowledging that there is no escaping the presence of form and its reverberation with content (Adorno, 1984, p. 154). Even the most objectively parched, traditional forms of academic writing communicate something of authority, structure, intent and voice. By adopting and adapting the essay herein, this project enacts an intentional revisioning of the idea that “content, once rigidly modelled on the protocol sentence should be indifferent to its presentation” (p. 154). This methodological enactment confirms that indifference is a practice of pretending that what is present, isn’t there... as if the linearity, rhythm, tone, font and white space on the page bring nothing to bare on the reader’s experience of a text (ibid). This essay-as-method involves a noticing of what is there and thereby celebrates the inescapable merging of knowledge and art.

Em – Interpreted through the French verb *essayer* - “a try or attempt” (ODEE, 1996), the history of the essay as method practice interweaves explanatory modes employed in the social sciences with conversation and prose more familiar to the humanities and arts.

Em¹ – The French verb *essayer* derives from the Latin *exagium*, which comes from *exagere*, which means to weigh, to sift and winnow (Rosenberg, 2000, p. 219).

Em² – Montaigne “is the father of the essay. As so many people have observed, it all begins with him and the idea of the personal voice, the idea of thinking about your ideas, what you feel, what your experience has been. It evolves over the course of many of his essays. He started out doing something fairly academic, quoting liberally from his reading, and eventually he got more and more personal” (Root, 2000, p. 220).

Em³ – The essay provides opportunities for an unfolding of research and writing together in an emergent and somewhat unpredictable way that is akin to the process of studio practice. As Hartle points out “the essay does not “aim at a predetermined conclusion... it is rather a way of discovery that allows the accidental an authoritative role” (2002, p. 17).

Em⁴ – The written form of my dissertation explores the elasticity of the essay. Using explanatory and metaphorical text that includes references to the historical, philosophical, conversational, political, poetic and popular sources, the text is interwoven with images from studio-research.

Em⁵ – “It occurs to me that the essayists aren't one-idea characters. I think there's something antipathetic in the idea of being an essayist and being interested in one idea” (Epstein, 2000, p. 228). This multiplicity of ideas and influences parallels an ecology of influences that are considered integral to this project and to practice-based research.

Em⁶ – The form of the essay is a malleable form that allows for lyric and explanatory modes to intersect; it's a form that has been stretched and expanded throughout history.

Em⁷ – “I think the essayist generally accepts the need for exploration” (Root, 2000, p. 228).

Em⁸ – Each essay of my dissertation is contained within a small handmade book, including this composition on methodology, which explores an alternate or radically expanded version of the essay.

Em⁹ – There are five essay-books in total that comprise the research-writing on the topic: *Resonance, Ecology & Imagination*. These include: (1) *Methodology Moves: Modus Tabula – Motus Tabula*, (2) *The Porous Eye: An Ecological Reconstitution of the Individual*, (3) *Through the Specimen Jar: Thisness, Ecology & Ontological Ethics*, (4) *Breath of an Image* and (5) *This Ecological Imagination*. The latter two essays are contained within one book as a paired composition under the umbrella heading *Fields of Entanglement: Image, Imagining, Imagination, Imagination*.

Em¹⁰ – This engagement of the essay as a method herein, allows for the interweaving of lyric and explanatory modes, assigns both accidents and explorations an essential role, acknowledges the multiple variables at play in writing and allows room for the noticing of the interplay of form and content. In its space for the explorative and accidental... “The effort of the essay reflects a childlike freedom that catches fire, without scruple, on what others have already done” (Adorno, Hullot-Kentor & Will, 1984, p. 152).

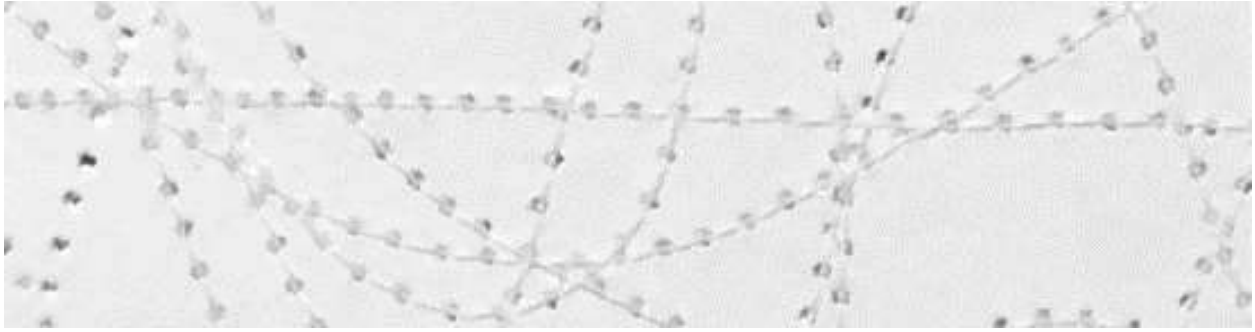


Figure 7. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

Ea

What does it mean to be attentive through an eco-ontological framework? What does it mean to attend to distinct things in an entanglement of relations, to notice with the world in a state of becoming?

“The deer show out from around the word “deer” and they have no name... The world is its names plus their cancellations, what we call it and the undermining of our identifications by an ungraspable residue in objects. To see it otherwise, to imagine it caught in our phrases, is to know it without courtesy, and this perhaps is not to know it at all” (Lilburn, 1999, p. 5).

“I must let my senses wander as my thought, my eyes see without looking... Go not to the object; let it come to you” (Thoreau as cited in Bennett, 2004, p. 1).

Ea – Eco-attention is a methodological term and hybrid of ecology and attention.

Ea¹ – Ecology is derived from *oikos* (Gr.) house (‘habitat’) and *lógos* (as) discourse.

Ea² – Ecology is differentiated from environment in that ecology implies participating within a community, a sense of “living in the world as if it were home” (Lilburn, 1999).

Ea³ – Eco-attention understood within the paper here is attentiveness *with* the world, as a research method it provides an alternative to research which is narrowly linear, goal oriented, and investigative. Eco-attention, thus, requires a sense of interiority, of being *with* the world, a part of the *oikos* of the world, of being attentive to and possibly interrupted by the world.

Ea⁴ – Eco-attention is indebted to a view of the world that is akin to Zwicky’s notion of the world being comparable to an elasticised geodesic dome where each thing is defined by and dependent upon its inter-relations (J. Zwicky, personal communication, November 14, 2011). Adopting the relational aspect of Zwicky’s view of the geodesic dome and layering it with a rhythm of syncopation, my understanding is

akin to Haraway's use of the word "entanglement" in which she recognizes that the entangled 'many' that constitute porous wholes "make consciousness possible" (2008, p. 4).⁸

Ea⁵ – Ea results in a way of engaging with research that is open ended and involves both the accidental and unexpected, both knowing and unknowing and the spaces in between.

Ea⁶ – "My poems (in the beginning) are like a table on which one places interesting things one has found on one's walks: a pebble, a rusty nail, a strangely shaped root, the corner of a torn photograph, etc.... where after months of looking at them and thinking about them daily, certain surprising relationships, which hint at meanings, begin to appear" (Simic, as cited in Zwicky, 2003, p. 2R).

Ea⁷ – Attentiveness is a form of noticing what is there. What is there before it is named.

Ea⁸ – Eco-attentiveness acknowledges that "the world is its names plus their cancellations" (Lilburn, 1999, p. 5). The world is things named, articulated and things without their names, as they are, before and beyond anthropocentric analysis.

Ea⁹ – The act of noticing is to become aware of something, to observe, to acknowledge, treat attentively, to distinguish by particular attention.

Ea¹⁰ – Attentiveness "consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, ready to be penetrated... empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive..." (Weil, 1999, p. 117).

Ea¹¹ – Weil's sense of detachment is not a suspense of awareness, nor is it a lack of noticing, rather it is noticing without a directed agenda, intent to control, or a presumption as to what is present.

Ea¹² – Attention, in this sense, is not a position of the outsider watching the other but rather responsiveness to the particularity of things. Eco-attentiveness is dependent upon syncopation; a disrupted direction, an unknown outcome, the letting go of social codes and assumptions to meet the situation as it is. It is akin to Nietzsche's (2006) affirmation that "the weights of all things must be determined anew" (p.226).

⁸ Zwicky's spatial visualization of an elasticized geodesic dome accommodates movement dependent upon inter-relations, yet says little about the unfolding rhythms of those inter-relations. I make reference to syncopation here not as a rigid definition of that unfolding but as a metaphorical visualization of time within a world view that engages complex variant rhythms that overlap and syncopate each other. The notion of syncopation adds a necessary dimensional layer as a way to envision a mapping of a complex, unpredictable sense of time with space.

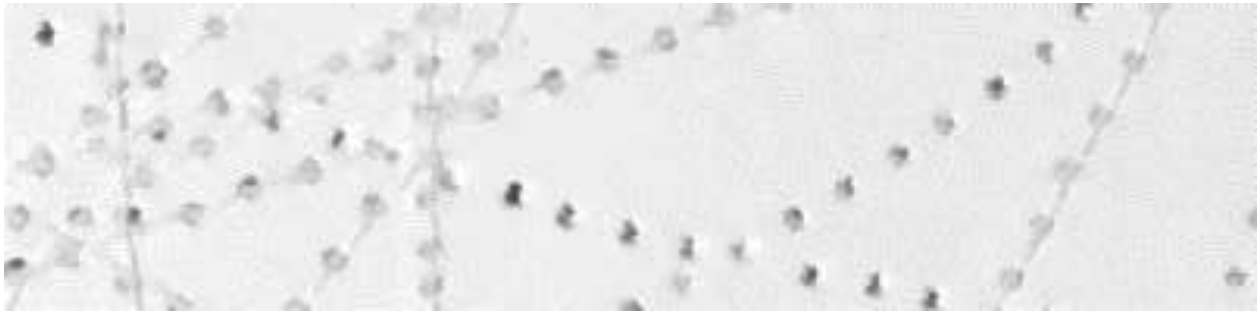


Figure 8. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

Mk

My research has engaged metaphor as a way of knowing. Researching through art practice, writing, reading, prose, poetry, performance, exhibitions, narrative, collecting, playing and reflecting have been some of the key ways that metaphor has enriched my understanding of the relationships between ecology and imagining. Metaphorical knowing has been an essential part of my processes of: (1) noticing connections that exist amongst research variables and (2) enacting a research method that allows thoughts to diverge, like an upside down funnel through which meaning is set side by side and expanded.

Mk – To know metaphorically is to travel through the rabbit hole: an upside down funnel where thoughts diverge and experiential truths are happened upon, in their multiplicity.

Mk¹ – The word metaphor originates from the Greek *metaphora*, meaning "a transfer" (Harper 2001). Metaphor is essentially the transference of meaning from one symbol (the topic) to another symbol (the vehicle).

Mk² – The metaphor "down the rabbit hole" reflects transference in which one thing is understood in terms of another. We may understand this metaphor as an adventure into the unknown, where the topic (a mysterious adventure) is "seen-as" the vehicle (down the rabbit hole).

Mk³ – Modes of metaphorical research include noticing relations that exist between things. I am particularly interested in Zwicky's scholarship on metaphors because of its eco-ontological grounding.

Mk⁴ – A metaphor sets one thing beside another and says, "see, they have the same form". Which is to say: They make the same gesture; they mean in the same way... Metaphor is one way of showing how patterns of meaning in the world intersect and echo one another" (Zwicky 2003: 6–8L).

Mk⁵ – The patterns of meaning made visible through metaphor is why poems and visual art carry intense experiential meaning; this is not because they are literal rational truths (or "facts") but rather because they have the capacity to carry embodied experiential truths.

Mk⁶ – "The drive towards metaphors is the fundamental human drive" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 121).

Mk⁷ – Research through the visual arts, poetry, dance, and play utilises rigorous metaphoric methodologies by "an over-riding of calcified gestures of thought" (Zwicky, 2003, p. 18) to engage with a form of knowing

that results in compound hermeneutic answers, engaging possible world views of the farmer, the child, the firefly, the atom and the shaman. These divergent answers echo the compound nature of experiential truths of the pattern relations of the world.

Mk⁸ – “But doesn’t non-metaphorical language tell the truth about the world, too? Aren’t eyes *eyes* and windows *windows*? – Yes, that’s one way of looking at it.” (Zwicky, 2003, p. 12L).

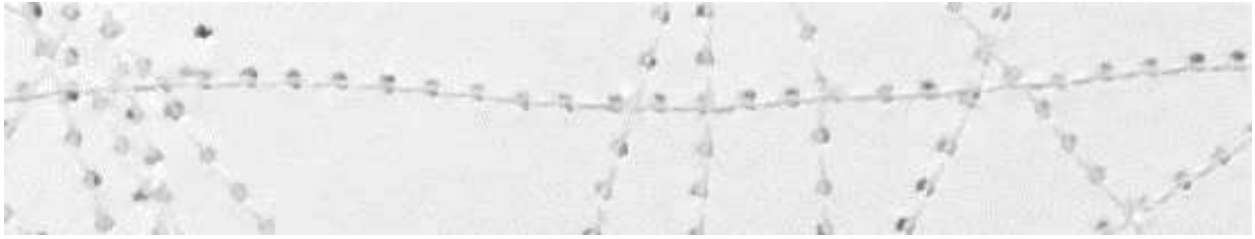


Figure 9. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

PrP

How can I begin to account for the compound influences as play in this project?

Let me trace the lines of entanglement.

The influences are, without doubt, polydimensional.

Smooth pebble; dripping resin; eye protection; the empty space on Zwicky's page; the way his mind moves; body rhythms; dust communities under her small red table; the pattern of the grain on wood; post-humanism through the cat's gaze; conversations in the office with Claudia, with Caren; words written on the bathroom mirror as reminders to hold on; the limits of materials – wax, glass, clay; coming to terms with the self; negotiating loss; making lunches; sanding, sanding, sanding; sewing, felting, repetitive processes; collaboration with students, artists, friends; compost growth; Nietzsche's desire; exchanges at the grocery store which tell us we are here, we are connected; small round squirrel on the red maple tree, blossoms abound.

"Everything exceeds its name: insofar as the named world is coterminous with the finite world, everything is infinite. The weight of everything, its home, where it is itself, lies beyond naming, lives outside the range of calculation, is not, if to be is to possess a name" (Lilburn, p. 61-62).

PrP – Practice-based research engages a poly-dimensional process.

PrP¹ – Polydimensional is used as a descriptor to indicate the spatial (dimensional), temporal (rhythmic) and relational complexity of the research, analysis and figuration processes of practice-based research.

PrP² – Adapting Zwicky's notion of polydimensional meaning, we can understand polydimensional research as a processes engaging entangled influences that are "dependent upon a spray of possible axes of connectedness, whose relations to one another are neither necessarily symmetrical nor orthogonal" (Zwicky, 1992, p. 8).

PrP³ – In taxonomy, an orthogonal classification is one in which no item is a member of more than one group, that is, the classifications are mutually exclusive. Polydimensional research is post-orthogonal in that it admits the possibility of taxonomical porosity.

PrP⁴ – “... all the actors become who they are in the dance of relating, not from scratch, not ex nihilo, but full of the patterns of their sometimes-joined, sometimes separate heritages both before and lateral to this encounter. All the dancers are redone through the patterns they enact.” (Haraway, 2008, p. 25).

PrP⁵ – Polydimensional process acknowledges a complex entanglement of influences, some linguistically articulable, and others known through non-linguistic means. There are influences on the research process that we are attentive to and some which extend beyond the limits of individual fields of perspectives, some which we become aware of later on, some which are too complex to be explained through descriptive language and some of which may be ineffable aesthetic experiences. It may be that it is impossible to completely quantify the complex influences at play in the process of research.

PrP⁶ – Entangled influences are “nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings coshape one another” (Haraway, 2008, p. 4).

PrP⁷ – The entangled influences of PrP include overlapping sources of data/influence from academic research practices and artistic practices. Practices familiar to academic research include: interviews, diaries, letters, journals, original hand-written manuscripts, newspaper and magazine clippings, government documents, textbooks, review articles, biographies, historical films, music and art, articles about people and events from the past. Practices common to artistic research practices include: a range of text-based influences, negotiation of spaces, multi-modal material encounters, daily life experience, informal conversations, thinking through materials, thinking through technical processes, gestures of making, writing, living; prosodic processes with rhythm, critiques, exhibitions, artist talks, performances and presentations, among others.

PrP⁸ – Examples of entanglements of influence within my research experience have included: readings of theoretical texts, poetry, diverse religious/mystical texts, walks, noticing snowdrops breaking through stiff soil, time spent with my cat, a wounded deer, hummingbirds that visit us repeatedly, my daughter’s insights on the relations of things, informal conversations about quantum mechanics and ontology, interviewing, writing articles, critique sessions with fellow artists, looking at artists’ work, experiential engagement with artistic materials, noticing the rhythm of various processes, trips to the hardware store, sleep, poetry readings, performances and presentations, artist talks, writing, sketching, revisiting past writing and sketches, personal discussions, conversations about my family’s heritage, media coverage of political events, sleep, in addition to other points of influence.

PrP⁹ – None of these sources are considered primary or secondary to the other, rather each source is dependent upon the other and aids in the emergence of knowledge that is fluid, continuous and multifaceted.

PrP¹⁰ – Attention to entanglements of influence and their metaphoric-literal relations aid in the emergence of key threads and themes of analysis, associations and understandings through polydimensional processes of studio practice and writing.

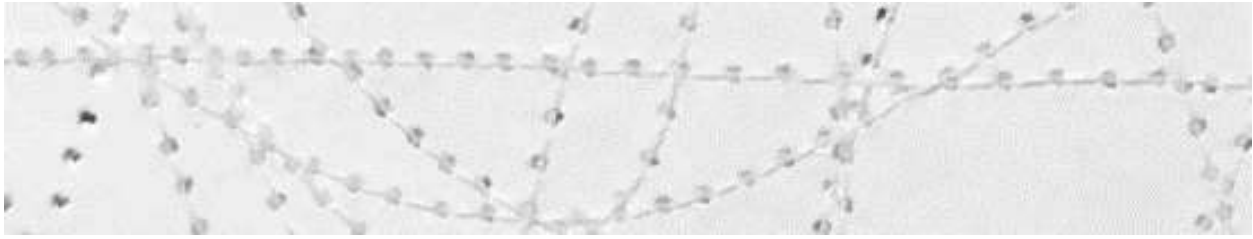


Figure 10. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

Ek

*In 2013, I had a meeting with my doctoral committee at an exhibition of my studio research. At the meeting we walked around the exhibit and talked about the work and how it related to my research practice. One of the things that came out of that conversation was the importance of holding something in my hand and of making objects that are hand-sized. A significant part of research through studio practice involves thinking through the hand, through materials. Holding a material in my hand not only engages an intimacy with the subject and invites personal attention, it also engages visceral knowing, experiencing its weight, scale, texture, density through the body is a part of **embodied knowledge**. It isn't just a way to understand clay, or wax, or wool, but is a way to think through the meaning of material and how the material meanings intersect with ontological understanding.*

Ek – *Thinking through the world* is not an isolated experience, not the “mind’s fine aloofness from bodies”; it is “a complicated protean nesting manoeuvre”, a way of “coming home” (Lilburn, 1999, p. 4 & 2010, p. 144).

Ek¹ – An eco-ontological enactment of practice-based research not only acknowledges my knowing body but also extends embodied knowledge to include bodies other than the self. Embodied knowledge, like all things, is enmeshed with the interconnected corporeality of the world. Embodied knowledge is a form of knowing with the corporeality of the world.

Ek² – “The severance of thinking from the body and ‘nature’ is a certain fantasy of violence that underlies our understanding about knowledge and knowing.” By attempting to place “the mind outside the body and nature, one thus endows to the mind a degree of immortality. One exists as the thinking subject who *thinks about* objects of the world. The mind objectifies the world, describing and navigating the world at a distance, creating the detachment that structures objective knowledge” (Ahmad & Morey, 2011, p. 5).

Ek³ – Embodied knowledge is particularly significant for practice-based research which pays certain attention to the gestures, responses, memories, movements, rhythms and somatic responses of bodies with the world.

Ek⁴ – As I knead clay with the undulations of the body and the push and pull of hands, my body not only registers the technical capabilities and limitations of clay but also records the potentiality of my body

with clay in space. I begin to embody a knowledge of the relations of bodies, absorbing, understanding and, at times, mirroring different ontological senses of bodies with the world.

Ek⁵ – Considering the role of embodied knowledge in my research, the function of the hand takes on particular prominence, not only as a part of my body that has its own particular way of thinking *through* but also as a significant contact zone between my body, and other material bodies with the world.

Ek⁶ – By producing and exhibiting objects which are hand-sized, as a part of the research, the viewer is reminded of the artist's process of holding-while-making (the tactility of manipulating with the hand) which engages a range of embodied memories of what it means to hold. In the case of participatory works, where a sculpture is picked up or manipulated, the experience of knowing *through* holding is expanded and shifts.

Ek⁷ – There is an intimacy between the object and viewer that occurs when an object is held in the hand. An unspoken invitation exists to get close, to notice what is there. And when the viewer accepts the invitation, a meeting occurs between the artist, the work and the viewer.

Ek⁸ – Through the unfolding of my research, over time, my work has become more and more interactive. The participation of the body with the work has taken on new meaning, not only in terms of holding work but in terms of movement and rhythm of the body of the viewer/participant.

Ek⁹ – The experiences of engaging corporeally with materials through practice has been integrally related to my understanding of the movement, rhythm and relations in understanding an eco-ontological sense of imagining.

Ek¹⁰ – I think through the hand, through the body, through material, through air, through space and the world. Knowledge thus is not just embodied in the corpus of the self, but also in the corpus of the world that I occupy, that occupies me.



Figure 11. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

Pr

“Prosody as sonic improvisation. Polyrhythmic form. A kinesthetic of meaning: clenched, a galumph, then wash of a liminal seque. Forward momentum; lateral gusts. Kinaesthetic knowing... The rhythmic manifold. A poetics of voice in motion. Cosmophony. Body music” (Lee, 1998, p. 198).

“It starts with rhythm; that much I know. I mean the way the research moves in time – its pace and gait and proportions. Research can unfold with the shapely aplomb of a gavotte, or meander, or move with a quicksilver stutter and glide. Each rhythm shapes the energy flow with a distinct logic; each parses the world with a syntax of its own. Research thinks by the way it moves” (Adapted from Lee, 1998, p. 197).⁹

Pr – Prosody is most commonly understood as a linguistic or poetic device involved in the orchestration of rhythms.

Pr¹ – Prosody engages variant forms and spills off the page and through the body. “Our body becomes the instrument rhythm is played on; we register it viscerally, absorb it as carnal knowledge” (Lee, 1998, p. 198).

Pr² – Prosody in writing intersects with micro and macro rhythms of life, tempos of research too, and the cadences of art practice and of reading and writing. These practices are syncopated by the pulse of the individual with rhythms of the world.

Pr⁵ – Prosodic syncopation is the desired accidental. Syncopation is an intentional or improvised “disturbance or interruption of the regular flow of rhythm”: a “placement of rhythmic stresses or accents where they wouldn’t normally occur” (Hoffman, 1997, p. 239).

Pr⁶ – In the arena of academic research, studio-based research has acted as a syncopation of more traditional research forms.

⁹ Adapted from Dennis Lee’s (1998) book of essays titled “Body Music”. In the quote, each instance of the word poetry has been replaced with the word ‘research’.

Pr⁷ – Prosody is about the rhythm of relations between wholes, about the pace of movement between one form and another.

Pr⁸ – Attention to rhythm, gives insight into the form of the research.

Pr⁹ –Prosodic research is about the relational rhythms of variant forms and practices that inform the unfolding of research.

Pr¹⁰ –Research moves, the pace and the rhythm of the movement influenced by multiple variables, including the researcher’s position, agenda, and context but also other variables that may or may not be unknown.

Pr¹¹ –Research that is seen as a means to an end, as working towards a known goal leaves little room for syncopation. Its rhythm is more predictable, and predetermined in nature and as a result the possible outcomes limited.

Pr¹³ –Prosodic syncopation acknowledges the need for interruption. It requires waiting, pausing, returning... moments of silence... attending to other’s rhythms, other writers, artists, scholars, neighbours, friends...

Pr¹⁴ – Both my studio practice and writing practice engage and establish rhythms that are presented and then disrupted, avoiding one predictable flow, splitting open the single easy answer, predictability spills out of itself, revealing a complexity of rhythms overlapping, overlapping.

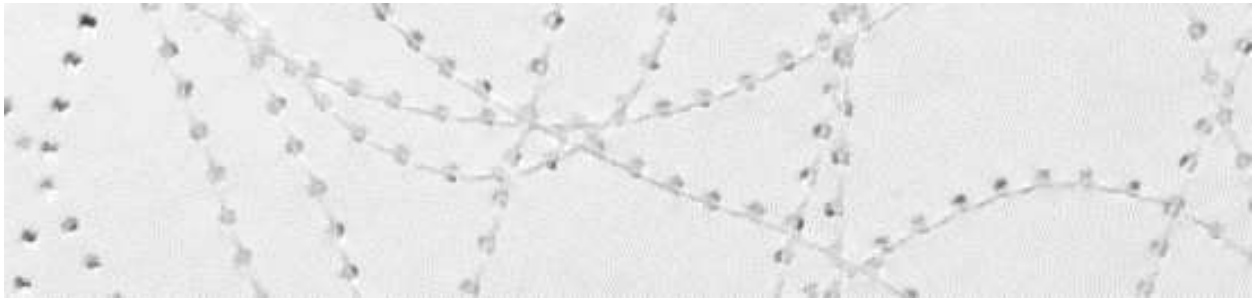


Figure 12. Detail of *Modus Tabula*; watercolour, pen, and thread on paper; 2015

Si

In February 2012, I attended a presentation of Michael Marker's at the First Nations House at the University of Victoria. His presentation was on place, space and time from a Coast Salish perspective. The talk began slowly with music and stories; a discussion followed. As I participated with the presentation, I noticed that my pulse had slowed, my body had relaxed, yet I was fully engaged. The pace of the presentation differed from others I had attended before. In fact it seemed quite different from the majority of presentations I had attended; it left spaces for silence and in that silence I actively entered. After the talk, I began thinking about silence, in its diverse forms. I began thinking about the role of silence in research practice.

Silence can be visual, auditory, kinesthetic, spatial, temporal or ideological. It can be planned, unexpected, imposed or presented as an offering. Dr. Marker's talk made me think about silence as both an invitation and an imposition. Colonialism is an act of silencing. It is an attempt to silence another, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and involves a forced compression of physical, temporal or ideological spaces, resulting in a lack of room for others to enter. During Dr. Marker's talk, it occurred to me that the force of colonialism has left a residual mark of speed on our practices and that haste impedes silence and the other from entering, whether that other is another's thoughts at a presentation, a student's response in the classroom, an artistic material from 'speaking' while being 'manipulated', or a variant perspective to our research 'agenda'.

Si – Silence can be understood as “the state or condition when nothing is audible; absence of sound or noise, quietness or stillness, noiselessness” (Silence, 2014).

Si¹ – Silence here is understood as *a relational pause*.

Si² – Silence can be visual, auditory, kinesthetic, spatial, temporal or ideological.

Si³ – Silence can be planned, unexpected, imposed or presented as an offering.

Si⁴ – Imposed silence often involves a forced compression of physical, temporal or ideological spaces, resulting in a lack of room for another to enter.

Si⁵ – ‘Another’ might include other is another's thoughts, a variant perspective to a research ‘agenda’ an artistic material from speaking or the potential for an unexpected or unknown variable to emerge as a source of influence.

Si⁶ – Silence as a research method involves acknowledging the import of the pause, of waiting for the possible to emerge. This requires that space be opened up, left empty, for the possible to emerge.

Si⁷ – There is a relationship between Pr (prosody), rhythm, pace and silence in research practice. Practice that adopts set rhythms with little room for syncopated responses tend to be too compressed to leave little room for silent pauses.

Si⁸ – I have noticed moments when space is compressed, noisy, even in the absence of sound, where agendas become a means to an end, a force of their own and the rhythm of research becomes dominant, linear, and problematically progressive. Research does and does not take this form.

Si⁹ – Moments of silence have been particularly important to imagining how the research, method, studio work and writing unfold. Pausing direction by engaging with ‘seemingly’ unrelated activities, pausing the mind by engaging the rhythms of body as a way of thinking through with drumming, dancing, walking have allowed spaces for ideas to move. Perhaps sleep is the most significant pause for me as it has been in the early hours of the morning after sleep that new thoughts have entered and ideas have synthesized.

Si¹⁰ – In my research overall, I have been involved in asking myself how much I am willing to allow things to unfold, to allow for an entanglement of influences to syncopate my process. To what extent am I willing to let go of the reins, alter my pace and leave physical, temporal and ideological spaces for various others to enter and morph this methodology? How does research pause and listen, as art does, to the unfolding of process?

“Scholarly knowledge is a vertigo,
an exhausted famousness.
Listening is better.”

-Jalaluddin Balki
(as cited in Barks, 1995, p. 242)

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Book 2
The Porous Eye:
An Ecological Reconstitution of the Individual

Connie Michele Morey

The Porous Eye: An Ecological Reconstitution of the Individual

For some time now, I have been fascinated by containers. This interest has occupied me for years, perhaps since my son, now eighteen, rested within the container of my womb. How can one not marvel at the body's apparent capacity to contain? There are other containers as well: natural ones like birds' nests, burrows, and seed pods; scientific ones like petri dishes, test tubes and beakers; metaphorical ones like holding, controlling, and nurturing; and manufactured ones like boxes, bags, and tea cups. Then there are ideological containers; these are of great interest, particularly those containers known as self,-other; human,-animal; mind,-body, art,-science, theory,-practice, research,-'representation'—forms that attempt to cup the fluidity of experience.¹ Experience that is paradoxically held for the purpose of letting go.

¹ I use the term 'representation' here with some hesitancy. I have included it as a common way of thinking about what are often considered the 'end-products' or 'results' of written and visual research practices. 're-presentation' frequently reflects a fragmented view of spatial and temporal dimensions of research; embedded in this view is the presupposition that experience and articulation are separate, particularly when housed under the academic configurations of theory and practice. The assumption implicates that what we do when we write, make art, perform, is a "re-presentation" of reality that is separate and outside experience and in some way fictitious thus relegating the artful to a Platonic shadow of the real. Yet our experience of making and viewing art, or reading and writing is richly experiential and real at the very moment that we experience it and again, in a different sense when we recall it and engage in the experience of remembering.

My thinking through various ways modes of articulating research is akin to what Haraway refers to as "figures", when she says "figures are not representations or didactic illustrations, but rather material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings coshape one another. For me, figures have always been where the biological and literary or artistic come together with all the force of lived reality. My body is just such a figure, literally" (2008, p. 4). Figures thus are entangled nodes of experience; for me this description attempts to sidestep distinctions between the material-semiotic & substance-ideology. Figures are lived experiential nodes through which diverse meaning is continually formed. In this sense the photograph is not a re-presentation of reality but a experiential node of reality through which diverse references coincide.

Containers seem nicely removed from their contents, a tea cup can be washed and placed on a shelf to hold a new flavour, the shells of eggs can be cracked open, their yokes emptied out and prepared sunny side up, or over easy, their forms changing, upon menu selection. It would appear that containers are separate from their contents, yet the two are not only co-implicated but also enmeshed. Containers are not autonomous, self-regulating entities, unimplicated by that which they hold. They are ecological forms, spongy co-minglings of compound compositions reverberating through one another, and another, and another as far as the porous eye, or the permeable microscope can see; but then I am reminded that there are limits to microscopic vision as well. From the vantage point of a distant gaze, form appears like the “mind’s fine aloofness from bodies” (Lilburn, 1999, p. 4) but lower yourself to the ground, adopt a position of submission to interdependence and it becomes evident that form and content are profoundly interpllicated with eco-political dimensions. These dimensions, while accessible through the attentive experience of being-with-the-world, are rendered less visible micro-analytical perspectives of “parts as parts” that result in disciplinary practices that argue that one form is separate from the next, that art is separate from academics, that research is separate from ‘representation’ and that theory is separate from practice. These are disciplinary conveniences, just as language too is both an experience and a communicative convenience, a ‘container’ that grasps paradoxically in an attempt to embody that which is too slippery to be held.

Distinct Configurations

Recently, I have been contemplating the meanings of form. As an artist, educator and academic working under the disciplinary umbrella of Art Education and leaky canopies of studio-practice, eco-aesthetics, ontological sustainability, feminist ethics, post-humanism and indigenous epistemologies, I have been negotiating the distinct yet interpllicated research traditions of art practice and academic practice, of visual and linguistic forms. Thinking through interdisciplinary forms and contemplating the writings of Jalalu'ddin Balkhī (2001; 2004), Robert Bringham (2002; 2007; 2008), Elisabeth Grosz (1994), Donna Haraway (2008), and Jan Zwicky (2003), among others, I have come to think of form through an eco-ontological lens as a 'distinct configuration'. Yet this is a nebulous perimeter rather than a rigid taxonomy. While the development of my thinking is loosely indebted to the aforementioned writers, and reference to them is mentioned herein, my focus, in what follows, is on mapping my own understanding of an eco-ontology of form, looking specifically at its repercussions for a reconstitution of the individual (Sampson, 1994; Morris, 1998). This eco-ontology recognizes: (1) the complexity, distinctness *and* interdependence of all forms, and (2) the porous inter-constitution of forms as lived environments. This sense of interdependence is not a joining of all into one, nor is it merely a form of biophysical dependence; rather it recognizes, that the complex many that constitute porous wholes "make consciousness possible" (Haraway, 2008, p. 4). Wandering back and forth between Balkhī, Bringham, Haraway, Sampson, and Zwicky, I hope to outline various ontologies of distinct yet interdependent configurations, some of them more firmly grounded in the bio-physical and others intentionally complicating their entanglements of the material and the psychoactive. It is not my intention to draw firm parameters, but rather to wander through established boundaries leaving room for others to enter. By exploring primarily the temporal and spatial dimensions of form, I hope to engage a

conversation that offers an ontological clearing for a revisioning of an ecological understanding of the individual as a relational form. It seems worth repeating that there are limits to human vision and as Lilburn (1999) reminds us some things are not to be claimed through reductive language, but this isn't to say that these same things aren't worth contemplating, and wandering through linguistically, visually, sensorially or otherwise. By referencing both metaphorical and explanatory modes, I hope to engage in a rigorous reflective process of embracing possibilities and then letting them go before the propensity to calcify becomes too strong, keeping in mind, along the journey that absolutes limits the rich and diverse possibilities of otherness.

A Sense of a Whole, with Parts Included

Through this ontological wandering we might envision form in Zwicky's (2003) sense of a whole, which is composed of distinct yet interpenetrating parts.² Forms interpenetrate each other; they are paradoxical shapes, configurations of permeable collectives. A form, in this sense, is an orchestral body: a coordinated whole that is the result of a dance of particularities, distinct emergent relationships between parts. Each form is unstable in its temporality, continually in flux, yet maintaining parts-with-wholes of varying consistency. The form cannot be viewed in terms of its parts alone, a part is never just 'a part', it is always 'a part of' or 'a part with'. Even when perspective is shifted to micro view, the interdependencies of form are integral to the echoing function of the parts-with-wholes.

² An ontological wandering is not the condition of being purposeless but rather involves purposely participating in a reverberative field of influence which is always uncertain, unmapped, in which one wanders actively without knowledge of what follows. It is a recognition of the eco-collaborative nature of research-writing, in that understanding is not laid out prior to writing or research and then expressed, nor is it dispensed autonomously, individually or anthropocentrically but rather, it issues forth as entanglements through lived forms-environments we shape and are shaped by. "Method for understanding images, symbols, etc. Not to try to interpret them, but to look at them till the light suddenly dawns. Generally speaking, a method for the exercise of the intelligence, which consists of looking" (Weil, 1952, p. 109)

Thinking *through* Form

When I speak of form, I am not referring to the ways that form is commonly understood within visual arts (although there are threads that run in complementary and divergent directions through these references). I am not referring to form as three-dimensional shape, nor the formal properties of the elements and principles of art, nor form as a 'genre' or 'movement' of art - a 'time-based' configuration of shared particularities amongst overlapping wholes. Additionally, when I speak of form, I would like to be careful not to fall into the trap of making common divisions of form as separate from function, content, meaning, material or matter. Although I may discuss form *and* content, in the text that follows, it is included as a reference to a common mode of perception to enable *thinking through* 'established' ways of thinking, and as such is a process of persistent reconfiguration.

Form is not understood to be separate from forming. Clearly if form is a whole, it is to say that it is in some sense *a unit*, but this is not to say that form is an impermeable unit, or a permanent unit, forms are not solid nor autonomous. To think of form in this way proposes, in the company of paradox, that a form can be distinct without being separate and can be a whole without being fixed. Yet a form is dependent upon forming, upon conforming, reforming, deforming; form is a perpetual shape-shifter. When we perceive a form, it appears, in some way stable, in order that we might grasp it within the confines of a body, perception and language. Forms appear, to some extent, stable, yet acknowledging that there are limits to vision and thinking, it is possible to conceive of a whole that is both permeable and in flux. The perception

of stability seems a matter of perspectival practice. As Balkhī notes, “To the bits of dust I say, *Stay*. To the sun, *Keep moving*” (as cited in Barks, 2004, p. 275).

Indwelling: *Form with Content*

But what is the purpose of speaking of form then, if it is not to distinguish one whole from another, if not to show that ‘this’ is different from ‘that’ and thereby arrange some order of things, a name, a definition or taxonomy, and in this way make some ‘sense’ of the world. Yet there are many senses of the world, many ways to make sense, to let go of sense and be lost in sense, to acknowledge both the potential and limits of sense. Nietzsche (1873) points to the limits when he says...

what does man [sic] actually know of himself? Is he, indeed, ever able to perceive himself completely, as if laid out in a lighted display case? Does nature not conceal most things from him – even concerning his own body – in order to confine and lock him within a proud, deceptive consciousness, aloof from the coils of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream, and the intricate quivering of the fibers! (p. 115)

Within humanist taxonomies of form the potential of making sense of the world is a largely isolated anthropocentric capacity, where the limits of sense-making are relegated to non-human nature. Yet taxonomies vary from culture to culture, within cultures and within individuals; they are delightfully ironic in their negotiation of stasis and fluidity.

“Anthropologists have noted that taxonomies are generally embedded in local cultural and social systems and serve various social functions” (Pittmann, ND, p. 21). Taxonomies are classified into different groups themselves, as ontological, epistemological, disciplinary, folk, scientific, military, linguistic, etc. As knowledge paradigms shift, so too do accepted systems of classification; as cultures intermingle taxonomies alter; this essay is just such an exploration of

two taxonomical categories of the individual that are in a continual process of negotiating the tensions between stasis and fluidity.

There is a tendency to think of taxonomies as a way of holding form in place, of tethering it down, so that we can grasp hold of it for a moment or two. Yet it is also possible to envision a *taxonomical process* as the negotiation of stasis with fluidity, of an indwelling of form with forming and being with becoming. If only the world would stop being so damn wiggly long enough to allow us to grasp hold of it for a moment or two. Bringhurst's (2007; 2008) attentive meditations on the ethnopoetics of form and structure of Native American stories, lead us in the direction of an aqueous taxonomy of form, when he says –

There are those who think of literary form as a way of tying language down and keeping it in order. I'm more interested in form as a kind of catapult: an articulating skeleton that allows meaning to leap or dance or glide amazing distances, taking us along... I don't say this will happen every time a form appears. I say that that's what form, in art as in biology, is for. (2008, p. 208)

When Bringhurst speaks of 'form as catapult', he is clearly not arguing that form is a static vehicle or impermeable container: his use-in-context, rather appears to argue for the indwelling of form and content in a way, that the articulating skeleton is acknowledged as integral carrier of meaning that allows form and content to reverberate and produce a catalytic affect.

Balkhī's (2004) forms facilitate catalytic participation. They are attentive to both the distinctness of things and the interpenetrative rhythms that run through; they carry the reader great distances.

Tatatumtum tatum tatadum.
There's the light gold of wheat in the sun
And the gold of bread made from that wheat.
I have neither. I am only talking about them.

(as cited in Barks, 2004, p. 272)

We might articulate a discursive ontology of forms without elaborating an inflexible taxonomy. Through this outline, form reverberates as a co-mingling vehicle within vehicles within. In this sense, forms are doorways that carry and transmogrify meaning. Tunnels are doorways, as is the surface of the ocean. The body is a doorway, as is the birth canal, and the organ known as skin. If forms are vehicles that reverberate with meaning, perhaps it is worthwhile to gaze a bit longer at one form in particular, that has particular ramifications for our understanding of an ecology of form, the ontology of the individual, in its various cultural configurations and degrees of self-world boundaries.³ And so, through this, we continue.

Self-World Boundaries

Haraway writing on companion species (2008) recognizes that the process of being one is always a process of becoming *with* many. In this sense form is both present and absent. Negotiating being and becoming human, for Haraway is a “coordinated symphony of cells, human and other, that make consciousness possible” (2008, p. 4). Haraway’s symphony is too complex of a performance to be interpreted as linearly causal, where the bio-physical is relegated as a one way ticket towards a view of consciousness that is forever disallowed reciprocation through the anthropocentric constructions of human exceptionalism. Rather, Haraway’s sense of form infuses the material substance (for lack of a better word) with consciousness. In doing so, it problematizes binarist ontologies of species separation and

³ My discussion of form in this essay focuses specifically on form in terms of temporality and space (as that which is porous, interdependent and in flux). This discussion is not intended to provide an exhaustive view of form but rather to offer a metaphorical and theoretical entrance of my own ontology of form that sets the stage for a discussion of different world views of the individual as self-contained and ensemble. By doing this, I hope to create parallels between ecology, form and the individual as porous, interdependent and in flux.

human autonomy, forms of ontological disengagement with the world. Binarist anthropocentrism is linked to the marginalization of those very groups that adopt world views that are more ontologically interdependent including particular feminist, cultural and indigenous perspectives that acknowledge the psychoactive reach of 'material' nature (Bringhurst, 2002; Evernden, 1992; Morton, 2007; Sampson, 1998). For Bringhurst *paying attention* to the psychoactive reach of the co-mingling of im-material worlds is known as poetry; he relates that "poetry is what I start to hear when I concede the world's ability to manage and to understand itself. It is the language of the world: something humans overhear if they are willing to pay attention, and something that the world will teach us to speak, if we allow the world to do so" (2002, p. 162).

But aren't there forms that are containers for meaning without themselves actually being saturated with psychoactive content? Certainly individually-centered ontologies teach us this – that the individual holds certain capacities that are entirely separate from other individual's capacities – personality, intellect, imagination, being some of those autonomous 'characteristics'. The foundation of the individual, in dominant Euro-American ontologies, is not one of distinction, but rather of ideo-political separation. How else would it be possible for our North American society to engage so apathetically with widespread unethical practices of factory farming of domesticated animals, to cage birds as pets for human entertainment, or remove large sentient creatures such as orca whales and elephants from their family groups for profit? Apathetic engagement with animal others necessitates an ontology of individualism that is not only one of separation and distance of forms, those considered 'cultured' and 'natural', but also of anthropocentric dominion that is based on ecologically disastrous tenets. It is an ontology composed of ecologically insensitive forms.

Yet it is not individualism in general that presents a problem for an eco-ontology, where ecology is understood as an ontological position that recognizes: (1) the complexity, distinctness and interdependence of all cosmological forms, and (2) the porous inter-constitution of forms as lived environments. There are diverse cultural interpretations of the individual that vary in their delineation of the self-world boundary. As Sampson argues, “although all cultures draw a line between a region defined as belonging intrinsically to the self and a region defined as extrinsic or outside the self and hence belonging to “the non-self other,” where that line is drawn varies extensively” (1988, p. 15). The ontology of forms currently dominant in North America is one that includes what Sampson refers to as “self-contained individualism”. Self-contained individualism is marked by: (1) a firm boundary between the ‘self’ and the world, (2) a locus of control within the self, and (3) a conception of the self/non-self boundary as exclusionary. “That is, if one were to draw a circle marking off the region of the self from the region of the nonself, the circle would be drawn as to exclude others from the region defined as belonging to the self” (1988, p. 16). Many indigenous cultures, including aspects of Maori, Chewong, Japanese and Chinese (Confusian and Taoist) ontologies engage more ensembled or social form of individualism in which: (1) the self/non-self boundary is fluid, (2) the locus of control is viewed as located within a field and (3) the conception of the self/non-self boundary is inclusive (Morris, 1994; Sampson, 1988).

In *Anthropology of the Self*, Morris (1994) points to the problems of analyzing other cultural conceptions of the ‘self’ through a Euro-American lens, he states that the “study of other cultures cannot be achieved by ‘projecting upon those cultures categorical abstractions derived from Western thought” (p. 8). Certainly the use of the term ‘self’, ‘itself’ is loaded with a particular

humanist trajectory. As it was not until between the 16th and 18th centuries that “keywords such as a ‘self-conceit’, ‘self-confidence’, and ‘self-pity’ came into use, and Coleridge coined the term ‘self-consciousness’ in the 19th century” (Wood, 2002, p. 4). It is gradually from the 15th century onwards that we begin to see a more humanist view of the individual emerge in Euro-American cultures; with a gradual turn towards self-contained individualism. Bringham notes that:

the word humanism was oddly misunderstood by a number of twentieth-century writers. Many of them defined it, wrongly, as the view that human beings are or ought to be the center of the universe. It is as if they traced the etymology of “humanism” back to David Hume. In fact the root appears to be **dhghem*, an archaic Indo-European word for earth. Latin *humanus* is related to English *humus* and Greek *χθόνιος*, as in *chthonic*. A human is an earthling. There and other shreds of linguistic evidence suggest that Indo-Europeans and Native Americans once thought about such matters in similar terms. In Navajo, humans are called *nihonk’lì dine’4*, “earth-surface people.” In Haida, they are *xhaaydla haaydaghaay*, “surface people,” or in the language of classical Haida Poetry, *xhaaydla hitiit ghidaa*, “ordinary surface birds.” Not the center of the universe, but shallow-rooted denizens – absolute dependents – of the world. (p. 55, *Tree of Meaning*)

There is an assumption within cultures subscribing to self-contained individualism that the loci of control, autonomy and causality for behavior *must* be located within the self, otherwise the realization of freedom, social responsibility and achievement and success are at risk. The rationale being that “if I am not wholly causal for my actions then how can I be free, responsible and thus held accountable for actions?” In “The Debate on Individualism”, Sampson (1988) not only shows that cultures who engage an ensembled view of the individual realize freedom, social responsibility and success on alternate, effective, and *equally valid* grounds but also makes the case that self-contained individualism impedes its own efforts by defining freedom circularly in relation to the isolated self. Through this perspective...

socially responsible behavior may be thwarted by the costs incurred to personal freedom (e.g., Brehm, 1966). These costs are said to occur both for the giver of socially responsible behavior (whose freedom may be restricted by giving assistance to others) and to the receiver (whose self-reliance and independence may be undermined by receiving assistance from others). Both Perloff (1987) and Waterman (1981), for example, cited

reactance research showing that when reactance is high willingness to act in responsible ways is diminished. It seems clear that reactance functions in this manner only within the purview of an indigenous psychology of self-contained individualism. (Sampson, 1988, p. 20)

The point that reactance (the feeling that someone or something is taking away personal choices or limiting the range of alternatives) is high within self-contained individualism is because freedom is interpreted as predominantly individual. Yet there are other ways of defining freedom. As Sampson (1988) shows...

when persons' sense of self is defined through relationship and connection, achievements will occur, not from separate actors seeking somehow to mesh their behavior together, but rather from thoroughly interdependent actors whose very design for being includes working on behalf of larger interests. (p. 21)

When notions of freedom are grounded in an ontology of interdependence, individuals work for collective interests. While it seems likely that each culture would negotiate complex ethical issues in relation to self-world boundaries, the assumption that freedom, responsibility and success are inherent in the North American dream of self-contained individualism is an ethically reckless remnant of colonial hegemony. As Sampson (1988) shows, cultures who engage ensembled ontologies realize freedom, social responsibility and success on *equally valid* terms. Likewise Bringhurst (2008), through his collaborative work with indigenous ethnopoetics and ensembled ontologies relates that participating *with* the world is a form of giving your 'self' away. "Trying to state perceptively and clearly – what exists and what's going on... is too much for the self to handle"(p. 144). He understands artistic processes, such as myth and poetry to be ways of *participating with* the world; poetry for Bringhurst is *thinking with* the world. "That is why, when you go to work for the poem, you give yourself away. Composing a poem is a way of leaving the self behind and getting involved in something larger" (p. 144).

Late, by myself, in the boat of myself,

no light and no land anywhere,
cloudcover thick. I try to stay
just above the surface, yet I'm already under
and living within the ocean.

(as cited in Barks, 2004, p. 12)

Reconstituting the Individual

If we adopt an eco-ontology of form, it is necessary to reconstitute the individual from a dominant form of self-contained individualism (which draws a firm boundary between the 'self' and the world, a locus of control within the self, and conception of the self/non-self boundary as exclusionary) towards a more ensembled understanding. In this sense the individual might be understood as a form that is a complex constitution of forms within forms, persistently relational and perpetually in motion; from an ecological perspective the individual can be understood as including "companion species" (Haraway, 2008). Haraway (2008) offers an opening for a more ensemble view of the individual when she says...

actors become who they are *in the dance of relating*, not from scratch, not *ex nihilo*, but full of the patterns of their sometimes-joined, sometimes-separate heritages both before and lateral to *this* encounter. All the dancers redone through the patterns they enact. The temporalities of companion species comprehend all the possibilities activated in becoming with, including the heterogeneous scales of evolutionary time for everybody but also the many other rhythms of conjoined process... the relationships are the smallest possible patterns for analysis; the partners and actors are their still-ongoing products. (p. 25-26)

An ecological reconstitution of the individual knots interdependence with particularity. Thus the individual is not a self-contained form, not contained, only constituted of particular within particulars, in, out and through. Given that there is no unit of distinction without process and no process that occurs in isolation; an eco-ontology is *dependent upon relationality*. It is relations of the particular that is "the smallest possible pattern for analysis" (Haraway, 2008, p.

26). Just as there is no particular without relations, there is no relation without the particular. To speak of an 'I' makes reference, by its implicit culture of grammar, to a noun status and noun stasis, however, I is always an I-ling, entang-ling, becom-ing, engag-ing *with*.

“I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, sir,' said Alice, 'Because I'm not myself you see.” (Carroll, 1991, Chapter V)

The question follows then that if the individual is dependent on a web of relationality then how do we account for difference? I don't claim to have a fixed explanation but it seems, through this wandering, that the co-existence of interdependence and particularity are not an incommensurable mix. Distinct configurations emerge from networks of shifting interdependencies, likewise, networks of interdependencies shift through distinct configurations. It is the network of interdependencies that makes a thing what it is, *at any given moment*. This overlapping network is distinct in its meeting of psychoactive-matter *with* space-time. Forms of entanglement, proximities, perspectival fields, and temporal degrees of change all play in the composition of what we understand to be *this* individual, and *this* individual, *at any given moment*. Haraway adopts Lynne Margulis' notion of symbiogenesis to describe the knot of space-time entanglement that we share.

Yoking together all the way down is what sym-bio-genesis means. The shape and temporality of life on earth is more like a liquid-crystal consortium folding on itself again and again than a well-branched tree. Ordinary identities emerge and are rightly cherished, but they remain always a relational web opening to non-Euclidean pasts, presents, and futures. The ordinary is a multipartner mud dance issuing from and in entangled species... These are the contagions and infections that wound the primary narcissism of those who still dream of human exceptionalism. These are also the cobblings together that give meaning to “becoming with” of companion species in naturecultures. (p. 31-32)

An Ethical Clearing of the Self

Symbiogenesis has implications for natureculture, a term which challenges a ‘western’ tendency to separate nature and culture as disparate and often opposing entities, suggesting instead a more ensemble view that natureculture are in a continuous symbiotic relationship with each other (Bringhurst, 2002; Evernden, 1992; Haraway, 2008; Morton, 2007). If relations of the particular are “the smallest possible pattern for analysis” (Haraway, 2008, p. 26), then relationality has implications for our understanding of how ‘individuals’ think and imagine and repercussively our notions of originality and creativity. Yet the way that we understand culture is imbued with a form of self-contained individualism. Bringhurst offers an alternate perspective of culture, one that begins with the common Euro-American notion of culture as human heritage, either in the form knowledge transferred through human beings, books, artifacts, etc. and extends it beyond the limits of anthropocentrism. Bringhurst’s perspective makes room for different cultural ways of being, including many First Nations views that emphasize culture as non-anthropocentric and inseparable from nature. Culture, we might say, involves the transmission of history.

Taking a narrow view, we can say that everything required to be a trout or a shark or black spruce or mosquito is transmitted through the genes. It has to be, because these and millions of other species abandon their young as eggs or spores or seeds. But to be a winter wren or moose or black bear, or to be a human being, a standard share in the species genetic bankroll is simply not enough. An education is required. That’s culture. It isn’t a luxury; it’s life-support. And it certainly isn’t restricted to human beings. (2002, p. 158)

In the broader view, it’s obvious that even for the black spruce, or the trout, genetic endowment alone is inadequate. The trout needs a trout stream. The spruce needs groundwater, sunshine, clean air, and it needs the forest floor. All of us – animals, plants, bacteria and fungi – need the community we create for one another and the earth that underlies it and the sun that keeps it warm. The community we create for one another is, of course, the ecosystem. That is culture in the large sense. Culture in this large sense is identical with nature. It is nature seen from the inside. (2002, p. 159)

Looking from the inside, from an eco-ontology, there is no separation between nature and culture, the two are enmeshed in a tangle of interdependencies. A reconstitution of form towards an ensembled view of the individual provides an ethical clearing for addressing cultural and ecological intolerance and that pervades colonial hegemonies of Euro-American institutions and canons that remain underwritten by self-contained individualism. Yet the provision of an ensembled view, is just that, a provision and possibility that requires further participation with the complex and collaborative processes of *thinking through* and *with the world*.

As Sampson points out, many indigenous cultures, including aspects of Maori, Chewong, Japanese and Chinese (Confusian and Taoist) have something to offer, yet a true opening of other ways of seeing and thinking involves a shifting of that locus of control and leaves us on shaky ground, with a loss of internal control. An ecological reconstitution shifts the foundations of key Euro-American notions, including how we define freedom, social responsibility and success, it involves a re-thinking of the cultural loci of thinking, and a questioning of whether it is possible to situate thinking at all. Thus thinking about thinking has implications for the nature and 'origins' of originality, the imaginative self and personal conceptions of creativity. If we genuinely hope to move through and beyond our colonial heritage, it seems necessary to acknowledge that our ontologies of the individual are not universal but rather are epistemological and methodological premises that implicate our ways of thinking and engaging with the world, and repercussively permeate our educational and social institutions. Genuine collaboration, in some sense, involves surrendering to interdependency; in a very real sense, it involves letting go of the taxonomies of the separate self.

“Very little grows on jagged rock.

Be ground; be crumbled, so wildflowers will come up where you are.
You've been stony for too many years.
Try something different. Surrender.”

(Balkhi, as cited in Barks, 2001, p. 21)

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Book 3

Through the Specimen Jar:
***This*ness & Eco-Ontological Ethics**

Connie Michele Morey

In 1978, my father purchased twenty acres of forest from my grandmother. We lived in a brick house, built by my grandfather and his five sons, on the artificial edge of that forest. After school, on weekends and during the open moments of summer vacation, the forest gestured to me. I realized, over time, that the forest didn't "belong" to our family; it was beyond the jurisdiction of its fabricated boundaries. It was my friend and it was with the forest that I belonged. I embraced the branches of its resident trees, scaled its rocks and swam through its bodies of water. To the east, cascading water met the expanse of Pepper's field. To the south, Howe's Lake summoned me to its length, depth and yawning surface where the sun echoed in the absence of the wind's ripple. The water was my teacher, insisting that I take deep breaths, gather them within the cavity of my body and then, at the precipice's moment, exhale. I remember the feeling of weightlessness and the lived sensation of *being*. The water was my teacher, I was a willing student, a path for its current; its damp library shelved within the crevices of my body, balanced on its midnight surface, still.



Figure 1. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

Through the Specimen Jar: *This*ness & Eco-ontological Ethics

Connie Michele Morey

“Metaphysics: the history of the search for the secret of life among the specimen jars”.

“In marmorealizing it, rather than experiencing it in action, we defeat our own ends:
when meaning holds still long enough to get its picture taken, it is dead”.
(Zwicky, 2003, p 62L)



Figure 2. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013



Figure 3. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

As a child, I spent solitary hours in the winding lakes and forests surrounding Craig Road. There, I encountered the forest floor drenched with violets, poison ivy and rhizomatic trilliums. I witnessed eager white streams split milkweed pods open in anticipation of the summer's evaporation when seeds take flight on suggestion of the wind. Chair Rock with its great wrinkled surface was large for a seven year old to scale, but affected elation upon reaching the top. At the peak, to the right of center, I'd find a weather worn cavity large enough to cup the upward turn of my body. Like a caterpillar absorbing its cocoon, I would watch the patterns made by the interplay of light and leaves in the canopy overhead. By dusk, I would return home and on rare nights don pajamas and venture into the garden to watch the lively performances of fireflies. These encounters in the garden, lake and forest were moments where I was awakened to the particularity of each encounter, of each milkweed pod and each firefly in motion. These were moments where I experienced incredible clarity in seeing *this* thing as it is and where I engaged *with* the world and that world, in turn, filled me. Time seemed to stand still with each meeting, while I paused in attentiveness, but the world was nonetheless abuzz with the motion of meaningfulness. Each *this* I encountered was abounding with the movement of life.

“We all have these experiences and different people have tried to explain them in different ways... They are moments when we say things like experience becomes luminous or experience becomes precious or suddenly real. There is a sense of suddenness or ontological opening... So how do we explain it; how do we account for that?” (J. Zwicky, personal communication, November 2011)

Zwicky’s notion of *thisness* is an admitted hypothesis that attempts to explain the power of “serious ineffability claims” (2012, p. 198), experiences that many of us have had as significant moments in our lives. Although these experiences seem out of the ordinary, even extra-ordinary, they are ones we recall with great detail and are oft remembered as particularly meaningful. Indeed, it is true that they are not the experiences of “the coffee cup, or the pen or the table” (Zwicky, personal communication, November 2011).

I have, on occasion, asked students participating in post-secondary studio courses under my direction, to record one experience from their childhood that is particularly memorable, one where they felt wide awake and fully engaged *with* the world. In class, we describe these experiences as aesthetic, in the broadest sense of the word, in that an aesthetic experience wakes your senses up, and anesthetic experiences, in contrast, dull your senses. However, this use of the word aesthetic falls short of the meanings of the experiences shared. For the students, the experiences are commonly ones where they are in natural environments. Through their retelling, many of the students communicate something of being a part of an experience where they felt wide awake and at home in the world. They have described feelings of belonging, joy, coming home, a sense of wonder or being awestruck.

Luce Irigaray (2004) refers to one of her childhood aesthetic experiences as near ecstasy when she says...

“The most constant companionship of my childhood, its greatest joys are bound to animals. To contemplate a flowering bush covered with fluttering butterflies moved me to ecstasy, or something close. I later learned that the word *papillon* (“butterfly”) comes from a Greek word meaning “soul”. I would contemplate for hours those souls flying or resting in the empyrean or some terrestrial paradise. Nourishing themselves from the nectar of flowers and giving thanks by beating their wings. That spectacle brought me a perception of what beatitude could be.” (p. 195)

Although it is absent from her writing, whenever I read this passage from Irigaray, I think about the intersections between her aesthetic experience and moments of *thisness*.

“*Thisness* is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it”

(Zwicky, 2003, p. 55L)



Figure 4. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

In the essay that follows, I hope to unravel Zwicky's notion of *thisness* through an adapted form of the *essay*, interpreted through its etymological roots as "a try or attempt" (essay, 1996). The history of the essay interweaves explanatory modes frequently employed in the social sciences with conversation and prose more familiar to the arts. Essay writing, additionally, provides opportunities for contemplative research practices that are employed in artistic research to unfold through the writing. As Hartle (2002) points out the essay does not "aim at a predetermined conclusion... it is rather a way of discovery that allows the accidental an authoritative role" (p. 17). After all, "getting lost is an incredibly productive thing to do" (Bolton-Funke, personal communication, October 2012). Prose, conversation, story, myth and poetry allow some space for the reader to participate with the text and acknowledge the role of the space between intention and interpretation as 'accidental'.

Through this writing and in the pages it permeates, I will employ three distinct modes of articulation that engage (what I will refer to as) participatory and explanatory forms of engagement. The first mode is a form that I understand as writing that intentionally engages participatory experience, writing that is ontologically participatory with the world.¹ We might consider some poetry, prose, narratives, myths, or conversations as experiential in that these modes don't focus on a literal or distanced explanation of experience but rather invite participation with this experience. We might also consider the space on the page as a canvas that engages experience. There is, after all, an unspoken politics to the page. The second mode of articulation is writing that adopts a position of being ontologically distanced from experience, where experience is thought to be followed around, or observed as if from the outside, as if describing or explaining *that* experience, such as traditional explanatory modes common to the social sciences. The third mode of articulation is a series of visual works that are meant to engage both experience and different ways of thinking about *thisness*. This series of sculptural works titled "Gush" are works in process that are shown here through photographs which are both creative images in themselves and references to another installation in a different form, that of the glass bottles themselves. The works are metaphorical components that are meant to engage discursively with the writing and the ontological variants it negotiates. These three modes are perspectival variants and dependents.

1. Please see notes on the following page that clarify my meaning of experience.

Moving back and forth is important to this essay, which negotiates a tension between the distinctness of things and their interdependence with the world. How does a thing remain a thing? A thing which engages time and changes? Are there moments at which a thing dissolves into that which comprises it and into the world upon which it depends?



Figure 5. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

Before continuing, let me say something of what I mean by experience, in the text that follows. By experience, I am referring to participatory engagement *with* the world. Experience, in this sense, is an ontological position of being *with* the world. This position argues that there are no moments where we are separate, only moments of distinction, and furthermore, that there are no moments where we do not engage experience, however there are ontological-perspectival shifts that obscure the presence of participatory experience, through the autonomy of the specimen jar. The adoption of “outside” perspectives of separation (although an understandable part of the back and forth negotiation of *being distinct and being with*) when privileged and understood as fixed, obscure participatory experience *with* the world and relegate participatory modes of engagement to the margins of knowing. When I refer to something being experiential, I am referring to *participatory experience with* the world, rather than outside, obscured experience *of* that world. Clarity, for me, is dependent upon participatory modes of engagement and is the result of the back and forth negotiation of distinctness and absorption into a field, neither condition being separate from the other or from the world.

Describing participation through these words which are written separately, one by one, black on the stark whiteness of the page, may appear to “fix” the fluidity of experience. Yet we may also consider language as a form of participation, a dance, which is enacted *with* the world. The experiences of reading, speaking and listening, upon which language depends, engage the dimension of time - words flow one into another, they have a rhythm, they move, change direction and are syncopated by the rhythms of life. Language is not a separate representation of the world but is wet with the rhythms of the world. “... Language is in the world, and only in the world do we experience it” (adaption of Merleau-Ponty, 2002, xii).

Considering the form of the essay, and the relations of form and content, my purposes with writing are threefold. (1) Initially, I will provide an ontological mapping of Zwicky's sense of *thisness*, based on time spent reflecting on her writing, an interview with her from November 2011, a set of email correspondences and my own process of questioning. By unraveling the ontological position that supports Zwicky's *thisness*, I hope to provide insight into key notions of her writing and their implications for ethics. By establishing an eco-ontological position, Zwicky's scholarship on *thisness* has worked to acknowledge the import of participatory ways of engaging with the world as central to understanding truths and gaining wisdom. Following this, (2) I will explore what I understand to be the key problematic that Zwicky's project addresses, a problem that she refers to as the privileging of analytic language in its objectifying tool use. In the text, I propose that this bias is based on the privileging of particular ontological positions that obscures what Nietzsche (2006) refers to as "the fundamental human drive"... "the drive towards the formation of metaphors", a participatory mode of engagement with the world. (p. 121). Furthermore (3) I will discuss the ethical clearing that Zwicky's ontology affords, in particular, its potential to re-vision culturally biased anthropocentric ways of understanding thinking, intelligence and imagination, thus providing an opening for those cultural views that have been relegated to the margins of knowing.²

² The use of the word culture here is used with some hesitancy to reference views of culture that are human-centered as a way to recognize that these views exist and to offer alternatives. As mentioned in the essay "The Porous Eye" in speaking of culture, I am referring to "natureculture", a term which challenges a 'western' tendency to separate nature and culture as disparate and often opposing entities, suggesting instead a more ensemble view that natureculture are in a continuous symbiotic relationship with each other (Bringham, 2002; Evernden, 1992; Haraway, 2008; Morton, 2007).

What is this *Thisness*?

Let us continue by creating a visual-textual map of *thisness*. Through this I hope to clarify Zwicky's meaning of *thisness* and its dependence upon key terms such as 'things', 'resonant structure', and 'world', as well as pose some questions about other terms included. To do this let us move back and forth between the parts and the whole of her definition, shifting focus and bearing in mind that the words are testaments to interdependence. In my view, they are also inherently experiential. Language, even as a definitive attempt, is not just a distanced description but is dependent upon its mode of presentation as *a form* of experience. In what follows, I highlight key phrases that ground Zwicky's notion of *thisness*, in a rhythmic repetitive chant that brings parts into focus, amongst the whole, to consider the question:

What is this sense of *thisness*?

*This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way
that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

(Zwicky, 2003, p. 55L)³

³ Because this quote is reiterated in a rhythmic repetition throughout the next section, I have included the citation once.
The iterations that follow are acknowledged in this original source.

*This*ness is the **experience** of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

*This*ness is the experience **of** a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

*This*ness is the experience of a **distinct** thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

*This*ness is the experience of a distinct **thing** in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

*This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the **resonant structure** of the world sounds through it.

*This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure **of the world** sounds through it.

*This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world **sounds through it**.

*This*ness is the **experience** of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

I have been thinking about experience for some time. Recently, the notion of experience has returned to my field of vision with new rigour after a series of debates with a friend about the possibility of experience outside of human language (and my insistence that there is indeed such a thing). I am quite certain that Zwicky would concur. Experience and indeed patterns of meaning are not, for Zwicky, solely linguistic or anthropocentric possessions. Experience occurs *with* the world.

Experience sets Zwicky's sense of *thisness* apart from some other senses of the word and also, in my view, provides an eco-ontological opening.

*This*ness is that which makes a thing a particular.

In cultures subscribing to self-contained individualism, what makes a thing a particular is a property or possession of the thing itself.⁴

For Duns Scotus (1266-1308) who introduced haecceity (thisness) as a proposed synonym for the Latin *haecceitas*, thisness was a component of a thing. It was a property of individuals (Merrihew Adams, 1979, p. 6-7). Within this view, it is not only 'objects' or 'physical properties' that are seen as being possessed by the individual, it is also true of processes, such as the experiential processes of thinking, creating and imagining. These processes are viewed as isolated properties or possessions of individuals in ontologies that are based in self-contained individualism, hence a reference to "my experience", "my thoughts", "my creativity" in cultures with this emphasis.⁵

⁴ Self-contained individualism is marked by: (1) a firm boundary between the 'self' and the world, (2) a locus of control within the self, and (3) a conception of the self/non-self boundary as exclusionary. (Sampson, 1988, p. 16).

⁵ I have placed 'objects' and 'physical properties' in single quotations because in self-contained world views, there is a tendency to speak of objects as if they are separate from processes, as if it is possible to separate, examine, and discuss 'things' separate from the very processes that shape them. My view is similar in a relational sense to Zwicky's notion of an interdependent geodesic dome and in a more thorny organic sense akin to Haraway's use of the word "entanglement". Through which she recognizes that the entangled 'many' that constitute porous wholes "make consciousness possible" (2008, p. 4).

Thisness is that which makes a thing a particular.

Zwicky's notion of *thisness*, as an experience, is, however, inherently relational.

Zwicky says that "... in perceiving *thisness* we respond to having been addressed.
(In fact we are addressed all the time, but we don't always notice this)"
(2003, p. 52L).

*This*ness, as an experience, is a response, not a self-contained response, not an autonomous, nor self-originating response, but is a response to a complex system of stimuli of which we are a part. In cultures with ensembled views of the individual, what makes a thing a thing is dependent upon its relations to the whole.⁶ By defining *this*ness as an (relational) experience rather than a property owned by an individual, Zwicky engages a different view of time and space than that view embedded in self-contained individualism. *This*ness, as an experiential process, is not static as a property or thing contained. In this sense, *this*ness enacts a mobile sense of time through the process of experience and a relational sense of space akin to ensembled ontologies. With ensembled cultural views, ecologically grounded ontologies are more prevalent, ones that, in short, recognize complex interdependence. The relational and experiential quality of Zwicky's *this*ness provides an ontological opening for ecologically grounded and ensembled ontologies that have been relegated to the margins of dominant culture.⁷

⁶ Many indigenous cultures' (including aspects of Maori, Chewong, Japanese and Chinese (Confusian and Taoist) ontologies engage forms of ensembled individualism in which: (1) the self/non-self boundary is fluid, (2) the locus of control is viewed as located within a field and (3) the conception of the self/non-self boundary is including (Morris, 1994; Sampson, 1988).

⁷ This project began by my encounter with Sheridan and Longboats (2006) writing on *The Haudenosaunee Imagination and the Ecology of the Sacred*. As a visibly white artist-educator-researcher (who has both Metis genealogy and family of Bumiputra origin) and who has spent a great deal of time living in post-colonial Malaysia, I have been thinking about imagination, ecology and post-colonial issues for some time. Reading Sheridan and Longboat's article for the first time brought together key areas of interest for me. Sheridan and Longboat, like many other post-colonial scholars have written specifically about the marginalization of Haundenosaunee "ensembled" world views and their disenfranchised by dominant settler world views that are individually and anthropocentrically centered.

*This*ness is the experience **of** a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

An 'of' is an unassuming, oft overlooked word, that like other prepositions establishes relations. Prepositions are linguistic links that relate positions and proximities of things and processes. English often uses prepositions of distance (*of* and *about*) when discussing the relations between space and time and objects and processes. Therefore we think *of* a thing, we imagine *about* a thing, and we have experience *of* a thing. It is less common, almost rare to say we think *with*, *through* or *in* a thing (unless we are physically situated in that thing). I can think in a house, if I am physically inside it, but not if I am not physically inside the house. But it is unlikely that I think through a house, or a cat, or a tree, or another human being. From the perspective of self-contained individualism this seems impossible because thinking is situated within and emerges from the individual; the locus of control is individually situated. In this sense, prepositions indicate cultural norms and as such convey the limits of ontological possibilities, and the relative proximity and distance of particular things and particular processes. Their use in context provides insight into how we view our relations with others.

It is clear that Zwicky's use of language is carefully chosen but whether her use of the preposition 'of' ('experience of') is intended to denote the space between the experience-ee and the thing experienced, as distinct things or whether it is the result of cultural predispositions of grammar that relate the limits of ontological positions, is unclear. Nietzsche (2006) makes mention of this grammatical-cultural predisposition when he says –

The wonderful family resemblance of all Indian, Greek, and German philosophizing is easily enough explained. In fact, where there is affinity of language, owing to the common philosophy of grammar – I mean owing to the unconscious domination and guidance of similar grammatical functions – it cannot but be that everything is prepared at the outside for a similar development and succession of philosophical systems; just as the way seems barred against certain other possibilities of world-interpretation. (p. 29)

Whether the preposition in question is deliberately chosen or a common part of a cultural mode of speaking, it is clear that language conveys important cultural and repercussively political positions and proximities of how we experience *this*. I pay particular attention to Zwicky's use of prepositions, not to pin down her meaning, but rather to open up a discussion on positions and proximity as a part of this writing on *thisness*, a point we will return to later. To say we have an experience of a thing, through a thing, with, within a thing, all designate different sets of relations. These relations are not just semantic passageways, but experiential conveyors of meaning itself.

*This*ness is the experience of a **distinct** thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

Simply put, what makes a thing distinct is its being non-identical. Distinction cannot be described as a possession of a thing, but rather is its particular relations with the whole. In this sense, what makes a thing distinct is not an independent or autonomous property. What makes a thing distinct is its unique set of relations, at any given point. Things change, they are more and less, continually, but they nonetheless have unique sets of relations that determine their distinctness. According to Zwicky, what makes a thing a distinct is its essential set of relations. *This*ness is a moment of noticing those relations with clarity. It is a moment of seeing the patterned relations of the world through *this*. *This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it. Zwicky's notion of *this*ness is a "necessary acknowledgement that difference inhabits any connection – things are particular and distinct and yet cannot be reduced to a single context of meaning" (Dickinson, 2006, p. 141-142).

*This*ness is the experience of a distinct **thing** in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.

A thing, is a thing, is a thing...
unless...
A thing does not exist in isolation.

A thing is *not* defined as the sum of its parts.
A thing is *not* composed of pieces that can be separated.

“A thing is its internal (essential) relations to everything else” (Zwicky, personal communication,
November 2011).



Figure 6. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

“A thing is its internal relations to everything else” (Zwicky, personal communication, November 2011).

By internal relations Zwicky is not establishing an inside/outside dichotomy as if the relations are contained within an autonomous individual. Rather she is referring to internal as essence, as “anything about you, without which you would not be you”. (Zwicky, personal communication, October 2012). This does not mean that things do not change, alter, that the sets of relations are stagnant, as it seems possible that identities can be fluid and dynamic and also composed of distinct sets of relations.

However, Zwicky emphasizes that all the characteristics of a thing are essential and they are all relational. This requires that we envision things as open rather than closed forms. It requires a *porous* and *mobile* configuration through the specimen jar.

If a thing is its essential set of relations to everything else, then a thing is not a means to an anthropocentric end. The world is not separate from and meant for human exploitation; there is no them and us, we are integrally linked. Parts are not just parts, they are parts *of*, parts *with*, and parts *in*. Each thing is composed of and dependent upon an entanglement with other things. Ignoring these complex dependency relations draws a bounded loop around a thing, closing it in, thus enacting a gesture of violence on things impacted by and excluded from circle. It is impossible to use any one thing as a means to an end without implicating linked sets (and sets) of relations.

In describing things (as relations), Zwicky makes reference to the figure of a geodesic dome. It should be noted that when writing about the figure of a geodesic dome, Zwicky, intentionally does not include a diagram or image of the geodesic dome, because she wants people to have an image in their minds as something that is alive and elastic, where the movement of relations and things are interdependent.

“But I’m not aware of ever having offered a diagram. Have I?”

One of the reasons I don’t think I have is that I want people to have the image in their mind — something alive, moving, the relations (analogous to the sides of the triangle and hexagons) flexing as things (the nodal points — defined exclusively by the relations, that is, the sides of the plane figures) move and change. Or causing the things to move and change as they — the relations — change. A total interconnected whole that nonetheless has discernible parts, each one of which is completely informed by the whole” (Zwicky, personal communication, January 2013).

“Things are, and are not, as they seem.

This means: at any given moment, from any given perspective, it is
Possible to be insensitive (forgetful, unimaginative, inattentive).

Things *are* what they seem; but it is possible for them to seem differently.”

(Zwicky, 2003, p. 79L)



Figure 7. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

Thisness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the **resonant structure** of the world sounds through it.

“All that confronts us is the world, gesturing at us. The world has patterns, of which thinking is a part.
It makes us feel good to experience these patterns; it is one way of coming home.”
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 104L)

In acoustics, resonance is the “intensification and prolongation of sound produced by a *sympathetic vibration*”. (*Canadian Dictionary of the English Language*, 1998, p. 1167). Through sympathetic vibration, resonant sounds echo, coagulating at particular frequencies, at moments where motion reverberates with a body. Resonance engages a sympathetic relationship with the body, whether that body is an instrument, a human body or another being in the world. To be resonant with the world involves being with that world.

Ontological resonance is a sympathetic vibration between two wholes that occupy the same space. “Same space” is to be understood as two wholes occupying one point or area in an overlapping way, or sharing a larger connected space. Both are possible. Resonance is a spatial understanding of *experience with the world*. Zwicky (2003) tells us that there is a resonant structure to the world, we must be attentive to the patterns of the world to experience resonance.

*This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of **the world** sounds through it.

What is this sense of 'the world'?

If the world is not outside of us, separate, then how can we speak of it?

What separates the world from me? Am I the world? Are things the world?

Does language make it possible to speak of a thing that is simultaneously a thing and not?

To do so does it involve the dissolving of letters into the presence of the page,
sliding out of containment and into nonbeing?

How can we speak of this both without slipping into established
hierarchies of thinking – or binaries of thought?

“(Related terms: ‘being’, ‘what-is’, ‘things’, ‘the world’, ‘the world’s resonant structure’. We may distinguish intuitive difference among their uses, differences of emphasis, without elaborating a rigid taxonomy. The first is more or less synonymous with the last. ‘Things’, on the other hand, refers to the collection of all distinct and compound individuals, of contested or uncontested metaphysical status – ‘stuffs’ that correspond to non-metaphorical names, potential *thises*. ‘What-is’ comprehends things and their resonant interconnectedness; to be aware of it is to be aware of two simultaneously, completely interdependent, exhaustive, non-identical gestalts. (Both are gestalts of the world; the meaning of what-is is the shift between the two.) ‘The world’ can be used interchangeably with any of the others – a general term without a particular emphasis.)”
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 85L)

My understanding of Zwicky's sense of "the world" through the passages that precede and follow is that the world is a term that is often used (in context) to refer to a larger structural whole. It is not particular in emphasis because there is only one world; it lacks the particularity of (non-identical) things.

Examples follow...

“Imagine **the world** as a geodesic dome in which every node is connected to every other node not by steel bars but by elastic bands”.
(Zwicky, 2012, p. 208)

“Imagine that the various nodes, like individual **beings in the world**, are in movement”.
(Zwicky, 2012, p. 208)

“What has meaning, embodies it... That this is so is not something that can be proven by argument; that it is so is **shown by the world, by its intelligibility**”.
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 78L)

How do we know that there are other beings that **see the world** in roughly the same way we do?
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 60L)

“Metaphor is one way of showing how **patterns of meaning in the world** intersect and echo one another”.
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 6L)

When Zwicky uses the term “the world, and it is repeatedly “*the* world”, in context, it seems to me that she is speaking of a larger structural whole, one structural whole, hence the use of the word ‘the’. Zwicky notes that “there is only one world” (2003, p. 55L) and therefore the term is not synonymous or used interchangeably with ‘things’, of which there are many, interconnected and interdependent as they may be. Nor is “the world” synonymous with a Gestalt, which is an experience with or through the world. Nor is “the world” synonymous with *thisness*, which also is an experience, but rather denotes, I think, an acknowledgement of the existence of an encompassing structural whole that is interconnected, shifting, relational and known through experience but not determined wholly by human experience, it runs through and beyond anthropocentric confines.

Thisness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world **sounds through** it.

What is it to sound through?

Why sound and why through?

“Sounds through” is wholly dependent upon the world and resonance, as a structure. It is a resonant structure that *sounds through* the world. These cannot be taken independently. Yet both “sounds’ and “through” are worth lingering on further, considering their dependence. The phrase is particularly important because Zwicky’s understanding is profoundly influenced by sound and music and perhaps, also, the relationship between geometry and sound. Sound in its temporality and movement is a key part of her analogies, which I have on occasion mistaken as largely visual, however, these analogies, such as the analogy of the perfectly tuned chord, the geodesic dome, Necker cube or Jastrow’s duck-rabbit are dependent upon movement, in the later cases, dependent upon Gestalt shifts. These aurally influenced analogies are much more mobile than the structures of ‘traditional objects’ of visual arts, when these ‘objects’ are seen as static objects on display (rather than processes engaged through materials and gestures). Yet this vision of art as an static ‘finished’ object is a long contested subject the arenas of visual arts. Even the specimen jar, ‘sitting’ on the gallery plinth, changes with time.

The use of the word “through” is also worth noting, as with the experience of *thisness* the resonant structure of the world sounds *through*. This permeation of an encompassing structural whole *through this* thing is what Zwicky refers to as the point of erasure of domestic tension, in that distinction and a resonant whole co-exist without tension and in the absence of objectification. For Zwicky domestic tension is “an active acknowledgement that the tension between two incompatibles (not opposites) that are specific to the human condition: (1) “the objectifying project of tool-use” (via analytic language) and (2) lyric, which is “thought whose eros is coherence... that is, at root, a flight from the condition of language”. (2003, Foreword)

“Thisness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.”
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 55L)

Or, put another way, through the lens of my understanding ...

Thisness is a relational experience of a non-identical yet dependent thing in such a way that the attuned vibrational pattern of the structure of the world sounds through it.

*This*ness, thus, is not a property of an individual, but rather an experiential process in which we respond to being addressed.

“... in perceiving thisness we respond to having been addressed.
(In fact we are addressed all the time, but we don't always notice this.)”
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 52L)

Opening the Specimen Jar: Negotiating World Views



Figure 8. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

Zwicky's *thisness* provides an ecological opening. It does not emerge vacuously from the isolated individual but is dependent upon an ontological position that emphasizes the interdependence of a thing and the field of the world. It is the moment of meeting, without assimilating or reconciling, the tension between the thing emphasized in self-contained individualism and the field opened in ensembled views of the individual. Yet, Zwicky is not in between these two world views, as for her, a thing is never autonomous; a thing is a thing *on account of its relationality*.

As Zwicky conveys (primarily through a critique of academic partiality for analytic language), the privileging of methodology has ethical implications. It is in this privileging of a particular mode of language, that metaphorical modes of engagement are relegated to the margins of knowing, as seen in the relegation of arts to the perimeters of education and academics and as seen in the devaluation of traditions of myth, that are a part of many indigenous ways of knowing.⁸

⁸ Although indigenous studies is not the primary focus of this project, it is important to make mention of its influence. As mentioned previously, both Sheridan and Longboat's (2006) article and my personal and family have been important catalysts and threads of influence to this project. My past work and interest in the visual arts, and the relationship between cultural constructions of nature, gender and colonialism form a backdrop for my interests in indigenous, feminist and metaphorical ways of knowing. It is not my intention to focus on or privilege any one of those key influences here but rather to honestly acknowledge their influence while shaping the scope of the project on the broader ontological perspectives that underlie, uphold and privilege particular ways of being with the world.

Yet, surely, ontology impacts how we see and use language. It also impacts our modes of engagement. While Zwicky rightfully points out the problematic bias of logico-linguistic modes, it is my position that the privileging of these modes is indebted to hegemonic adoption and reinforcement of particular world views and a marginalization of others.

If we adopt a world view that is akin to self-contained individualism (where there are firm boundaries between things, the locus of control is within the anthropocentric self and the conception of the self/non-self boundary is exclusionary) then our forms of engagement will be indebted to the perimeters of that view. Here in lays the value of the aforementioned unassuming preposition “of”, a preposition that relates a position of distance and separation. In worldviews where the loci of control is thought to be within the individual, the autonomy and separation of things predicates interactions. Language is thus *valued* in its function to mark that precision, to function as a coagulating force, conceptualizing experience into objectified facts, divorced from its original experiential and metaphorical roots. This necessary function of language, in holding things down, is not problematic unless it’s privileged and assumed independent.⁹ This autonomous bias is a marker of self-contained individualism and it is through that mode that knowledge and truths are tautologically found.

⁹ Zwicky’s notion of *thisness* is an admitted hypothesis that attempts to explain the power of “serious ineffability claims” (2012, p. 198), claims that are difficult to encapsulate through logico-analytic means. Zwicky’s project challenges the privileging of logico-linguistic means which emphasize language’s tool use, to hold things in place. This privileging in academics has resulted in the marginalization of cultures and subject areas which engage metaphor as a way to understand. It is through metaphor (myth, stories, poetry, dance, ritual, and the arts) that experiences of *thisness* are often re-enacted and understood.

In ontologies that are akin to an ensembled view, in which the self/non-self boundary is fluid, the locus of control is located in a field and the conception of self/non-self boundary is inclusive, then forms of engagement emphasize participation and language that functions poetically, as participatory experience, is valued. In ensembled ontologies participatory modes such as myth, performance and art are understood to be ways to *experience* deep truths.

Ontological margins aren't monolithic or unwavering;
nonetheless cultural differences and biases subsist.

In her work “Wisdom & Metaphor (2003), Zwicky makes a strong case for metaphorical knowing as a way to encapsulate participatory modes of engagement, such as *thisness*, and as a way to experience deep truths. Zwicky’s text enacts an ontological counter-balance to the privileging of logico-linguistic modes of knowing and engagement.

In the text that follows, I hope to augment Zwicky’s argument for metaphor through Nietzsche’s perspective of metaphor as the base of all language formation, including logico-linguistic analysis.

Nietzsche (2006) speaks to the importance of participatory modes when he speaks of metaphor.
He notes that:

“The drive towards the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive” (p. 121)

We experience the world through relations and express those relations metaphorically.

“A metaphor sets one thing beside another and says, “See, they have the same form”. Which is to say: they make the same gesture; they mean in the same way.... Metaphor is one way of showing how patterns of meaning in the world intersect and echo one another. (Zwicky, 2003, p. 6-8L).

“A metaphor does not establish new internal relations; it shows us ones that were already there”.
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 76L)

Nietzsche (2006) describes our fundamental experiential drive as metaphorical. This experience is then congealed into concepts which take the form of stable categories and obscure the experience of *this*. Marmorized language thus appears stable even though it is an inadequate representation of experience. Yet these stable “residues of metaphors”, once mobile and participatory experiences of deep truth, are then privileged as truth (in the form of fact) (Nietzsche, 2006, 118). But it is only by forgetting this “world of metaphor can one live with any repose, security and consistency: only by means of petrification and coagulation” (Nietzsche, 2006, 119). The fixing of language into something separate from participatory metaphoric experience with the world requires that human beings forget their relational dependency upon that world and subscribe to an understanding of truth that has forgotten its inherent relationality.

“Only by forgetting this primitive world of metaphor can one live with any repose, security, and consistency: only by means of petrification and coagulation of a mass of images which originally streamed from the primal faculty of human imagination like a fiery liquid, only in the invincible faith that this sun, this window, this table is a truth in itself, in short, only by forgetting that he himself is an artistically creating subject, does man live with any repose, security and consistency. “ (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 119)

Through an inherited ontology emphasizing self-contained individualism, logico-linguistic modes are privileged, indeed reinforced. This academic favouring spills out of classrooms, buildings and peoples through porous acts and intricacies of language and incurs an act of violence against the other. When one mode of knowing is hegemonically privileged over another, those marginalized practices may emerge as less serious modes of engagement. Not only are these modes of engagement important to human existence but they are also key to the way that many marginalized groups, disciplines and practices engage with the world. Discounting one way of knowing over another, marginalizes groups and whether those groups are based on personality, discipline, gender, culture, etc. that hegemonic marginalization is a form of violence. Through this bias, people, epistemologies and practices that are rich in metaphor, myth and participatory modes of engagement are relegated to the margins of knowing. Yet ironically, the very mode of logical analysis that is privileged, the imperturbable face of analytic language is dependent upon its metaphorical and participatory roots. It is as Nietzsche argued “the residue of a metaphor” (2006, p. 118).

“Anyone who has felt this cool breath (of logic) will hardly believe that even the concept – which is as bony and foursquare, and transposable as a die – is nevertheless merely the residue of the metaphor...”
(Nietzsche, 2006, p. 118)

Thisness makes the fundamental human drive, the participatory mode of engagement with the world apparent, present, clear. It is the experience of a distinct thing in its fresh, uncalcified state, in a way that the resonant, interconnected structure of the world sounds through it (*paraphrased* from Zwicky, 2003, p. 55L). *Thisness*, like other participatory modes of engagement, has been disregarded in academic discourse, perhaps because it reaffirms an ensembled experience *with* the world, one where the loci of control is not contained within the individual.

Allow me to clarify...

I do not mean to disregard the worth of logical analysis. This is not my position. The form of this essay is, in part, dependent upon it. What I intend to question, is the ontological bias that results in the *privileging* of analytic forms. This bias is an ontological narrowness and intolerance and has resulted in constrictive and repercussively dangerously assimilative approach to truths, as well as obscuring the interdependency of analysis and metaphor, of distance and participation, in the absence of conceptual autonomy.

Yet, it is not analytical language *in itself* which enacts a violence of marginalization on people, ways and practices. Both analytic and metaphoric modes are symbiotic forms of engagement with the world. Forgetting this is akin to forgetting the *residue of a metaphor* (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 118), whereby the fundamental human drive towards metaphor and the formation of words as participatory with the world, is forgotten through use and reuse, removed from the site of meaning making and marmorealized to the point that language acts as if it is an object in itself, as if a table exists apart from the experience of *this* table.

“If I make up the definition of mammal, and then, after inspecting a camel, declare “look, a mammal,” I have indeed brought a truth to light in this way, but it is a truth of limited value. That is to say, it is a thoroughly anthropomorphic truth which contains not a single point which would be “true in itself” or really and universally valid apart from man [sic]. At bottom, what the investigator of such truths is seeking is only the metamorphosis of the world into man [sic].” (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 119)



Figure 9. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

“What is a word? It is the copy, in sound, of a nerve stimulus” (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 116).

A Jar Permeated by Liquid Once Contained



Figure 10. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

Zwicky's notion of *thisness* opens a door to an eco-ontology that acknowledges the distinction of a thing and interdependence with the world, while arguing firmly against the privileging of analytic modes in academic contexts.

Widescale privileging of logico-linguistic ways of knowing in and through porous academic contexts results not only in a limiting of modes to truth, but also a repercussive marginalization of ways of knowing that are viewed as outside of logical parameters, such as metaphorical ways of knowing. Individuals, disciplines, and cultural ways of being that engage practices that use metaphor as ways of understanding the world are hence devalued. I would argue that we see repercussions of the bias against metaphorical modes (rituals, myth, storytelling, performance, poetry and the arts) in the ghettoization of the arts and indigenous ways of knowing in curricular content where these subjects have been relegated to the margins as either noncore subjects or curricular add-ons that provide polite (and sometimes politically correct) yet disingenuous nod of appreciation, yet do little to offer a counter-balance to a historical privileging of particular ways of knowing and being with the world.

Zwicky's notion of *thisness* makes a serious ethical maneuver by offering: (1) a mode of engagement that makes room for metaphorical ways, or ensemble ontologies and (2) by redefining clarity and meaning as the active meeting of two (or more) ways of engaging with the world, without an erasure of either. To relegate experiences of *thisness* as less significant because they are not explainable through analytic language (indebted to an ontology of self-contained individualism), is indeed a dangerous act. As Zwicky and Nietzsche point out, metaphorical language is a primary means through which human beings understand the world. Marginalizing any experience that cannot be explained through logico-linguistic means disregards diverse ways of knowing that are based in metaphor, some of which implicate culture and thereby re-enact a legacy of colonialism and the continued institutionalized dismissal of others, whether those others are cultural others, gendered others, disciplinary others, individual others, or nature as others or otherness in ourselves. If we, as diverse peoples, understand the world through varied epistemological modes, then a genuine valuing of diversity must engage a shift in administrative and curricular planning at all levels to make legitimate room for epistemological and ontological diversity.

*This*ness also makes possible a third door...

An opening for an eco-ontological revisioning of properties that have been delimited through an anthropocentric lens of self-contained individualism.

*This*ness, thus provides an ontological clearing for revisioning characteristics that have been often marked by anthropocentric hierarchies, what Anna Peterson (2001) refers to as markers of human exceptionalism, x factors that not only set humans apart from the rest of the world but also above. These qualities have been diverse and have included qualities such as “thinking, intelligence, consciousness and imagination, among others. These markers can only be located within the detached human with a worldview in which the locus of control is individually situated. Zwicky’s notion of *this*ness and the ontology it makes visible, makes it possible to revision thinking, intelligence, consciousness and imagination from an ecologically grounded perspective that addresses the ever present residue of colonialism on ecologies, peoples and practices.

It also insists, in stepping into that field, that there are limits to human knowledge.

In sharing a Haudenosaunee perspective, Sheridan and Longboat (2006) reaffirm Bringham's conviction that

“humans think at their best if they know they are the last beings created. Literally, after all, humans are totally dependent on everything else” (p. 369).

Last summer my daughter was fascinated by insects, june bugs and spotted tussock moths, in particular. She participated in a summer program that had a week long focus on bugs. Through her engagement with the program, she was inspired but also conflicted. We had numerous conversations about her friends capturing caterpillars, moths and other bugs that later died inside small containers. She spoke of her own desire to capture the small beings so that she could be close to them and her concern for their rights to be with their own families. The ongoing conversations reminded me of Irigaray's quote that was woven into the beginning of this essay, in which, Irigaray spoke of her moment of ecstasy, where she came to know beatitude through her experience with butterflies. The quote continues on the page that follows and expresses a similar conflict that my daughter expressed in her negotiation with the lives of june bugs and moths.



Figure 11. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

“Alas! I wasn't satisfied with approaching beatitude such as it was offered to me in such a way. I wanted to appropriate it - a naive gesture to which I devoted any number of hours of my childhood. Impossible to measure the time dedicated to waiting for a butterfly to appear in the garden, the meadow, the forest. Nor the patience spent in waiting for it to alight, fly away, return, depart again, and stop finally on a beloved flower where my hand or a net would pluck it. What the butterfly would give me in happiness would vanish with this gesture, or almost. No doubt the flight of a butterfly on a window put a little lightness and joy into the house. But only briefly. How not to understand that it would truly be generous only when I contemplated only in a space appropriate to its life? To give thanks for what it let me perceive should have sufficed to perpetuate, indeed amplify, a joy to which capture put to an end.”

(Irigaray, 2011, p. 195)

There is an false security in the desire to capture. It seems that capturing makes it possible to know, to speak of, to show, hold in our hands and pass on to another. It seems in that capturing that the world has stopped and we hold it in marvel in the palm of our hand. Yet as time passes, in the best of moments, the impossibility of the act and the violence of the capture become apparent and we either continue the task of petrification or let go. *This*ness is experienced through, as in a poem, a painting, a song, or the flight of another. Each of these modes of experience brings understanding that is enlivened again through another form of participation.

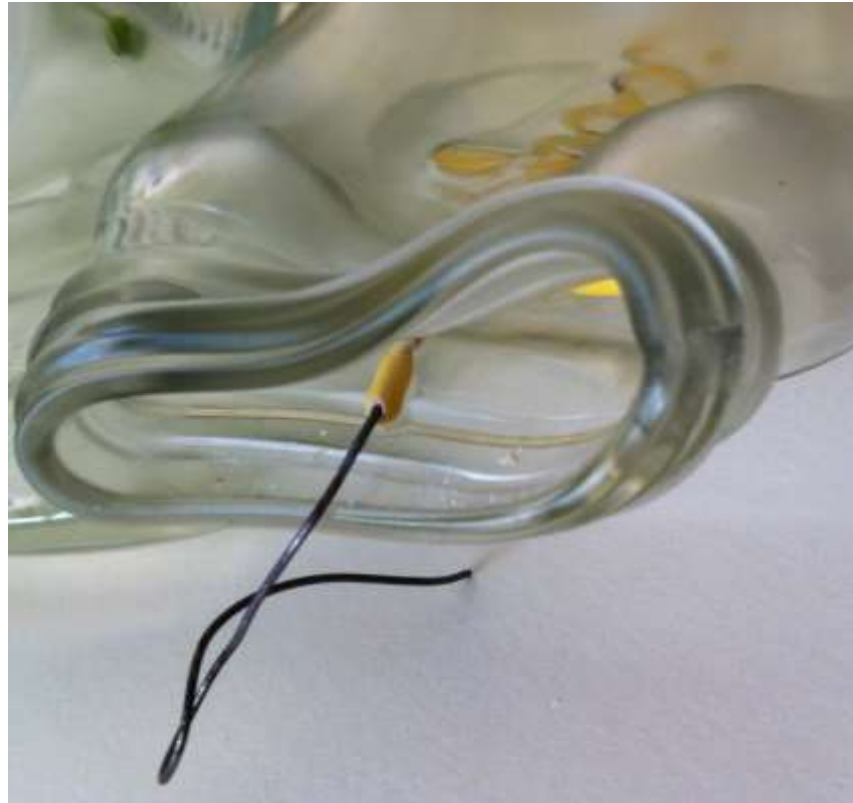


Figure 12. *Gush (After Domanski)* (DETAIL), Work in process, Nichrome wire, earthenware slip, glaze and kiln fired glass, 2013

And so we pause in participation with the dance of Balkhi, through the specimen jar...

“Every object and being in the universe is
a jar overfilled with wisdom and beauty,
a drop of the Tigris that cannot be contained
by any skin...”

(Balkhi, as cited in Barks, 1995, p. 200)

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Book 4

Breath of an Image

Connie Michele Morey

*Fields of Entanglement:
Image-Imaging-Imagination-Imagining*

Connie Michele Morey



Figure 1. *Perforatio*. Detail of Installation; Felted merino roving, crewel thread, and metal pins on wall;
Photo by Luis Mario Guerra; October 2013

*In these entangled architectures, a system cannot be broken down into autonomous parts;
even when particles are miles apart, they still behave as a single entity.¹*

¹ My thoughts about the relations between ecology, ontology and quantum entanglement have emerged from a series of conversations that began in September 2013 with fellow doctoral student Goksenin Sen related to particle physics and additional research that followed. The above statement makes metaphorical reference to our conversations on quantum entanglement which occurs when pairs or groups of particles interact in such a way that each particle cannot be described independently of others, even when the particles are separated by great distance. The quantum state of the particles must be described as a whole, interacting system.



Figure 2. *Perforatio*. Detail of Installation;
Felted merino roving, crewel thread, and metal pins on wall;
Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra; October 2013

In the 1930s Einstein made a theoretical supposition that two particles with the same basic make-up are co-joined even when separated by distances. He referred to this phenomenon as “Spooky Action at a Distance”. Einstein’s theory was experimentally proven in the 1990’s and is now referred to as Quantum Entanglement. When one particle is stimulated the other particle responds proportionally, instantaneously. The transfer of information occurs at, at least, 10,000 times the speed of light.

This essay is one part of an entangled architecture; one of two inter-related compositions under the umbrella title: *Fields of Entanglement*. Together, the paired-essays mobilize notions of the image and imagination through an activation of the image to imaging and imagination to imagining. While the first composition: *Breath of an Image* focuses on Jan Zwicky's recent writings on imagination. The second composition *This Ecological Imagining* focuses on my own sense of imagining and how Zwicky's earlier writings provide an ontological framing and impetus in developing my own thoughts on the relationship between ecology and imagining.²

Through each composition, I will engage with at least three overlapping modes of spatial-temporal articulation, including: visual, textual and compositional articulations. All three forms reference an often unspoken politics of the page. Not only does the content of the visual and textual communicate an approach and position, so too does the theoretical and metaphorical form of the visual, the textual and the structure of text and page. The typographical shape of words, the space around the letters, and the negative space on the page and the relative shape and size of the book, all impact our experience through the compositional structure. As Zwicky (2003) says "one's preference for a style of explanation will depend on one's purposes. (Just don't imagine there are purposes in which politics plays no role)" (p. 107L) My purposes are to acknowledge an interdependency of forms, engage in an unfolding practice of multi-modal understanding, open my perspectival field and give voice-in-action to modes of articulation that have been, until quite recently, largely marginalized in academic research (Borgdorff, 2004; Candlin, 2000a, 2000b; Frayling, 1993; Sullivan, 2005).

² Ecology is understood as an ontological position that recognizes: (1) the complexity, distinctness and interdependence of all cosmological forms, and (2) the porous inter-constitution of forms as lived environments.

Breath of an Image



Figure 3. *Respiratio*; Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

*This essay is one part of a two part composition titled “Fields of Entanglement: Image, Imaging, Imagination, Imagining”. Part 1: “Breath of an Image” addresses Zwicky’s recent writings that deal directly with imagination as “thinking in images”, while Part 2: “This Ecological Imagining” focuses on Zwicky’s earlier writings and how her ontological position provides an impetus and framework for my own sense of imagining. While there is some intersection in our expressed motivations, and Zwicky’s content and form have inspired my process, it is not with her writing on imagination that I find the most accord. It is, rather, in her earlier texts, particularly *Wisdom and Metaphor* (2003) that I find ontological fortitude for mapping an ecological sense of imagining. In Part 2 of this composition, I will engage with my own sense of imagining and its relationship to her ontological notion of resonance. In this first essay, I intend to engage a back and forth movement between image, prose and theory to discuss her recent writing on imagination to highlight expressed motivations, her points of emphasis and to offer an interpretive expansion of one of her key terms, a term central to the history of imagination, that of the image. By challenging associations of the image with static representationalism, I hope to activate the image through a Bergsonian adaption of the image as imaging – an inherently temporal oscillation akin to the inhale-exhale motion of breath.³ Images included are of a series of collaborative works with Luis Mario Guerra Veliz titled “Respiratio” which engage metaphors of breathing, penetration and a blurring of images, one into another. The written text combines theoretical writing and prose with references made to structuring metaphors referencing Quantum Mechanics to enrich a process of seeing-as.*

³ Henri Bergson (1859-1941) was a French philosopher particularly active during the early 20th century. Bergson challenged mechanistic views of causality in favour of multiplicity. He redefined conceptions of time, space, and causality with his mobile, fluid and multiplicitous concept of duration (a duree) which cannot be understood through stagnant spatial quantitative analysis, but only through qualitative experiential, first-person intuition.

Exhale: Ōscillātio

Deep inside any particle “there is... a dancing filament of energy. It looks just like a vibrating string. Just like a vibrating string on a cello can vibrate in different patterns... [strings] can also vibrate in different patterns... [producing] different particles making up the world around us. (Greene, 2005)

*The oscillation of the string,
dear wavering cello,
turn
this hesitancy,
thin echo of the drum.
Run
as a swing,
past the corner, round
this fugitive
house.*

*Ropes held taut as sisters
head tilted,
skimming
wet with
the ground.*

*Come leg,
stretch the long bow
of your sorrow,
reaching
reaching
skyward
home*



Figure 4. *Respiratio*; Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra & Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

Oscillate can be traced back to... "the Latin word \bar{o} scillum, a diminutive of \bar{o} s, "mouth," meaning "small mouth." In a passage in the Georgics, Virgil applies the word to a small mask of Bacchus hung from trees to move back and forth in the breeze. From this word \bar{o} scillum may have come another word \bar{o} scillum, meaning "something, such as a swing, that moves up and down or back and forth." And this \bar{o} scillum was the source of the verb \bar{o} scillāre, "to ride in a swing," and the noun (from the verb) \bar{o} scillātiō, "the action of swinging or oscillating."

(American Heritage Dictionary, 2000)

Inhale: Membrana



Figure 5. *Respiratio*; Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

Zwicky writes that imagination is “thinking in images”. (2012, p. 2)

Thinking *The hazy boundaries of
thinking
Membrane navigations
simultaneous shifts through
fields of entanglement*

In *What can be said of neutrinos
caught
within the walls
of that Great Particle Collider?
Cavernous appetites
nestled
deep in the belly of the earth.
A single fortification born
of particulates
Im/penetrable...*

Images *The only evidence of a particle is a trace
An image indicting passage in oscillation
Momentum of the tide
Continuation of breath*

Exhale: Motivus

*Motivation emerges from motive which comes from the Old French motif - motivus – “moving impelling”.
(Motive. 2013)*

*A motivation is that which moves one to behave in a certain way.
It is the propulsion towards movement, a complex reaction to a system of stimuli.*

*Unique patterns of string vibrations give shape to different particles;
this oscillation breathes a particularity into the entangled universe.*

Zwicky's writing on imagination is expressly motivated by ethics. In two of her recent essays directly addressing the topic of imagination: "Imagination and the Good Life" (2011) and "Auden as Philosopher" (2012), she reclaims imagination from anthropocentric bounds and challenges its association with falsity.

Zwicky is concerned with "imagination in relation to what-is independently of specifically human consciousness" (2011, p. 3).

My project, like Zwicky's, is propelled by ethics; it is motivated by a questioning of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. My work in "Fields of Entanglement" attempts to question the use of "imagination" as a hegemonic tool of marginalization of people, animals, life forms, materials, practices and ways of being with the world.

As a female artist-educator my practice emphasizes community and diversity (in thought, method, and subject). The genealogy of our family is culturally diverse and includes both settler and indigenous cultures. I have a long standing interest in post-colonial studies and its relationship to conceptions of nature and gender and because of these interests am particularly interested in how imagination might be envisioned to be a collaborative ecological experience. Zwicky's writing on ontology and imagination provides an opening to explore this further.

*Imagination has been used by and in support of dominant cultures,
those cultures largely permeated by an anthropocentrically oriented
ontology of self-contained individualism.⁴*

*What we have come to call imagination has acted as a co-dependent shape shifter:
Coupled with fantasy, imagination becomes “primitive” superstition—
a dangerous ‘untruth’;
Nestled inside “Western” rational thought as critical thinking,
imagination morphs into problem solving —
a way to “truth”.⁵*

⁴ In “Anthropology of the Self” (1994), Morris notes that self-contained individualism is marked by: (1) a firm boundary between the ‘self’ and the world, (2) a locus of control within the self, and (3) a conception of the self/non-self boundary as exclusionary. “That is, if one were to draw a circle marking off the region of the self from the region of the non-self, the circle would be drawn as to exclude others from the region defined as belonging to the self” (1988, p. 16). Many indigenous cultures, including aspects of Maori, Chewong, Japanese and Chinese (Confucian and Taoist) ontologies engage more ensembled or social form of individualism in which: (1) the self/non-self boundary is fluid, (2) the locus of control is viewed as located within a field and (3) the conception of the self/non-self boundary is including. Also see Sampson (1988).

⁵ Throughout history what we refer to as imagination has been used in many different and contradictory ways, from Aristotle’s *phantasia*, to Hume’s *baseless fancy* to Kant’s *source of knowledge* to Coleridge’s way to *deep truths* (Zwicky, 2011, 2012 & Sheridan & Longboat, 2006).

Our history is marked by a relegation of colonized cultures and species, “nature”, women, and artistic practices to a sense of imagining that is associated with untruth, fancy, and superstition. Myth, narrative, metaphorically rich song, arts and crafts traditions of marginalized groups have been interpreted as unrelated to the pursuits of truth. Through association with one limited sense of imagination, that of “phantasia”, the deep truth value of these imaginatively rich practices has been masked. (Zwicky, 2011; 2012; Sheridan & Longboat, 2006)

Zwicky’s ethics moves to rigorously critique “the conflation of imagination with superstition” (Auden, p. 14) She works to show that imagination, as thinking in images, reveals deep truths by helping us to “perceive what is in fact right in front of our eyes.” (Auden, p. 2)

The conflation of imagination with superstition has been used as a problematic tool of oppression. There is a politics of hegemony deeply rooted in the shaping and use of the linguistic association of categories of superstition in general. There is a colonial politics of superstition.

Zwicky's work makes an ethical manoeuver by providing a counter-balance to the privileging of logico-linguistic modes of knowing in the field of philosophy and in academics. Zwicky's work is an act of reclamation for artistic, poetic and imaginative ways of knowing and being.

*“... Kant is right: for ethics to be a philosophical project, we need a way to decide among candidates for the right principles, rather than simply settling for what our culture hands us, no questions asked...
Kant famously believes that pure reason will deliver the grounds for making those decisions, but here I believe he is wrong: reason without imagination is blind.”
(Zwicky, 2011, p. 21)*

Despite Zwicky's overt focus on the genre of philosophy, implications for her project ramify through and beyond disciplinary boundaries to the margins of being – to groups, peoples, practices and ways of being affected by the privileging of particular world views. This is where my own immersion in ethics meets the dimensional curve of Zwicky's.

“Ultimately, an epistemology is a way of holding the world up to the light. If one way of holding it up reveals facets invisible to another, this tells us only that the world is complex. It does not tell us that one way is correct or better than others’ nor does it tell us that any way, at any given moment, what any given individual will do. It tells us we need to be curious, and that we need to have patience and goodwill to sustain the curiosity; it tells us that we need to have courage in the face of the unfamiliar...”
(Zwicky, 2012, p. 14)

Zwicky enacts a reclamation of imagination by questioning the need to genuinely value multiple and at times 'incommensurable' epistemologies. Yet, I think Zwicky's call for deep and candid methodological tolerance, might be paraphrased to focus on ontology, where ontology reveals fundamental beliefs about what sorts of things exist and how they relate to each other. It is not a coincidence that those cultures subscribing to ensembled ontologies tend to employ poetic and imaginative methods and epistemologies. These methodologies have been disparagingly associated with superstition, 'primitive' myth and luck by dominant colonial traditions that have emphasized a sense of the individual that is ontologically self-contained. Cultures that emphasize self-contained individualism, (an ontology dominant in colonial nations) tend to valorize objective, logical-linguistic and rational distance, more so than participatory poetic modes of knowing.

Both ways are interdependent and a necessary part of the rich complexity of the world. It is only when one ontological position is used as a method of domination and hegemonic marginalization of another that that method is instituted (through speech, practice and socio-academic doctrine) as an untruth or superstition.

*“It is significant to note that what is dismissed as primitive imagination by dominant culture is to indigenous tradition reality’s only viable description.”
(Sheridan and Longboat, 2006, p. 4)*



Inhale: False Breath

*Breath is full of particulates.
Traces of these particulates arise into our field of vision
as vapour, as we walk briskly on a cold November morning.
The visible trace dissipates
while we continue the act.*

It is my sense that Zwicky's writing on imagination is not so much a definition of what imagination is, but rather is the act of emphasizing certain aspects of imagination that have been left out of focus, those elements hazy in the background of a saturated landscape. Her writing on imagination acts as reclamation for the often brutal effects of lived ideology. Zwicky emphasizes particular chords of the ideological composition of imagination in the same way that a mother holds a child after a considerable fall. It is not the same way that this mother embraces her child when the child leaves for school on a crisp fall afternoon, nor the same celebratory embrace as when the child recites a first song on a piano. There is a difference. The former acknowledges a loss and attempts to rectify the loss in the embrace and all that it carries.

Zwicky writes that imagination is "thinking in images" (2012, p. 2). In writing this she alleviates imagination and its lived ideology from the status of falsity, as a "baseless fancy" (Zwicky, 2012, p. 2).

What does it matter anyway, if imagination is bestowed the status of untruth?

*It doesn't,
unless...
your way to truth is
Carmen Linares' Solea, or
Ann Hamilton's sculptures, or
Ghandl's Haida myth, or
Hildegard's Scivias, or
Balkhi's Mathnawi, or
oral history, or
the limits of knowing, or
ecological consciousness, or
intuition*

*It doesn't matter,
unless...
you are a child, negotiating
the world through the suppleness of a cardboard box, unless
your mother and father were alive during the colonial era in Malaysia, or
Indonesia, or
St. Lucia, or
Vietnam, or
South Africa, or
Columbia, or
the Philippines, or
Argentina, or
Or, or, or*

*It doesn't matter, unless
you are the child of a hat maker from
the Red River Reserve, or
have followed the rabbit proof fence in Western Australia, or
experienced French colonial rule in Vietnam with Vu Trong Phung*
*It does not matter, unless
you are Abigail Williams on trial in Salem in 1692, or
Virginia Woolf's anonymous sister, or
your research is comprised of abstract poetic form.*
*It doesn't matter, unless
you prefer to use Chinese medicine.*

Exhale: Accentu

*A hair falls,
unnoticed,
while she knits a hat for Hugo's head.
The ball of yarn wound tight
as the promise of cats' play*

*You collect instruments
a cello, a flute, a saxophone,
while she plays the violin
Plucking each string, fresh.
Wandering the scales
with rain drop emphasis on the last note.*

*Clear membrane of sunlight
sing that slippery curve of the drop.*

Zwicky emphasizes that the etymology of imagination “ultimately leads us back to a Greek word “to bring to light” (2011, p. 4).

*She accentuates imagination's role as a door to truth through two key texts:
"Auden as Philosopher: How Poets Think" (2012)
And "Imagination and the Good Life" (2011)*

*The text that follows recaps her basic points of emphasis in each work,
followed by an interpretive expansion of one of her key terms: the image.*

In “Auden as Philosopher: How Poets Think” (2012) Zwicky unravels Auden’s 1956’s lecture: “Making, Knowing and Judging” to provide a view of imagination that challenges contemporary interpretations of imagination as “mere or baseless fancy”. She traces imagination as “fancy” to Hume’s interpretative revision of Aristotle’s *phantasia*. Auden was influenced by Coleridge who was in turn influenced by Kant’s writing on *Productive and Reproductive Imagination*. What interests Zwicky, however, is how Auden provides a doorway to understanding quite another sense of imagination, a sense of imagination that: (1) reveals deep truths about the world and (2) perceives things that exist (rather than things made up or created in the mind).

Through Auden, Zwicky elucidates a sense of imagination that she refers to as “thinking in images”. She describes thinking in images as akin to Wittgenstein’s seeing-as, the experience of metaphor and the experience involved in “grasping basic visual proofs in geometry” (Zwicky, 2012, p. 2).⁶ She follows Wertheimer to show that imagination as a gestalt experience is an “important way in which we know aspects of the world”... in that “it helps us perceive what in fact is right in front of our eyes” (p. 2). It is my thinking that we engage with what might be or could be by seeing relations that actually exist, that are in fact right in front of our eyes.

Auden discusses imagination in terms of having two qualities of experience a Primary and Secondary. The distinction is important here not because of the separate categories themselves but rather because together they show that imagination, for Zwicky, involves a negotiation between a wordless state and an attempt to find a fitting expression of that state. Auden’s Primary Imagination “perceives sacred beings and sacred events” and responds with “the passion of awe” (p. 4) whereas the Secondary Imagination is “concerned with finding and communicating a fitting or appropriate expression of the Primary Imagination’s awe.” (Zwicky, 2012, p. 6)⁷ For Zwicky, like Auden, imagination has been conflated with falsity and superstition because it “is basically inarticulate: it perceives and knows, but it cannot, unlike the Secondary Imagination, argue its point”. (p. 14) As before, Zwicky is making an argument for individual, cultural and disciplinary ways of knowing that are understood and expressed in other-than- logic-linguistic form. She is arguing that these ways of knowing are not “mere baseless fancy” but are epistemological ways to deep truth. (2012, p. 2)

⁶ Zwicky sees Wittgenstein’s seeing-as as being able to see one thing as another... “seeing X as Y – what is already present is seen as something else; we see the face in the leaves. (We understand a metaphor.)” (Zwicky, 2003, p. 25 L).

⁷ By sacred Zwicky is not referring to religious sacredness, but she also isn’t excluding it. Her reference to Domanski is helpful here... “By sacred, I don’t necessarily mean religious, or spiritual in the New Age sense of that word... I mean how each thing holds a mystery, simply because it exists, because existence itself is sacred...” (p. 8). By sacred, Zwicky is referring to being... She says that what “we perceive when we perceive being is resonance: the resonance of individual things with others, and the resonance of the whole; and the resonance of the whole in individual things.”

Imagination and the Good Life is the title of a talk given by Zwicky in the spring of 2011 at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS. Like “Auden and Philosopher” (2012), “*Imagination and the Good Life*” focuses on her understanding of imagination as “thinking in images” as a way of “understanding the real” (2011, p. 4), however, the emphasis in this composition is more overtly ethical. Zwicky hypothesizes that imagination as seeing-as and as seeing-into is a prerequisite for ethical engagement with the world. She focuses on imagination as ontological thinking, through which we: see one thing as another, thereby experiencing gestalt shifts and through which we see-into the particularity of thisness.⁸

“To perceive thisness is to perceive a thing’s internal relations. It is to perceive it as its internal relations”⁹ (2011, p. 12)

For Zwicky when we see-as we become aware of its inner structural relations; when we see into something we see “its soul – the glint or gleam of the divine in individual things.” (p. 17). With imagination we see-as and see-into. To see into is to see the particularity of a distinct relational thing, to see-as is to experience a shift between one whole and another. Imagination engages as shift.

“Genuine understanding, though, occurs only when the mind is on the move.” (2011, p. 14)

⁸ Zwicky refers to seeing-as in reference to Wittgenstein and in particular relation to metaphor –*to see one thing as another*. Seeing-into can be understood as seeing a particular thing as it is or in other words as seeing a things particularity (its thisness). Thisness can be understood as the particularity of this thing as it is, what makes it, I fact a thing distinct from (yet dependent upon) all other things.

⁹ For Wertheimer and for Zwicky, “all genuine thinking is rooted in gestalts” (p. 6). A gestalt deals with inner or internal structural relations. It is “the recognition that a thing’s internal properties or the experience of the live interior –structural relationship between two or more things, situations, or contexts.” (p. 10) By inner, Zwicky does not mean inside-outside, but rather means “essential” – “a property is internal if it is unthinkable that its object should not possess it.” (p.9)

“Imagination, as the capacity to see as and into, as sensitivity to ontological resonance, is the most direct route to the good life. It does not tell us, it shows us that a response is required... But of course it is possible to understand that we must change our lives, and then fail to do so. The price is, always, a loss of integrity, an absence of interior attunement. This, then, is why the exercise of moral imagination requires courage: we could, in any instance, be risking everything.” (p. 19)

The point of emphasis for Zwicky is that cultivating imagination as seeing-as and seeing into is necessary for an ethical life. The point she stresses is that... “if we do not cultivate the imagination as an organ of ontological insight, if we derogate it, we cripple ourselves as ethical beings. We close the door on our single best chance to espouse the world; to see things for what they are; to testify to that espousal through what we then become.” (p. 22)

Inhale: Image-Imaging

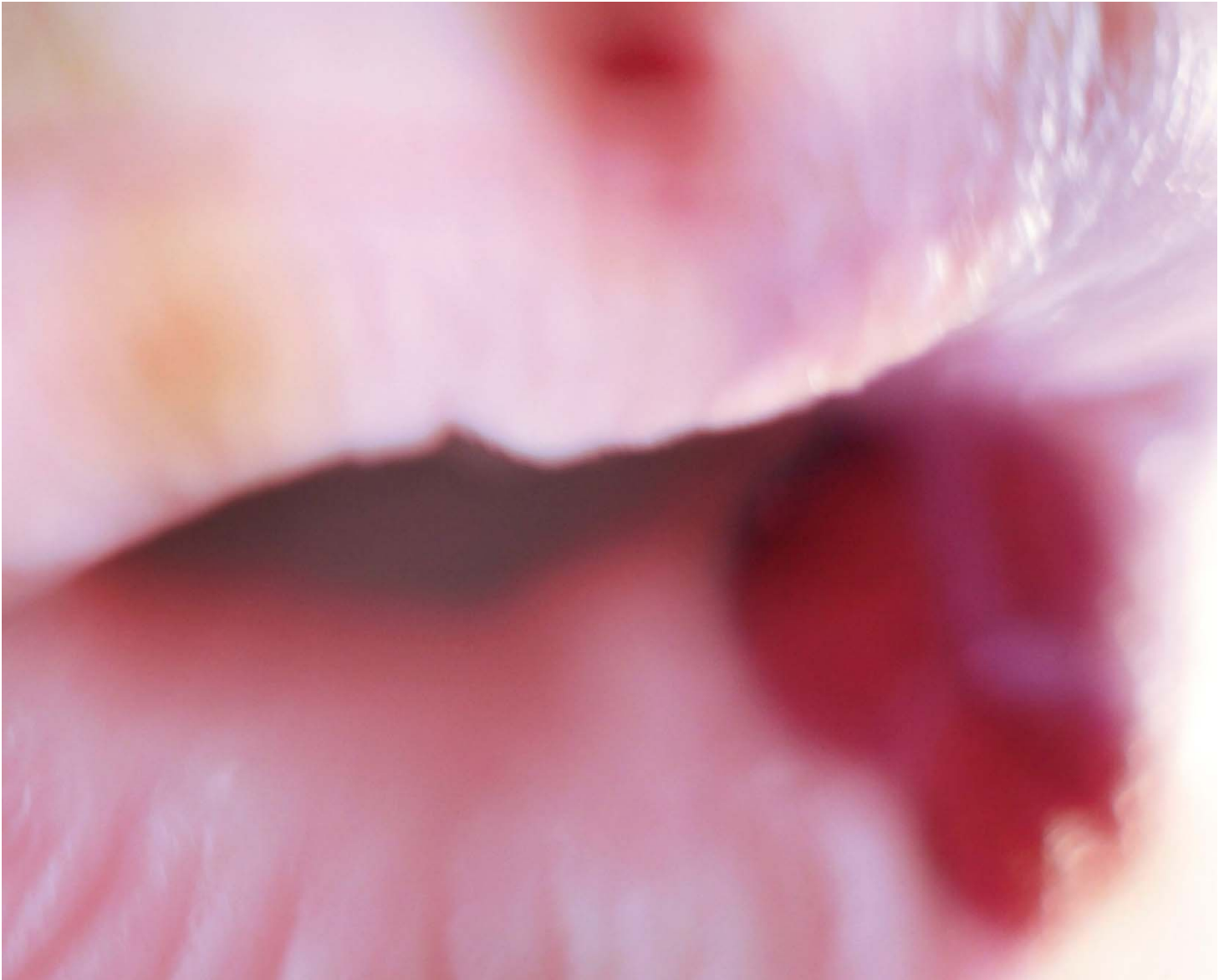


Figure 7. *Respiratio* (DETAIL); Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

In both “Auden as Philosopher” (2012) and “Imagination and the Good Life” (2011) Zwicky makes a strong case for imagination as a form of ontological attention and a pre-requisite for ethical engagement with the world. In these texts her focus is on the relationship of imagination to truth and perhaps, because of that emphasis, she does not elaborate on a few key terms within the text, including thinking, thinking-in and image. Through the overture of her work, it is possible to get a sense of what Zwicky means by thinking, and the process of thinking in images, however, she says less about the nature of the image itself.

In the text that follows, I engage my own questions of image through poetic-theoretic means to explore an ontology of imaging.

“Image” is a markedly broad and elusive term that embodies a range of possibilities for ontological and epistemological configuration. In the text that follows, I explore an eco-ontology of image to consider an image as a temporal experience that is akin to the act of breathing. As a way of paying attention to the temporality of an image, I will refer to it henceforth in its verb form as imaging. Imaging is a self-world entanglement, inherently temporal, always changing; an ecological experience. The experience of imaging speaks to an ensembled ontology that attends to what-imaging is, where-imagining is (origination and location), and how imagining relates.

Of her meaning of the word 'image' Zwicky says very little, except to refer to Ezra Pound's image as: "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time". (Pound, as cited in Zwicky, 1995, p. 432)

An image "is not a representation in the usual sense... an image, as I use the term, is not abstract, and representations usually are. An image is an aspect of a whole that presences with great immediacy..." (J. Zwicky, personal communication, November 2013).

Exhale: Breathing the Image

8 Movements

Breathing Collectibles

Breathing Pictures

Breathing the Real

Breathing Experience

Breathing Idols

Breathing Maps

Breathing Kin

Breathing Time

“I felt my lungs inflate with the onrush of scenery—air, mountains, trees, people...”
(Plath, 1966, Chapter 8)

*Morning grasshopper, wet exoskeleton removed,
Where do the worn jade particles of your skin go
once they depart the body?*

*Do they enter my lungs
when I gasp for air?*

Does the air we breathe contain particulates of images experienced?



Figure 8. *Respiratio* (DETAIL); Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

In the 16th century, Rudolph II,
Holy Roman Emperor,
King of Hungary,
King of Croatia,
King of Bohemia,
Archduke of Austria,
possessed
the most extensive compilation of oddities,
a cabinet of curiosities unmatched in all of Europe.
This collection was so unique that it defied categorical boundaries.

A six-legged fox;
A nail from Noah's ark;
A large silver cup holding
an "Indian nut" bigger than a human head;
A handful of bezoar stones extracted from animal guts
used for curing a host of ailments;
The horn of the legendary unicorn

The collection mirrored the tensions of the cosmos
Cross-species amalgamations
oscillating back and forth, at the promise of rupture

As the 16th century turned with the slow curve of the earth,
those recalcitrant objects whispered respiratory conversations
with the atmosphere
Dust particles became submersed with air
Dissolving breath
as the world that they are,
as the world that is.

*Images are an oscillatory process.
As the particulates of breath enter and leave the lungs,
so too do images enter and leave the individual-with-the-world,
engaging in ex-change.
Images are a temporal process of imaging.*

*“Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of ‘images.’
And by ‘image’ we mean a certain existence which is more than
that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than
that which the realist calls a thing; - an
existence placed half-way between
the ‘thing’ and the ‘representation.’
(Bergson, 1986, p. xii)*

Images are more and less than objects.¹
Objects are more and less than objects.
In the sense that-
“an object is matter separated from mind
available only for
for hands to cup,
or eyes to gaze,
In the sense that –
an object has been set the task of a noun,
held in place with dissection pins
made impenetrable,
isolated,
set in an ironwood drawer
away from other collectables”
In this sense –
all objects and images
are more and less than this.

*As communities of im-materiality through “which diverse bodies and meanings coshape one another” ... objects gorge themselves, spill out of their firm boundaries and exceed containment.
(Haraway, 2008, p. 4)*

*Images coshape with the world.
Images engage in a back and forth coshaping;
Images wiggle, move, shift, refuse to be held down, decompose, transform, exchange and decay.*

Images are constantly in a state of imaging.

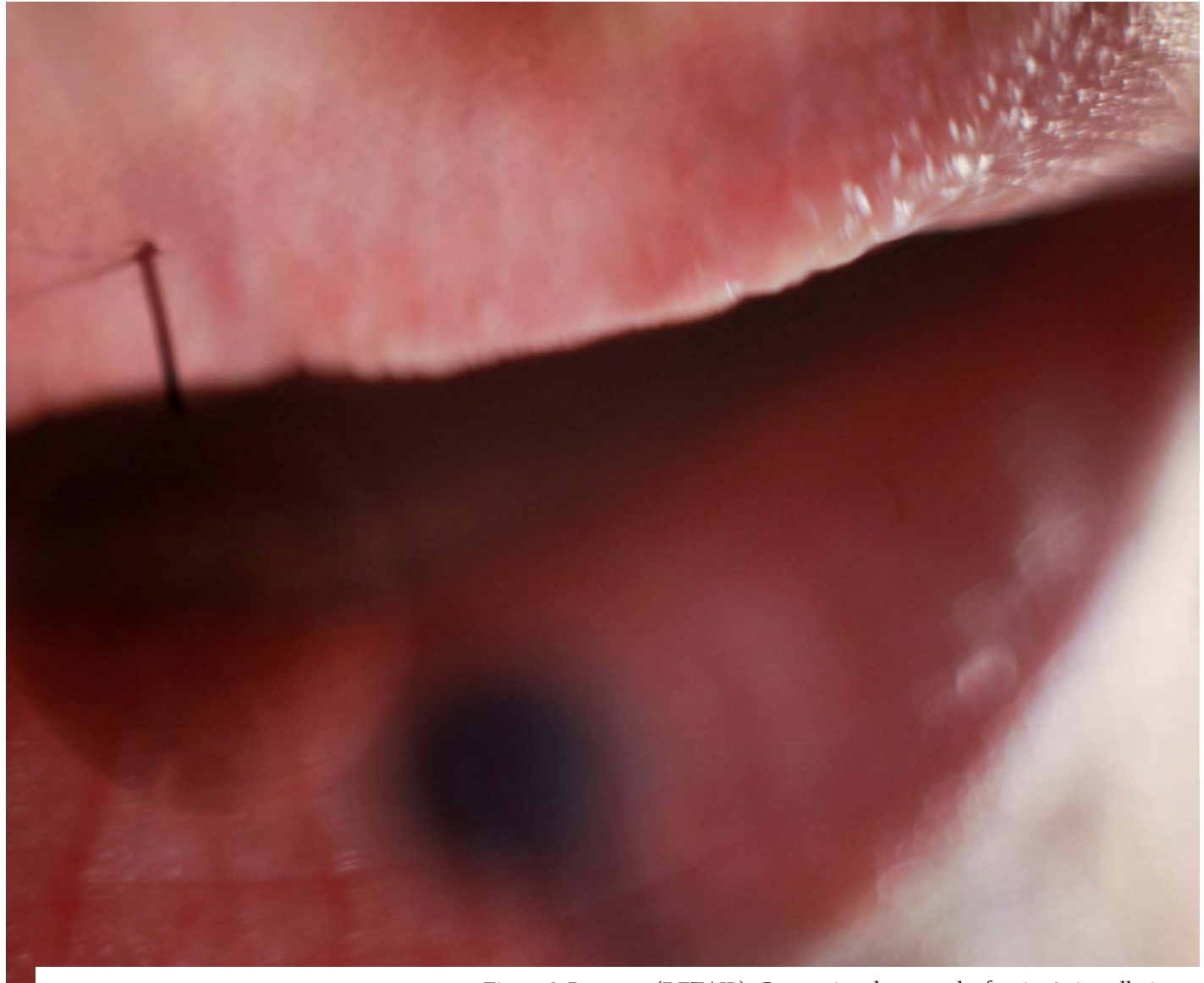


Figure 9. *Respiratio* (DETAIL); Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

Breathing Pictures

“The ladder of disorder leaves conventional representation behind, in favor of images that explore inadequate representation. Each time I consider it, the ladder seems to get longer, like a dream descent into a bottomless well.”
(Elkins, 2008 p. 51)

*Imaging is more and less than visual.
Imaging is more and less than pictures.
Pictures are more and less than pictures.
In the sense that-
“a picture is a visual re-creation
of an external
reality
In the sense that-
a picture is the eye bracketed
In the sense that –
a picture is something internal
inside the individual
inside the mind’s eye
In the sense that-
a picture is-
not-
an entanglement
not-
an osmotic web
not-
a porous community”
In this sense,
imaging is more and less than a picture.*

*Imaging is more and less than visual
In multiple directions, it crosses-
the River Haptic,
the Tornado of Kinesthetics,
the Olfactory Slew,
the breadth of the Auditory Canal.*

Imaging engages rhythm, movement and time.

Imaging is multi-sense entanglement.



Figure 10. *Respiratio* (DETAIL); Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

Breathing the Real

“We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we can live – by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith nobody now could endure life. But that does not prove them. Life is no argument. The conditions of life might include error”. (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 223)

*Imaging is more and less than the real.
The real is more and less than the real.
In the sense that-
 “The real is
 Of sense
 Of materiality
 Of externality-
In a sense that the real is bona fide matter
In this sense, imaging is more and less than the real.*

*In the sense that reality is
 objective / subjective
In the sense that the real is
 truth / superstition
In the sense that the real lacks
 immersion in affect
 penetration by belief
In the sense that the real is an anthropocentric isolate
 or linguistic determinate”
In this sense the real is more and less than the real
In this sense, the image is more and less than the real.*

Given that breath at any given moment can be:

visible

ephemeral

haptic

microscopic

absorbed

photosynthesized

swallowed

dissipated

used

spent

turned through the hummingbirds whirr

spun through the ravens gurgle.

Given that breath takes forms

Given that imagining takes forms

Imaging is more and less than the real.

With images we experience and negotiate the world

Images are

Images exist

Repeat.

Imaging is more and less than the real.



Figure II. *Respiratio* (DETAIL); Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

Breathing Experience

*I experience imaging with more than my eye-body-mind.
Imagining is penetrated by an experience with the world.*

The world perforates the images of imaging.

Let us speak of imaging as experience.

*Imagining is more and less than experience
Experience is more and less than experience.*

*“In the sense that experience is sense separated,
In the sense that experience is bracketed from logic,
Or analysis,
Or language
Or materiality, space, movement and time.”
In this sense experience is more and less than experience.
In this sense imaging is more and less than experience.*

*Let us speak of experience as a form of participatory engagement with the world.
Imaging is participatory with the world.*

*Participation persists,
even in the absence of noticing.*

*As particles collide,
neutrinos penetrate bodies undetected,
and Higgs-Boson propels mass,
imaging persists and is
dependent upon participation with the world.*

*Imaging calls us to attention.
Imaging is experienced regardless of our response.*

Interlude:
The individual-with-the-world breathes with varying degrees of attention.
I turn to the window –
light shifts the wooden planks,
grass frosts rigid
a drop in temperature
decay falls on leaves
breath continues
with the world.

*As the individual-with-the-world breathes, imaging is experienced with degrees of attention.
Yet attention opens light on the experience of imaging; as shoulders rise and fall with each breath,
a shift in focus engages participation anew with this. Imaging is present and noticed with varying degrees. Imaging
invites participation. With imaging, I participate, partake, enjoin, exchange.
With imaging, we perform, reform, decay, slough deteriorating cells and rejuvenate.*

“...To know that this man who is hungry and thirsty really exists as much as I do – that is enough, the rest follows on itself.

The authentic and pure values – truth, beauty and goodness – in the activity of a human being are the result of one and the same act, a certain application of the full attention of the object.”
(Weil as cited in Zwicky, 2003, p. 102 R)

*“...Truth is the result of attention. (As opposed to inspection.)
Of looking informed by love. Of really looking”*
(Zwicky, 2003, p. LH102).



Figure 12. *Respiratio*; Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

“There are more idols than realities in the world”

(Nietzsche, 1977, p. 465)

*Images are more and less than idols
Idols are more and less idols*

*Who can speak of where imaging comes from?
What are the idols of imaging?
Where does imaging begin?*

*Ex nihilo?
Ex ineffabilibus?
Ex junctura?
Ex junctura?*

*“You may say that my body is matter,
or that it is an image:
the word is of no importance.
If it is matter, it is a part of the material world;
and the material world, consequently, exists around it and without it.
If it is an image, that image can give but what
has been put into it,
and since it is, by hypothesis, the image of my body only,
it would be absurd to expect to get from it
that of the whole universe.
My body, an object destined to move other objects,
is, then, a centre of action; it cannot give birth to a representation.”*

(Bergson, 1986, p. 5)

“But if we could communicate with the gnat, we would learn that he likewise flies through the air with the same solemnity, that he feels the flying center of the universe within himself. There is nothing so reprehensible and unimportant in nature that it would not immediately swell up like a balloon at the slightest puff of this power of knowing. And just as every porter wants to have an admirer, so even the proudest of men, the philosopher, supposes that he sees on all sides the eyes of the universe telescopically focused upon his action and thought.”

(Nietzsche, 2006, p. 114)

Imaging is more and less than an idol

A taxonomy of hypothetical sources follow:

*“Reason begets imaging
Logic begets imaging
Language begets imaging
Perception begets imaging
Aesthetics begets imaging
Matter begets imaging
Memory begets imaging
Sense begets imaging
Corporeality begets imaging
Experience begets imaging
The self begets imaging
The other begets imaging
The world begets imaging”*

*As to whether the imaging has an origin, a specific source, I can say nothing.
If there is a source, it seems beyond explication.*

Ex ultra



Figure 13. *Respiratio*; Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

*"We now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well."
(Lewis Carroll, 1893, Chapter 11)*

*In a map of the city of ontology
Where is imaging situated?*

*We might also ask, in a similar vein-
Where breathing is situated?*

*One might respond by saying, “well...breathing resides
in the bronchiole
the lungs,
the trachea,
or the mouth
or perhaps in the world upon exiting the orifice of the mouth”*

*Breathing moves, it is transient
Imaging moves, it is migratory*

“What then are these movements and what part do these particular images play in the representation of the whole? The answer is obvious: they are, within my body, the movements intended to prepare, while beginning it, the reaction of my body to the action of external objects. Images themselves, they cannot create images; but they indicate at each moment, like a compass that is being moved about, the position of a certain given image, my body, in relation to the surrounding images.”

(Bergson, 1986, p. 9)

*Imaging is with the body with the world
This body spills into the world
The world infuses this body
Images breathe.
Images are distinct and entangled.
Only in separation can we situate images
Only in separation is there a map independent of the country.*

*Imaging enters the city porous
Imaging is the country as the map.*

...In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

(Borges, 1999)



Figure 14 *Respiratio*; Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

“More generally, does not the fiction of an isolated material object imply a kind of absurdity, since this object borrows its physical properties from the relations which it maintains with all others, and owes each of its determinations, and consequently its very existence, to the place which it occupies in the universe as a whole? Let us no longer say, then, that our perceptions depend simply upon the molecular movements of the cerebral mass. We must say rather that they vary with them, but that these movements themselves remain inseparably bound up with the rest of the material world.”

(Bergson, 1986, p. 12)

*Imaging is relational.
Imaging is a relation.
Imagining is relating.*

*I remember vaguely the morning my grandfather taught me to ride a bicycle on the paved road in front of his house.
The same house my father grew up in. The bicycle had a banana seat and a curved handle at the back
for holding and letting go.
This memory
leads to a dead end road, where-
my own father taught Soleia to ride her bike some four years ago.
The two of them racing up and down the cul-de-sac with training wheels half on.
This memory
leads to the snow covered balcony where-
I look from my bedroom window at the blue bicycle with curved handle occupying the space
It hasn't been ridden since October 30th when the tire was punctured on Cook Street.*

*Even the image of the bicycle on the patio is not still. It shifts with the light, with the window's reflection.
I see it, back and forth, an oscillation between experiences, between virtual and actual experiences
continuing...*

What is the difference between my memories of various compound experiences involving bicycles?

*It isn't that-
one is inside and the other is outside;
Or that-
one exists only in the present and the other only in the past
Images collaborate, they are relational.*

*How do these images differ?
Perhaps it is perspectival field.
The whole of the field itself is movement,
of vibrational strings extending in infinitude.*

*At times, our experience of the field is bracketed,
by the body as a porous lens
And at moments of duration, at moments of intuition,
a scope of the interrelations of the whole is experienced.
And our position in the field shifts
within that continuum of relations.*

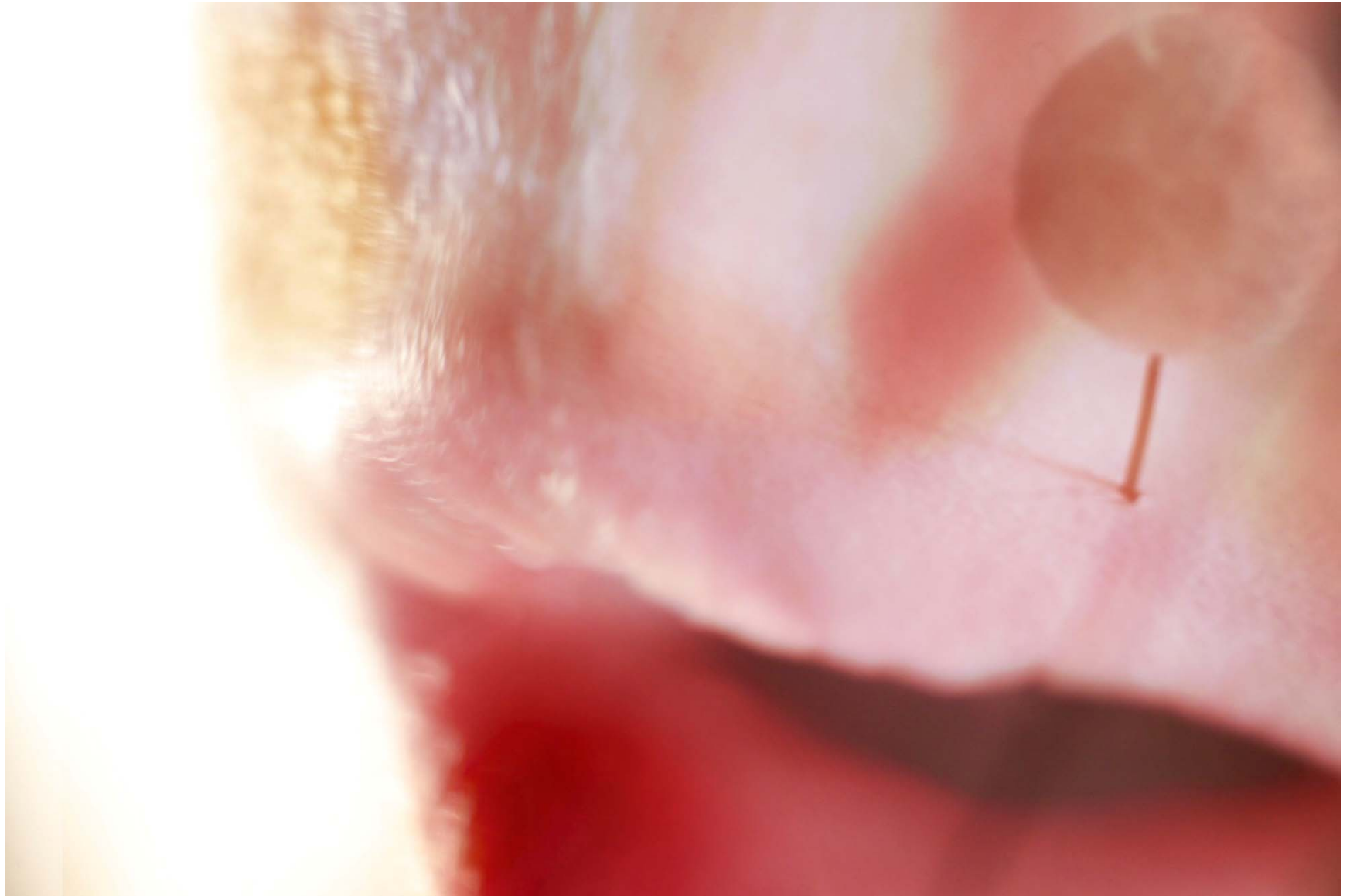


Figure 15. *Respiratio*; Composite photograph of artist & installation; Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

Breathing Time

*For Bergson the direct data of consciousness is a duree (duration).
Duration is temporal and ineffable; it can only be shown indirectly through images which never reveal the whole
picture.*

*A single image can never reveal experience, however,
what if the image wasn't isolated,
what if it was relational with other images,
what if the images moved
back and forth
between each other,
like breath?*

*Imaging is more and less than time.
Time is more and less than time.
“In the sense that time can be broken down
into sugar cubes of sequence
In the sense that time is measurable
Quantifiable
Made linear
Forward thinking
Progressively colonial
In the sense that time is chronologically juxtaposed
Time is more and less than time.
Imaging is more and less than time.”*

*Imaging is temporal
Imaging is movement.
In multiple directions
On multiple planes
simultaneously*

Interlude:

Since small, I have spoken in a grammar of separation.
Take, for example, how I learned to speak of myself, in terms of space held still
in the absence of time.
Of the pictures in my head
Of pictures of my body
Not pictures in my body
Except for those taken by others
Of eyes as passageways to the brain
Of eyes held in place by the flesh of the body

I wonder, if, since small, I had learned a different grammar
If, since small, I was immersed in an ensembled view of the individual
where the boundaries between self and world are porous
where time is extensive, continuous, perhaps infinite,
what would constitute the grammar of my experience?
Would I breathe the prepositions in with out
Spread wide between of and through
Jump back and forth and forth and back like a skipping rope
amongst amongst and about
Would I wander in a rhythm of prepositional duree?

*Let us think of imaging in relation to Bergson's duree¹⁰
a proximate kinship.
While the idea of the single image presents a limited vision of durational time,
In that it is understood as
a bracketed moment
a narrow corridor
or a spatial determinant.
Imaging continues
as sound travels.
Imaging is a process of immersion
with multiplicity
A back and forth oscillation
As the respiratory vibration of inhale-exhale envelops the self with the world*

¹⁰ While Bergson said that the image can never fully reveal duration which is the immediate data of consciousness, imaging has a more intimate relationship with time as *la durée*, in that imaging, like a *duree*, is a process which is temporal, and cannot be understood as a symbol. Imaging is the process of experiencing images as a back and forth oscillation between the world and the self. This sense of imagining is unlike Bergson's notion in that it is not dependent upon an inside outside view of the world and the individual and is not an interior representation but a process of being with the world.

*Interlude:
On Teaching a Student to Breathe*

This is hard work.

- 1. Begin by collecting the bronchi of different species, place them in an ironwood box and create a taxonomy.*
- 2. Next, re-present a series of images of breathing within the crevices of your mind. Immobilize them into photographic stills so that they are carefully extracted from the images of the world.*
- 3. Determine which breaths are real and which are false.*
- 4. Experience breath, first consciously and then unconsciously; being careful not to mix or confuse the two.*
- 5. Pinpoint precisely the origins of breath.*
- 6. Trace the pathways of breathing; draw crisp lines as it travels from the bronchioli in infinite directions, through the blood, the skin, the lungs, the trachea and the world.*
- 7. Inspect families of breath. Draw a circle around an investigative focus, bracketing the subject based on nuclear, extended or ecological groupings.*
- 8. Count the tempo of breath, in a progressive sequence, each day, as the pulse of the clock.*

*Upon completing all steps,
pause.
Set steps 1-8 aside and attend
to the movement of breathing,
its ins and outs,
contained and bursting
the seams of pedagogy.*

*Breath exceeds containment.
Imaging exceeds containment.*

Imaging in 8 movements.

Imaging experienced as:

1. *the horn of the legendary unicorn decaying despite petrification*
2. *representation entangled with the materiality of world*
3. *reality perforated by belief*
4. *neutrinos penetrating imperceptible passages of corporeality*
5. *the absence of origin, ex ultra*
6. *the tattered ruins of the country as the map- homeless, migratory, fleeting*
7. *relational oscillation of the virtual and the actual; three bicycles reverberating:
banana seat-training wheels-curved handle bars*
8. *a respiratory duree, a vibrational inhale-exhale, enveloping the self with the world*

Repeat:

*Imaging is a moment of time that is continuously flooded by a back and forth reverberation
between the virtual and the actual, in an exchange that constitutes the greatest density of activity.
(Paraphrased from Hulse, 2008, p. 9-10)*

*Imagining in not the image.
Imagining breathes.
Imagining moves.*

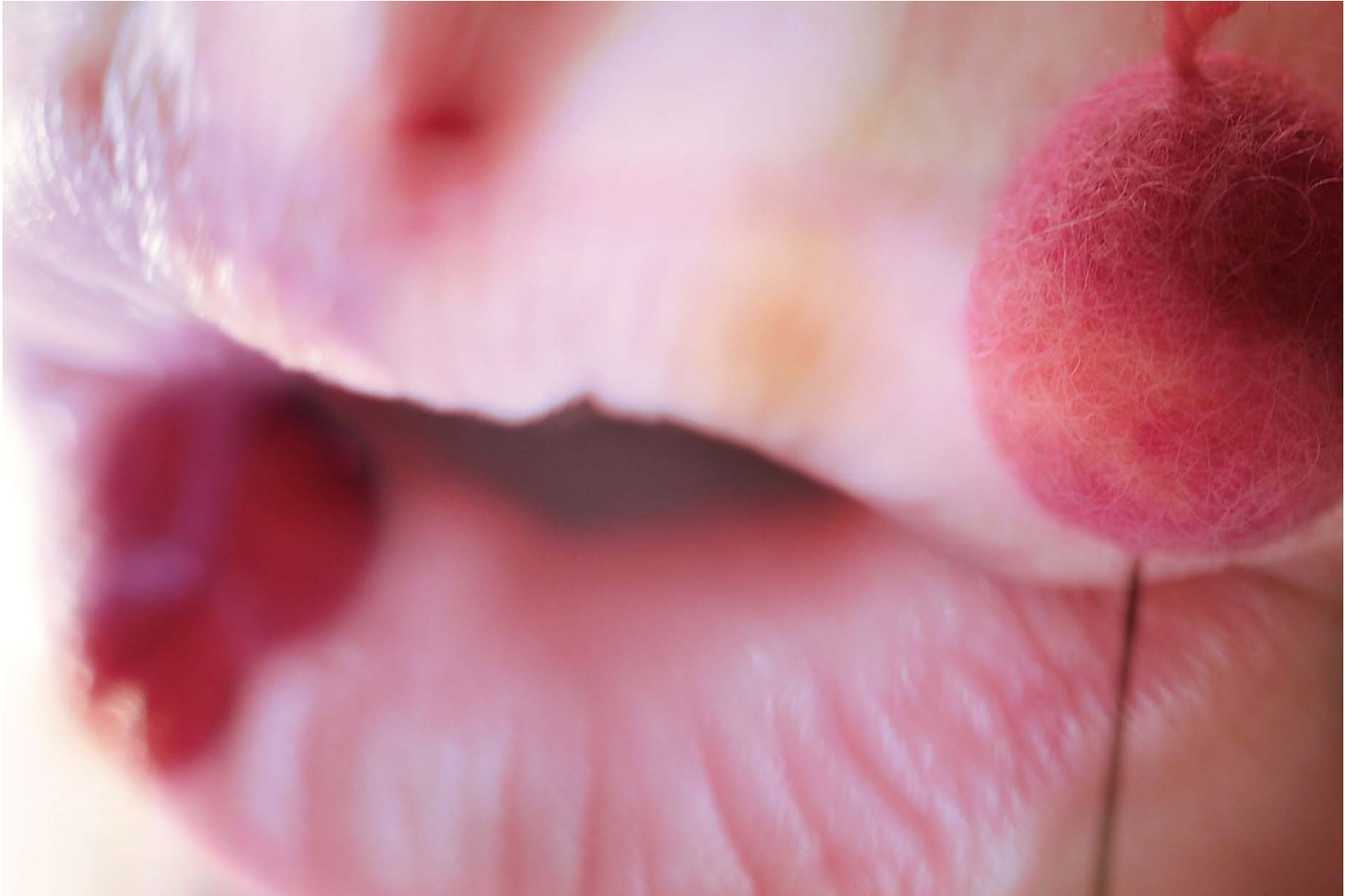


Figure 16. *Respiratio*; Composite photograph of artist & installation;
Luis Mario Guerra and Connie Michele Morey; October 2013.

ⁱ My use of more *and* less is an adaptation of Bergson's use of *more or less* in his writing about the image, through which Bergson shows that representation only differs from the image *by degree*, and that perception is *continuous with* images of matter. Through his hypothesis of the image, Bergson is reconnecting perception to the real. My use of more *and* less indicates, in a similar vein, continuity between what is often thought of as "external" and "internal" images, what I would argue is, primarily or, at least in part, a shift in perspectival field. If we consider the ways in which we become aware or attentive to the act of breathing, these ways are variant and indicate an entangled process. On cold mornings breath is evident through vision; at times of illness, evident through labour; with attentiveness to the body, breath is evident through our kinesthetic and acoustic sensibilities; at other times breath is evident because it is saturated with scent. Not only are the particulates of breathing altered by the internal workings of our bodies but also by an intimate co-relation with the body as environment, within environment, within environment. Perhaps this idea that imaging is not dependent upon a view of the individual as internal and the world as external is where my work departs from Bergson and is aligned with Zwicky. Breath, in this sense endures as more *and* less, depending upon our perspectival field of reference. By considering imaging as akin to breathing *with* the world, as continuous and thus *more and less*, it may be possible to up the perspectival field of images.

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Book 5
This Ecological Imagining

Connie Michele Morey

This Ecological Imagining



Figure 1 & 2. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

dear Quantum apparitions
with radioactive Labour
your torrents of Imperceptible embryos
Run.
Unheard, unseen
Quietly, quietly.

Of abundant habitats
you emerge.
Of this city
Wet with the sun's
molten core,
Of this village
with powdered Bone houses,
Of this valley of alpha decay
housed Deep
beneath Our restless feet.

Oh, undetected life supports,
you travel near
the speed of light,
Oscillating through matter
With entangled shifts
Unimpeded by walls of lead,
Or these streets of palladium
Determined in your course
You, nomadic neutrinos
Storm.

“An unapparent connection is stronger than one which is obvious”.

– Heraclitus, Fragment 54 (Robinson, 1987, p. 39)

This Ecological Imagining is the second essay in a paired composition titled: *Fields of Entanglement: Image, Imagining, Imagination, Imagining*.

The first essay: *Breath of an Image* envisions Jan Zwicky's understanding of imagination as "thinking in images", while offering a theoretic-poetic interpretation of one of her key terms: the image. This, second composition, articulates my own interpretation of imagining: a reading that is indebted to Zwicky's earlier writings on resonance, which I believe, provide an ontological clearing for developing an understanding of imagination that is ecologically grounded.

The composition that follows begins with: Part 1: *A Neutrino Lost in Higg's Field (Form and Structure of the Writing)* and continues with Part 2. *A Particle without Place (Imagination Runs like a Verb)* – A proposed way of seeing imagination as a resonant, ecological experience that occurs through the emergence of a complex comingling of deluge of variables.

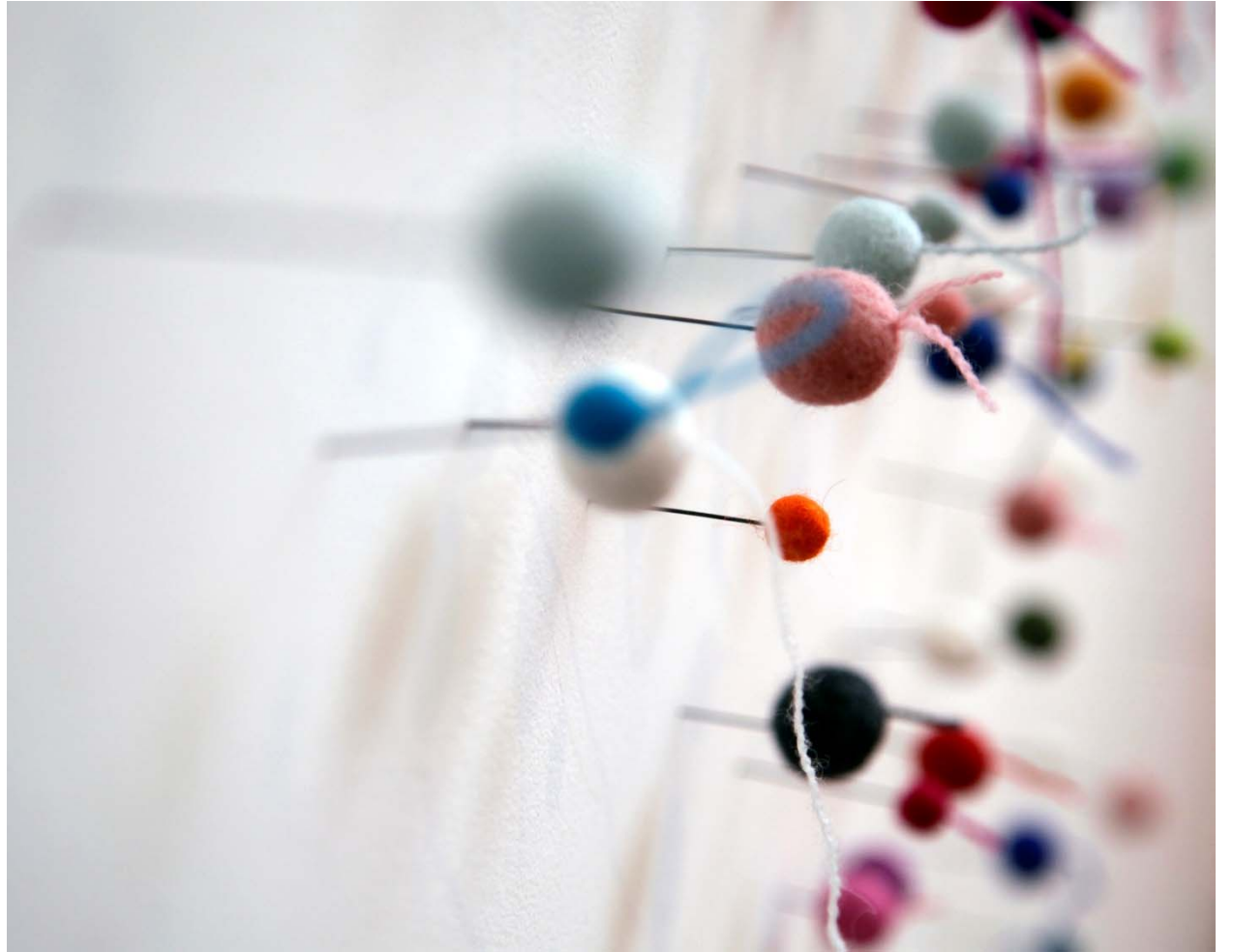


Figure 3. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Part I: A Neutrino Lost in Higg's Field (Form & Structure of the Writing)

It is said that there is a ubiquitous field, where all matter originates. The field is known by the villagers in the surrounding area as “Higgs’ Field”, named after a well-known inhabitant Peter Higgs. Higgs was born in that very field, in 1929 to an English father and a Scottish mother, and by the age of seventeen had taken a keen interest in the birth of some of the smallest phenomena known to exist. Because of his interest in the sub-atomic world, Higgs began a career researching particle physics and the origin(s) of mass in 1947, at the age of eighteen, at the University of Edinburgh.

Despite being present everywhere, Higgs’ field is most difficult to confirm. It is thought to be responsible for the origin of the mass of elementary particles, thus the origin of the structure of all things. I have wondered, rather illogically, about the presence of a neutrino in that omnipresent field. How does the smallest known particle, an immeasurable sub-speck with non-zero mass swim imperceptibly without altercation in the pervasive ocean known as Higgs? What propels that infinitesimal neutrino? How does it find its way?

The structure of this essay is propelled by the rhythms of oscillation and syncopation. Higgs' field is thought to be a field where particle mass originates. Until recently, the smallest known particles, neutrinos, were thought to be without mass. They are now said to have non-zero mass.

There is much speculation about how Higgs' field and neutrinos intersect, if at all. While in continuous motion, neutrinos oscillate back and forth between three different types (or flavours) based on their mass, position and direction. The composition that follows also oscillates, back and forth, between at least three modes of articulation: explanatory text, metaphorical prose, and metaphorical images. This oscillation allows for both obvious and obscure connections to unfold and for the reader's interpretive participation to syncopate the composition thereby creating a contra-tiempo with the work.¹ Unlike neutrinos, which are named from the Italian, meaning little neutral one, this writing is both admittedly and intentionally not neutral. It is rather interested, passionate, political and personal. With your reading, it becomes more abundantly interpretive, a little less neutrino and a little more *participatio*; a syncopated creative process of engaging in collaborative hypothesizing with the composition.

¹ As mentioned in my earlier essay, "Methodology Moves", rhythm has played an important role in my research process. Because of my interest in the rhythms of lived research, writing and studio practice, I began reading Virginia Woolf's "The Waves", took up playing Djembe, which makes extensive use of syncopation and started Flamenco lessons which engage a rich contra-tiempo. Please see pages 3-4 of "Methodology Moves" for more on how rhythm and syncopation implicated my research processes.

Explanatory text included with the writing is determinedly hypothetical; it is the articulation of rigorous thoughts that act as a starting point for conversations. Metaphorical text functions to expand the perspectival field of the writing, allowing different planar ways of seeing to penetrate the text. It functions similarly to the images included, much like an upside down funnel that diverges thought and as such provides an intentional counter-balance to the convergent tendencies of explanatory modes. Including explanatory text and metaphorical text and image aims to enrich the process of developing deep understanding through multi-modal means.

Metaphorical text included in the composition emerges from a topic that has informed my understanding of the process of imagining in literal-metaphoric ways; the topic being that of Quantum Mechanics. My understanding of Quantum Mechanics is relatively limited. Nonetheless, my research on the topic has informed my artistic and theoretical processes. I became interested in QM in the fall of 2013 when I realized that my interest in ontology had significant parallels with the sub-atomic world of particles. Many of my diagrammatic drawings, sketches and works referenced particles. Upon realizing this, I began to wonder how gaining some rudimentary understanding of the topic might enrich my process of engaging with imagining as an ontological process. I had a series of informal “introductory lessons” with Goksenin Sen, a friend and scholar with a background in Quantum Mechanics and thereafter began reading and researching without an end in mind. A book titled *Neutrino* (2010) by Frank Close helped me to focus my interest for the purpose of this essay on the metaphoric potential of seeing the eco-imagination through the lens of the sub-atomic particles known as neutrinos.



Figure 4. *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

The images included with the writing are a part of my ongoing studio research and are taken of my recent felt-based installation titled *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them, the Planets Dance)*. The work in the installation began while I was initiating research on quantum mechanics; at that time I was particularly interested in string theory and oscillation. The making of the installation has been a key part of my research on imagination and has enriched my thinking through conceptual and material processes. Just as particles continually shift, the work has altered through time and has been included in a recent collaborative exhibition with artist Sarah Cowan titled, *Oscillatio*. It continues to shift and evolve into other work.

The images of *Fingertip Cartographies* included in the essay are the result of collaborative work with artist Luis Mario Guerra and are presented as a series of manipulated photographs of the installation. Cooperative artistic processes with Goksenin, Sarah, Luis Mario and many others have been essential to engaging a sense of imagination that is profoundly ecological. My sense of ecology is an ontological position that recognizes: the complexity, distinctness and interdependence of all cosmological forms, and the porous inter-constitution of forms as lived environments. As the images collaborate with the writing, their back and forth dialogue questions ontology, ecology and imagination, or more specifically they engage with and consider the experience of imagining through an eco-ontological lens.

Part 2: A Particle without Place (Imagination Runs like a Verb)

“Life has evolved within this storm of neutrinos” (Close, 2010, p. 1).



Figure 5. Altered photograph of a detail of the installation, *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

“I drew a sign at a point in space, just so I could find it again two hundred million years later, when we went by the next time round.... I soon left the sign far behind me, separated from it by the endless fields of space. And I couldn't help thinking about when I would come back and encounter it again, and how I would know it, and how happy it would make me, in that anonymous expanse, after I had spent a hundred thousand light years without meeting anything familiar, nothing for hundreds of centuries, for thousands of millennia; I'd come back and there it would be in its place, just as I had left it, simple and bare, but with that unmistakable imprint, so to speak, that I had given it.” (Calvino, 2002, p. 32-33)

“Neutrinos carry identity cards” (Close, 2010, p. 105).

In 1933, Enrico Fermi proposed neutrino (‘little neutral one’) as a name for the smallest known particles in the universe. The new name helped to distinguish these near massless particulates from other larger particles sharing a similar name. Names are necessary but illusory markers, attempts to suspend the ephemerality of the world, to stop the cosmos contained within us from their continual and dizzying motion.

A name is a taxonomical marker, it helps us to hold things in place; like a sign post it indicates, to some degree, what a thing is. In the section that follows, I sketch a map of imagination as a resonant ecological experience. The primary intent of this process is not to name or situate imagination as a sign post but rather to engage with one possible way of seeing and thereby engage dialogue. I am proposing that imagination is less like a noun and more like a verb. As such, imagination runs like a river, as a migratory process of imagining. It is, in this sense, the existence of a particle as a wave. This, that follows, is an ecological imagining.



Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Ubiquitous crumbs.
Assemblies of sub-atomic morsels
Pepper dash, Screen pixel, Map marker
Flavours mix, ink bleeds, entangled sensitivities, reverberating
Air exits my mouth and enters your lungs, returning home
As grains of sand overwhelm oceans

I understand imagining as an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena.

Imagining is an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena. Imagining is an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena. Imagining is an ecological process of **thinking through** the world to notice existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena. Imagining is an ecological process of thinking through **the world** to notice existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena. Imagining is an ecological process of thinking through the world to **notice** existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena. Imagining is an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice **existent threads of relationality** amongst distinct phenomena. Imagining is an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena. Imagining is an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent threads of relationality amongst **distinct phenomena**.

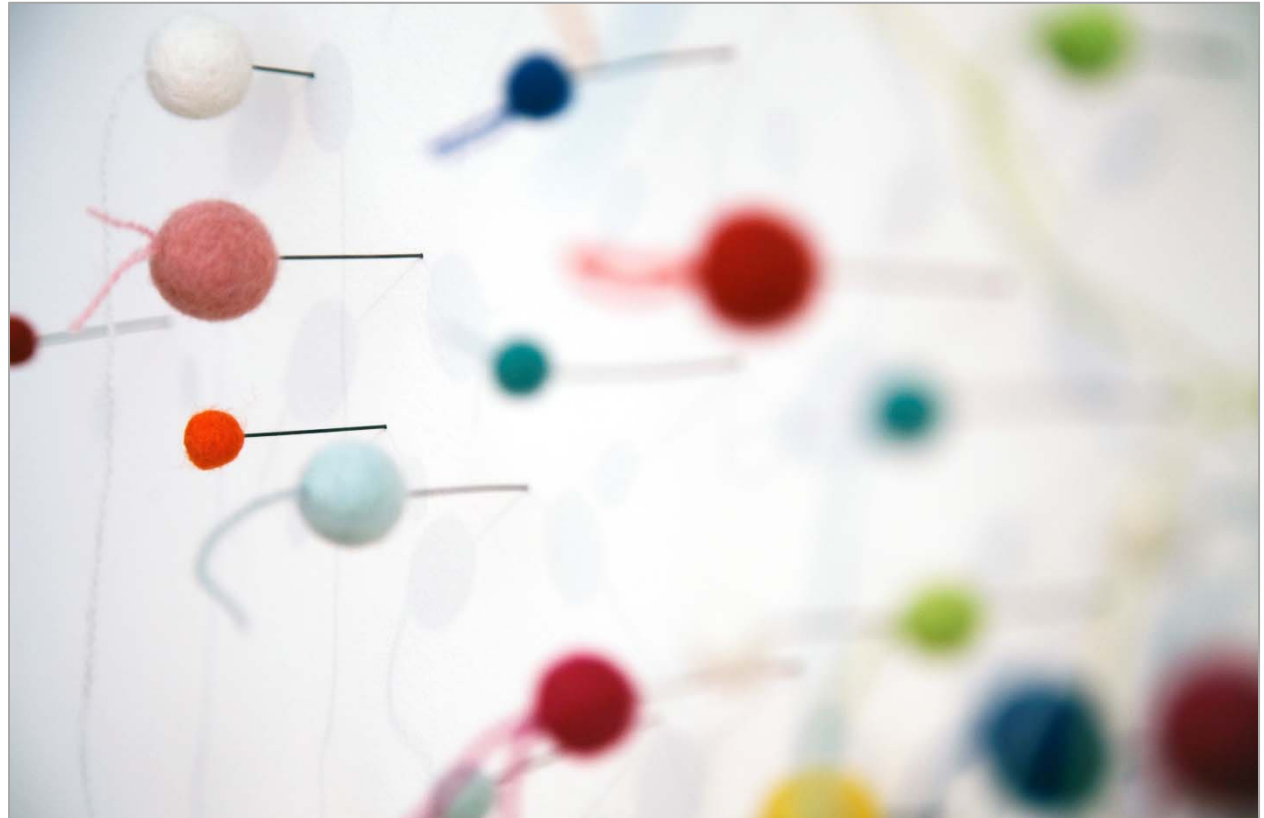


Figure 7. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Imagining

→↖↗↙←↑↓↘

→ The night sky stirs

↖ All things move

↗ I lose my footing

↙ Things as processes

← We've gone too far

↑ A particle becomes a wave

↓ The full moon, pregnant, forgets her name

↘ Imagination runs like a verb

↖ Vibrating membrane of sunlight

→ Saturated by neutrinos

↙ Imagination ceases, turns over the covers,

↖ In continual motion

↗ Reification activated as

← Imagining

← Moisture collects on the trellises of spider webs

↑ Rain drops reconfigure like magnets

↓ Sub-atomic connections

← Imagining, imagining...

An ecological sense of imagination challenges fragmented ontologies, such as those emerging from cultures subscribing to self-contained individualism.² This ensembled sense of an eco-
imagination is understood as a composite process *without place*, not a property of an individual apart from the world, but rather a process experienced by an individual (as a distinct and mobile composition of relations). From this perspective, imagination is *imagining*. It emerges from a back and forth oscillation of the individual with the world.

² In “Anthropology of the Self” (1994), Morris notes that self-contained individualism is marked by: (1) a firm boundary between the ‘self’ and the world, (2) a locus of control within the self, and (3) a conception of the self/non-self boundary as exclusionary. “That is, if one were to draw a circle marking off the region of the self from the region of the nonself, the circle would be drawn as to exclude others from the region defined as belonging to the self” (1988, p. 16). Many indigenous cultures, including aspects of Maori, Chewong, Japanese and Chinese (Confusian and Taoist) ontologies engage more ensembled or social form of individualism in which: (1) the self/non-self boundary is fluid, (2) the locus of control is viewed as located within a field and (3) the conception of the self/non-self boundary is including. Also see Sampson (1988).

“Perhaps one of the most well-known dilemmas in quantum physics is the “wave-particle duality paradox”: experimental evidence at the beginning of the twentieth century exhibited seemingly contradictory features—on the one hand, light seemed to behave like a wave, but under different experimental circumstances, light seemed to behave like a particle.” (Barad, 2007, p. 29)

Imagination is imagining
Process experienced.
Neither a body or a corpus
Without locale
Reification in exile.

Imagining is a migratory process, experienced, noticed, attended to.

Ecology as Process

By ecology, I am referring to an eco-ontology.

→↖↗↘←↑↓↘

Eco

- Pebble upon pebble
- ↖ Where is this dwelling place?
- ↓ Inhabit habitat
- ↗ Scatter these streets
- ← Wayfaring particle
- ↘ Peter Higgs: “tell me, tell me”
- ↖ Locate that field
- ↘ In this swarming village
- ↑ Orbiting, orbiting, home...

Onto

- On the way home, I found one existent being
- ↖ Two things named
- ↓ 32 parts, .23 portions, 56 particles,
- ↗ Innumerable wholes,
- ↖ And one continuous wave
- ↘ I lost count
- ↘ Of things-overlapping
- ← Ontology as a cartography of relations...

Ology

- ↗ Each night she studies the moon
- ↖ Through the body of her telescope
- ↗ Noticing its currents
- ↘ Recording the surface indentations
- Weighing that velvet light
- ↖ .02167 micrograms per stream of photons
- ← Transecting luminous paths
- ↘ Radiating subatomic analyses...

- Ecology is understood as an ontological position that recognizes:
- (1) The complexity, distinctness and interdependence of all cosmological forms, and
 - (2) The porous inter-constitution of forms as lived environments.

“To be one is always to become with many” (Haraway, 2008, p. 3-4).

Not after listening to me, but after listening to the account, one does wisely in agreeing that all things are one.”

– Heraclitus, Fragment 50 (in Robinson, 1987, p. 37)

Heraclitus said that “all things are one”, however, his declaration does not necessarily disregard the existence of distinct things. Both his and Haraway’s sense of interdependence does not signify a joining of all into one. Like Haraway (2008), my own view of the coexistence of one with many moves beyond biophysical dependence to recognize that the ‘many’ that constitute porous wholes “make consciousness possible” (p. 4) and in this sense is not making a claim for monism (at least not at this point of my juncture), but rather a recognition of distinction with interdependence. This sense of this eco-ontology problematizes binarist ontologies of both substance monism and dualism, and species separation and human autonomy while acknowledging that the interpenetration of one *with many* is fundamental to the experience of being.

“We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and are not.”
–Heraclitus, Fragment 49a (in Robinson, 1987, p. 35)

In an eco-ontology of one with many, things exist as both parts and wholes.
The constitution of a part and/or whole is dependent upon perspectival angle and scope through
which variable inter-relationships are determined.

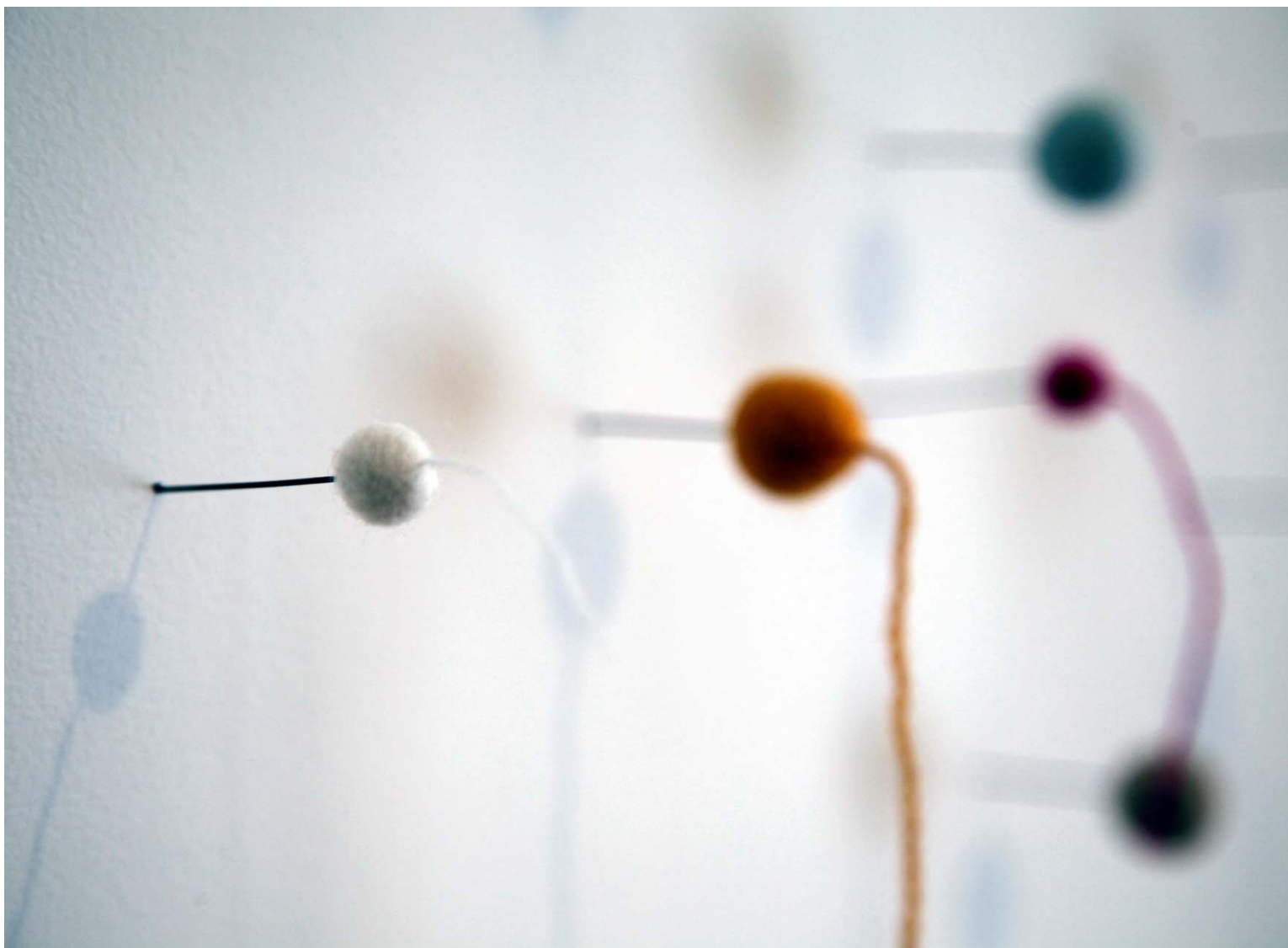


Figure 8. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Thinking Through

“Out in space, away from the Sun and stars, the universe is flooded by them.
Even you are producing them.
Traces of radioactivity from the potassium and calcium in your bones and teeth produce
neutrinos...
...so as you read this, you are irradiating the universe...” (Close, 1987, p. 2).

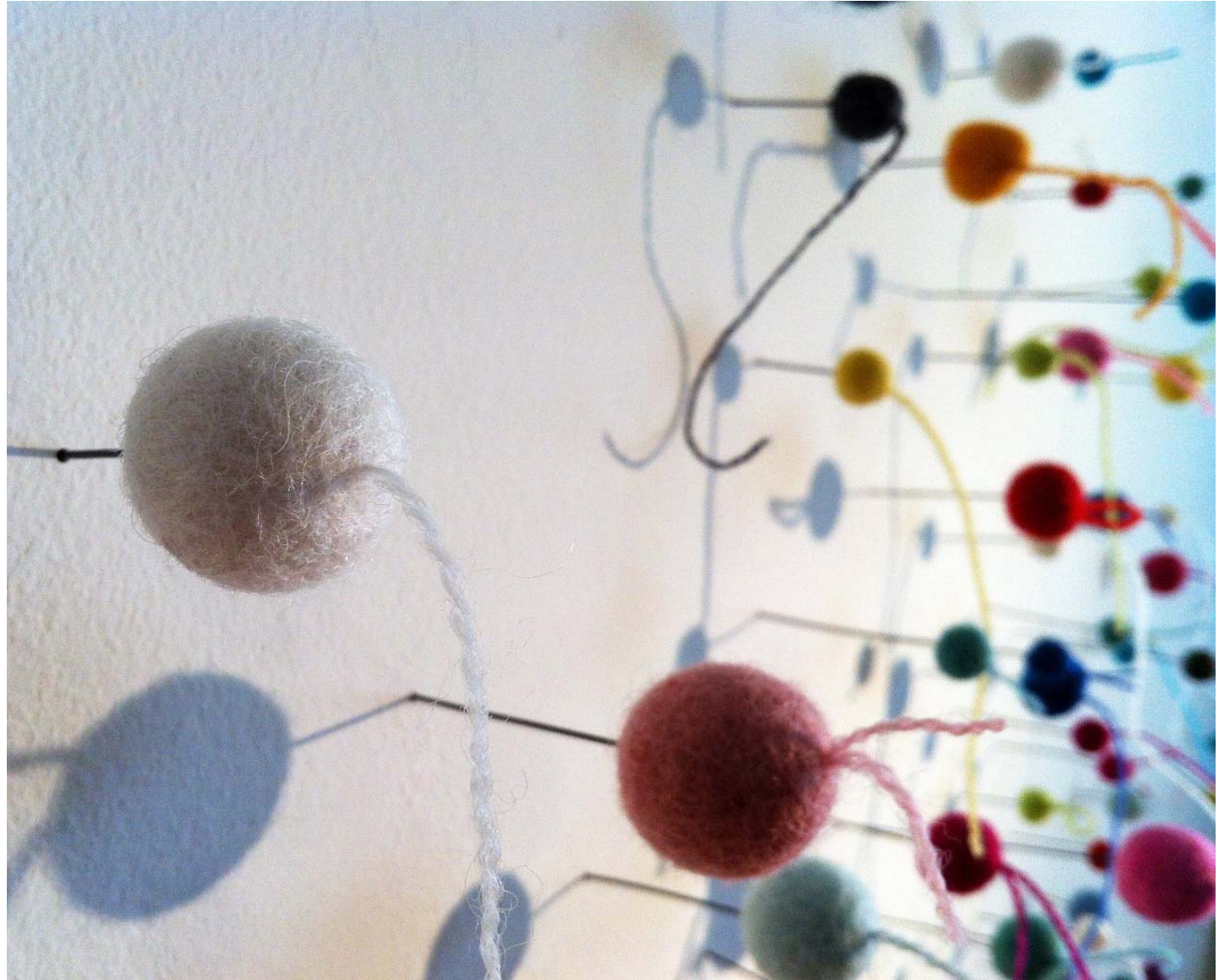


Figure 9. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

→↖↗↘←↑↓↙

→ Industrious song of the undergrowth
 ↖ The thinking of things

↗ Draw a circle
 ↖ Isolate this memory
 → Fragile shape, dotted line
 ↘ Cling, cleave, tornado thoughts

← Trapped syllables
 ↑ Anthropomorphic speech

↓ Wet intelligence
 ↘ The body of the world
 ↖ Marinated by the patterns of the mind
 → Participation awash

↖ A line between two points
 → Expanded
 ← Particles burst their seams

↘ Electron-Tau-Muon
 ← Raging oscillation
 ↖ Thought gesticulations
 ↑ Cosmic maps stained by consciousness
 ↗ You are here
 ← In these woods
 ↖ With this world
 ↓ Thinking dependencies

“... There is no inner man [*sic*], man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself”

(Merleau-Ponty, 2002, xii).

Thinking is not an individual possession but an inherently collaborative process.

“Are there other ways to think besides in language? Of course. But perhaps a better way to say that is, there are other languages to think in; the languages of mathematics, the languages of music, languages of color, shape and gesture. Language is what something becomes when you think in it. The forest thinks in trees, and in smaller vascular plants, mosses and fungi. Life as we know it thinks, it seems in nucleic acids. Humans often, but not always, think in sentences and stories.” (Bringhurst, 2002, p. 163)

“The proposition that the world is empty of thinking is an interesting myth in itself: one that has proven heuristically useful as well as hugely destructive. Yet it’s an odd myth—and so is any other – for a thinker to believe. Myths are theses, not beliefs” (Bringhurst, 2002, p. 165).

Thinking is a process that is dependent upon the world. Here we encounter prepositional limits. We think *through-as-with* the world. As Bringhurst shows, thinking is best defined with a circle drawn with a wide circumference, a circle drawn with a dotted line. Thinking here might be understood of as an experience intimately entwined with ecological interdependence of things with the world.

“Whether with humans, animals, or other forms in the cosmological world...”relationships are the smallest possible patterns for analysis; the partners and actors are their still-ongoing products”
(Haraway, 2008, p. 25-26).

Does the sub-atomic world contribute to the processes of thinking? As neutrinos pass through the calcified matter of my cranium without my notice?



Figure 10. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

“Because of the general direction that Greek philosophy took from its very beginnings, in Asia Minor, it was virtually impossible for [many] Greek philosophers to think ecologically in any systematic way. To begin with, the Greeks would not have considered an understanding of ecological relationships in nature to be knowledge. Objects of knowledge, like the ultimate objects of reality, were believed to be permanent, eternal and unchanging. Ecological relationships, in contrast, are concerned with objects that are impermanent, perishable and in a constant state of change.” (Hargrove, 1989, p. 21-22)

“Thinking of” transcends nature, it is thinking about the world. This form of thinking, thinking about the world from a distance, thinking projected from the isolated individual is a form of thinking that emerges from a milieu of self-contained individualism. In cultures subscribing to ensembled views of the individual (numerous indigenous cultures, including aspects of Maori, Chewong, Japanese and Chinese (Confusian and Taoist)) the self/non-self boundary is fluid, the locus of control is viewed as located within a field and the conception of the self/non-self boundary is including (Morris, 1994; Sampson, 1988). Within these varying ensembled milieus, thinking involves *thinking through*.³

³ In writing on *thinking through* I have encountered what I feel are the limits of prepositions. If we are both a distinct configurations of relations that are porously connected to the world then it is possible that we think *with-though-as* the world. I use *thinking through* here, to emphasis porosity but not to exclude the prepositional and ontological possibilities of thinking *with* and *as*.

An eco-ontological sense of imagining is a process of *thinking through*.

The World

In 2010 Frank Close (2010) noted that... “of all the things in the universe, the commonest and weirdest are neutrinos. Able to travel through the earth like a bullet through a bank of fog, they are so shy that half a century after their discovery we still know less about them than all the other varieties of matter that have ever been seen” (p. 1).



“...the world is always ‘already there’ before reflection begins” (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. vii).

→↖↗↘←↑↓↙

↘ prior to taking the account

← preceding, following, continuing

↑ what-is

↘ a field wherein

↘ perception and thinking

→ entangle and unfold

← constituents constituted

→ On the first day you held an object in your hand,

↖ small as it was, I dreamed it isolated.

↗ On the second day, I saw myself a thing in myself

↘ The third, an external reality

← The fourth, a construction

↑ The fifth, an appearance

↓ The sixth day, the calendar collapsed beneath the weight of relativity

↘ The object, small as it was,

↖ stained the taught surface of your skin,

↗ pink like raspberries.

↘ Seeds scattering, shapes shifting.

→ A moment, attempting articulation,

← Following the pattern of decades before

↑ OverlappingLivedEnvironmentsOverlappingLivedEnvironments

↘ Awash, one with many

↓ That field where my mother picked fruit

↖ I know it was there

↘ Inundated with hazy borders

“The world is not an object such that I have in my possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions. Truth does not ‘inhabit’ only ‘the inner man’ [sic], or more accurately, there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself.” (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, xi-xii)

The world is an entangled field of relations that exists prior to and with instances of perception, thinking, articulation and description. I propose, as I believe Zwicky does as well that there is only one world, but many ways of seeing, yet the world exists prior to taking account. My hypothesis is that the world is not an external object or environment, nor is it an appearance or construction. The world is an entangled field of relations, of which we are part. The world is both what-is and what-is described.⁴ Language is a part of the world.

⁴ What-is is the ontology of being, the experience of existence that cannot be expressed through language (which always generalizes). I believe that Zwicky argues that while it is not possible to describe what-is, it is possible to see-as what-is, to echo being through a particular form of attentiveness to thisness – “an utter particular” (Bifford, 2010, p. 195)

“Reality is... the framework of relations with which all appearances tally” (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, p. 349).

The world here, can be understood as an encompassing whole that is interconnected, shifting, relational and known through experience but not determined wholly by human experience, it runs through and beyond anthropocentric confines. There is only one world which lacks the particularity of (non-identical) things. It is a structural whole wherein experience unfolds.



Figure 12. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Noticing

I has been suggested that for “neutrinos, there is no such thing as pressure, since the particles don’t even notice each other, let alone other particles or light.” (Lemonick, 1993, p. 41)

What is it to notice?

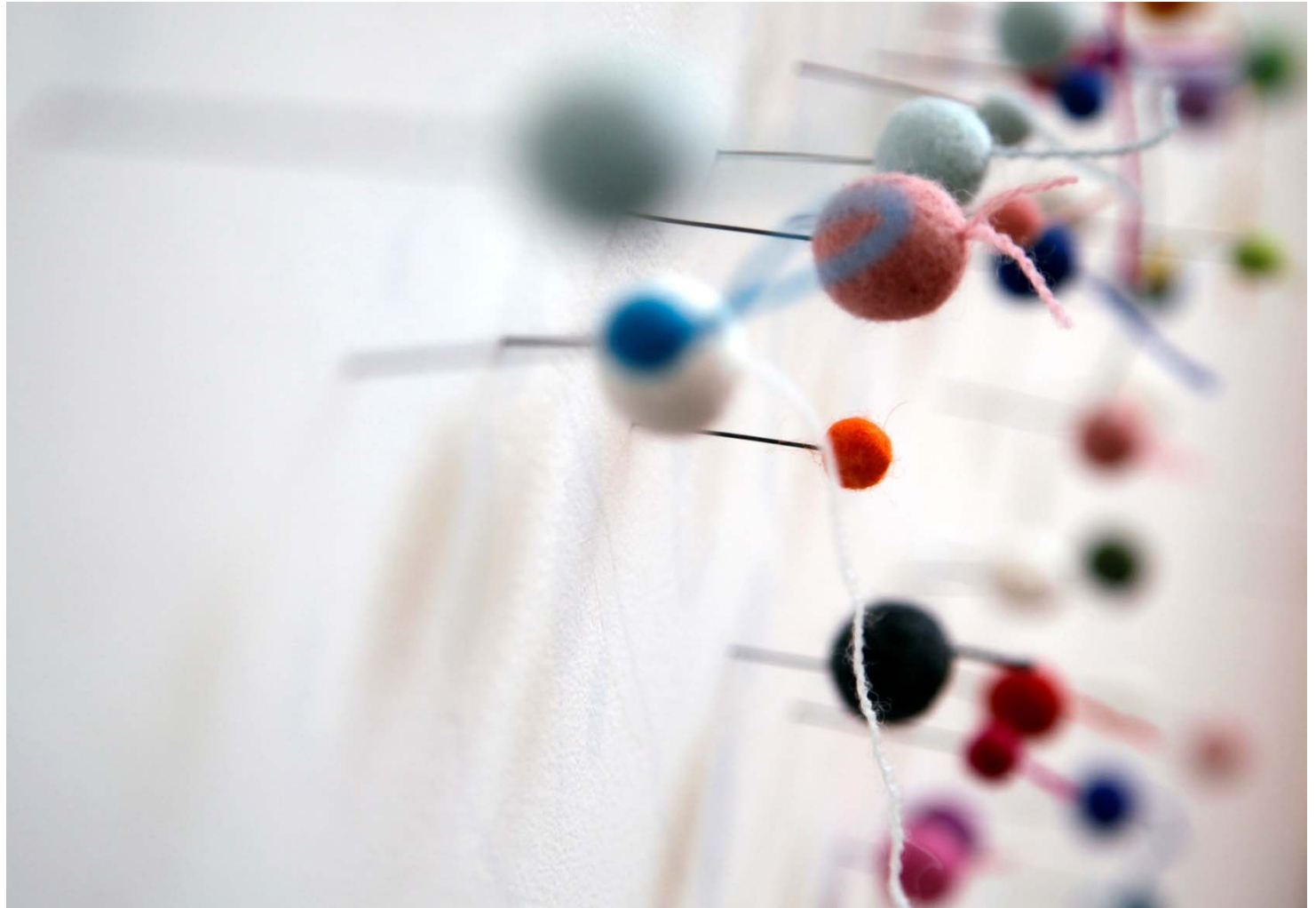


Figure 13. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

→↖↗↙←↑↓↘

→ My neutrino oblivion

↑ Awakened from that sober sky

↖ By an onrush of photons

↗ Germinating daybreak's pause.

↖ There you stir

← small orange banded kinglet,

→ vibrant, your black eyes

↙ syncopated, your steps

← plush, the speckled dome of your body.

↓ Exposed I, in the noticing of you.

Standing on the **edge** of our **perspectival field**, we notice what is already there. Imagining is an act of noticing. Noticing is an act of attention. Standing on the edge of our perspectival field, we **notice** what is already there. Imagining is an act of noticing. Noticing is an act of attention. Standing on the edge of our perspectival field, we notice **what is already there**. Imagining is an act of noticing. Noticing is an act of attention. Standing on the edge of our perspectival field, we notice what is already there. **Imagining** is an act of noticing. Noticing is an act of attention. Standing on the edge of our perspectival field, we notice what is already there. Imagining is an act of **noticing**. Noticing is an act of attention. Standing on the edge of our perspectival field, we notice what is already there. Imagining is an act of noticing. Noticing is an act of attention. Standing on the edge of our perspectival field, we notice **what is already there**. Imagining is an act of noticing. Noticing is an act of **attention**. Standing on the edge of our perspectival field, we notice what is already there. Imagining is an act of noticing. Noticing is an **act of attention**.

To notice is to attend to what is present. A presence in motion.
To become aware of something, to observe its' unfolding, to acknowledge, treat attentively,
to distinguish by particular attention.

Attentiveness “consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, ready to be penetrated... empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive...” (Weil, 1999, p. 117)

Attention, in this sense, is not an investigative stance, of the outsider watching the other but rather open attentiveness to the particularity of things. Open attentiveness is dependent upon syncopation; a disrupted direction, an unknown outcome, the letting go of social codes and assumptions to meet the situation as it is.

“... Rather than making oneself uniform, we may find greater value for the enrichment of knowledge by listening to the soft voice of different life situations; each brings its own views with it. Thus we acknowledge and share the life and nature of many by not treating ourselves like rigid, invariable, single individuals.” (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 189)

“All wrong translations... all clumsiness of style and all faulty connection of ideas... all such things are due to the fact that thought has seized upon some idea too hastily and being thus prematurely blocked, is not open the truth. The cause is always that we have wanted to be too active; we have wanted to carry out a search.” (Weil as cited in Miles, 2005, p. 8)

Method for attentiveness:

“The weight of all things must be determined anew.” (Nietzsche. 2006, p. 226)

Attentiveness requires being present with the complexity of the entangled world. It is predicated on the limits of knowledge and the hypothesis that assumptions and assertions are illusively stable foundations. Knowledge in this sense is a possibility upon which other possibilities can be built. Attentive understanding emerges from seeing what-is there and by seeing what-is there, we wound the framework of assumptions so that they are split open, exposed and reconfigured within a complex intermingling of un-knowable variables.

“The poet produces the beautiful by fixing his [sic] attention on something real. It is the same with the act of love. To know that this man who is hungry and thirsty exists as much as I do – that is enough, the rest follows of itself. The authentic and pure values of truth, beauty and goodness – the activity of a human being are the result of one and the same act, a certain application of the full attention of the object.” (Weil, 2008, p. 119-120)

Imagining is not merely the static reproduction of things, it is an experiential act, a process of noticing existing relations amongst things. Noticing is an act of attention.



Figure 14. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Existent Threads of Relationality

Neutrinos shift; neutrinos interact.

→↖↗↙↘↕↔↞↠↡↢↣↤↥↦↧↨↩↪↫↬↭↮↯↰↱↲↳↴↵↶↷↸↹↺↻↼↽↾↿↺↻↼↽↾↿↺↻↼↽↾↿

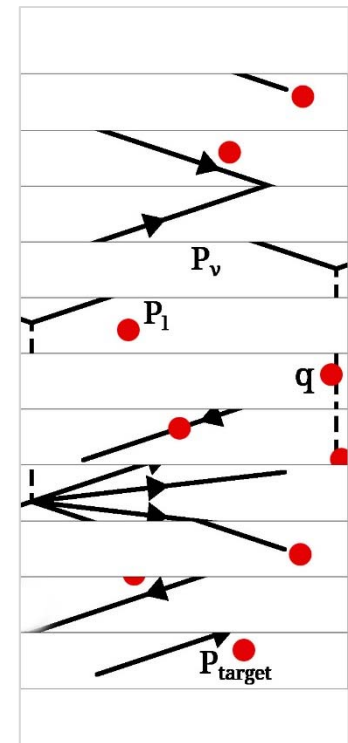


Figure 15. Neutrino Relations.
Diagrammatic prose of a generic neutrino interaction with a target.

I am interested in a sense of imagining that is fundamentally relational. It is relational in two senses, in its *emergence* and *occurrence*. By *emergence*, I am referring to the complex set of ecological experiences that we encounter and *think through* over time. Emergent experience influences the form and the content of our *occurrences* (processes) of imagining. In this way, imagining does not materialise from the individual as an isolated, singular act but rather is integrally dependent upon an ecology of emergence. The emergence of imagining shapes what I am referring to as *occurrences* of imagining whereby particular existent threads of relations are noticed, attended to and, at times, articulated through various means. In other words, the noticing of existent threads of relations is the activity of imagining that *occurs* within a relational field of ongoing emergence.

It is the emergence and occurrence of an ecological sense of imagining that I am focusing on when I reiterate that *imagining is an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena*. Many other senses of imagination exist, however, I believe this ecological sense of imagining provides an ontological clearing for cultures adopting more ensemble views of the individual, many of which have been marginalized by alternate understandings of imagination (Zwicky, 2011, 2012; Sheridan & Longboat, 2006).

To situate imagination inside a particular cognitive faculty of an individual and refer to imagination as a possession of that individual (as in “Oh my! She has an active imagination!” or “I used my imagination!”) presupposes a form of imagination that is rooted in an ontology of self-contained individualism. Privileging this view of imagination disregards ensembled ontologies where the loci of control for thinking is not individually situated (such numerous indigenous cultures, including aspects of North American First Nations, Maori, Chewong, Japanese and Chinese (Confusian and Taoist) (Morris, 1994; Sampson, 1988; Sheridan & Longboat, 2006). If in ensemble worldviews, the self/non-self boundary is fluid, and the locus of control is viewed as located within a field, then one way to provide an ontological clearing is to desituate imagination from being contained within the “separate self”, and to activate it as a process of *thinking through* that is mobile and without place.

To notice an existent relation is different from constructing a relation. Noticing is an act of paying attention to *what-is* there. *What-is* presented to us, at any given moment differs from person to person, dependent upon the emergent relations which make up our experiential field. Following Zwicky, I would like to draw attention to a sense of imagining that is not a form of “making it up” (Zwicky, 2003, p. 114L). What I am interested in is imagining that is an act of noticing truths of relations that exist in the world.

The relations exist and are noticed. Noticing itself shifts relations. Relations are mobile.

“It is to see the face in the chaos of lines. And the face is there, we aren’t making it up... But all that confronts us is the world, gesturing at us. The world has patterns, of which thinking is a part. It makes us feel good to experience these patterns: it’s a way of coming home.”
(Zwicky, 2003, p. 114L)

My questioning of imagining, as a process of *noticing existent threads* of relationality, has been inspired by my reading of Zwicky's notion of resonance. Resonance can be seen as an ontological theory of a particular form of relational experience that is in attunement with the ecological patterns that exist in the world. This particular form of relationality offers one possibility for envisioning the occurrence of imagining as an attentive ecological experience. What follows is a mapping of resonance that begins with Zwicky's work and is extended to germinate *this ecological imagining*.

Imagining is a process of noticing *resonant* relations.

“Sensitivity to resonance is what we call imagination” (Zwicky, 2003, p. 60L).

In acoustics, resonance is the “intensification and prolongation of sound produced by a sympathetic vibration”. (Canadian Dictionary of the English Language, 1998, p. 1167). Through sympathetic vibrations, resonant sounds echo, coagulating at particular frequencies, at moments where motion reverberates with a body. Where the corpus of a particle is a vibrational string and a vibrational string is a body. Resonance engages a sympathetic relationship with the body, whether that body is a particulate, an instrument, a human body or another being in the world.

Resonance is concerned with vibrational waves in matter. An acoustically resonant body will elect its resonance frequency from complex vibrations, superseding all frequencies except its resonance.

To be resonant with the world involves being with that world. Ontological resonance is a sympathetic vibration between two wholes that occupy the same space.

Zwicky (2003) tells us that there is a resonant structure to the world and to experience the what-is of the world, we must be attentive to its shape and echo its patterns. We must, in a sense, see-as the world to experience resonance.

The experience of resonance is a prolonged intensification and reverberation of a sympathetic engagement with a whole resulting from fixed attention on something real... resonance is “a way of coming home” (Zwicky, 2003, p. LH 104)

“Being is the interconnectedness, the resonant ecology, of things” (p. LH 86).

Interconnected wholes are composed of complementary yet divergent parts, of the first spark of daylight emerging from void of darkness, of certainty and uncertainty resting side by side underneath a sheet of silence, of the both-/and. It is through attentiveness to the patterned threads that echo through “the particular” of interconnected wholes that we resonantly engage imagination (Bifford, 2010, p. 195). “Sensitivity to resonance—is what we call the imagination” (p. LH 60)

““The eyes are windows.” This changes, among other things, the way we understand houses” (Zwicky, 2003, p.L77).

The process of imagining, in this sense, emerges out of a field of relations as an experiential occurrence of noticing resonance, as the existent patterned relations among particular things. Imagining, thus, is a fundamentally relational process of making connections and is dependent upon an ecological field of interdependent relations. It is not an isolated vacuous faculty of the individual separate from the world but is a result of being *with* the world. Walking down the street, past houses shadowed with trees, exposed through sunlight, streaming through the air, thoughts move, thinking is penetrating, permeated, and reverberates with the world in an onrush of collaborative-individual consciousness. Noticing connections, inspirations of relations that enter, as an inhale, through porous membranes into the micro-organisms that constitute this being. These lines between being with this self and with the world are at best hazy, momentary and continuous, a deluge of exchange that is and is not contained. Despite attempts to cling, to solidify, calcify, and taxonomize, things defy, escape, and rub up against each other residually, *things are things*, porous and reverberating.

Things are things in that a thing is defined as *a distinct configuration of relations*.

“Look,’ said Rhoda; “listen. Look how the light becomes richer, second by second, and bloom and ripeness lie everywhere; and our eyes, as they range round this room with its tables, seem to push through curtains of colour, red, orange, umber, and queer ambiguous tints, which yield like veils and close behind them, and one thing melts into another.” (Woolf, 2008, p. 110)

This eco-ontological imagining is a process of noticing resonance, of attending to existent relations among distinct phenomena.



Figure 15. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Distinct Phenomena

Neutrinos are amongst the tiniest quantities “of reality ever imagined by a human being” (Reines,
as cited in McGowan, 2003, p. 5).

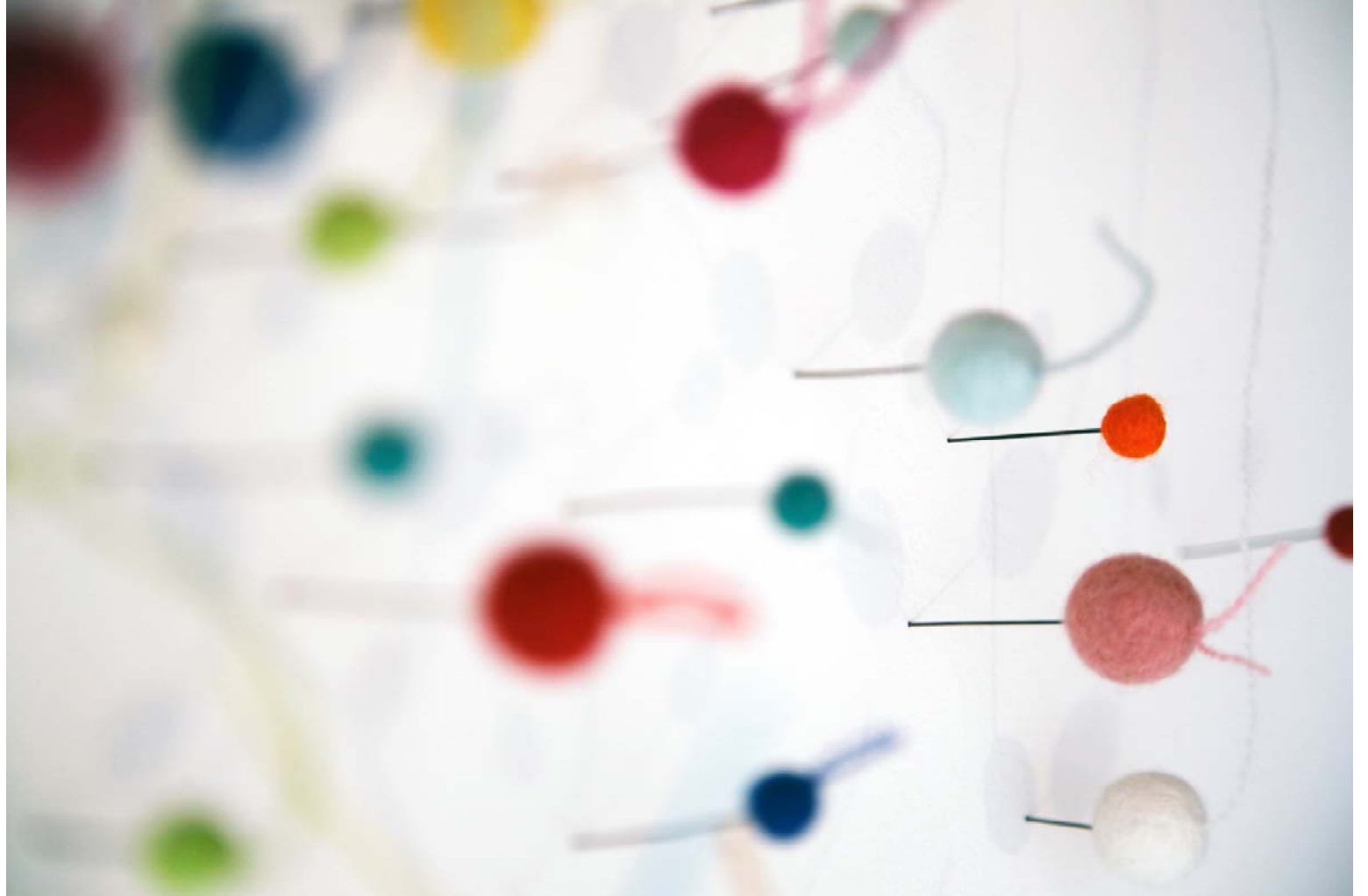


Figure 16. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

→↖↗↘←↑↓↘

↑ Distinct quantities of reality

↖ Minute inspirations

↗ In the summer of 1977

→ I ran the evening outside

↘ Warm air, elfin flickers of light

← Sisters sandwiched on either sides

↑ Mason jars in our hands

↘ Poised to capture

→ murmuring enclaves of fireflies

↖ Distinct entities, detained

↗ Mesmerizing, those photon tails

↘ Seized

← Held captive

↑ In the specimen jar

↓ As a thing named

↘ As a corpus solidified

↘ And upon an exhale of release

← A particle is a wave

Things are distinct. Things are porous.
Things are interdependent.
Rigid bodies are a theoretical supposition.
Particles are things. Particles are packets of energy.
Particles are waves.
As distinct compositions of relations,
a thing is determined relationally.

In mapping imagining through resonance, an ontology of relational distinction is necessary.⁵
Resonance is based on ontological attentiveness to the interconnectedness of all things, things
involving distinction.

“Resonance is indeed a function of the attunement of various distinct components of a whole. But
their distinctness is crucial: resonance involves the carrying-over of an impulse from one
component to another. If components are fused, a resonant relation between them is
impossible.” (Zwicky, 2003, p. LH, 47)

⁵ The metaphor of mapping has been particularly important to my research process and to understanding the process of imagining. My interest in mapping is not for the purpose of situating “imagination” as a sign post but rather to engage with one possible way of seeing. The map once held in the hand is a device used for navigating; it is an active device that becomes meaningful in use. In mapping one viable sense of imagining, I hope to engage the reader in active dialogue – to collaborate, question, enrich, augment and alter this sense of imagining while navigating their path, our paths intersecting.

Resonance is dependent upon the sympathetic reverberation of things whose distinct compositions are determined by their mobile sets of relations. Resonance is dependent upon both attunement and distinction, yet the distinction should not be interpreted as dissonance, isolation or separation. There are no rigid bodies. An ontology of self-contained individualism, of things isolated, separate, or solidified results in the limiting of resonance. If resonance is a sympathetic vibration between two wholes then the separation of things as isolated parts and the calcification of thought could be considered impediments to eco-imagining and resonant processes. As Simone Weil says “a fixed point of view is the root of injustice.” (Weil, as cited in Zwicky, 2003, p. RH 69).

Imagining thus mapped is an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent threads of relationality amongst distinct phenomena, distinct things being porous.

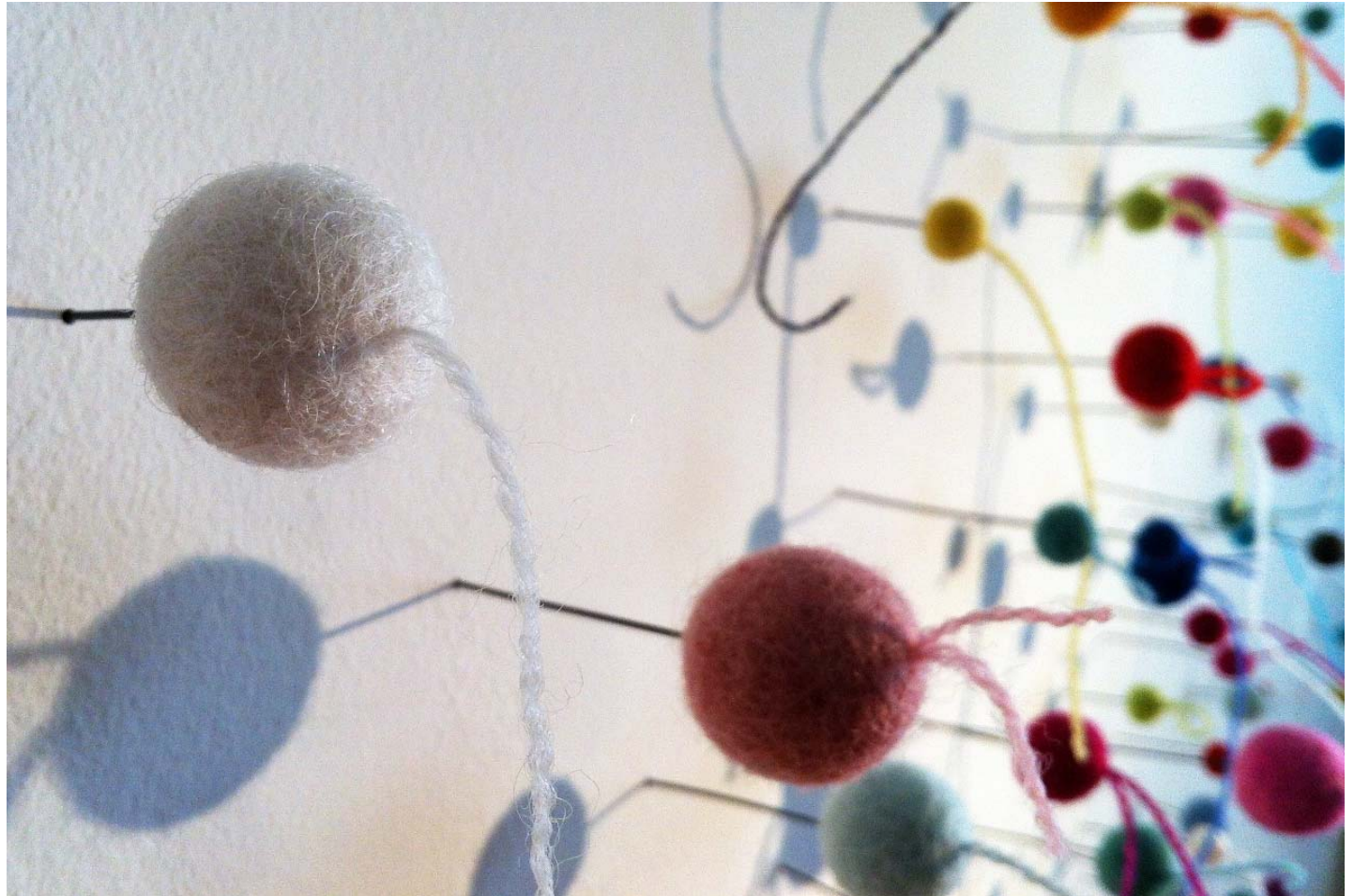


Figure 17. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Allow me this retelling of a story:

→↖↗↘←↑↓↘
↖ Imagining, Imagining,
↗ 37 years ago -
↘ sky awash
← sub-atomic flickers
↘ an ecology of one
↗ with many
↓ The night air pierced our thinking
↑ through an entangled field of relations
← The stars were given titles,
↑ and noticed,
↓ in absence of their names.
↘ And then after days stunned by the sun's light
← And the absence of darkness
↖ We searched
↗ those incandescent bodies.
↘ They still existed,
↘ Traces were detected.
↓ We weren't making it up,
↖ this sympathy between
↗ planetary fireflies
↘ those neutrino waves.

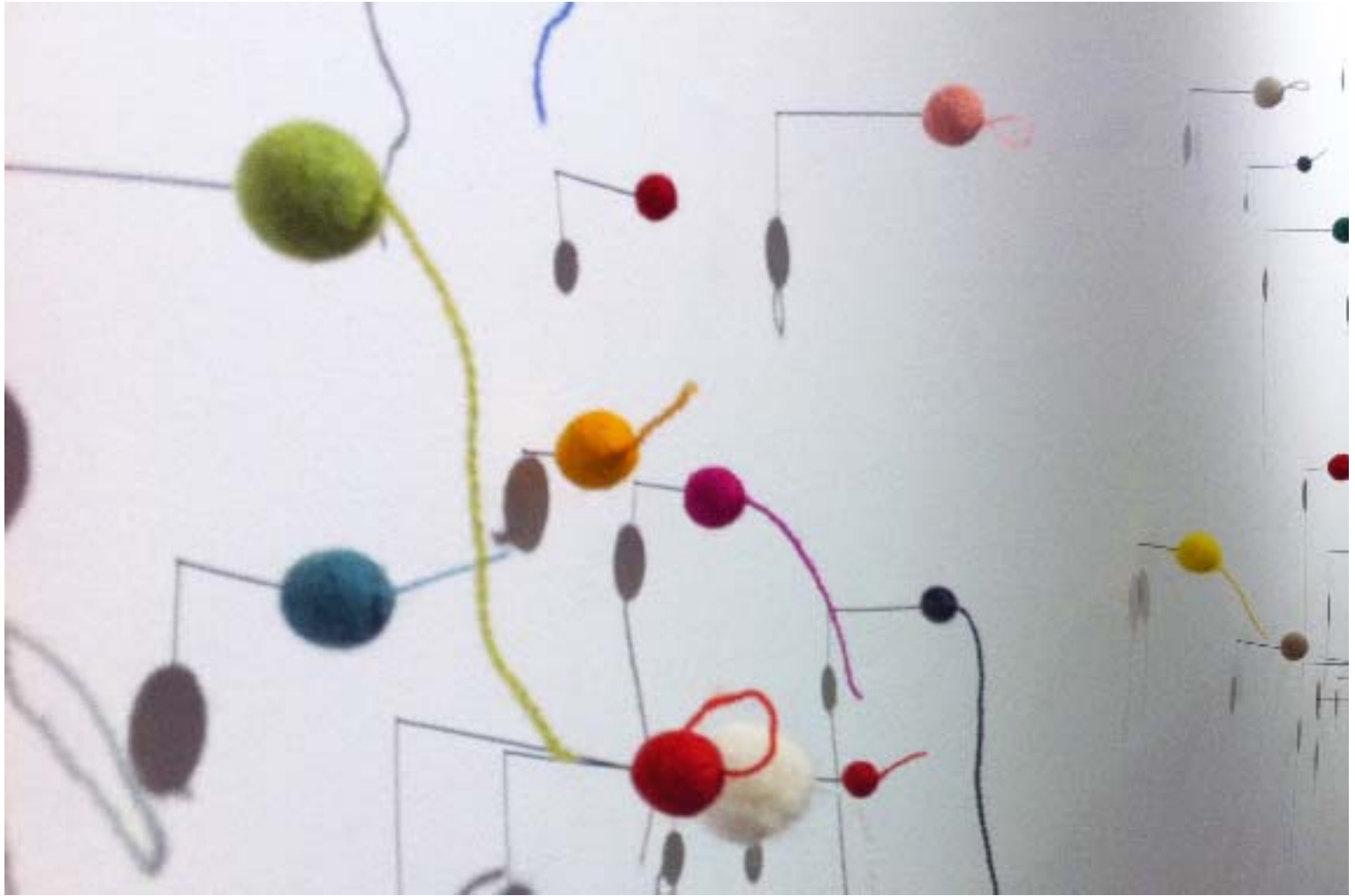


Figure 18. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

Some pages ago, we began in Higgs' field, an imperceptible amphitheatre where all matter is thought to originate. Here, several sheets later, following the metaphorical path of a neutrino, we pause in an emergent relational field: *this ecological imagining*.

Neutrinos are among smallest known particles, with a mass so small that it is immeasurable. Even though neutrinos pass through all matter imperceptibly and all matter originates in Higgs' field, the jury is still out on whether Higgs' field and neutrinos intersect at all. The number of neutrinos passing through our bodies at any moment is impossible to quantify. The outpouring of variables within our relational fields from which the process of imagining emerges is equally immeasurable. Yet, imagining unfolds within a field of relations. The emergence of imagining and its occurrence as an act of noticing particular sets of existent relations is inherently ecological, in its interdependence and in its state of continual motion. Imagining thus is not a faculty of the individual, it is an unplaceable process. Imagining is a noun in exile, a particle without place.

"The complexity of things becomes more close... especially now, when I have left a room... and I behold the moon rising, sublimely, indifferently, over the ancient chapel - then it becomes clear that I am not one and simple, but complex and many" (Woolf, 2008, p. 61)



Figure 19. Detail of *Fingertip Cartographies (As We Name Them the Planets Dance)*; Installation at Xchanges Gallery; Merino wool, crewel wool, pins; January 2015; Photograph by Luis Mario Guerra

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Book 6

A Pedagogical Engagement:

In Three Movements

After Calvino: Mitosis, Light-Years and Waves

Connie Michele Morey

A Pedagogical Engagement In Three Movements After Calvino: Mitosis, Light-Years and Waves

“What does man [sic] actually know of himself? Is he, indeed, ever able to perceive of himself completely, as if laid out in a lighted display case?” (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 115)

Come wander with me a while, through this essay.¹ Let the gait of our movements unfold as the pace of two waves, which, at times, flow along steadily beside each other for a stretch and then, at any moment, turn in different directions, depending upon a host of complex variables. Come let us stretch the intricate perimeters of *thinking through* each other through the world.² As Nietzsche notes, there are limits to human knowing. Yet we are continually struggling to understand. I am particularly interested in epistemological limits, not as a way to suggest humility (false or genuine) but rather as a way to engage and explore the value of limits. As an art educator who has spent some time considering what it might mean to envision and enact an ecological sense of imagination, epistemological limits have become an important aspect of my research. Through this process, it has occurred to me that it is within limits that we engage in a process of questioning, of asking, of thinking through each other in divergent ways. It is when I do not know or when I am in a space of feeling free not to have to know, that I am invited to explore multiple perspectives to see how things might be for others.

¹ A few years ago I went to the CSEA (Canadian Society for Education through Art) conference in Edmonton. At the conference, one of the most meaningful presentations I attended was by Kit Grauer, Rita Irwin and Adrienne Boulton-Funke. Bolton-Funke was completing her PhD at UBC at the time. Her portion of the talk focused, in part, on the role of unplanned moments in research and teaching practice. She said something that I’ve remembered since: “sometimes getting lost is a very productive thing to do” (2012). It struck me as important. As teachers and researchers planning seems incredibly important, yet our plans are more often interrupted and syncopated by the rhythms and presence of others, than not. In this way, our practice is more akin to wandering than we might like to think. I use the term wandering deliberately, with an understanding of the aimless quality that it can infer, but also with an understanding that it is in the state of openness, that wandering affords that we are truly able to be attentive to and open to ideas and others.

² I use the term *thinking through* throughout each essay/book, as a way to indicate an ontological position which is expressed through prepositional relations. *Thinking of* and *about*, I argue, express a different sense of relations that *thinking through*, *thinking with* or *thinking in*. *Thinking in*, indicates an inside-outside relation, *thinking with* indicates a proximity of side-by-side, however, when I *think through* – there is the possibility of the porosity of others and of thoughts, *thinking through* indicates movement. I also use the phrase *thinking through* in reference to drawing and feminist research on embodiment which references *thinking through* the body (see earlier writing Ahmad & Morey, 2011).

It seems to me that pedagogy is oft focused on knowing. Perhaps the drive for certitude is such an unavoidable part of the human condition that Nietzsche felt compelled to write this “fable”, which begins: “Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of “world history,” but nevertheless it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die.” (p. 114). And there is knowing, invented or not, unavoidable or not, certain or not. But what of unknowing? What of a process of education that makes some space for undoing knowing, for wandering in a space without certitude, for expanding, questioning and attending to an array of possibilities. It would involve as Nietzsche said, “that the weights of all things must be determined anew” (2006, p. 226).

My research during the last five years has focused on an explorative enactment of imagination as “an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent relations among distinct things.” Imagining is an experiential act, a process of engaging and noticing relations. This process could be understood as a practice centered on knowing in that it gives values to certain things over others and even the act of focusing attention implies a position and some commitment to certitude, however, perhaps it is possible to see this process as navigating statements, sentences, and knowing with an intended focus on positions, limits and possibilities.

My attempts to envision and enact an ecological sense of imagination through research, writing and studio practice have spilled over into the classroom and led me to inquire as to how ecology as an ontological position might enrich pedagogical practice within the art education classroom.³ How does an eco-ontology (the view that our various configurations of relations are the very things that make us distinct) impact and enrich classroom practice? My response to this question, in the writing that follows, is to share some of my experiences I have waded through in the process of researching, writing, practicing art and teaching while researching an eco-logical sense of imagining. As we continue, I invite you to wander with me through three movements, one which follows another, like a wave. This

³ Ecology is understood as an ontological position that recognizes: (1) the complexity, distinctness and interdependence of all cosmological forms, and (2) the porous inter-constitution of forms as lived environments. It notes that various configurations of relations are the things which make us distinct.

repercussive process is very much how I understand thinking to unfold. The movements are not meant to be a comprehensive teaching philosophy but rather are stories and reflections that are entered through Calvino's (1983, 2002) imaginative and ontological writings on *Mitosis*, *Light-Years* and *Waves*, as ways to envision topics that center around noticing relations as rich ways of being-with-the-world. By sharing experiences, I hope to be attentive to the readers own history, path and unfolding by allowing some space for others to enter and interpret, much like one would an art work. My hope is to open up possibility, rather than narrow it. Calvino's writing on *Mitosis* (2002) allows me to discuss the risky topic of love in the classroom; *Light-Years* (2002) intersects with the pace of classroom practice; and the composition *Reading a Wave* (1983) leads me to consider the process of *thinking through* as a form of collaborative pedagogical engagement. What these three distinct stories share in common is that relations are the smallest possible patterns for understanding; noticing relations requires a form of deep attentiveness that is central to this project. Each section of the writing that follows includes purposeful intersections of "fiction" and "non-fiction"; as a practice-based researcher and arts educator, thinking through both of these forms have been important and intentional parts of my process. If it is possible to know, and I think it is, then by vulnerably acknowledging limits we open up the rich area of perspectives on knowing. *Thinking through* both "fiction" and "non-fiction" - what might seem like "incommensurable" forms of articulations - affords a space for connectivity and a noticing of relations to occur for the writer and the reader. I suspect that it is within that meeting of the self, the other and the world that the fundamental human need to connect, as a part of the ecology that is, is attended to.

MOVEMENT 1

"Mitosis" or How Dare You Talk about Love in the Classroom

"...Truth is the result of attention. (As opposed to inspection.)
Of looking informed by love. Of really looking"
(Zwicky, 2003, p. LH102).

...And when I say 'dying of love'... I mean something you have no idea of, because you think falling in love has to signify falling in love with a person, or thing, or what have you, in other words I'm here and what I'm in love with is there, in short a relationship connected to the life of relationships, whereas I'm talking about the times before I had established any relationship between myself and anything else, there was a cell and the cell was me, and that was that. Now we needn't wonder if there were other cells around too, it doesn't matter, there was the cell that was me and it was already quite an achievement, such a thing is

more than enough to fill one's life, and it's this very sense of fullness I want to talk to you about. (Calvino, 2002, p. 209)

A student once suggested to me that love is an F-word in academics; I interpreted it to mean that it is a topic not commonly mentioned in classrooms and when mentioned, it is generally not taken seriously. This is not to say that it hasn't been studied but the student's comment resonated with the group and led our class to dive into a rigorous discussion of love to see why something so pivotal to human existence seems awkward on the pedagogical agenda. Exploring what it means to love requires a certain degree of vulnerability, perhaps, as Calvino suggests in his self-portrait as a cell, an exposed love of the self. In Sara Wilson McKay's (2009) article "The Space Between: Intersubjective Possibilities of Transparency and Vulnerability in Art Education", the author discusses the "spaces between", spaces between each other and the spaces between being present with the complex conglomeration that is known as the self. Wilson-McKay's paper explores the roles of transparency and vulnerability, as ways to allow for significant change in art education. I am interested in transparency and vulnerability as a way to engage with each other inside and through the porous walls of art education.

January 15th – Portfolio Project 1: One Piece of Advice

This is our second class – week two with a group of twenty-eight students in an introductory sculpture course. Only a few of them know each other. They are from different faculties, different study areas and diverse backgrounds. We discuss topics for their first sculpture project, a project introduced the previous class by asking students to write one piece of advice for themselves or for the world, with twenty gauge wire. The pieces of advice vary, some of them are more frequently mentioned and some of them more idiosyncratic; all are valued. One piece of advice that has come up before deals with the topic of love. It is a difficult subject to make innovative and/or engaging sculpture about; it is a difficult subject to talk about in a post-secondary environment, an environment that has historically valued rationality, logic and objectivity. This time a student offers a variation on the topic by advising the world and himself "to love". And so we dig in. *What does it mean to love? How do we develop an understanding of love that includes and goes beyond Paris, cartoon hearts and Valentine's Day? How welcome is this conversation in a post-secondary setting?* Perhaps the student who suggested that love is a taboo topic may be right.

We continue to question. We discuss how challenging it is to represent love in a non-stereotypical way. As one student points out, writing the word love with wire seems insincere if it's too perfect. It reminds her of factory-produced dollar store signs that didactically tell us to love, experience

joy and have peace.... as if it was as easy as all that. The class expresses that these factory-produced signs water down the complexity and beauty of the experience of love and make it sound as if it's a one size fits all experience. Writing the words "to love" in an awkward technically challenged way shows imperfection, makes it more believable and leads us to a discussion of vulnerability.

As a class, we mind-map the word love... we talk about associations, random associations, places that we associate with love, stereotypes of love, types of love, the opposite of love and loves dependency on those opposites. The students talk about vulnerability and connection, about the small space where one lays their head on someone else's shoulder and diverse moments where we show what seems like love to a stranger. We discuss how we might make a sculpture that represents love, as a complex experience and ideas are expanded. We use the most difficult topic as an example for how each of the students can develop varied ideas for sculptures representing their pieces of advice. I see connections unfolding before us, between this group of "strangers" on the second day of class. As each of us is transparent and vulnerable about a topic that is difficult to talk about, and I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to connect and engage with each other. The class on a whole seems to relax, breathe a sigh of relief and let down their guards a little. We aren't interested in right or wrong answers, we are in the process of probing meaningful questions and we have established a way of being together that cuts to the heart of what it means to engage with each other as vulnerable, imperfect human beings. It doesn't always happen like this but many times it does and the guards that separate us and stop us from being attentive to one another dissolve, just a little. It seems that deep attentiveness, may be a form of love, and a pre-requisite for depth of engagement and this form of connectedness is a fundamental human need.

The Huffington Post recently published an article citing new findings on addiction. I first read the article while the city that I live in, Victoria, on the west side of Canada, was engaging with controversies about a tent city that was set up on the lawn of the courthouse by a community of homeless people, many of them users. The article talks about the findings of Vancouver doctor and researchers Gabor Maté, Bruce Alexander and Peter Cohen which show that "the opposite of addiction is not sobriety. Its human connection" (as cited in Hari, 2015).

"Cohen argues that human beings have a deep need to bond and form connections. It's how we get our satisfaction. If we can't connect with each other, we will connect with anything we can find -- the whirr of a roulette wheel or the prick of a syringe. He says we

should stop talking about 'addiction' altogether, and instead call it 'bonding.' A heroin addict has bonded with heroin because she couldn't bond as fully with anything else.” (as cited in Hari, 2015)

What does this have to do with teaching? Everything. As Haraway (2008) says, “...relationships are the smallest possible patterns for analysis” (p. 25-26). Eco-attention is a hybrid term of ecology and attention. It is ecologically grounded in that it acknowledges that relations are not only the smallest patterns of analysis, but also for engagement. Attentiveness to relations is how we engage consciousness. Deep attentiveness is itself a form of love. When relations are attended to we fulfill very necessary biological, emotional, mental (and so on) needs within ourselves, we engage with the ecology of the world. And so we talk about love in the classroom.

MOVEMENT 2

“Light-Years” or Michael Marker Slows Down the Pace

“A galaxy located at ten billion light years from us would have a speed of recession equal to the speed of light, three hundred thousand kilometers per second” (Calvino, 2002, p. 123).

One night I was, as usual, observing the sky with my telescope. I noticed that a sign was hanging from a galaxy a hundred million light-years away. On it was written: I SAW YOU. I made a quick calculation: the galaxy’s light had taken a hundred million years to reach me, and since they saw up there what was taking place here a hundred million years later, the moment when they had seen me must date back two hundred million years. (ibid)

Some years ago, I attended a presentation of Michael Marker’s (2012) at the First Nations House at the University of Victoria. His presentation was on place, space and time from a Coast Salish perspective. The talk began slowly with music and stories; a discussion followed. As I participated with the presentation, I noticed that my pulse had slowed, my body had relaxed, yet I was fully engaged. The pace of the presentation differed from others I had attended before. My experience with many past presentations in and outside of classroom settings seems to be predicated on speed. How much information can you pack into twenty, thirty, fifty minutes? There have been times that I, myself, in planning and delivering a presentation have felt as if I was approaching the speed of light. Dr. Marker’s presentation seemed quite different from the majority of presentations I had given or attended and it radically changed the way I view my practice as an artist, writer, researcher and educator. His talk left

spaces for pause and in that pause I actively entered. After the talk, I began thinking about the pace of academics and how the speed of things influences our abilities to reflect, and engage attentively.

Simone Weil's notion of attentiveness is predicated on waiting. Where attentiveness "consists of suspending our thought, leaving it... empty, waiting, not seeking anything..." (Weil, 2002, p. 117). I see Weil's attentive waiting as a form of temporal silence... not as an absent but rather as a present pause. Since attending Michael Marker's talk, I have been wondering about how different forms of silence hinder or support moments of attentive engagement inside and outside of the classroom, with others and with the ecology of the world.

Silence can be visual, auditory, kinesthetic, spatial, temporal or ideological. It can be planned, unexpected, imposed or presented as an offering. Dr. Marker's talk made me think about silence as both an offering and an imposition. Colonialism is an act of silencing. It is an attempt to silence another, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and involves a forced compression of physical, temporal or ideological spaces, resulting in a lack of room for others to enter. During Dr. Marker's talk, it occurred to me that the force of colonialism has left a residual mark of speed on our practices and that haste impedes silence and the other from entering, whether that other is another's thoughts at a presentation, a variant perspective to our research 'agenda', an artistic material from 'speaking' while being 'manipulated', or a student's response in the classroom.

After the talk, I was reminded of a position that I held briefly in 1995 at a commercial gallery in Victoria. The gallery was highly sales oriented. During on-the-job training I was instructed not to give potential buyers much space or time to think about their purchases. I was told that by talking enthusiastically and continuously about the art exhibited, without pause, the buyer would be more likely to purchase the work. This is what I refer to as the light-years approach to communication. I was reminded of this experience after Dr. Marker's talk and began to question the spaces that I leave in my practice, in the studio, the lecture hall, the gallery and the classroom. To what extent am I willing to let go of the reins, alter my pace and leave physical, temporal and ideological spaces for others to enter? To what extent is my practice an offering rather than an imposition?

"Silence" never ceases to imply its opposite and to demand on its presence. Just as there can't be "up" without "down" or "left" without "right," so one must acknowledge a surrounding environment of sound or language in order to

recognize silence. Not only does silence exist in a world full of speech and other sounds, but any given silence takes its identity as a stretch of time being perforated by sound..."(Susan Sontag, 1967, p. 5)

Silence is a presence. In 1951, the composer and educator John Cage visited the anechoic chamber at Harvard University. An anechoic chamber is a sound proof room (known as a silent room) that is designed to absorb all sounds made in the room, rather than reflecting them as echoes. Cage expected to hear silence in the room but instead he heard two frequencies of sound, a high and a low sound. The 'silence' of the room, made it possible for Cage (and others) to attend to and hear the sound of their own bodies. The high sound was his nervous system in operation and the low sound was his blood in circulation. In the classroom the choice not to speak can be just as active as the throbbing presence of the sound of the body in an anechoic chamber. Silence in this case is not an absence but rather a presence, as Jaworski notes "although an immediate association with silence might be one which relates the concept to an absence of a lack of something, the term 'silence'" can act as a signifier for a number of different states or interrelationships" (as cited in Ollin, 2008, p. 266). Planned silent times, often seem to be welcomed in the classroom; however, students choices to be silent can be a cause for concern when they are associated with non-participation, however, as Ollin shows, silence is not necessarily negative, it can be the result of cultural differences in communication, the need for processing time, shyness, resistance to dominant discourse, or a form of reflective or engaged silence (Ollin, 2008).

In 2007, I taught two sections of Art in the Elementary classroom for the first time. One might think that my background as a pre-school and elementary art specialist and post-secondary art instructor would have prepared me for the course. It didn't. It was a huge learning curve. I entered the course confidently with a plan, imposed it at a rather focused pace and experienced student's resistance to my dominant discourse, through silence. It was a bumpy ride, and a humbling experience through which I learned a lot. Two years later, I was asked to teach the course again and accepted, with great hesitation. This time, for the first day of class, I began on a different note.

We started class slowly, with a brief story that introduced anesthetic and aesthetic experiences. In short, we might say that anesthetic experiences dull your senses and aesthetic experiences wake your senses up, but often in strange 'silent' ways. During the class, we took time to reflect and listen. I invited students to share memories of their own aesthetic experiences; the vast majority of stories shared involved them listening or being attentive, in many cases in natural

surroundings. While sharing them, many of the students took on some of the same engaged ways of being that aesthetic experience instill in us. Here is one of their stories:

Summer must have been on the way because it was starting to get warmer out, and the crab apple tree in our front yard was in full bloom. I took our family puppy out to our field to play, and I remember it was just covered in dandelions. The whole acreage was a magnificent harvest of yellow. My brother joined me and we wandered down to our pond where we noticed strange black things swimming in the water. We grabbed a large white bucket to scoop up the moving bodies and take them up to our house. The bucket was full to the brim. The next morning we woke up early and went outside to discover a bucket full of baby frogs! They had transformed overnight. We took them back down to the pond because we figured they liked to swim, and we found hundreds more hopping about! There were tiny frogs everywhere; I remember the experience with great detail to this day. My brother and I stood there that morning, entranced and silent watching the recently transformed baby frogs. (Anonymous student, included with permission)

In her article “Integrating Silence Practices into the Classroom” Cathleen Haskins (2010) asks if we, as teachers “are able and willing to consider the practical value of silence for a child who simply needs time to think? Or is the potential for “wasted time” likely to stop the teacher from exploring with her students the meaning, value, self-discipline and trust that is a necessary prerequisite for the freedom to create and refine ideas.” (p. 5)

Considering silence as a pause, a suspension of plans, a recess to think, a space to speak, a gap to ask questions, or to feel, or just to be present, does not necessarily guarantee a form of attentive engagement, however, from my experience as a teacher and a student, giving pause, provides an opening and more opportunity for others to engage. It also allows more possibility for teachers to be fully present with students, to listen verbally, kinaesthetically, somatically to what our-selves and others are telling us. Without pause, it is difficult to be attentive to ourselves, an-other and the ecology of the world.

In Movement 1, I mentioned Vancouver doctor and researcher Gabor Maté’s work with addiction (Maté, 2012, Hari. 2015). Maté notes that a fundamental need of human beings is the need to connect and when we don’t develop patterns of connection as children (and later as adults) we find ways to simulate replacements to connectivity. Replacements can lead to addictions that activate neuro-hormones (such as dopamine and endorphins) that are otherwise activated through attentive

connections with the self and other, connections that are necessary parts of our existence as social beings. Maté's definition of addiction is a broad one, it is: any behaviour that provides temporary relief (from isolation) but also results in harmful long term consequences; and despite those long term consequences the behaviour is difficult to give up. We often think of addiction in terms of substance dependency, yet according to Maté's definition addiction includes addiction to consumption, to power, to production (as workaholics), to social media, in addition to other forms of unhealthy dependency that substitute for our need for attentive connection. According to Maté, addiction and mental health disorders proliferate in societies that value individualism, consumption and production over connection, where an individual is valued on his/her ability to produce and consume rather than who he or she is. Maté, Alexander and Cohen's (as cited in Hari, 2012; Maté, 2015) research has caused me to take pause and wonder how the temporality of our pedagogical practices can provide opportunities for attentive connections with others that help to afford opportunities for our basic need to connect. In classrooms where students do not know each other, where students move from subject to subject in fifty minute blocks, and from teacher to teacher, how do we create spaces of connectivity? How does the pace of our practices impact the potential for us to make necessary and attentive connections with each other?

MOVEMENT 3

"Reading a Wave" or Thinking-through the Supermarket

Mr. Palomar is standing on the shore looking at a wave. Not that he is lost in contemplation of the waves. He is not lost, because he is quite aware of what he is doing... it is not "the waves" that he means to look at, but just one individual wave: in his desire to avoid vague sensations, he establishes for his every action a limited and precise object. (Calvino, 1983, p. 4)

... But isolating one wave is not easy, separating it from the wave immediately following, which seems to push it and at times overtakes it and sweeps it away; and it is no easier to separate that one wave from the preceding wave, which seems to drag it toward the shore, unless it turns against the following wave, as if to arrest it. Then, if you consider the breadth of a wave, parallel to the shore, it is hard to decide where the advancing front extends regularly and where it is separated and segmented into independent waves, distinguished by their speed, shape, force and direction. (Calvino, 1983, p. 4).

January 8th – First day of sculpture class

Let us consider research as a wave, as the force of one idea impacting another, and another and another. Let us consider research as a process of thinking rhythmically with syncopation through the wet environment which saturates you and where your ideas, in turn, saturate the environment until your spongy body is filled with the world. Let us consider research as a *thinking through* the world.

“There is no inner man [sic], man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself” (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, xii).

January 22, 2016 – Researching in the Morning – Topic: Home

Eyes open - restless sleep, sleep as home, estranged sleep – *Home as restlessness*
Alarm – home alarm, alarmed home, safety, routines, schedule – *Home as linear time disrupted*
Granola – small pieces, ingredients, home as community, contributions – *Home outside home*
Yogurt – curdled milk, sour, without home, homelessness, tent city – *Home in a shopping cart*
Blueberries – stain, teeth, shirt, marks left, stains on walls, injury and repair – *Home as nurture*
Stirring, stirring – motions, rhythms of the house, syncopated by spilled milk – *Home as accident*
Kettle boiling – left, forgotten, multi-tasking, folding laundry, making bed – *Home as overwhelm*
Dandelion tea – grass, noxious weeds, lawns, Blue Velvet, white picket fences – *Home as conformity*
Shower – droplets of water, warm, Mr. Palomar revisited – reading together – *Home as memory*
Getting dressed – mundanity, one-leg-then-another, 2 socks, comfortability – *Home as habit(s)*
Open the door – step outside, freshness, body breathes in outside air, threshold - *Home as membrane*
Bus stop – singing you, coat half buttoned, binder in hand, saxophone, lunch kit – *Home as adoration*

Research as *thinking through* in the classroom acknowledges the entangled influences of the world on consciousness and on imagining. This is a process of saturated connectivity, it is dependent upon Haraway’s (2008) note (and I repeat) that “...relationships are the smallest possible patterns for analysis” (p. 25-26). By activating this in the classroom, we not only engage the relational process of imagining by noticing connections that exist in the world, we also connect with ourselves, each other and the world to attempt to address the human imperative to connect. *Thinking through* encourages divergence and diversity by engaging in a rigorous process of multi-perspectival, collaborative engagement *with*.

By engaging topics that connect with students’ lives, needs and passions, by sharing ideas with ourselves and others, by contributing to peers’ ideas, by brainstorming collaboratively, discussing ideas prior to executing them, understanding multi-perspectival meanings of topics, by switching roles,

performing together, making with the self and with the other, by contributing to works-in-process, by discussing uncomfortable topics in a way that makes room for each differing voice, we engage with the process of noticing and making connections.

Several years ago, I made up a handout titled “30 Visual Research Methods”. I developed the handout as a way to help students understand that research isn’t an isolated activity that originates with an individual in a specific place, such as a library, but is a process of *thinking through* every day experiences with a topic. *This is lived research*. Some of the research methods on the handout are more traditional to art education, such as sketching and re-sketching, or looking at images of art works, others are less commonly considered research and include going for a walk, asking your grandmother’s opinion, sleeping or shopping at the supermarket. For each of these methods I encourage students to engage with them as a *process* and to document their process in various ways. By doing this connections become evident; we begin to see how research is like a wave, how an idea changes or evolves from each experience. Research thus is not a way to document a calcified idea but a way to initiate a process of proliferating ideas which are later shared in a process of *thinking through* each other. As students have engaged with this form of lived research, over time, they have added their own everyday methods of researching through the experience of riding the bus, taking out the garbage, arguing with a loved one and playing with a child. These methods encourage a form of attentive engagement that is a process of imagining.

Imagining is an ecological process of thinking through the world to notice existent relations among distinct things. Imagining is an experiential act, a process of noticing relations. Noticing is an act of attention. Deep attention is an act of love.

Some time ago I came across John Steffler’s poem *Eclipse*. While reading it, I imagined it to be about the spaces of connection and distance between life partners; I imagined it about a moment when two friends line up and connect in a beautiful meaningful way, as an eclipse occurs. This alignment, of the stars, or of a meeting of the spirits, so to speak, has occurred on occasion in my life; sometimes only as a momentary flash and at other times with endurance, as if time stands still. It is a form of connection that can occur with a life partner, a child, a student, colleague, friend or a “stranger” at the grocery store. When this transpires, it is, as Steffler describes, a moment of undoing, an opening up. It is in these moments of opening, of letting go of assumptions, of attending to another, or just *being with*, that the most transformative moments of life-learning occur. Teaching, in this sense, is less about filling up with knowledge and more about undoing; it is as Nietzsche (2006) said, with such clarity, that “the weight of all things must be determined anew” (p.

226), and likewise, as Simone Weil (2002) attested, that “teaching should have no aim but to prepare, by training the attention, for the possibility of such an act” (p. 117).

“Near noon it will happen.
For twenty-seven years there will not be another;
and will we be alive then, will we be together?
As the birds grow anxious in the trees and the light
 tightens to smoked blue,
the sad thought of you alone in your studio, me alone
 here with my gadgets of words
 is a darkening that will not be put right.
And I walk as fast as I can through the bled streets,
 but your studio’s empty.
And will the dark come then while I’m in a parking lot,
 mistaken,
unconnected to this place or that?
I put myself into your absent body,
into your feelings and face, your own restless loneliness,
and I head toward the post office, the store, thinking
 somehow this is a test of my intuition,
of our sympathies,
telepathy or delusion,
apart or together when the snapshot from heaven is taken,
 this memory happening now
this crucial memory,
and there you are coming toward me carrying milk,
your face sad and tilted toward the ground
 until you see me-
the clap of gladness we make coming together, lined up
 with the sun and moon at our heads,
the earth at our feet,
the blurred shadows of branches trembling around us,
 about to come undone, about to break
into script or tears or racing
flame.”

(Eclipse, John Steffler, 2007, p. 42-43)

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