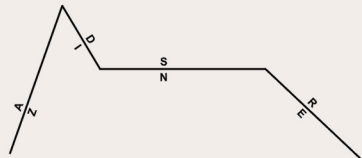


ADSR Zine

017



Wednesday 3rd November. During the rest of the day's journey it rained without ceasing and I spent most of the time rather dismally in the hold. Instead of going up the main river as I had done on my first expedition, we turned down it towards Rewa, the chief town of the district, and came to a halt at the bailoma (half-caste) village which really forms part of the town, though divided from it by a creek. Here we visited several houses, for Byrne knows everybody. They were clean and well kept and had many european articles of furniture but half castes I find difficult to admire. In point of physique, though perhaps harder, they stand below the full-blooded natives. The women especially strike me as inferiors in general appearance to their Fijian half sisters, for in spite of their more regular features, european complexion, and a greater vivacity of manner there is often an unpleasant coarse look in their faces, and a corresponding inferiority of bearing. Of course, I need not say that there are many thoroughly respectable and respected half-caste families, the character of the the parents here, as elsewhere, accounting no doubt very much for the character of the children. The moral tone of the lower classes in Fiji seems to me to have been naturally an exceptionally wholesome one, and this inferior half-caste population is, I think, one of the chief seats of immorality amongst them. That these poorer half-castes should be no better than they are ought to surprise no one, seeing that as they belong equally to both races, they are equally looked down on by both, and have, therefore, nothing to give them self-respect. These people always make on me a most melancholy impression of being outcasts; no one cares for them, and as far as I yet know their education is felt even by the missionaries, to be nobody's business.



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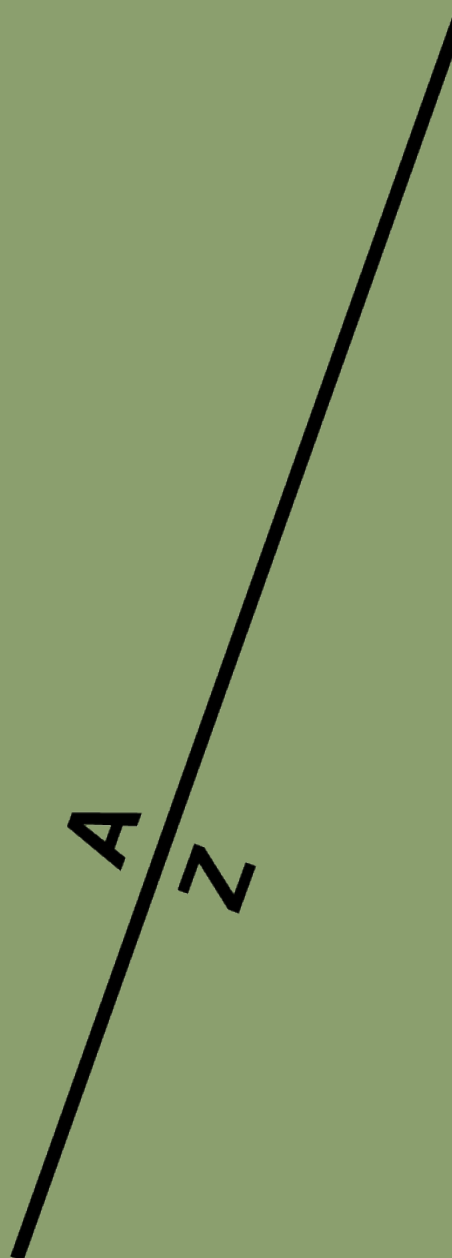
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ATTACK

AN IMMEDIATE AND SUCCINCT
INTERROGATION OF SOMETHING
SPECIFIC



Julian Day

Termination Shock

With Jimmy Carter, Jean-Luc Nancy, Stella Ocker, Carl Sagan and Laurie Spiegel

2022 marks the 45th anniversary of the launch of NASA's twin Voyager spacecraft. This essay accompanies the record [VERY FAST & VERY FAR](#) with Tim Bruniges and Matthew McGuigan, released through Hospital Hill.

1

"Music is the art of the hope for resonance."¹

2

By now they are almost too far. Twin spacecraft slipping from our grasp, pushing outwards and away. The further they fly, the slower they appear; the ratio of velocity to proximity ever thinning.

3

July 2016, Sydney. We're in a dark studio. Tim and I set up at opposite ends of the room for a showdown between his laptop and my vintage synths. Matt sits between us, diverting cables so that Tim and I hear him but not each other. When Matt plays us fragments of the golden record we can riff off them but not our rival. What results is a pair of duets connected by a vitalizing spine. During Covid our setup would be natural. Two musicians sort of in sync but separated; "together apart," to paraphrase Jean-Luc Nancy.

4

August-September 1977. Two spacecrafts launch, Voyager I and Voyager II. The second takes off first, the first two weeks later, on John Cage's 65th birthday. In place of astronauts, a golden record each. The mission is diffuse. It is, currently, to "explore the outermost edge of the Sun's domain. And beyond."² In other words the ships are aimless, their sole instruction to leave us.

5

"Billions of years from now our sun, then a distended red giant star, will have reduced Earth to a charred cinder. But the Voyager record will still be largely intact."³

6

The Voyagers are designed to fail. By now their signal is breaking, as is the technology. Within a few years they will no longer power any single instrument.

7

We wrap our session. I tell the others my relationship is unraveling and I cannot stop it.

1. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, transl. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007): 67.

2. NASA, *Voyager: Mission Overview* <https://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/mission/>

3. Carl Sagan, *Murmurs of Earth: the Voyager Interstellar Record* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978): 42.

8

Forty years before us, eight 12-inch gold-plated records are manufactured. The workers are unmistakably of the time. A man with sideburns and brown t-shirt places a record into its canister. Another man in brown stripes, his hair luxurious but now no doubt gone, pours liquid into a circular tray. A woman with a Ziggy mullet and brown dress tests a silver dub plate, looking every part the DJ. A man with white 50s hair and white 50s lab coat holds his disc at such an angle that we see his white 50s face, as patrician as the mission. A single record is placed aboard each craft.

9

"The sonorous present is the result of space-time: it spreads through space, or rather it opens a space that is its own, the very spreading out of its resonance, its expansion and its reverberation."⁴

10

The ships fulfill their design. Their death is slow, successful, as is our relationship to them. An imperceptible divorce.

11

April 2016. Sydney. I Skype with my lover in New York. We sketch out an essay about our distanced relationship, centering on Felix Gonzalez-Torres' *Lovers* in which two identical clocks sit frozen on a wall. The batteries are dead; forever stopped, forever together. We pitch to an editor in Denmark. He is faintly interested but declines.

12

Hand etched onto each golden disc is the memo "to all the makers of music – all worlds, all times." The label is marked similarly. "The sounds of Earth. United States of America. Planet Earth." Like one of those letters you send as a kid. The gesture is unusually bright-eyed for such a dystopic decade. A newly-elected Jimmy Carter adds a preface, a message inside a message inside a bottle.

13

"This is a present from a small distant world, a token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music, our thoughts and our feelings. We are attempting to survive our time so we may live into yours."⁵

14

The spaceships drift forward yet always look back.

15

August 2015, Sydney. My partner, a curator, writes an essay about two Australian artists working together. The more famous of the two resists the word 'collaborating' in favor of 'parking', as in 'to park my work alongside his.' Later my work is parked alongside his in a group show. His fame supersedes mine, so my work is powered down.

16

The chances of anyone finding the records let alone playing them are basically zero. The sounds of crashing waves and squawking birds are literal but, to an alien listener, absurdly abstract. What would they mean? Still, I find the naïve optimism of the gesture – "very hopeful," as Carl Sagan put it - galvanizing.

17

"Music is the art of making the outside of time return to every time, making return to every moment the beginning that listens to itself beginning and beginning again."⁶

18

The crafts are basically parasites – tugging at the gravity of each successive star to push further and further on.

19

November 2016, Sydney. Tim, Matt and I listen to our mixes. We start out in good spirits as the new US president begins her ascent. An hour or two in our phones begin to ping. The election is off course, the candidates diverging.

4. Nancy, *Listening*, 13.

5. Jimmy Carter, *Voyager Spacecraft Statement by the President* <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/voyager-spacecraft-statement-the-president>

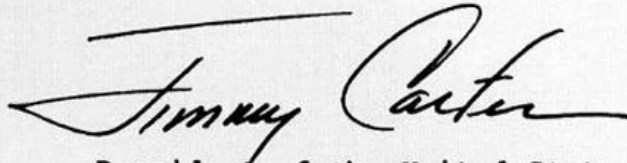
6. Nancy, *Listening*, 67.

STATEMENT

This Voyager spacecraft was constructed by the United States of America. We are a community of 240 million human beings among the more than 4 billion who inhabit the planet Earth. We human beings are still divided into nation states, but these states are rapidly becoming a single global civilization.

We cast this message into the cosmos. It is likely to survive a billion years into our future, when our civilization is profoundly altered and the surface of the Earth may be vastly changed. Of the 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy, some -- perhaps many -- may have inhabited planets and spacefaring civilizations. If one such civilization intercepts Voyager and can understand these recorded contents, here is our message:

This is a present from a small distant world, a token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music, our thoughts and our feelings. We are attempting to survive our time so we may live into yours. We hope someday, having solved the problems we face, to join a community of galactic civilizations. This record represents our hope and our determination, and our good will in a vast and awesome universe.



President of the United States
of America

NASA

THE WHITE HOUSE,
June 16, 1977

20

The golden record contains artefacts of earth including thirty-one audio tracks of greetings, foley and music. NASA describes the playlist as “both Eastern and Western classics and a variety of ethnic music.” Bach appears three times, Beethoven twice, Mozart and Stravinsky once each. Urban myth suggests that EMI blocked the use of Here Comes the Sun by The Beatles. Instead, the two living composers are Chuck Berry and Laurie Spiegel.

21

“What does to be listening, to be all ears, as one would say ‘to be in the world,’ mean?”⁷

22

Voyager power itself with death. Radioactive material kept on board slowly decays and is converted into electricity. This won’t last. The ship loses several watts of energy every year. And if the antenna freezes it will become mute.

23

She wears two watches on her wrist, one for her and now, the other for her lover.

24

Five years before us, the first of the two spacecraft enters interstellar space, “the region between stars, filled with material ejected by the death of nearby stars millions of years ago.”⁸ This is ‘termination shock’, where the sun’s influence meets that which it is not. A boundary is crossed from one zone to another. At this point the particles radiating from the sun slow to less than the speed of sound. It’s like stepping into quicksand or hitting a wave of fatigue. It took the two spacecraft 27 and 30 years respectively to reach this point (Voyager II, despite launching first, significantly lags). They are the only human-made objects to make it this far.

25

“I often think of those craft as sad and lonely ... so very far from home, moving ever farther into the cold and the dark, sensing more and more hungrily for the slight, fading, low-level warmth of the increasingly dim sun.”⁹

26

On NASA’s website you can click on ‘Where Are They Now’ and follow the Voyagers in real time. Their vital stats update twice a second. I feel calmed watching the flickering numbers knowing that both are, for now, still with us.

27

October 2016, New York. I arrive back to find my relationship has dissolved. Orbits detach, actors detether.

28

January, 2020. Voyager II is asked to pirouette, a 360 spin for the cameras, and fails to perform. It overdraws power and switches off, leading to “an unexplained delay.” Nothing much can be done, at least not quickly. A message to and from the ship takes a day and a half: seventeen hours to send, seventeen to reply. This still feels fast.

29

“Communication is not transmission, but a sharing that becomes subject... An unfolding, a dance, a resonance...”¹⁰

30

For four decades they have escaped us and they will continue until neither they nor we can hear each other.

31

June, 2021. As I finish this essay, some unexpected news. Voyager I hears a “faint, persistent hum.”¹¹ The universe is talking back. Finally, as the instruments falter and our emissaries fade, the mission starts to listen.

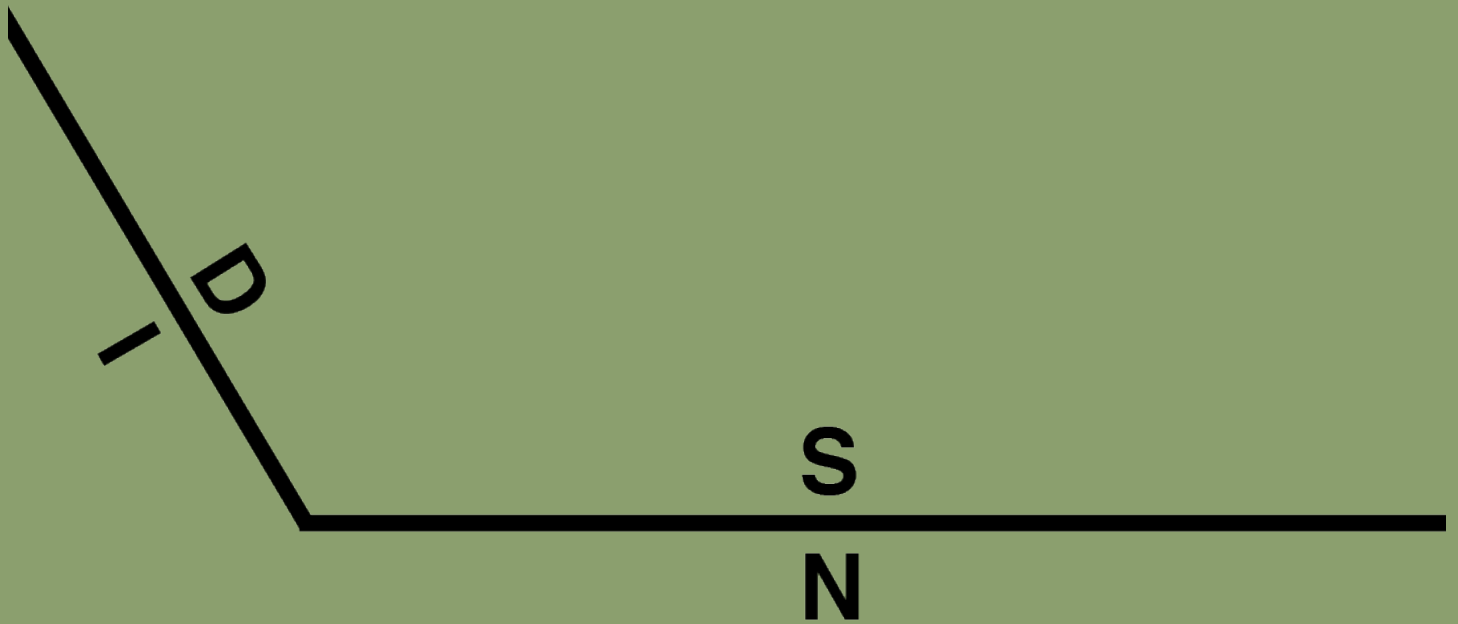
7. Nancy, *Listening*, 5.

8. NASA <https://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/mission/>

9. Laurie Spiegel in Alex Ross, “The Interstellar Contract,” *The New Yorker* (February 13, 2014) <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-interstellar-contract>

10. Nancy, *Listening*, 41.

11. Stella Ocker in Jackson Ryan, “NASA’s Voyager I detects faint, monotone hum beyond our solar system,” *CNET* (May 12, 2021) <https://www.cnet.com/science/nasa-voyager-1-detects-faint-hum-beyond-our-solar-system/>



DECAY– SUSTAIN

A LONGER-FORM EXPLORATION
OF WORK THROUGH
APPROACHES OF BREAKING
DOWN OR EXTENDING FURTHER

*In and
out of place: what happens
to site-specific art without its place? A re-
sponse to the artwork *Store-blp* by Margaret Roberts, an
installation shown in [Articulate Project Space](#) in April-May 2022.
By Caitlin Hespe*

Store-blp is a site-specific installation that poetically encapsulates the very questions that Margaret Roberts has engaged with over 30 years of art-making. To encounter it is to confront multiple material forms stacked and arranged inside one larger boundary; the shape of a blp. As the eye traces over and around each form, one is prompted to consider questions beyond formal arrangement to the significance of site to site-specific art. The artist describes them as “the material remnants of multiple site-specific artworks” which were brought together “to work out [the]relationships site specific artworks could have with their (live) site while the artworks are dormant (uninstalled).” Incidentally then, the installation is partially a retrospective of a practice, whilst continuing to re-question how sites are potentially unconsidered and devalued in our present context.

First, the choice of the words remnant and dormant (in the artists’ description) strike me. Their archaeological and geological connotations suggest a status of lacking completion. The artist is telling us these pieces are not whole, but are the components of a larger work. (Already, this is a challenging concept for many, as the physical material alone is generally what one considers the artwork as against considering the environment to which they belong.)

When pondering remnants, I think of ruins; things preserved, connected to the past. I also think of broken things, but more precious than a scrap or a remain. A remnant’s survival is honoured, not resented. By their nature, remnants offer the suggestion of another story, another version of the thing.

Like a trace, they hint elsewhere.

Rather than ‘previous works’; by consciously referring to these materials as ‘remnants’ Margaret Roberts honours the role that place has in their construction, for they are not whole without it.

So it follows that to look upon each shape within the blp also invokes another time, another place, another story, another meaning. For each remnant there are links to the artists’ [website](#) to explore their original conception. It is like the cabinet of curiosity/wunderkammer which has the potential to transport you to far away places just by looking, each object a symbol of its origin and the journey of its owner. But, though one can get lost in the symbolic references that the remnants offer, this present work is also markedly different to a cabinet of curiosities. The very lack of place for these remnants draws attention to the subject and meaning of their present place *Store-blp* (also an impermanent entity).

Is the ‘store’ of *Store-blp* referring to storage, to contain? Or is it a marketplace; to display for purchase? The ambiguity perhaps reflects a conundrum for artists in general; that to generate material is to

require
a place for it, be it in stor-
age or to sell (to then be stored). But for this
work, Roberts is also asking what to do with/how to place
site-specific artworks that lack their original intended place. Her
canny solution is in the blp, through subtle subversion and playfulness,
for the blp is itself a reference to looking at space. [The blp is a shape named
and used by artist Richard Artschwager, described as “an instrument of useless
looking... its function being as close to pure art as you can get”. The blp has also been
elaborated on by Roberts and Terry Hayes in this catalogue [essay](#).] A form that also resem-
bles the merged circles of binocular vision, perhaps the blp is more about the act of noticing,
what it feels like to notice space. Roberts subverts the site as a spatial framework by rendering it
as a container, a sculptural form embedded with the past sites of the remnants and the historical
reference of the blp itself.

By defining a space to contain (and exclude) does in fact bring about many new spatial considerations
and challenges, a dilemma of storage in general. 2D spatially autonomous works may find a home,
or even hop between homes over its life. Many works are purchased or gifted and get to be optically
and spatially enjoyed by a household. Some works are purchased or gifted and for periods of time
are presented to a visiting public. Many works, if purchased for the purpose of collecting may not be
seen for years, until re-selling. Many works sit in climate controlled storage. Many works sit in racks,
shelves, or stacks. Many works sit in the artist's home or studio. Many works are destroyed by sun,
dust, collision, or lack of attention. Many works are destroyed for a lack of space. Many works are
destroyed for a lack of necessity. Many works are dismantled, waiting for a new moment. *Store_blp*
somehow acknowledges this conundrum, simultaneously focussing on and valuing the subject of
(and the actual) place.

As for *how* to place; the permutations to pile, rotate, adjoin, stand or lay these remnants within a de-
fined area could be overwhelming. But there is definitely a feeling that the challenge and constraints
were embraced and enjoyed by the artist. Something I love about Margaret Roberts' works is that
they consist of their own logic and system, generate their own form of labour, and remain playful and
interrogatory. An example that comes to mind is the 2018 work [Little-Hanne-Darboven](#) (the rem-
nants of which are within *Store_blp*) which involved sweeping dirt into a stencilled letter each day,
and sweeping the previous letter away, for 21 days (the time it took to spell the work title). In its
nature, this work pays homage to Hanne Darboven's systematic [practice](#), whilst poetically
physicalising (through ritual) how a place can form an artwork.

For the making of *Store_blp*, there are the self-devised constraints of fitting the rem-
nants within the blp form. Like remembering a dream where the boundaries of
different logics and contexts overlap with no questions asked, I imagine a
game-state where the scenarios flow between colouring in (stay in
the lines!), Tetris™ (with additional curve challenges), the
physical stretch and reach of Twister™, and a
Chess-like strategy where each

m a t e -
rial's proximity to another
holds symbolic potential in meaning. Per-
haps there is also some Solitaire™ chance, opportunity
and choice at play. The presence of blp shapes within the blp ([blp 2](#), [blp 3](#) and [blp 5](#)) add a further loop of self reflection.

The process of making an artwork could be described as a search. But a very special kind of search, for it is uncovering things that you do not know or understand yet. It is like Meno's question to Socrates; how will you go about finding the thing the nature of which is unknown to you? (I don't think that I am saying one cannot know what an artwork looks like before making it, but rather that the drive to create something at all comes from a place of searching; be it for meaning, a feeling, a form, a vision, a sound...) So to look at an artwork is to witness the result of a search, and can be a window into the passions, curiosities, thoughts and temperaments of the maker, and even inspire new searches for the viewer.

Then in a way, to observe the artist's oeuvre is to trace their journey of searches, it allows a view of their path in a unique way. This is not unlike the freshness and wonder when seeing the patterns of landscape from inside an aeroplane window (incidentally, almost a blp shape); when you can see the shapes made by different pastures, properties, roads, rivers, rises and valleys. Sometimes there is such a geometric order like a patchwork quilt, it is shocking. These moments of perspective are special, they cannot be reached easily, [but we are so used to these views being at hand, accessible, and we probably take these moments of seeing the grander picture for granted. Here, I am thinking of ubiquitous drone footage, GPS driven map footage...] But, they take work, like the cartographer who must travel and survey real-life scale in order to condense. These moments can point you to continue looking elsewhere; upon, but they can also point you to appreciate the contrast to the here. *Store_blp* gives the special opportunity to glance upon (part of) Margaret Roberts' oeuvre, whilst self-consciously addressing that this kind of view is never really possible without removing the original context; the ingredient of place.

So, it is not a retrospective in the conventional sense, but an artwork on its own. Although it does provide the opportunity to celebrate the artists' long and productive career, the primary intention is to enquire about site-specificity in a new way, where the point is to point us ("Look, Here!") towards considering the very nature of place, and the site of work and thought everywhere. We are all somewhere, in a place filled with potential to conceptualise meaning, joy, questions, stories, past and present, and it only requires a point (of view) to see it from.

Roberts is pointing us to sense where we are and notice more, even if it is small,
saying where we are is all we really have.

***The Pipeline* (2018-2022) : Reading List**
HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH



***The Architecture of Happiness* (2006) by Alain de Botton**

The Pipeline project began when my partner and I moved into this house on Dharug Country, Old Guildford in 2018. Soon after we moved in, I picked up a copy of Alain de Botton's *Architecture of Happiness* at a second-hand book fair. It was a fortuitous find. The book both articulated and inspired the relationship I was building to the first home in which we have filled with everything we own; our belongings brought together from family houses, studio spaces and storage lockers (we both have hoarding tendencies though I prefer to think of myself as a collector).

I have surrounded myself with art in this house – works I have been collecting for many years and have held mostly in storage. Over time, I have come to realise it is not just the artworks that I love, or that make me feel at home. It is the way they hang from the picture rails. The way they interact with the geometry of the fibro panelling. The way they rest guardian-like above the thresholds.

Architecture works on us slowly, de Botton writes, “asking us to imagine that happiness might often have an unostentatious, unheroic character to it, that it might be found in a run of old floorboards or in a wash of morning light over a plaster wall...”

A very suburban kind of happiness.

The Architecture of Happiness has in turn inspired me to take more notice of the intensely personal nature of other people's houses. Their temperament, their vices and virtues. To see every house as a home, and their collective – a neighbourhood.

***Suburbanism: Poetics (2017)* and *History & The Poet (2017)* by Robert Wood**



On residency at The Border Line on Miriwoong Country in 2019, I was introduced to Robert Wood's collection of essays *Suburbanism: Poetics*.

I immediately connected with his writing "about how our place, people and relationships can be renewed by thinking poetically ... about how we can live in our suburbs with a utopian spirit in order to make our world better materially." *Suburbanism* illustrates how entwined identity is with place, how we can make meaning in place.

Wood writes of the poem as a way to generate a considered understanding of suburbia. I find this in my process of over-painting. In *The Pipeline* series I paint over Polaroids, wanting them to be more than photographs of a place, to become narratives that can recall different and broader experiences. I paint over them to spend time with them and consider where I am at.

I followed reading this book with *History & The Poet* – another essay collection by Wood. I think often of Wood's concluding remarks in the essay *Renewing Localism*, of the need to retrain our senses, to better look, see, listen, learn and poetically engage with the world (and people and difference) from where we stand. It is this need that drives me to engage with, and make art.

Reading Wood's writing on suburbanism was a revelatory experience. I was lucky that the founder of The Border Line introduced me to this author, and during my residency we corresponded via email, exchanging and exploring further ideas on suburbia, place, poetry and painting. Our conversations reminded me of the writing of cultural activist Justin O'Connor, on how we can live together, and what the quality of our collective experience should be.

Wood left me with some recommended reading, including *Holy Land: A suburban memoir* by DJ Waldie.

Holy Land: A suburban memoir (1996) by D J Waldie



This painting is from Toowoomba, a Garden City resting atop the remnants of a volcano. A previous winner of the *Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Award*, work is undertaken all year round to prepare for the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers in Spring. The unique landscape of this region gives the city a misty feel, described to me as the “Toowoomba magic”. The identity of this place is written on signs, in flowers, in the mist. But we know that it is more than this – it is in the hopes and habits of everyday life, in the small days and nights.

DJ Waldie’s *Holy Land* illustrates, through stories of a life lived in one place, how the design of a suburb affects how we feel, how we move about and exist there (as de Botton has argued of architecture). So too, its residents enact and adapt these designs, shaping its identity. I was deeply moved by the power of Waldie’s observation, of the small details that create our sense of place:

After work at city hall, I walk home on straight, flat sidewalks. Their lines converge ahead of me into a confusion of trees and lawns.

The sidewalk is four feet wide. The street is forty feet wide. The strip of lawn between the street and the sidewalk is seven feet. The setback from curb to house is twenty feet.

This pattern-of asphalt, grass, concrete, grass-is as regular as any thought of God’s.

I keep returning to this book, for its earnest teachings on how to fall in love with wherever we are at.

***Holy Water* (1979) by Joan Didion and *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* (2021) by Andreas Malm**



This pipeline, the namesake of this project, has served many metaphors. It is a locating device for anyone who lives or travels through the area where I live. It is often the focal point of past residents' memories and stories of home. It is an engineering feat of the Upper Nepean Scheme that continues to transport most of Sydney's water supply. It is infrastructure like this that allows for our suburbs to exist.

I think of Joan Didion's essay *Holy Water*, recommended by a friend. Didion writes on the availability of water as a defining factor in where and how we live. She reverently traces the source of her own drinking water in Malibu, California, meditating on its movement. In Sydney, I have traced a similar path, following these overland pipelines from the Prospect Reservoir east to Potts Hill. Starting three houses down from where I live, I have followed this pipeline to within a stones-throw of the house where my father grew up. In Sydney we are all connected by this water journey, just as we are all affected by the pollution of the Prospect Reservoir by the recent floods.

Of course, these pipelines are also signifiers of the violence of colonialism on this land.

Around the same time, I was recommended to read *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* by Andreas Malm. I struggled through this confronting manifesto. It has been an important reminder of these pipelines as signifiers of the oil pipelines servicing the fossil fuel economy.

These pipelines shape a landscape that enables us to live in ways that are ecologically and morally unsustainable. Their expansive sightlines, at once beautiful and unique to suburbia, are a reminder that our roads, footpaths, bridges, and borders are arbitrary, artificial, and damaging.

They are also the reason I can call this place home.

Invisible Cities (1972) by Italo Calvino

I picked up a second-hand copy of *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino part way through this project. In it, Venetian traveller Marco Polo recounts to Kublai Khan, emperor of the Tartars, details of the cities he has visited on his expeditions around the empire.

Polo describes fantastical places of all shapes and sizes: Thin Cities, Trading Cities, Continuous Cities, Hidden Cities. He tells of the very character of each place: Cities & Memory, Cities & Desire, Cities & the Sky. These are not recognisable cities. They are imagined cities and they are *every* city. Written almost as poems, each short chapter reflects on how we connect to place, through memory and imagination:

Arriving at each new city, the traveler finds again a past of his that he did not know he had...

After being invited to exhibit at The Condensery, Somerset Regional Gallery in September 2022, I have painted the suburb of Toogoolawah from afar. During the Sydney lockdown in late 2021, my collaborator Alexandra Lawson visited, my Polaroid camera in hand, and began photographing on my behalf. With minimal instruction – to photograph straight on from standing height - Alexandra gave me my first glimpses into this neighbourhood. The Polaroids were posted to me, and through this postal conversation, I formed my own stories and memories of Toogoolawah in paint.

I was able to visit and take more Polaroids in early 2022 but my relationship to this place exists almost entirely in my imagination. The road pictured above is the entrance to the town off the Brisbane Valley Highway. The street is flanked by signposts listing local services. On the left: Vehicle Sales, Engineering, Electrician, Produce, Tyres, Mechanical, Real Estate. On the right: Butcher, Groceries, Bakery, Chemist, Newsagency, Hardware, Plumbing, Child Care. Not included on the signs: Specialty Picnic Store, Regional Art Gallery and Skydiving.



***Suburbia* (2016) by Helen Garner**



Our backyard was the first place I painted after we moved here four years ago. When I look at this painting, I hear our neighbour's birds. As I write this text, we are packing to move out of this house. This house where we have spent more time than we could have imagined, after years of lockdowns and working from home. This house where the wall paint does not match the door frames and where we have started our family.

I have read Helen Garner's short story *Suburbia* repeatedly over the past year. It traces her movements between outer and inner city suburbs – a story of shifting priorities and perceptions. A story of housemates, neighbours, and reluctant domesticity. I read echoes of my own shifting relationship to suburbia in her words – a shift brought about by embracing this new home, by noticing the details, the past, present and future of this neighbourhood. A shift guided, in part, by these seminal texts.

At the end of the story, Garner recounts the evening in 2009 when Victorian writer Gerald Murnane was awarded the Melbourne Prize for Literature. In his acceptance speech Murnane declared his intentions to travel within Australia (rather than the international travel typically associated with the prize), to visit all the houses he had ever lived in.

Then he tilted back his head, closed his eyes, and recited a long list of all his former addresses in the suburbs of Melbourne: plainly named streets in obscure, lower-middle-class suburbs that no one ever goes to or hears about in the news. And as he reeled them off, by heart, without hesitation, in chronological order, we all held our breath, with tears in our eyes, because we knew that he was reciting a splendid and mysterious poem.

Acknowledgements

The photographs in *The Pipeline* have been taken on Dharug land in Old Guildford and Guildford, New South Wales; Miriwoong country in Goonoonoorrang/Kununurra, Western Australia; the land of the Giabal and Jarowair people in Toowoomba, Queensland; and on Jinibara land in Toogoolawah, Queensland.

CW: mental health, physical health

DISCLAIMER: The following should not be construed in any way as medical advice; please consult a professional before utilising TENS/EMS, tDCS, or any similar therapeutic methods.

“ ‘Control’ ” is – speaking purely personally, of course – something I have never been able to fully associate with creativity, or the act of making. On any given day in any given moment, I write my music or poetry or what have you, with some sense of purpose or concept or direction, but, ultimately, the crystallisation of creative thought – what note to write, what word to inscribe – is mediated by all sorts of unavoidable adjacencies that appear and disappear in individual and unknowable ways, like ambling crowds in the halls of an art gallery. Concept comes up against tangential train of thought, against the fallibility of working memory, against the all-consuming distraction of inspiration in either its presence or lack, for example. And that’s not even to mention the *actioning* of that creative thought – even when one is secure in what they want to write, one is still faced with the very real physical and temporal barrier of the action of writing it – yet another bridge to cross, yet another potential distortion to the original signal.

That’s not to say I *haven’t* wanted to be ‘in control’ of what I do. Particularly, as I found myself just-the-same absently ambling up the rungs of tertiary arts education, and the cut-and-dry-suggested-best-fit ‘path’ into the profession, the more and more I began to place importance in ‘control’, seek it out. Over the years my outlook, the advice I sought from mentors and peers circled closer and closer around it: how can I write better? How can I write more? How can I convince myself I *want* to write more? *How can I crystallise that concept of what artist I want to be into actually being?*

Artistic progress – improvement – control – became one and the same, and with this outlook I would persevere without second thought, no matter how taxing or counterproductive it might have seemed in immediate hindsight. At some point along the way, I must have bought into the adage of having ‘good days’ and ‘bad days’ – the gap I perceived between my artistic aspiration and ability to actualise it was too variable, and necessarily I wrote off ‘control’ as an ultimate factor of happenstance – perhaps as self-absolution, perhaps as self-preservation.

I wouldn't describe myself as unhealthy per se (and I'm cautious to generalise 'health' anyhow), but throughout my life I've found myself a various companion to a few thematically repetitive bundles of ailments – *i.e.* muscoskeletal problems, like hip impingement, iliotibial band dysfunction, leg muscle imbalance and weakness, flareups of sciatica and weird nervy sensations and pains; gastro-oesophageal and motility issues; and all mood and mental health things like depression and anxiety.

My point herein isn't to dwell on the specifics, but, as anyone who has suffered a chronic or medium-term ailment knows: irrespective of the actual, tangible nature of your 'un-health', your personal relationship to 'un-health' day-to-day is no constant. Sometimes one, as expectation would have it, feels consumed by it, glued down by it; conversely, sometimes, almost randomly, one is able to forget it entirely and feel a kind of temporary weightlessness. (See 'spoons' and 'black dog' and the like.)

I suppose this is where the subdued fixation on 'control' comes into play – becoming healthier seems on paper more quantifiable, more traceable than artistic progress. And so naturally I found myself pursuing documented, replicable methods to engage with my ailments and chase 'improvement'. But improvement is no constant either – some things worked; some didn't work; some worked and then didn't work; and then, amidst the frustrations of improvement but at 'not-enough-a-fast-pace', I stumbled across something new.

Electrocution has a long and controversial history in the field of medicine, and a number of negative connotations in the popular consciousness to boot (often most immediately associated with execution, or season-arc ending character moments in TV serials). However, when seeking out methods of health improvement, I was shocked to find that many in-roads had actually since been quietly made in research – and coincidentally all in ways that were relevant to my own conditions.

For reference:

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) and Electrical Muscle Stimulation (EMS) are two similar methods focused on treating various muscoskeletal and somatic ailments, that apply low voltage electrical current directly to the skin via adhesive electrodes. The two are often conflated, although this is most a result of their dual availability on the same, portable, cheaply available devices. TENS relieves pain through stimulation of nerve receptors; EMS encourages muscle activity and 'reawakening' via deliberate contraction.

Transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) conversely targets mental faculties; it also involves weak electrical signals, but with the electrodes placed at specific sites on the head. A growing body of research shows that tDCS may be effective in treating a number of mental health conditions,

including depression and anxiety amongst others. It is also, save for some DIY aspects and risks, very accessible to consumers in terms of both availability and price (unlike its private lab-exclusive older sibling, Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)).

Upon discovering these (albeit at different times), I was immediately enthralled and impulsively made purchases accordingly. *This was it* – ‘control’ to a new degree – literal on/off switches – *no self-aware increments of dosages of logs of cognitive mindfulnesses in sight*, so I thought, anyway.

I have been regularly using both for some time since. To start, the sensation of TENS/EMS is incredibly strange at first; irrespective of which mode of stimulation is being used, one feels physical, bodily pulsations, but without any self-realised intent of them occurring. Contractions at the electrode sites occur in a ceaseless evolution of all dazzling rhythms and perforated continuums (selected by the user from a set of existing programmes); stranger still, the body, its larger muscle groups especially, begins to respond with sympathetic contractions, counter-rhythms, in other areas. The body becomes a subject of external impulse – although, complicatedly, not to the complete exclusion of the self. You can still walk around, go about your day with these electrodes firing away – you find your movements sometimes aided by the impulses, sometimes in their opposition.

My particular TENS/EMS machine has 4 different outputs – and therefore 4 potential patterns firing at once, completely out of sync with one another. In my moments of ‘consumption’ and ‘glued-ness’ I still find myself with the energy to apply the electrodes and start their cycles, and when I lie back down I find myself unable to ‘listen’ to anything else *but* these rhythms – internal, but of external cause – controlled, but not of my own, a sort of comfortable disembodiment. These rhythms are hypnotic; they are beautiful.

By contrast, the sensation of tDCS is surprisingly dissimilar; your mileage may vary, but with the method I feel the electrodes high on my forehead lightly tingling with a sometimes-irritable sensation. tDCS’ mode of action is purportedly much more long-term – the effects you hope to notice from it, *i.e.* alleviation of your depression, accrue over time, and any immediate boost is likely a placebo. It does, though, sometimes leave you with a mild headache – but one nothing like a migraine, or one brought on by muscular tension. It hollows you out, makes you feel lighter.

I find that all these methods, again leaving aside the specifics, impart one with an otherworldly, strange sensation in their own body; much like the waves of the ocean from earlier in the day when trying to sleep, these electric undulations and currents stay with you and begin to permeate your consciousness. Likewise, the actual decision each day to engage with one of these methods brings with it a sense of anticipation and discovery – one’s exact somatic response seems different each time, never pinned down – and other aspects of one’s being seem to take this on, too.

Or so I found, anyway, when creating my art – it’s hard to describe in a strict sense but, at one point or another, I found myself freer than before. I had these weird, non-conscious rhythms and frequencies running through my body, who would invariably find

their way into my consciousness and what I wrote; a lightness of the body or the mind would wriggle its way into the creative process. Making art became another point of anticipation and discovery, renewed in itself once again.

I take inspiration from these – internal rhythms, but not mine; bodily sensations not of the body – and have found myself more and more imparting such inborn artistic coincidences into my work. Melodies and ensemble interactions bounce off one another like sympathetic contractions within the same entity; poetic writing is visualised with chaotic but fixed cadence first, and words to suit as a latter instance.

Although I talk about being on various paths of improvement now, and accordingly collate these paths into one article, it is impossible to actually know if these things do meaningfully feed into one another. Everything always seems in hindsight a similar accumulation of time and circumstance – and, it would be tempting, assuming as I did that ‘control’ is necessarily futile, to see improvement (or lack thereof) in each area of our lives as some unknowable calculus of chance and intention.

The irony, I realised, is that none of these things – health, art, what have you – had anything to do with ‘control’ at all; at least, not in the immediate and all-consuming way that I had learnt to frame them. It’s a work in progress, mind, but it seems that *not knowing*, *not controlling*, and allowing in the influence of different, externalised ways of thinking or being has been a real key to ‘improvement’ all along. At the very least, to me, the cross-engagement of practices of not-fully-knowable relation has been a source of creative impetus, and I might suggest this could be true for others as well.

And even if ‘control,’ then, is beyond us as individuals – there being no constant correlation between input and output; between time and effort spent and improvement of result; between knowing and doing – *why not* choose to embrace the very fact instead?

ON BEGINNINGS

Ira Ferris, 27 September 2022



When we walk in, the performance has already started: Two dancing bodies idling to the sound of a turned-on engine... The beginning lasts for a while – the bodies jolting between possible directions to take, ways to begin. Jarred by the choice.

Then it happens, a direction is taken and the piece ‘truly’ begins. But when did the work actually begin? Here, when the lights went down and we, the audience, experienced it? Back in the studio when the dancers met to contemplate *the beginning* of the work? Or months and months ago when the seed of the idea first sprouted in the choreographer’s (Tra Mi Dinh’s) head, before she even knew that the process had begun?

Beginning is a tricky thing. Painters speak about the terror of putting the first mark onto the blank canvas – the mark that frames or defines the work, and from which “the invisible structures come out.”¹ Visual artist Asma D Mather refers to this mark as an “imperfection,”² implying that the beginning is never ideal; it is just and only *a beginning*. And when she speaks of it giving shape to the invisible structures, she may be echoing the idea that the work really began some time ago – in the shapeless process of conceptualisation – only to eventually emerge in a material form visible to the eye.

Rebecca Solnit writes how “ideas emerge from edges and shadows to arrive in the light, and though that’s where they may be seen by others, that’s not where they’re born.”³ The ideas –

and, therefore, the artworks – are born in the imperceptible ‘in-between’ or interstitial spaces of art practice; the long gestation periods of seeming ‘not doing’.⁴ The part of the process that dance artist Shyamla describes as “the juiciest,”⁵ although rarely recognised as part of the process at all; so we are asked: When will you ‘begin’ the work?



Beginning is the theme of **Tra Mi Dinh's** dance piece *And, again* which was developed as part of DirtyFeet's 'Out of the Studio' program and premiered at the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre on 9 September 2022. The work, as expressed by Dinh, deals with the ways we structure time: how we compartmentalise its endless flow into the decided-on beginnings and ends.⁶ With compartmentalising time, we also compartmentalise the process of art-making; neglecting its in reality ongoing nature. As a result we assign value only to the time spent in the studio, finishing the work. It is here in the studio that the pressure *to begin* begins – the panic associated with choosing that first mark with which to stain the blank canvas of currently endless possibilities. To begin the work is to end it; define its final form. The gravitational force of that first mark – or, the first step – is way too strong to pull out from. Once we have begun, it is hard to choose another beginning.

But is it 'choice' that we are working with here, or something less controllable than that – say, impulse or intuition? These are some of the questions explored in Dinh's work, which is peppered with moments of jarred 'begin begin begin begin' motions where the body seems stuck between many possible beginnings, but also shattered by the pressure to constantly (re)begin. The stuttered (or jarred) motions seem an apt metaphor for the fast, ever accelerating rate of incessant beginnings. The body pulled and exhausted between too many of them.



Take those stuttering motions out of Dinh's work and you only experience the sheer brilliance of her choreographic capabilities. The dance sequences that exist around 'the stutter' are filled with movements that make you gasp and marvel how on earth one comes up with such ideas and makes such shapes. Dinh is a true master of the craft, no doubt about that. In their final form her pieces exude pure confidence and one assumes she makes them in a breath; no struggle at all. It is only her deliberate choice to insert those stuttering motions (which are, by the way, also performed gorgeously) that alerts us to the reality of the process; the behind the scenes.

The motif of a stutter (body jerking between choices of movement) returns every so often – each time one choreographic sequence is completed and the new one meant to begin. A meta choice that exposes the 'mechanics' of the process: the decision-making (and therefore indecisiveness) that underlines each step we see. The idea of mechanics, or mechanisation, is in fact present in the work through the soundtrack that features sounds of engines, creating a parallel between the body and the machine. As expressed by Mitchell Christie who accompanies Dinh in this dance duet: "It is easier to recognise the beginning and the end when it comes to machines, where you have a 'turn on' and a 'turn off' button."⁷ But bodies – and therefore, the creative process – do not function exactly like that; even though we tend to frame them with such clarity.

Within the institutional framework, an artist is expected to begin the process of making when a commissioner turns the button on. An approach that treats the artist as a machine, and expects them to create as one. However, machines eventually break, and those 'begin begin begin begin' motions in *And, again* may well be metaphors for a machine being wracked, stuck in a loop.



Unlike machines, the creative process cannot be ‘switched on’ or divided into the clearly visible beginnings and ends; because it flows ongoingly – like time. However, some external ‘pressure’ (or incentive) is helpful as a force that propels the artist to exit the potentially endless idling-phase and dare to make that first imperfect mark. It would be easy to get lost in interstitial labyrinths of shapeless ideas – the darkness of infinite conceptualisation – and lose sight of the edging light. To have an institution commission you to ‘begin’ the work, is like putting your vehicle in the D gear and pressing the gas pedal down. Now you cannot not begin, as frightening as the beginning may be.

However, we still need to champion and value the invisible moments of conceptual groundwork – time spent in dreaming up the work. Could those interstitial spaces, the periods of shapelessness, be recognised as work? And could art practice be freed from the ‘beginning-end frame’? With time, the shapeless ideas impulsively sprout out onto the surface – something *more* significant happens in the ongoing flow of creation and the work’s ‘beginning’ is only a matter of “noticing the change.”⁸

**All photographs are by Natalia Cartney*

1. Words by visual artist Asma D Mather, during the Artist Talk at Firstdraft, 9 Sep 2022. Part of the ‘so hot right now now now’ group exhibition: <https://firstdraft.org.au/program/so-hot-right-now-now-now>

2. Ibid.

3. Rebecca Solnit, *The Faraway Nearby*, Granta, 2013, p185.

4. For more about ‘in-between’ spaces in the art practice, see: Ira Ferris, ‘just.drop.into.that,’ ADJR Zine 005, 2019, p9: https://f3a7ef68-fbab-4d89-9436-183b772ae50a.filesusr.com/ugd/884980_77a9663df53d43c18c017e8969cd15b3.pdf#page=10

5. Words by Shyamla, during her presentation as part of ‘Movement, Movement’ discussion for the dance sector, at Campbelltown Arts Centre, 20 Sep 2022.

6. Paraphrasing choreographer Tra Mi Dinh, based on the And, again Q&A held at East Sydney Community and Arts Centre, on 10 Sep 2022.

7. Words by Mitchell Christie during the And, again post-performance Q&A at East Sydney Community and Arts Centre, 10 Sep 2022.

8. Words by Tra Mi Dinh during the And, again Q&A at East Sydney Community and Arts Centre, 10 Sep 2022. She said: “Beginnings are just noticing the change.”

This performance of *My Self in That Moment* begins with a false start. An audience of around thirty people enter a dark space and sit in rows of stools and long cushioned benches. After some time in the darkness, with anticipation building, we are asked to leave the room and told that a technical issue needs resolving. I am not certain whether this was part of the work.

Ten minutes later we shuffle back into the room and our seats. Another pause in the darkness, and then the piece begins. We hear the sound of a voice, or more accurately a voice made up of many voices, a chorus. The voice is coded female (although I question the normativity of my own listening here. Or perhaps it is because I know the performer, Tina Stefanou). It is a mass of voices, with many layers, producing an undulating vibrato effect. My mind drifts to a memory of György Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna*, and then, a few moments later to Joan La Barbara's *Sound Paintings*. Slippery ambiguity of voices, always moving, yet almost static. Psychologically dissociative.

As we listen, a mise-en-scène emerges from the darkness; a technical apparatus, a screen — or more accurately, a screen made up of many screens, a grid of approximately forty vertically aligned tablets. A distributed image begins to form. It is a woman; seated, expressionless. She begins to slowly move. As the figure animates, her screen-body becomes misaligned, discontinuous, fragmented, out of sync with itself.

Now it begins to disappear. Blocks of the image collapse into black, darkness. The screen-body-apparatus is being dismantled piece by piece, and another image-body, that of the performer, is revealing itself, iteratively, through gaps in the structure. In this interplay between performer and mediated reproduction I am reminded of Guy Sherwin's canonical expanded-cinema performance *Man with Mirror* (1976-2009), in which the artist slowly spins a screen, white on one side and mirrored on the other, while an image of himself performing the same activity is projected towards him. The audience experiences an oscillating visual echo between performance and recording.

In Sherwin's work, a melancholic temporality emerged over the decades as the performer aged, while his image remained fixed, each performance indexing the irreversibility of time. In *My Self in That Moment*, we experience a different 'doubling', and a different indexing; more immediate and somehow ambiguous, digital rather than analogue. Self and self-image are not contrasted, but inextricably fused, self-as-image. Myself 'in that moment', the never-ending digital present, in which we are continually reproduced as images, a spectacle even to ourselves.

All the screens have now been removed. We follow them, and the performer, to another space and a different configuration of materials. The audience now sits in the round, observing a central area in which screen-tablets lie scattered, disordered, image-up, on the floor. Each device is producing images and sounds, creating a diffusion of body parts, zoomed-in details of clothing, images-within-images extracted from context. This scene has a puzzle-like quality, in which relationships between elements are on the cusp of graspable, yet still abstract. The image-sounds are out-of-order, a database waiting to be sorted, sifted for information or clues.

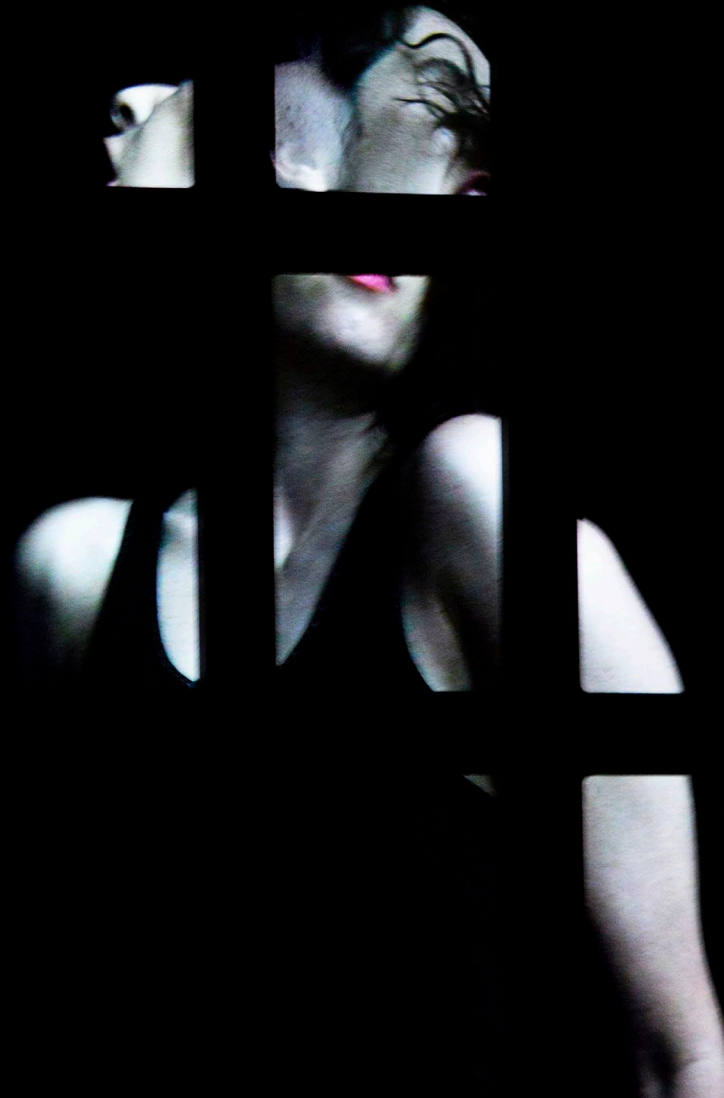
Now the lights go out. In darkness we hear voices and conversations, naturalistic, discussing how bodies and voices become abstracted, and are reconstituted in ways that feel untethered to the bodies that produced them. Electronic treatments, glitches and granulations, begin to intervene; a sonic metaphor for atomisation, fragmentation, and perhaps loss. Yet at the same time signalling the ecstatic proliferation and multiplication of identity and subjectivity. Responding, the performer begins a monstrous choreography. She is adorned in a misshapen, mutant-like costume made seemingly of faces and bodies; a deformed body-made-of-bodies, analogous to the screen-made-of-screens. She screams, as if mourning the loss of a comprehensible relationship to herself.

The screens, now arranged in a circle around the performer, begin strobing in black and white, an impression of self as binary code, subjectivity extrapolated from underlying programmatic logics. The performer vigorously collects the screens, throwing them from the periphery of the stage into the centre, where they pile-up like so much e-waste, in a swarm of screeching tones. Here we see another, final, image of the self, constituted as a mound of discarded interfaces, digital detritus. And, the lights come on.

I'm left with a sense of the profound alienation and, indeed, abjection of our mediated worlds. The cascading effect of the self-as-endlessly-reproducing-image plays out as body horror. But the horror is not that of the body's disappearance, but rather it's continual reappearance in ever more distorted forms.

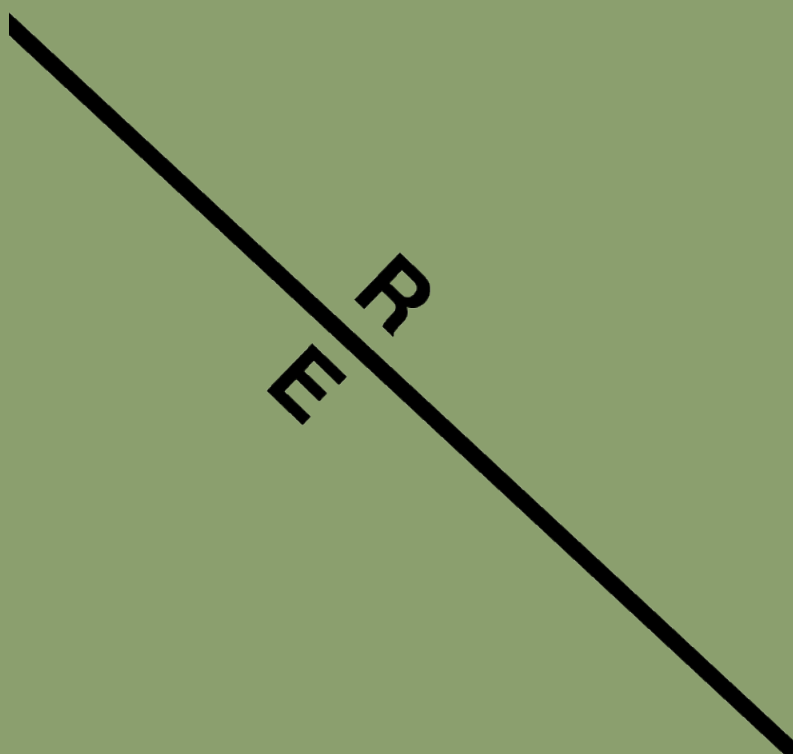
Note: This text is a transcript of a voice message dictated by the writer into his mobile phone, in the front seat of his car in the Substation carpark, immediately following the performance. It is an attempt to capture the an immediate response to the work, before second order reflections and the ambiguities of memory take hold.

Image of Tina Stefanou.
Photographer: Pia Johnson



RELEASE

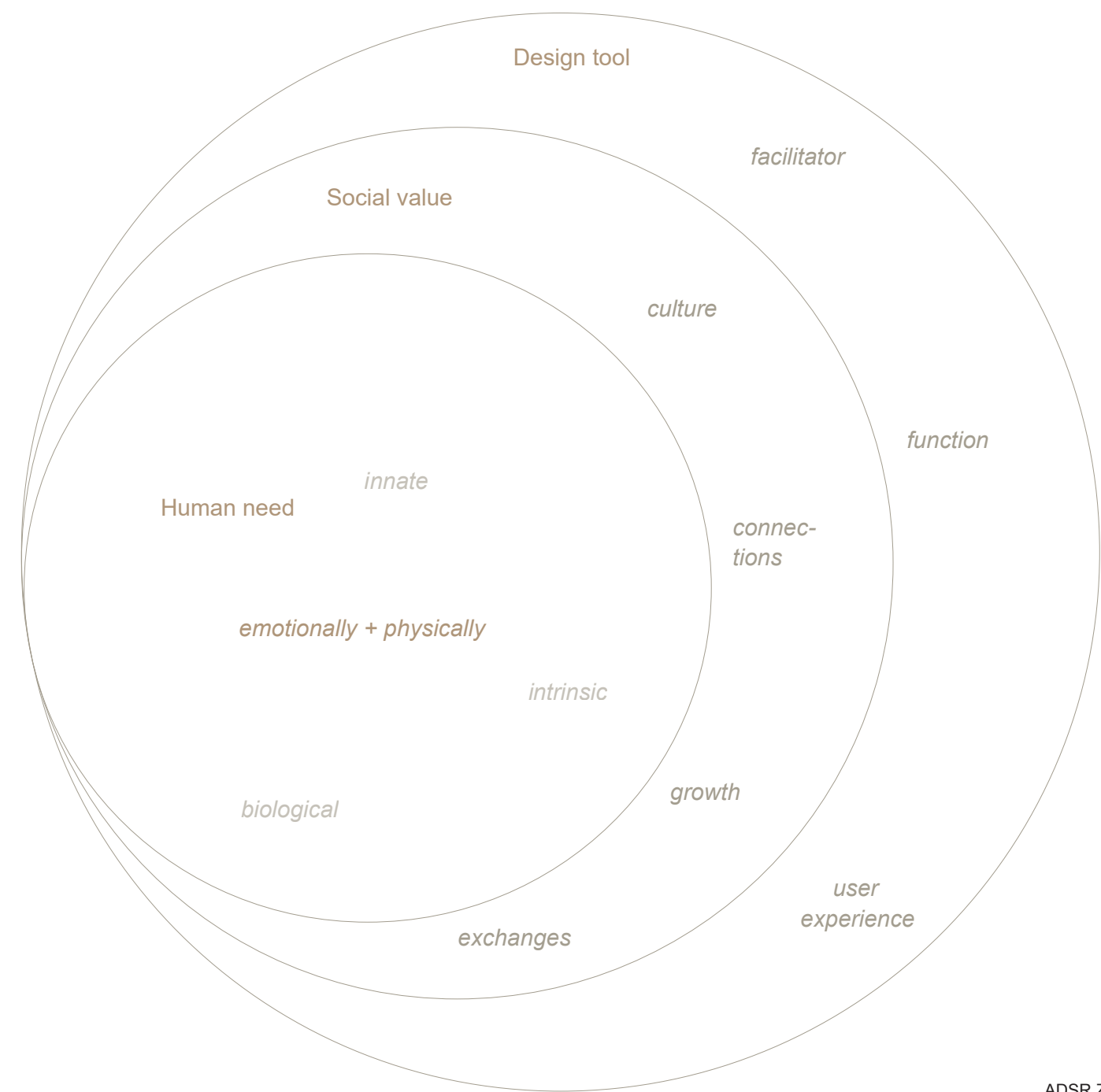
THE RELEASE OF MEDIA
(NEW WORK)



‘Care’ as a *practice*, as a *process*

Value / Slowness / Routine / Function / Process

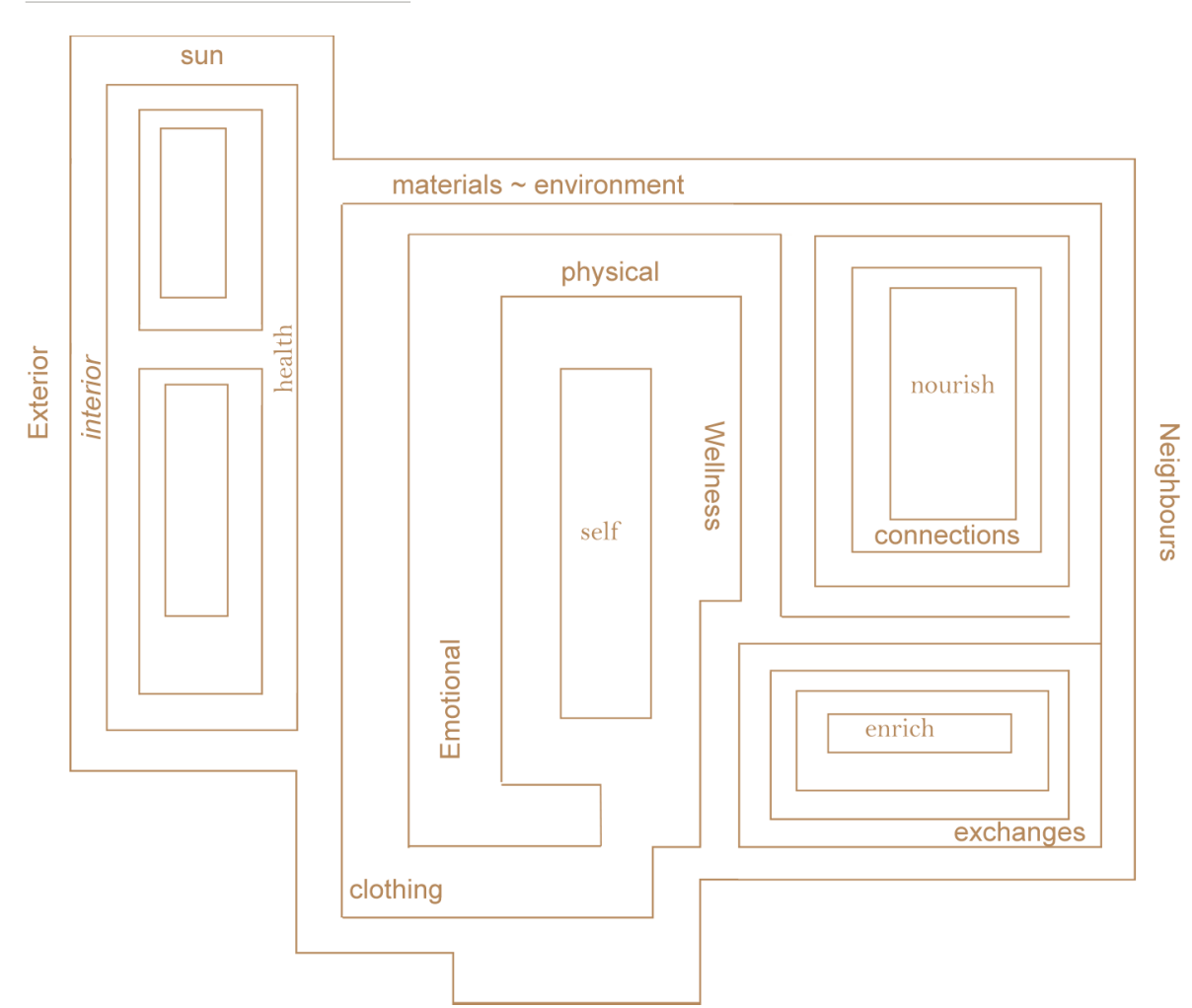
Care has culturally been constructed around the terms ‘health-care’, ‘aged-care’ and ‘self-care’. It is defined as the provision of what is necessary for the betterment of something. However, in design *care* has fallen in a seemingly grey area, where profit often overrides people, and *care* is sometimes considered as an afterthought. When we consider care, we are first acquainted with one of the most humanistic and apparent forms; the biological vernacular of the motherly bond that emanates from the inner-the self, and transcends as protection, welfare and health of another. The effect is compounded and added by others in a community. This innate biological need for emotional and physical care is just a segment of a more extensive, complex system. This innate need trickles down, informing the broader aspects of life, including the spaces we inhabit, spaces we work, live and play.



In an email exchange from Elia to Sarah on the discussion of cooking and care...

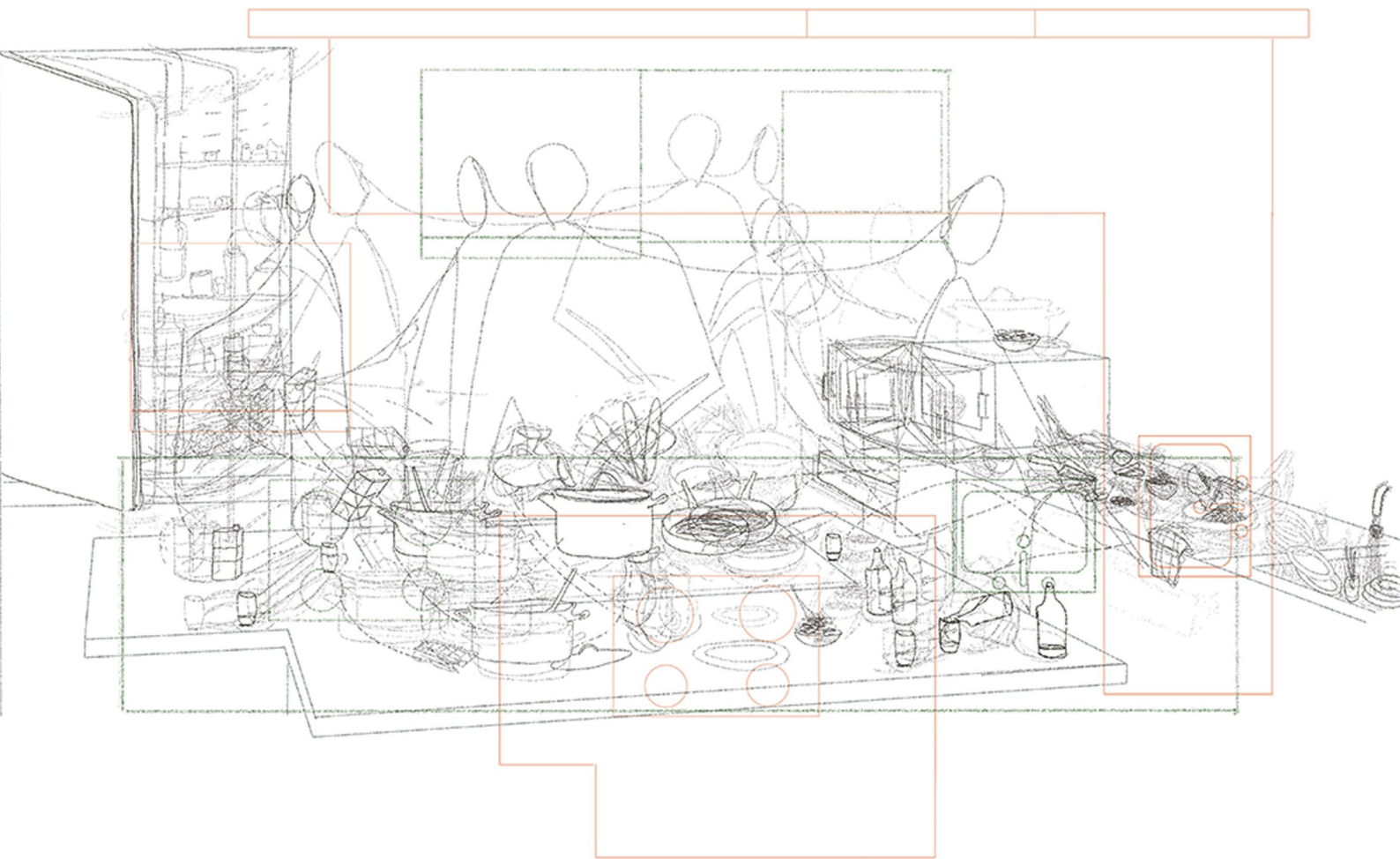
“...Cooking with care – care as design methodology...’ By understanding care in cooking, how can this help us to understand care as design methodology? The text in the yellow note is fantastic, it takes us straight into the premise of your interrogations! The text could be a feature of the work, not just a side note. Also, more drawings of cooking? Recipes, stories, photos of cooking to share as part of this reflection?...”

The mental ‘scapes’



What can we gain from examining the mental scape of the home in rethinking the way the built environment is designed. What can we draw from routines / themes / practices?

How has design facilitated connections or hindered it? How has lockdowns revealed the importance of well considered designs and connections and encounters with the environment?



"Cooking as a means of care ~ care as a design methodology" traverses the middle ground between care and design, speculating where care occurs and how these often intangible examples can be brought forth and discussed.

How can we transcend the discussion beyond building materials and techniques to think about how human interaction is considered in the design process?

Thinking from the perspective of care.

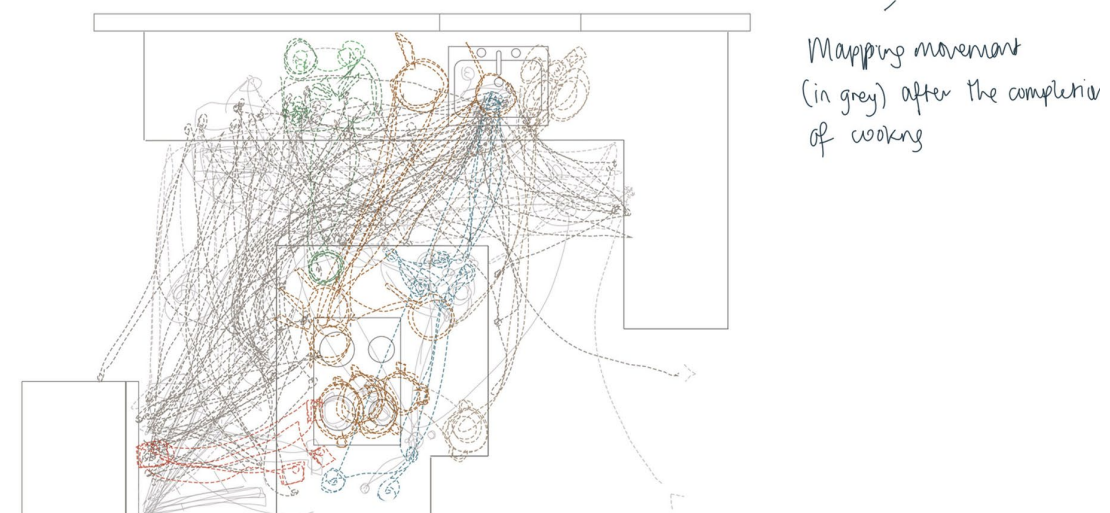
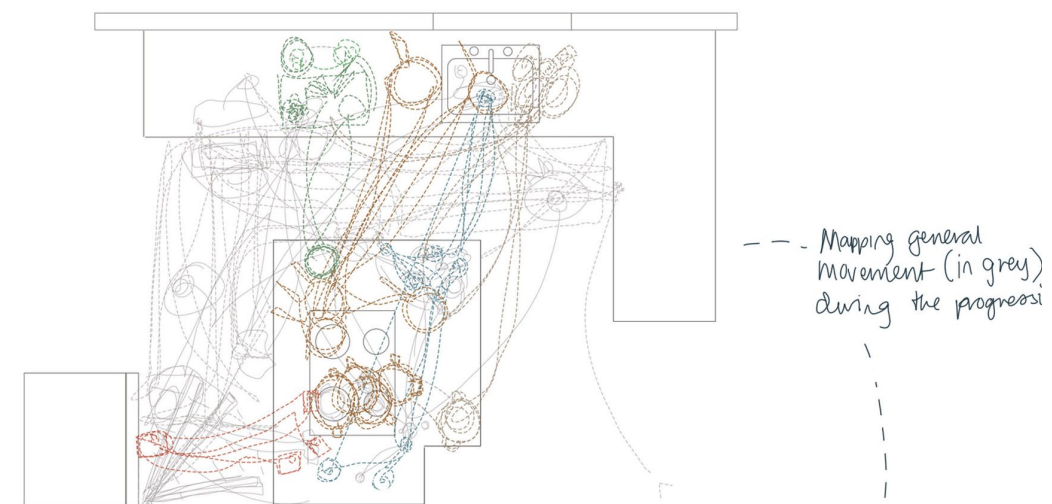
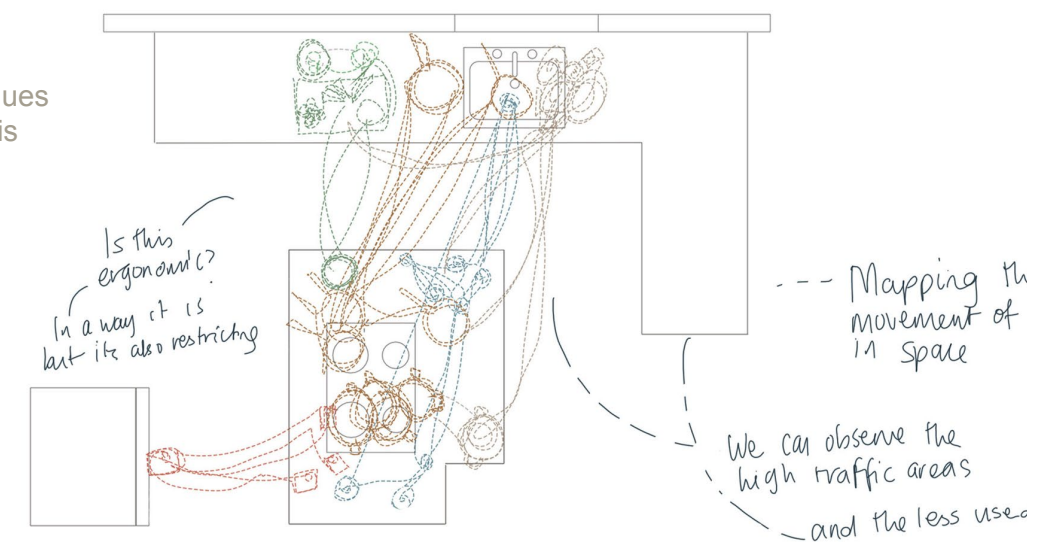
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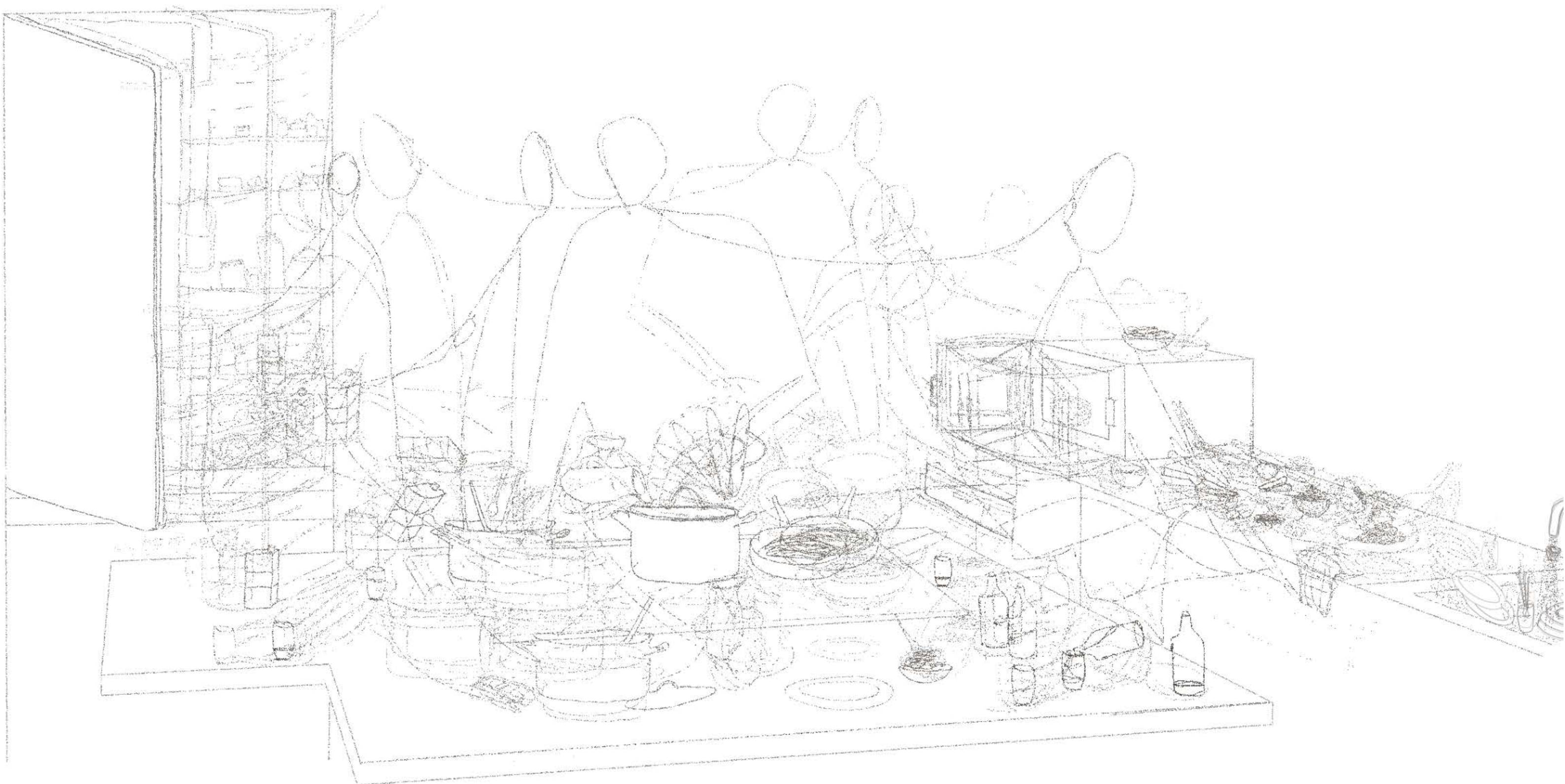
The interplay between cooking and design - mapping movement and ergonomics in space

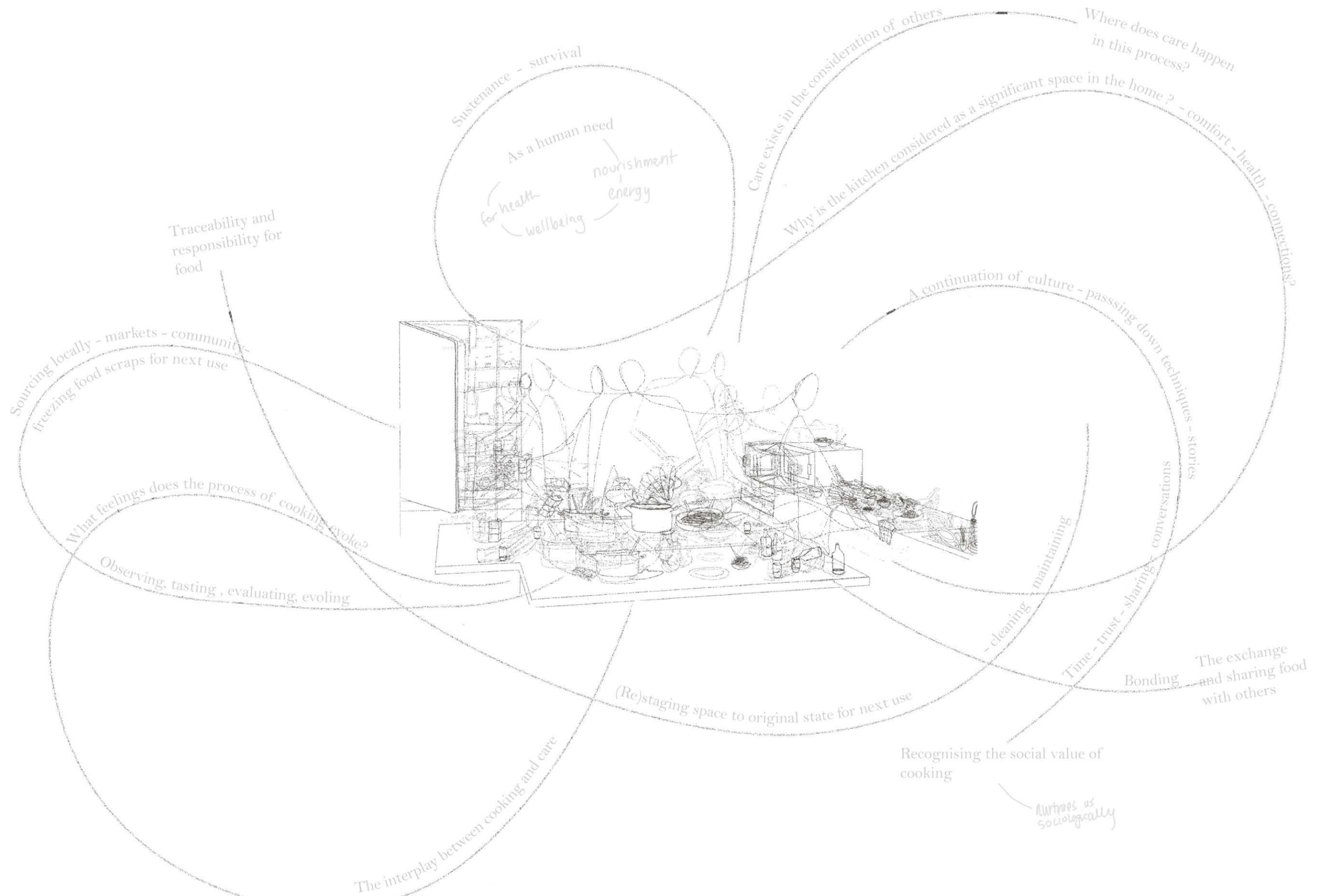
How does the spatial configuration of space effect its use and the interactions in space?

Exploring cooking as an intrinsic human need, exploring the intervals of the habitual every day, looking at process and duration of time to analyse the unfolding events that goes into producing a meal.

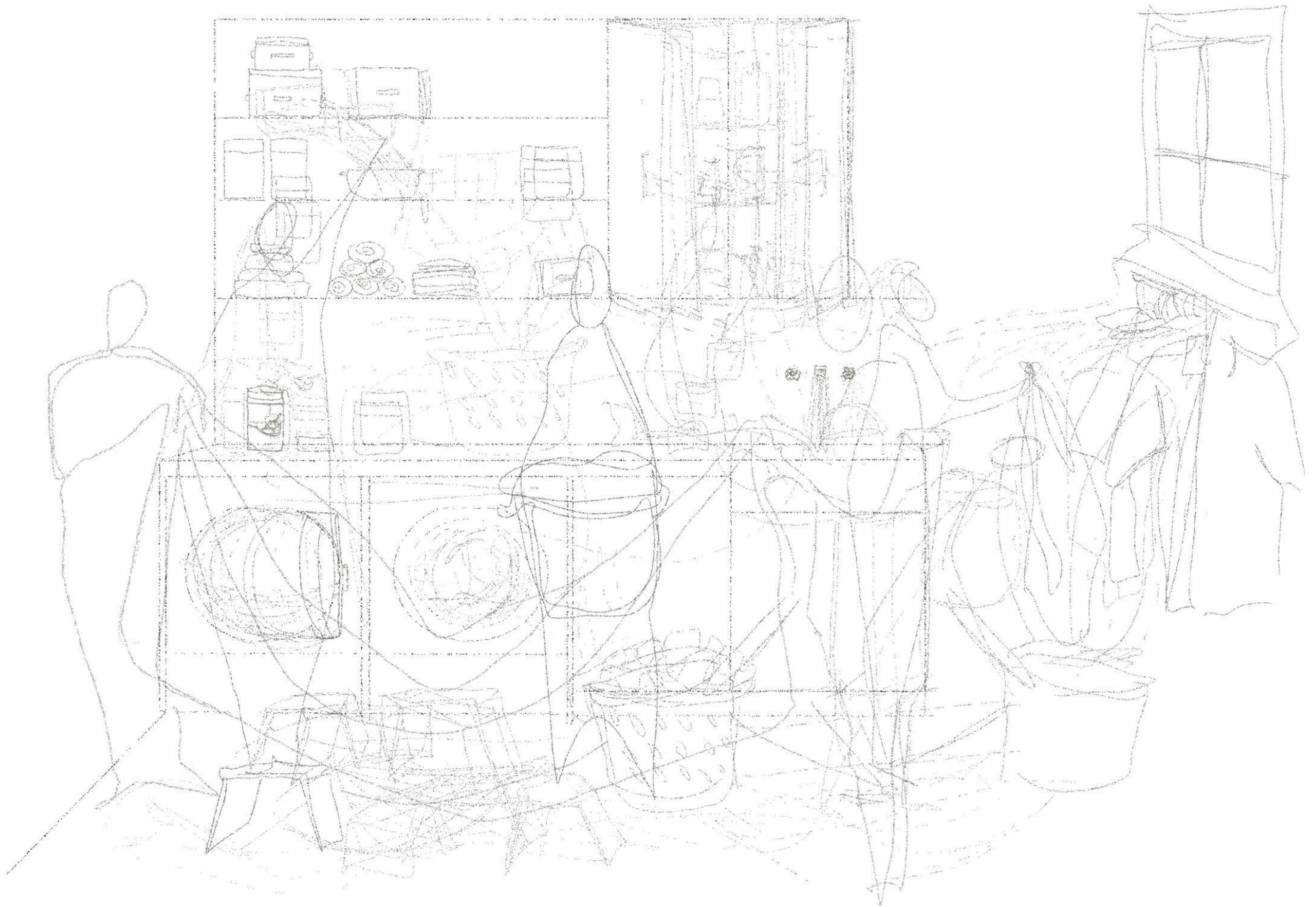
\ Considering the kitchen space as a design tool - examining ergonomics of space and how it might relate to improving use.







Where can we find care in the process of cooking ?



Where can we find care in laborious tasks?

Can our structures invest the same energy for empathy and care as it does for profit?

How can **adaptation** of spaces/dwellings foster a sense of care and agency?

How can architecture increase care **and** empathy in the urban landscape?

How do we find **agency** in limitation?

How can residual space **be** platforms that inspire positive change or inspire caring attitudes?

How is human interaction **explored** in the design process?

How can we (re)introduce care **as** a third tenant of design? Where form follows care.

Can adaption to limitations be explored as **modes** of care?

How can we observe the public realm to initiate ideal/s **of** care?

How does ergonomics allow or deny agency ?

How can we practice **care** across different scales? As a social value, human need and design tool.

Can adaption and agency **in** our everyday spaces encourage a more positive encounter with space?

How does **creating** modular spaces lend agency?

What are some small interventions that start to explore care in the urban context?

Can design foster **a sensitive shift** in the way we encounter space?

Theo van Doesburg

by Kurt Schwitters

Translated by Rainer Linz

Everyone knows the Doesburg of *de stijl*, the collective, the consequential evolution, the logical organisation, but only a few know of his significance to dada. Even though in 1923 he brought dadism to Holland with unparalleled success, and even though in so doing he created a good piece of dada himself. Already in his magazine *Mécano* he showed himself to be a great authority in dadaistic things, and one could feel his real passion for dada with every line, whether he wanted or not.

At the end of 1922 Theo van Doesburg invited the most important dadaists to a congress in Holland that would take place in 1923. Unfortunately one underestimated the receptiveness of Holland, and so apart from Doesburg I was the only dadaist who appeared at the experimental evening in the *Haagse Kunstkring*. Theo van Doesburg gave an explanatory talk about dadaism, and I was supposed to appear as an example of dadaism. So Doesburg at the podium in a tuxedo, with his stylish black shirtfront and white tie, powdered white to boot, a monocle on his eye and with monstrous gravity worked the stern faces just dadaistically enough, according to his self-coined proverb “life is a wonderful discovery”.

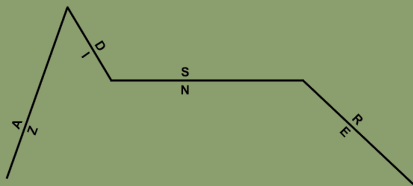
Now, because I don't understand a word of Dutch, we agreed that I would demonstrate the dadaism as soon as he took a sip of water. Doesburg drank and I, sitting in the audience unbeknown to the public, suddenly began to bark terribly. The barking brought us a second evening in Haarlem that was even sold out, because everybody wanted to see Doesburg drinking water and hear me suddenly and unexpectedly barking. At Doesburg's suggestion I didn't bark this time. And that brought us a third evening in Amsterdam, during which the unconscious were carried out of the hall, a woman during the course of a laughing fit attracted the audience's attention for a quarter of an hour, while a fanatical gentleman in a woollen mantel labelled the audience idiots in a prophetic manner. This is the point at which Doesburg's campaign for dada succeeded decisively. Countless evenings in every Dutch city was the result, and Doesburg managed everywhere to raise the most energetic opposition to himself and his own. All of us, Petro van Doesburg and Vilmos Huszár belonged to our small troupe as well, and we dared ourselves again and again onto the raging public that we had ourselves enraged beforehand, and Does worked again and again as a red rag despite his black shirtfront.

It was precisely the distinguished, deep black nobility of Doesburg that the Dutch found terribly provocative, and so he could plough the public over and over and lay the ground so that important new things could grow on it.

The nicest experience for me was in Utrecht when suddenly, as I spoke on the great glorious revolution while Doesburg found himself in the dressing room, some unknown masked men appeared on the stage to present me with a peculiar flower arrangement and thereupon to take over the lecture. The flower arrangement was about three metres tall and attached to a large wooden framework. It consisted of decaying flowers and bones and was topped with an unfortunately depotted Calla. Additionally a very large, putrid laurel wreath from Utrecht's Cemetery of the Bourgeois was laid at my feet and a faded ribbon was unravelled, and one of the gentlemen sat himself at my table and read something from a large bible he had brought with him. Since as a German I couldn't really understand him, I took it as my duty to inform Doesburg so that he might exchange a few friendly words with the gentlemen.

But it turned out differently. As Doesburg came, he saw and conquered. That is, as he saw the man he did not hesitate for long, but rather without first introducing himself and without any kind of ceremony, tipped him complete with bible and flower arrangement into the orchestra pit. The result was unprecedented. Indeed, one man was now gone, but as one man the entire audience stood up. The police wept, and the audience fought among itself just to get hold of a small piece of the flower arrangement; everywhere bloody bones were passed around with which to congratulate themselves and us. It was an unparalleled dadaistic triumph.

I had dearly hoped to be able to lecture more often with such a talented dadaist as Doesburg. In Doesburg world dadaism has lost one of its greatest experts and authorities.



ADSR Zine

[Attack, Decay-Sustain, Release]

ADSR Zine is an award-winning publication, releasing quarterly online editions that feature writing and media from contributors who are, or who work with contemporary practising artists. We value the process of reflection, translation, interpretation, critical response and active engagement with Australian art and performance.

We believe that the artist is not only an expert in their field, but offers an important voice beyond the scope of their primary discipline. Artists are welcomed to move beyond this scope to embrace naivety, presenting the sweep, the details, or a combination of both.

As a magazine with a strong interdisciplinary focus, the online format allows for the delivery of written, sonic and visual resources to present, support and facilitate discourse between practising artists.

WHAT WE DO

ADSR Zine offers a 3-part conceptual scaffold that is designed to evoke experimental and non-formalist approaches to responsive writing and media within a contemporary arts and performance context.

OUR POINT OF DEPARTURE

ADSR Zine is a platform for discourse that encourages experimental approaches to discussing visual, performative and sound art. Functioning from an 'art begets art' premise, we offer contributors significant creative license. We are influenced by the wave of 80's and 90's experimental music and art publications (NMA, Sounds Australia, Real Time) which were platforms for creative and innovative solutions to writing and conceptualising experimental work.

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