

Submission Art Thesis Award, Hogeschool Zuyd, 2024

The Green Box r.1 (facsimile)

Pablo Fontdevila

programme: Master in Theater, Toneelacademie Maastricht

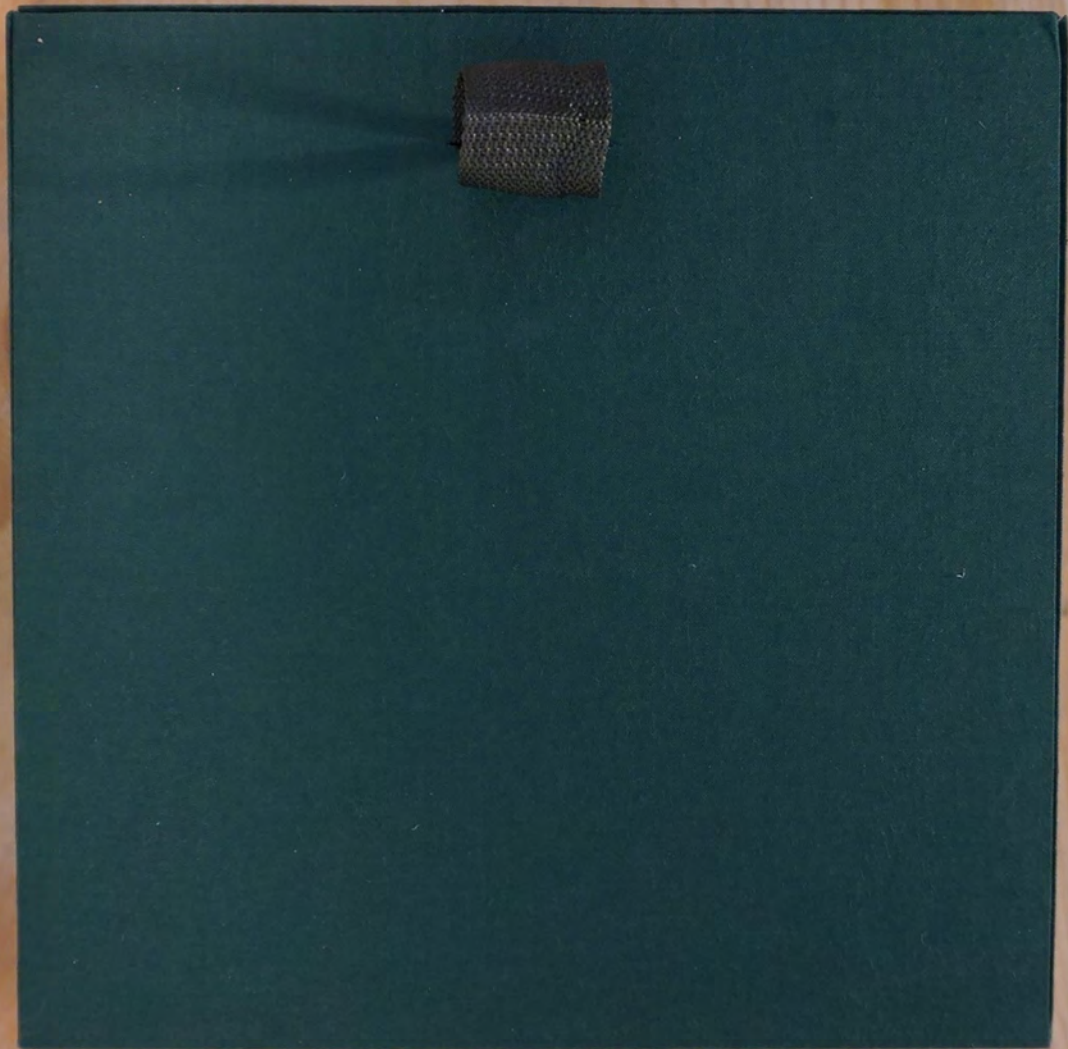
Thesis mentored by Ulrike Scholtes, Diego Fontdevila, Elowise Vandenbroecke

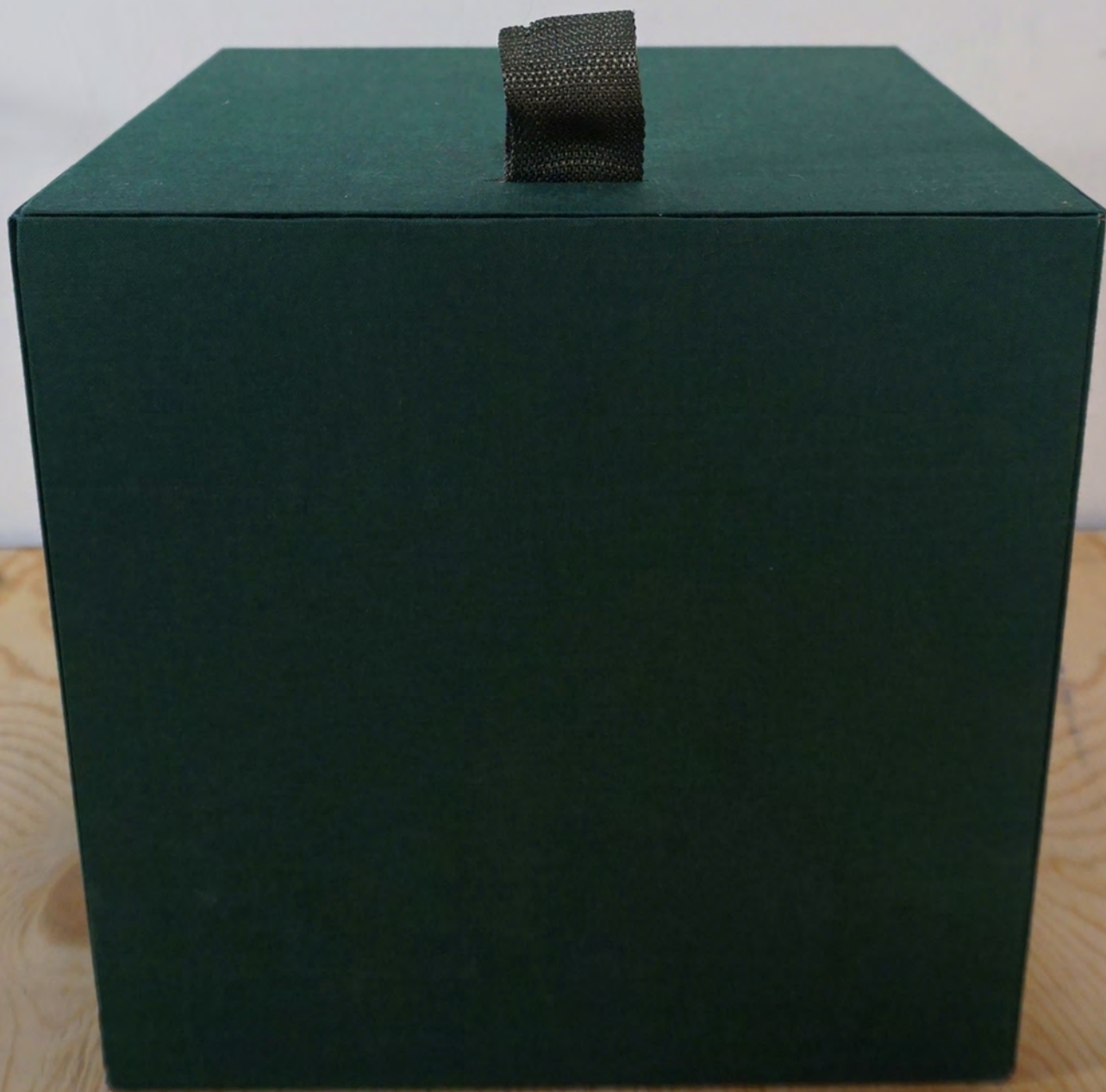
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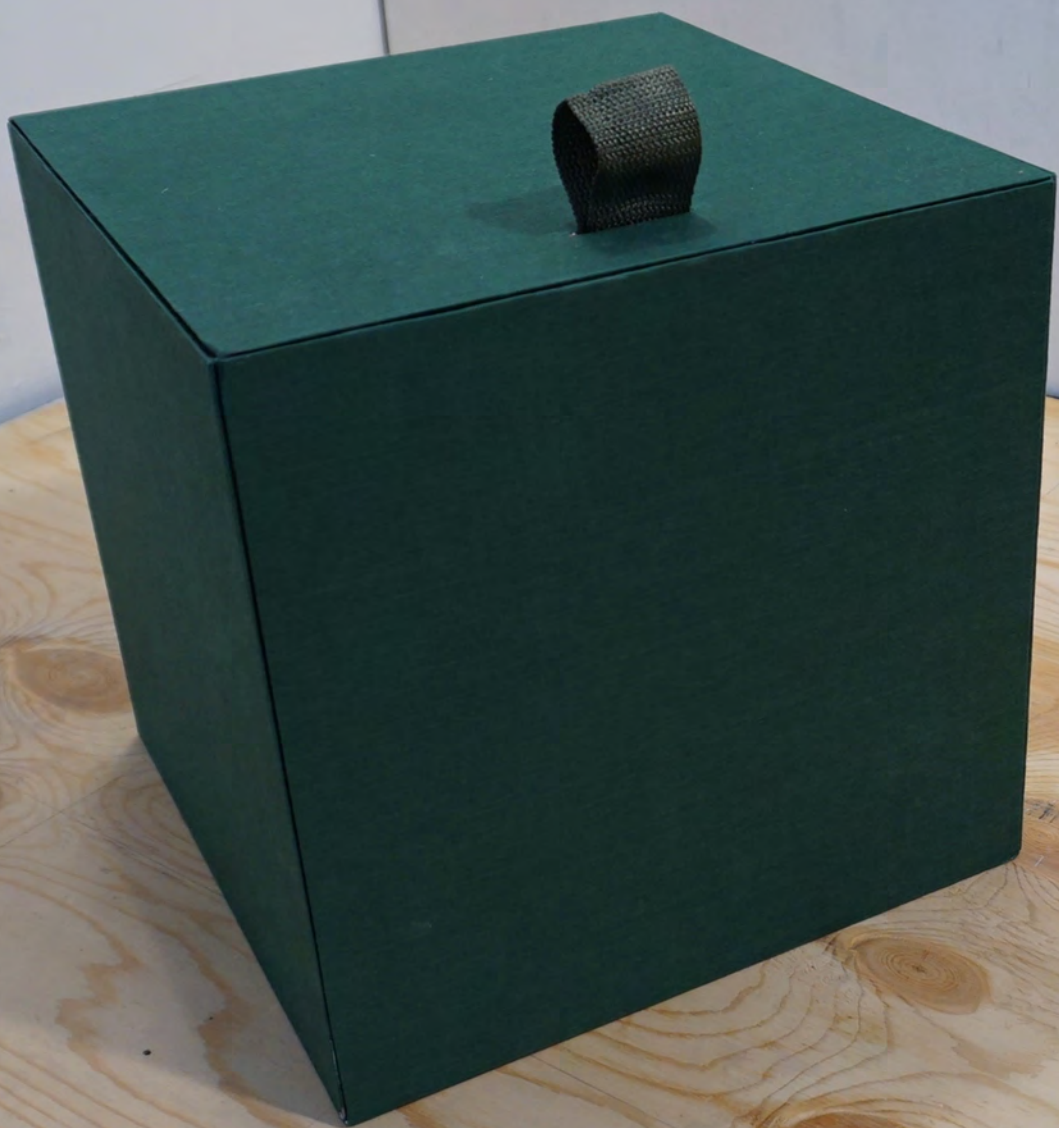
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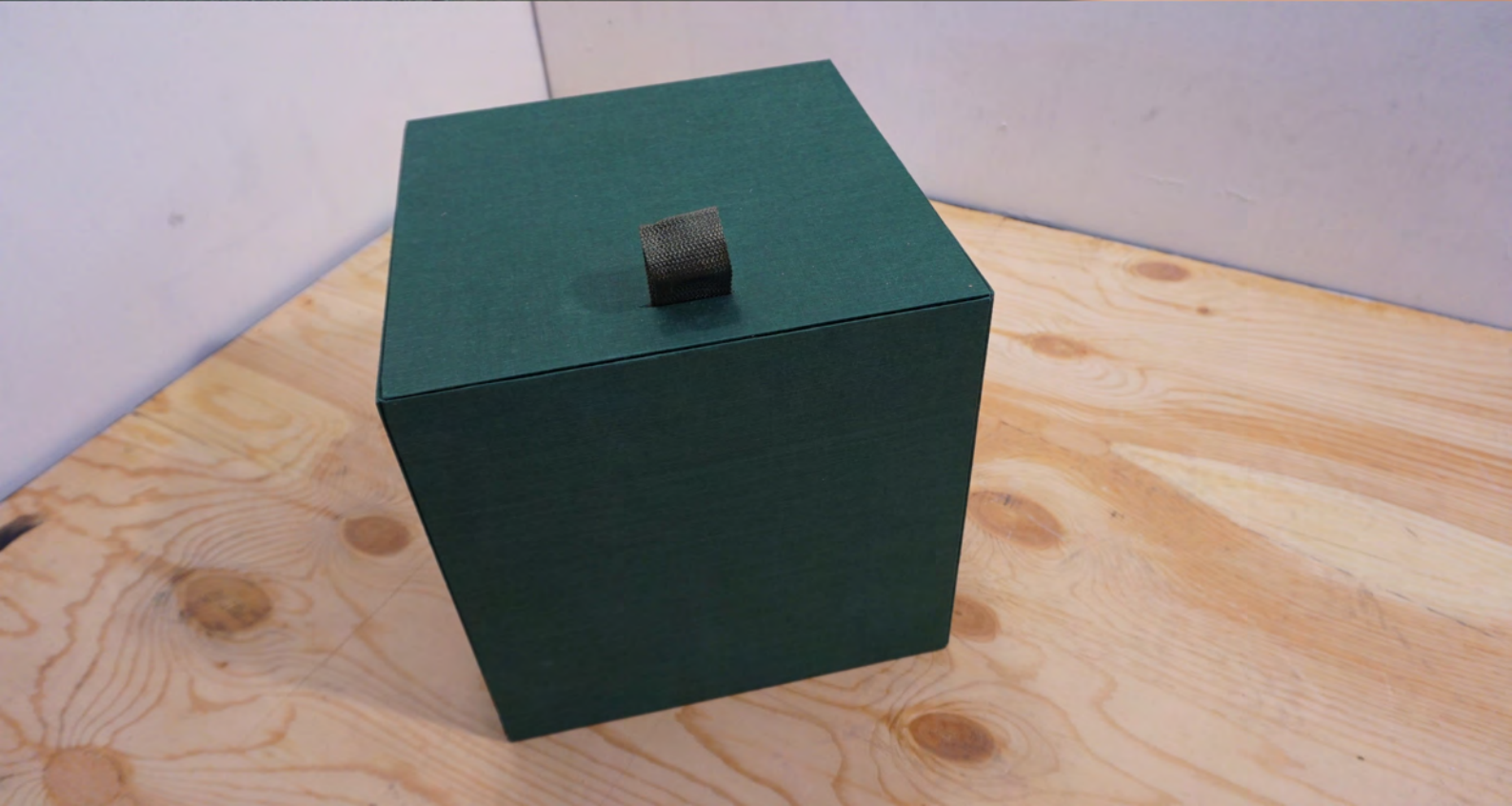
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The Green Box r.1 (facsimile)

I presented The Green Box as my artistic research thesis (or 'Critical Reflection'), in the frame of the Master in Theater at the Toneelacademie Maastricht. In March 2024 I shared with the jury what I call the first release.

I have worked for over 20 years in the field of dance and theatre. I studied choreography, lighting design, scenography and electronic arts. I started the Master in Theater questioning what I felt had been a compartmentalizing approach. I was looking for a frame to re-integrate the different aspects of my work. In this trajectory I tried to bring together questions about movement and about vision, which formerly I had often seen as conflicting concepts. In the search to integrate my experiences as choreographer and designer I unexpectedly connected with text. I started working with words as objects, exploring the performativity of written texts.

With The Green Box I didn't want to write *about* my artistic research. Rather, I wanted it to be a playground to research writing, and ways of placing writing in the space. I imagined the Box as a sort of inconvenient book that I could lend to one person at a time. From the beginning I imagined characteristics that would propose (or maybe demand) a certain way of engaging: it would require the reader to find a specific time and space. Almost to make an appointment for it – like going to the theatre.

The Green Box contains a collection of texts about my artistic process, about writing, about vision and movement, about dramaturgy, and about the Box itself. More than attempting to arrive at conclusions, it is an experiment, an exercise for myself and for the reader. It tries to be playful, it proposes frictions between the materialities and the words. It's a very solid 16 kg of wood, marble, plastic, fabric, acetate, plastics and more, and at the same time it's a collection that can be curated and edited with relative ease. Elements can be removed, new texts can be introduced. I call this a first release, and I hope with time it will be able to continue developing it.

As I mentioned, my initial idea was to create a singular object that would circulate from reader to reader. With time (and especially with interactions) other ideas came up: group readings or events, to include the performativity of the readers in each others' experiences.

Trying to put The Green Box into a .pdf file somewhat betraying its base premise. This document is meant as a teaser, to give an impression of the work and hopefully to pique your curiosity. I would be glad to lend an (actual) Green Box to the jury of this call. In order to do so, please contact me by email and I will arrange delivering it.

Thanks for your attention

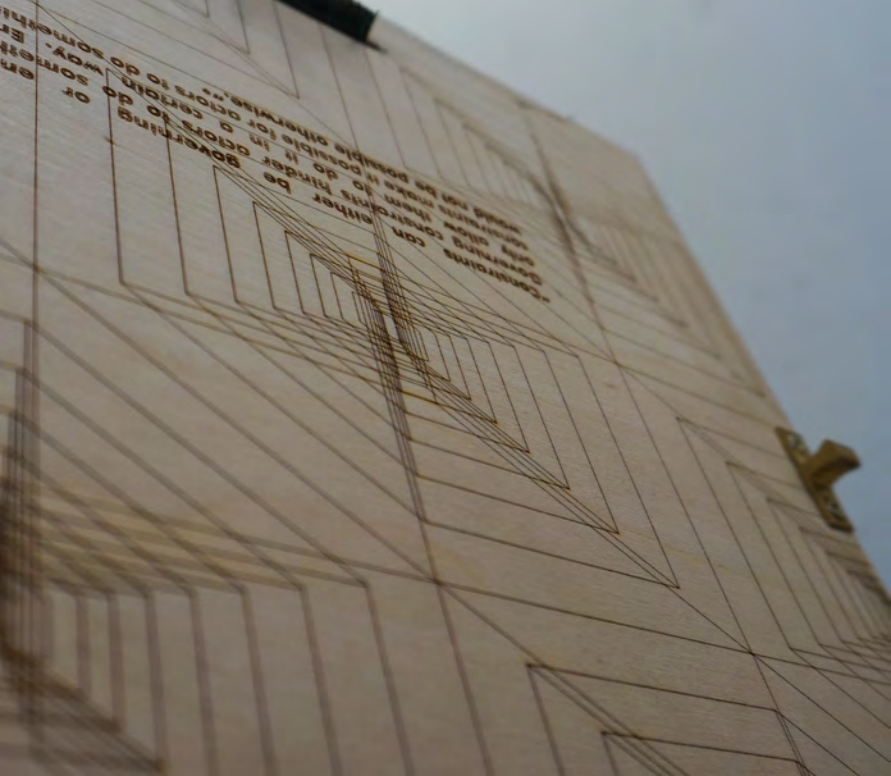
Amsterdam, 2024.07.30



"Covering can either be governing or enabling, only allowing controlling hidden action to do something or constructing them to do it in a certain way. Grabbing or holding not be possible otherwise."

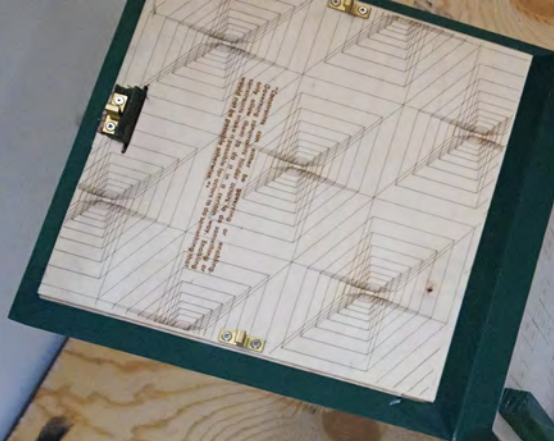
this is where I am

"Governments can only bring about change by using incentives and disincentives. It is not possible for governments to do otherwise." "Governments can only bring about change by using incentives and disincentives. It is not possible for governments to do otherwise."





this is where I am





If I see research as creation and creation as research, their methods are not that easy to separate. There's also a subtle entanglement with the idea of process and process oriented art, which is how I usually think about my work. Is process oriented work the same as research oriented work? The former means that the point of interest in the work lies in staging processes, things which are happening—doing in the moment of the presentation of the work. Whatever the work is about, it is also about the process of approaching that aboutness. Not focused so much on a result but on showing the processes that led there. The intention (the hope?) is to present questions rather than re-present answers.

On the other hand, a focus on processes doesn't necessarily imply that these are about discovery or innovation. But in my



this is where I am

DOES REFLECTION NEED TO BE ANALYTICAL? ANALYSIS NEEDS TO DIVIDE, AND IN DOING SO IT CANNOT GRASP THE WHOLE. DIVIDING, DIVISION, CATEGORIZATION OBSTACULIZES UNFOLDING / UNFOLDING AS A WAY TO KEEP THE WHOLE WHOLE.

THIS PROJECT BRINGS UP THE TENSION BETWEEN TRYING TO CREATE ONE INTEGRAL DISCOURSE, A TEXT THAT MAKES SENSE, AND ACCEPTING THE MULTIPLICITY OF TEXTS SHOOTING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS... AND YET, IT ALSO BRINGS UP THE THOUGHT THAT *•THAT•* MAKES SENSE, THAT THERE IS A SENSE TO BE MADE IN THE GAPS... THE THOUGHT THAT *•THAT•* SENSE NEEDS TO BE MADE BY A READER. THE THOUGHT IS THAT *•THAT•* IS EXCITING: THE EXPERIENCE OF READING (OF WRITING) ALL THESE FRAGMENTARY TEXTS AND PERCEIVING THE GAPS, AND STARTING TO CONSTRUCT THINKINGS IN AND AROUND THEM. THAT EXPERIENCE IS WHAT THIS BOX CAN PRODUCE. BUT, OF COURSE, THAT MIGHT JUST BE AN EXCUSE FOR MY FAILING TO MAKE PROPER SENSE.

AT SOME POINT, DUCHAMP LEFT THE LARGE GLASS (WHOSE PROCESS IS DOCUMENTED IN THE GREEN BOX) *"definitely unfinished"*. IT WAS MAYBE UNAVOIDABLE, BUT IT WAS ALSO A CHOICE. ULTIMATELY IT'S A QUALITY OF THE WORK ITSELF.

THERE IS SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE IN THE TENSION BETWEEN TRYING TO ARTICULATE ONE DISCOURSE AND LETTING THE DISCOURSE FALL APART. IT JUST REQUIRES A LOT OF WORK.

FROM BOTH OF US, MIND YOU.

Meaning is never
a principle or
an origin,
but rather a product
- sense
needs to be made*

AND ACCEPTING THE MOVING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS...
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TO ARTICULATE ON

what if
where I am
is
what I need?



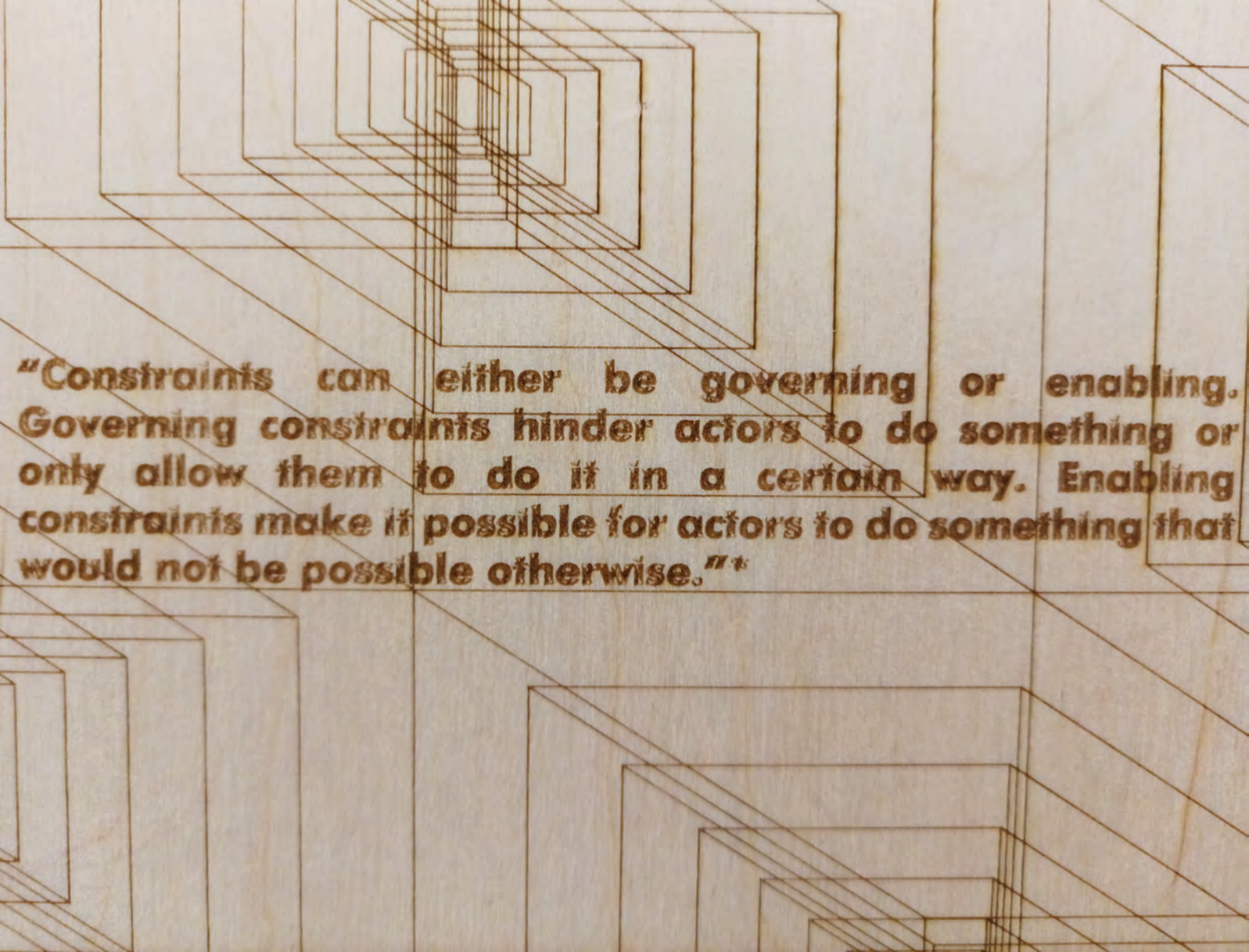
What if an artistic
research is just a
way to practice
becoming more
sensitive?

What kind of texts
put thinking
into movement?

**What if research is just
a practice of listening,
of tuning to all the
things that emerge
while doing other
things?**

I started with the question:
what if the exploration of a subject
is always
the exploration of
the modes of exploration?
but when I try to conceptualize
what I'm doing now,
I have to think rather:
what if the exploration of
the modes of exploration
is always
the exploration of a subject?





"Constraints can either be governing or enabling. Governing constraints hinder actors to do something or only allow them to do it in a certain way. Enabling constraints make it possible for actors to do something that would not be possible otherwise."¹¹

Master in Theater, Toneelacademie Maastricht

Excerpts from Artistic Research Proposal (ARD2.1 – July 2020)

PART I.

THINK OF YOUR PLAN AS A PLAN FOR LEARNING AS MUCH AS IT IS A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION.*

An introduction

So I start working, I start writing. Or, actually: the work has already started. But I start again. I move around, back and forth, I move things around in order to move myself. Copy & Paste: I start (re)collecting (I re-start re-collecting) paragraphs, sentences, clusters of words. Clusters of ideas. Complex networks of meaning. Maybe take a step back – “complex network of meanings” might be too complex a network of meanings for the fourth line of this document.

Artistic Research Document 2.1 (ARD2.1) – in the frame of the Master in Theatre of the Toneelacademie Maastricht, I'm writing this document to present the ideas behind my Artistic Research (AR, from now on). The AR is a research trajectory which concludes with the presentation of a Critical Reflection (CR), a communicable something that marks the end of the AR (or at least punctuates the process and, by the way, creates a moment for evaluation). Or, actually, what am I writing this document for?

Let's go back to the beginning, or to somewhere in the middle, when I realized how confusing it could get, writing about my AR. One of the things I eventually realized while trying to write this document (ARD) is that it is not so easy to differentiate it from the actual research. Or maybe it can be differentiated, but not so easily separated. So, again: what am I writing this document for? I am thinking about this ARD2.1 as something like a research proposal, a document communicating to others what I am busy with in the frame of my AR, what are my interests and (more or less) how do I plan on working on them. But not only.

Writing the proposal is also already the research. In trying to clarify them for communication, the ideas get questioned and transformed. It's not only a matter of communicating what the research is about but also *how* to communicate it. What form of writing does that better? And more: what practice of writing better stimulates the thinking process about the writing, and about the communicating? And more: since language (and particularly writing) is a central element of my research, why not explore, already in the writing of the document that communicates the ideas, the ideas about language and writing? So, this document, ARD2.1, will be a tool for communication and it's also already a space of research, a space of exploration. An exercise in writings.

Of frames, boxes, anchors and other desirable constraints

But what is artistic research? I ask myself this question often. How to write an artistic research proposal without first defining what artistic research is? I struggled and stalled, and puzzled and fiddled, and I huffed and I puffed. Eventually I started writing about my Artistic Project (AP), in order to be able to explain my AR. The AP is the other main track in the Master, and it's oriented to the creation-production of a work of art (possibly but not necessarily a performance). The AR and the AP don't need to be related, but they could. At the start of the Master I had the desire to engage with the two tracks independently, to see

them as opportunities for making *more* – to make a performance on one hand, and to do research on something completely else next to it. But as my ideas for the AP became clearer (and rather complex) I found it more productive to relate AR to AP. I still found it problematic to think of a relation in which the AR *serves* the AP – I was prejudiced against what in more conventional theatre used to be called dramaturgical research, collecting references and background information, *previous* to starting the artistic creation process. So I tried to think what other kind of relation can there be – again, what *is* artistic research?

And what is that need to question what artistic research is? I find myself longing for clear definitions to work with, and I find myself wondering if there is a contradiction between wanting to facilitate an openness of materials and experiences (to escape the predetermination of meaning, to avoid interpretation or at least to complicate it) and wanting to have specific frames to work with. So I try to embrace working with an undefined definition of what artistic research is, but still I search for anchors that help me to work.

In that process I resort to two frameworks. They hover in the back of my mind, and seem to help me shape the thinking processes. The frameworks I'm talking about are **Research-creation**, for putting the AP and the AR in relation, and **Agile**, as a conceptualization and series of practices to organize the working process. There are surely more frames feeding my thinking - conceptual frames, the work of others... And there is surely more that I don't know yet. But for now, back to the frameworks. Enter Research-creation. :

Research-creation

*"Art brings back out the fact that all form is necessarily dynamic form. There is really no such thing as fixed form – which is another way of saying that the object of vision is virtual. Art is the technique for making that necessary but normally unperceived fact perceptible, in a qualitative perception that is as much about life itself as it is about the things we live by. Art is the technique of living life in -- experiencing the virtuality of it more fully, living it more intensely."**

To me every work of art implies some form of research. If this is not completely true, then I can say at least: works of art *interest me* when they imply some degree of research. And if artistic research is something other than academic research, is it simply research in and for the creation of works of art? What is an artistic researcher who is not an artist? What does she do? And what for? Or the other way around: what does the concept of artistic research do for the definition of what an artist can be?

I would like to develop my AR as a part of my creation process. It is not thinking that the AR is in service of the making of the artworks, but rather understanding them as entangled and inseparable. It implies both the impossibility to think of creative work (and artistic creation) without research, and understanding research as a creative activity in its own right.

Why say that research is creative? Because it broadens the work field and frameworks, because it can open up new understandings. Because it brings into the space things that were not there before.

For developing the AR I am drawing inspiration from the field of Research-creation, a term originated *"...in Canada's academic milieu, linking the interpretive disciplines (humanities and social sciences) with creative ones (art and design). This involves the creation of knowledge in and through creative material and performative practice."** It is perhaps mostly used as a framework in the context of philosophy but its propositions seem to resonate with tendencies across other academic disciplines questioning traditional modes of (social scientific) research (I have to think, for example, about Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright's introduction to the publication "Contemporary Art and Anthropology" we discussed in the Travel Companions course at the Master).

Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) defines research-creation as *"...an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms). Research-creation cannot be limited to the interpretation or analysis of a creator's work, conventional works of technological development, or work that focuses on the creation of curricula."**

When trying to describe my work as an artist I've often talked about "exploring ethical questions through the movement of bodies and minds". I like to think in terms of embodied thinking, and to think beyond the human body – the thinking is embodied by people but also in the space between the human and non-human participants of the work of art. I am interested in work that produces experiences rather than explanations. I am interested in thinking processes – questions, movement, are useful words.

How to write texts that can communicate and give access to others without them becoming a capture, an arrest of the thinking process? From the Schneider & Wright article: *"Discussing the role of printed words, Bruno Latour asks 'how much explanatory burden can they carry?' He argues that the reduction involved with transforming three-dimensional objects into two-dimensional objects on paper (words) has resulted in similarly two-dimensional thinking. Through the abstraction of writing, objects and 'the world out there' are reduced in dimensions and can be dominated in a different way."** This should not be thought of as an absolute determination of what writing or words do, but it points out the risk of conventional ways of writing being reductive. And a reminder that if writing is a tool for questioning the world, the mode of writing also needs to be questioned.

How to enrich the idea of writing then? In reading a draft of Ulrike Scholtes' article on skilfull (body) practitioners I recognized myself, at least partly. *"Words, in many practitioners' as well as researchers' view, are often seen as opposing feeling, disrupting the senses, corrupting experience and should be allied with*

thinking, conceptualising, cognition and rationale; the 'others' of feeling bodies."* I'd like to say that I don't, but sometimes I still experience myself thinking like that. Ulrike's analysis serves to identify more precisely the frictions: "...I will argue that both feelings and words are part of practices and that, rather than opposing feeling, words enact feeling and facilitate feeling bodies. (...) I argue that words do not just represent or describe realities – they do for example not just describe feeling bodies – but they also perform realities – they also produce feeling bodies."* To keep developing the skills that make words productive is one of the goals of this research. To keep thinking language as part of how we experience (and form) the world, rather than something that describes it and distances us from it.

I am interested in looking at how words can be productive in specific ways. By that I mean exploring how specific formulations and *wordings* can have effects beyond explanation. I am interested in specific writings that affect (that produce *affects*) the reader. To produce an experience bigger (other) than cognitive understanding and transmission. I like to think about the words as *performers*. I think this is why writing has a specific relevance above the spoken word. In the written text the words seem to me to claim their own space, and to be more autonomous from a human speaker.

The framework of Research-creation invites to conceptualize the process of writing as a creative, speculative and not so predetermined process of work. It allows for an ongoing questioning and adjustment of the research strategies on the go, an adaptative process rather than a prescriptive set of criteria to be fulfilled. This is crucial. I'm not interested in research as something to fulfill or to prove, but rather as a triggering, creative activity. Ultimately my goal is to stimulate creative modes of thinking that can feed into my artistic practice. My primary audience is myself. With all the obvious limitations, my first relation to what I produce as an artist (or, in this case, as a researcher) is my own experience of it - a first attempt to take a step away and to look at it. That is why writing seems like such an essential tool for thinking. By putting ideas in writing I put them literally outside of myself, creating that initial distance. The following steps involve time, repetition and dialogue with others. Conversation is an important strategy. And repetition (iteration) is fundamental. Enter the second framework.

Agile

Agile is a set of principles, values and practices that guide the organization of working processes. I came to know it through my software engineer brother, and over the years it has fed an unlikely yet prolific methodological exchange with people from other disciplines. My view on Agile is particularly informed by "Arful making", a book by theatre director Lee Devin and Harvard Business School professor Robert Austin, based on a study comparing practices and working processes of theatrical productions and other businesses. Although they don't use the Agile terminology much I would argue that "Arful making" provides a conceptual background for Agile as a framework. And that their most important contribution is to identify

which kind of working processes are suitable for it.

Agile aims to support making choices in the shaping of organizations and their working process. The conceptual frame is not discipline-specific, though its best known and most specific examples are methodologies from the software development world (Scrum, XP, Kanban). The principles are about the organization of processes, independently from what the product is. Agile is meant to provide tools for dealing with complex problems (processes and products) *and* with a focus on innovation. It has a strong focus on collaboration, which is viewed as indispensable for engaging with complexity. It proposes practices for managing that complexity and to facilitate constant improvement (a process of *inspecting and adapting*).

One of the fundamental propositions is to work incrementally and in iterations. That is, to organize the working process in recurring cycles, with a certain focus on the rhythm and cadence of work. The aim is to produce results incrementally, ending each cycle with a specific tangible outcome (usable and valuable), each time adding to the previous results. It opposes the *cascade* approach, where a perfectly thorough plan anticipating all the possible problems and all the necessary steps should be laid out *before* starting the actual production work.

What Agile posits is that in complex problems (and especially when innovation is desired) it's not only impossible to anticipate all problems, but even the objectives can't be fully known before starting to work. What *exactly* should the software do, or how *exactly* should the performance look like, is something to be discovered during the making process. What's important is defining a vision that will help make decisions in steering the process over time. And to create the conditions (scheduling, communication, transparency, exchange) that enable responding to change. The practices aim to turn the plan into "...a plan for learning as much as it is a plan for implementation."

Agile strategies are meant to minimize risk, to *fail fast* and be confronted with problems as early as possible. This is referred to as inspection and adaptation. They also focus on producing value quickly: to break down the problems to small and achievable goals – the idea is that if a process is interrupted or the direction changes, whatever you have worked on is already of some value (for example, by finishing something before starting something else). The length and consistency of the working cycles and some of the practices that punctuate them (for regular and methodical self-evaluation) are essential.

Artful making's most important contribution is, arguably, the question about the conditions under which Agile can be successfully applied: that the process be repeatable, and that that repetition (iteration) be cheap. The former means that the ways in which the work is organized should be more or less reproducible – to start with, a (more or less) consistent group of people working with a (more or less) consistent schedule. It might be more effective to rehearse a few hours regularly, than to have big variations in schedule trying to compensate lack of rehearsal time with an intensive rehearsal period, for example. It's important to emphasize that it's not about reproducing results but about sustaining the working process.

The latter condition is about the *costs* of iterative work. That is, how costly is it to *explore* (how much time people need to invest, until which point can they afford to work on ideas that might later be dropped) and how costly is it to *reconfigure* (how difficult is it to change something already made: changing an actor's position on stage in a scene is rather easy, whereas changing the shape or size of a wooden scenography can be rather costly).

Why is all this relevant? Roughly speaking, a software program or a theatre piece are both rather complex products with complex creation processes. But not all software and not all theatre are innovative. A small experimental theatre project might have more in common with a software start-up than with the re-run of a big musical production or a classical ballet, where there is often less interest in the new than on reproducing accurately what was achieved earlier.

I have to admit that I have a rather inconsistent relation to the Agile framework, though, and that I don't fully practice what I preach. Still, the concepts have helped me to reflect on my working processes, even if the conditions in which I work make it very difficult to properly apply (some of) its practices.

Agile has helped me to conceptualize my practices: the rehearsal rhythm as a series of iterations; inviting people to rehearsals (different forms of try-outs) early and regularly; thinking incrementally (producing value regularly and adding to it); making a distinction between reflections on the product (the most common feedback in theatre) and the reflection on the working process (a bit less usual, sometimes done by creative teams and dramaturges); to think about collaboration not only inside the creation process but also in the relation to other institutions, and even the encounter with the audience as a form of collaboration; to think about feedback not only as a *confirmation* of what's been done, but even more as an *enabling* of what remains to be done.

Adapting the framework to my own process, the main issues are my irregular working rhythm and the fact that I am now often working by myself. Still, I look at ways of using this understanding of rhythm and cycles to frame my working periods, and to strive for finding suitable instances of collaboration that help my thinking process (mentoring, conversations, publishing writings in the blog, etc).

Finally, I like to think that the techniques or concepts from Agile are ways of making the work less personal. You learn to better handle the pressure of (self) expectations, exchanges with others and deadlines, by recouring to specific ways of doing things. They are practices, so you eventually become better at using them – they don't (always) solve the problems but they help you to better identify them.

Back to Artistic Research

So, if research is always creative, then what is the difference between the AR and the AP?

Wondering about this distinction while writing for the Travel Companions course, and thinking about my own approach to creating artistic work, I had to think about how the exploration of a subject usually produces also an exploration of the modes of exploration.

In my experience there's an intertwining of these elements: working around a subject or reference matter implies also a work on my ways of working. In order to explore new modes of thinking around something the exploration tools need to be able to change in response to the research. To let the conceptual frame and the practices be formed by the experience of the research. In their reflections on anthropology, Schneider and Wright cite Bruno Latour again to call out the presumption that fieldwork practices are stable and systematic, and to posit that these are changing and ad hoc. The exploration of a subject tends to imply also an exploration of the modes of exploration. Methodologies are constantly in the making – which does not mean that sensitivity is not a *rigorous* practice. It is on that level (the level of practices) that putting diverse elements in relation (making and reflecting; researching and creating; artistic and non-artistic disciplines and skills; language, vision and movement), becomes really productive. A form of cross-contamination that allows for encounters with unexpected ideas and experiences.

This resonates with my understanding that the art field can function as an open playground for ideas which inform our world view, also beyond the experience of art. A framework for anything and everything, a space of opportunities: for learning, for sharing, for reflection, for transformation.

If making and reflecting are entangled practices, if researching and creating are inseparable, then maybe my AR is a sort of mirror image of my AP – a creative project with a different focus, somewhat different methods, a different goal, a different outcome. Maybe it's just one more work of art. Otherwise, how to engage with the AR? I feel the need for a frame that helps me organize the research. That good old contradictory feeling of wanting a clear frame to be able to open things up. The productive stimulus of enabling constraints, the safety of putting things in a box.

Actually: maybe I don't really need to organize the research. The research seems to organize itself. But it might be helpful to define some kind of perspective that I can go back to from time to time. A vantage point that helps the viewer (me or an other) organize her *experience* of the research. But because the definition of artistic research here remains somewhat vague, I have found it useful to have a concrete form to work with. An artistic form, at least for now - the form of an art object. I encountered the idea of a box.

Enabling constraints: a concept from the analysis of complex and emergent systems. Enabling constraints make it possible to do something that would not be possible otherwise. So I assume the box as a format to work with, a shape within which to place my reflections about the project. I found it productive to imagine the way in which it can shape someone else's experience of reading my writings about the project. It has helped me to move on with the AR. To think about the end-product (and thinking about how to keep it an *open-end-ed-product*) helped me to keep the process active. I like the irony of it, of the usefulness of

thinking *inside* the box. Enter The Green Box.

A Green Box

The Master asks from us that we present a Critical Reflection (CR), "*the end communication of the AR, which could take many forms*". While conducting research, without knowing all that clearly what my research was, I came across a form that made me very excited.

"The Green Box" is a work from 1934 by Marcel Duchamp (it's full title is actually "The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even (The Green Box)"). It consists of a box with 94 loose documents which present some of his thinking, both in writing and in sketches and drafts for the homonymous piece.

While researching the use of text and language in art, I found a renewed interest in Marcel Duchamp's oeuvre. I noticed how some of the ideas behind his work resonate with how I would like to make work. Or at least it seems to offer tools to think about the relations I am interested in researching. And I also hope that it will help me remember the relevance of playfulness and humor. "*Duchamp claimed that his goal was to put art back in the service of the mind – to free it from merely perceptual, retinal preoccupations. (...) Central to his philosophy, therefore, would be the principle of indifference, an attitude that was intended to ensure the avoidance of self-expression or the taking of a position in order instead to pursue a detached art of practical, though unorthodox and often amusing, philosophical speculation. (...) it is to the more neutral and consciously non-artistic realm of the 'verbal' rather than the evocative realm of the 'poetic' that Duchamp wants to direct us. By emphasizing the linguistic component, Duchamp also drew attention to the fundamentally discursive nature of his enterprise, placing his work at the service of analysis rather than expression.*"*

I became quite interested in appropriating the format of a box containing a collection of loose texts for my CR. An object that explores both what writing and form can communicate. I think the box can propose an open reading in multiple possible sequences (including the possibility to not read everything in the box). This non-linearity evokes also another tool that I often use in my working processes: blogs, with their episodal writing (more or less self-sufficient, small pieces of text) and the multiple navigations enabled by hypertext.

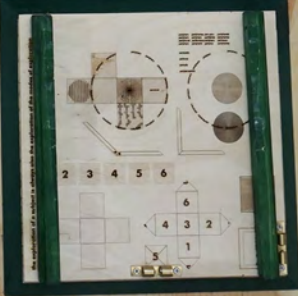
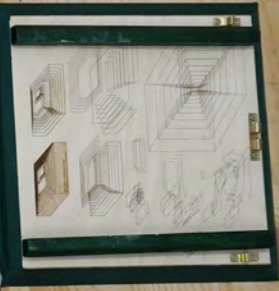
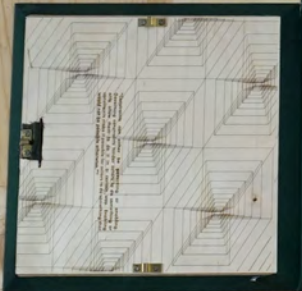
Next to that, I would like the CR to be an object that needs to be physically reached in order to be read. Not a digital document, easy to distribute and access at a distance and simultaneously, but rather something that needs to be present in the same space with its audience. I like to think that the box will be the *performer* of the CR.

I also like the idea that placing my writings in a green coloured box makes present the reference to

the work of Marcel Duchamp as part of the artistic lineage in which I'd like to inscribe it. Maybe a similar strategy can be used with other elements, contextualizing my work and referencing the work of other influential artists.

Finally, I like the apparent contradiction of it being possible to edit the box, in spite of it being such a physical object: over time, it will also be possible to add or subtract texts from the box.

Now that I have a box to put my thoughts in, it seems that I can get started with my research.



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THIS SIDE DOWN

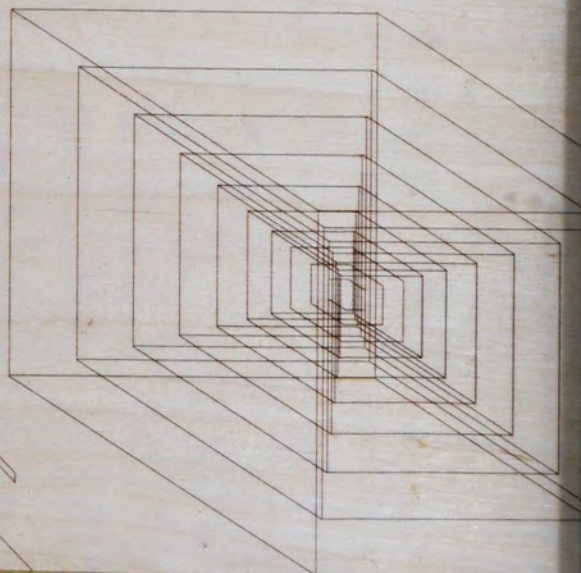
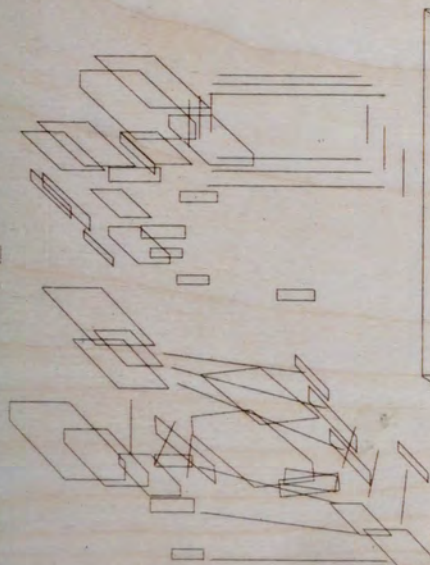
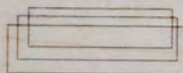
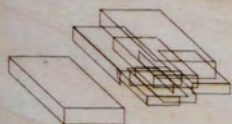
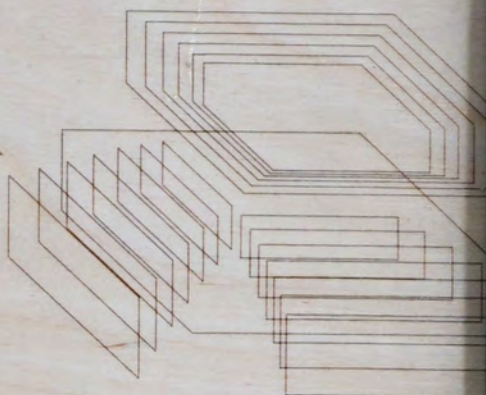
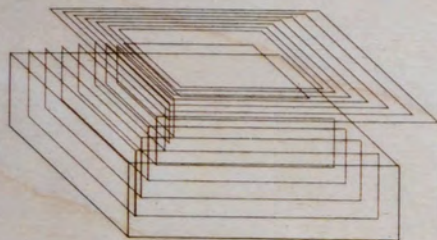
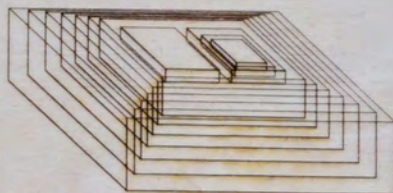
If I see research as creation and creation as research, their methods are not that easy to separate. There's also a subtle entanglement with the idea of process and process oriented art, which is how I usually think about my work. Is process oriented work the same as research oriented work? The former means that the point of interest in the work lies in staging processes, things which are happening—doing in the moment of the presentation of the work. Whatever the work is about, it is also about the process of approaching that aboutness. Not focused so much on a result but on showing the processes that led there. The intention (the hope?) is to present questions rather than re-present answers.

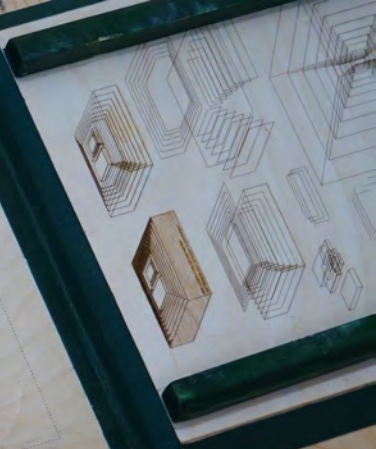
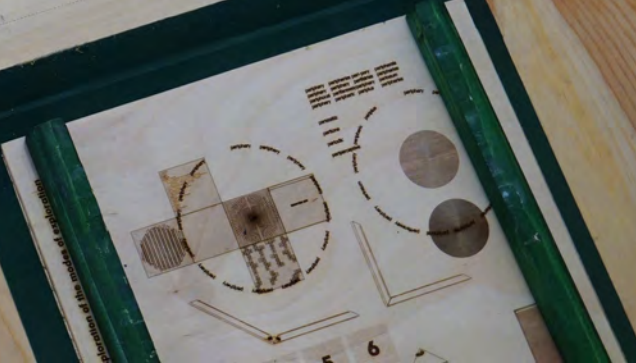
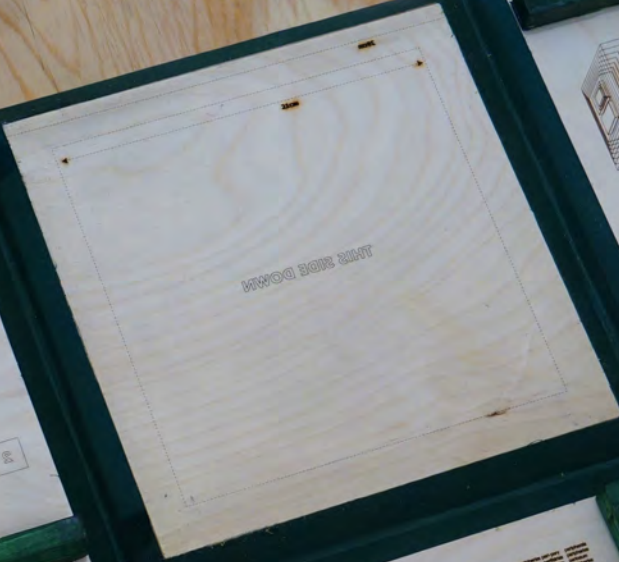
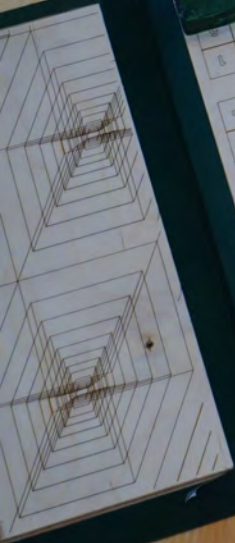
On the other hand, a focus on processes doesn't necessarily imply that these are about discovery or innovation. But in my understanding research does imply an interest in new territories. Engaging with research practices is meant to produce unforeseen results or insights, which in turn inform the practices themselves. Research is meant to provide tools for dealing with the unknown. Or maybe it's simply meant to provide a frame because there is an interest in engaging with the unknown.

I am interested both in the experience of the process and in the discovery of the new. In my work I try to make the research questions be part of the staged materials, whatever those questions are at that point of the process—creation—research process. In dramaturgical terms, this is also about how things are brought to the spectator's attention, and how her experience is framed.

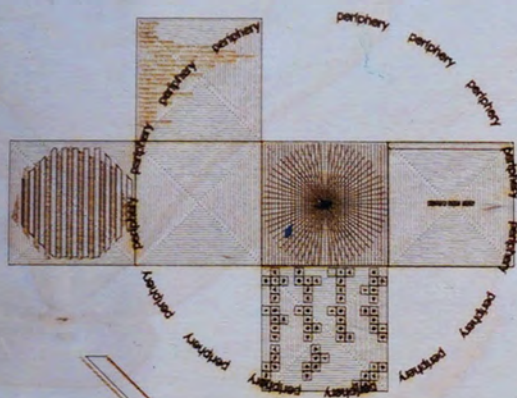


image: a collection of boxes made from wood -
and if the boxes are empty (as engraved in the book themselves?)





the exploration of a subject is always also the exploration of the model of the subject

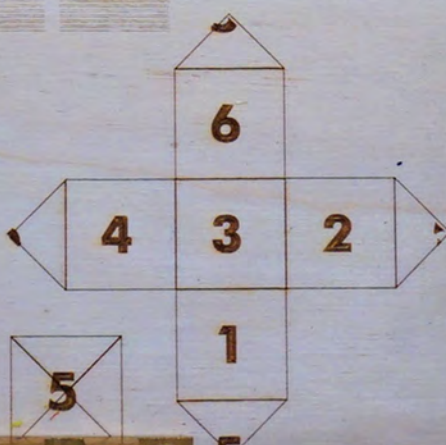
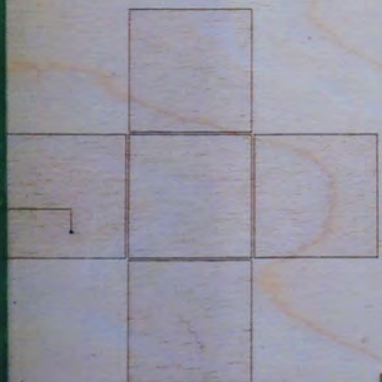


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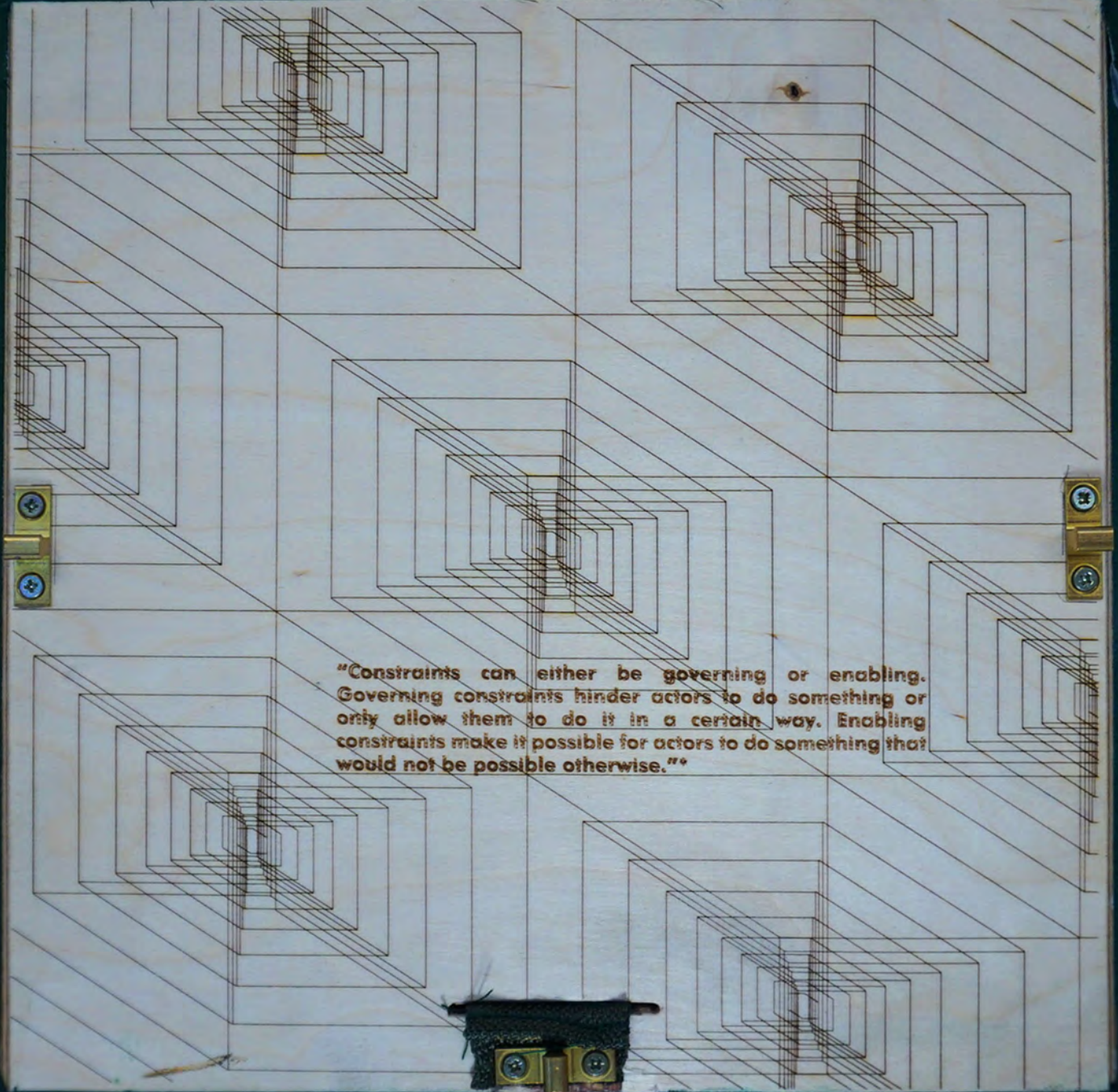
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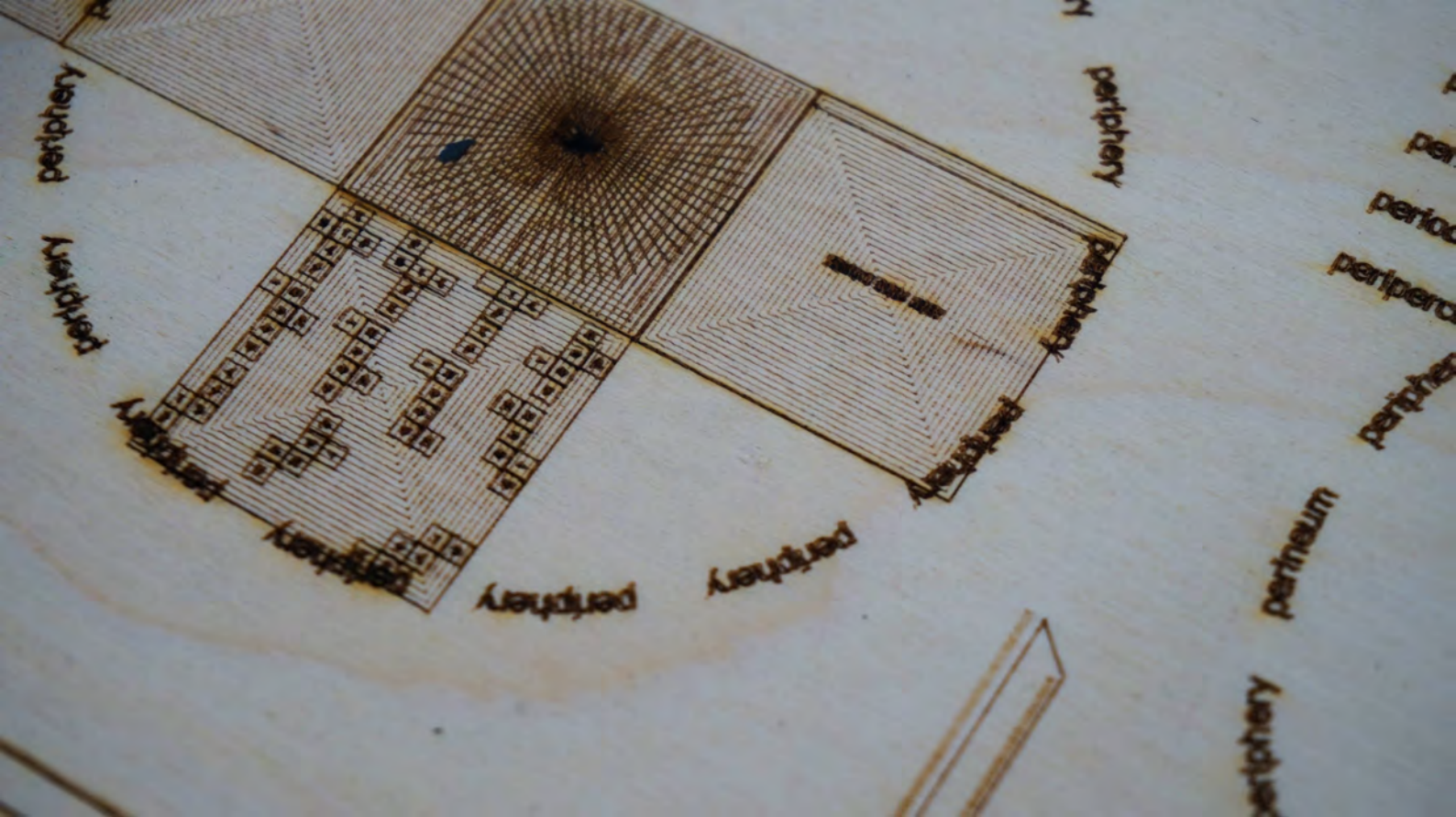
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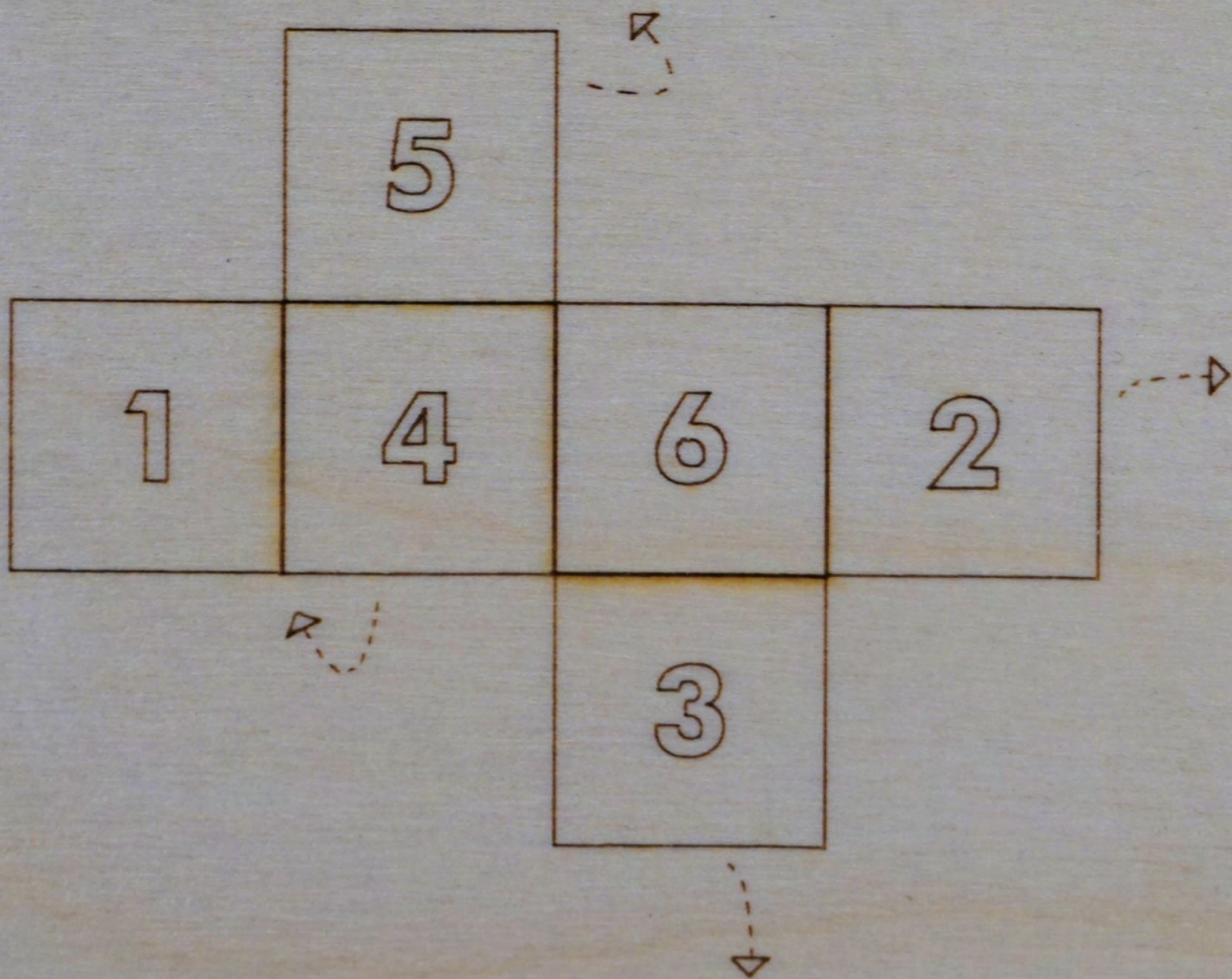
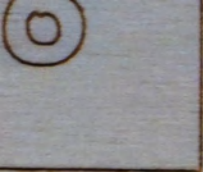






"Constraints can either be governing or enabling. Governing constraints hinder actors to do something or only allow them to do it in a certain way. Enabling constraints make it possible for actors to do something that would not be possible otherwise."







In one of the possible forkings of the path, the contents
of the box can be indexed into:

- 1.introspective texts
- 2.texts that talk about process
- 3.those that start with the words
maybe or actually
- 4.personal texts
- 5.reflective and self-reflective
ones
- 6.soft texts
- 7.petrified ones
- 8.those which are included in
this classification
- 9.colour
- 17.texts which are exactly as
complex as it is deemed most
likely necessary
- 18.texts that should probably
be shorter
- 19.texts which don't need to be
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- 20.texts that lend themselves to
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- 8.those which are included in
this classification
- 9.colourful texts
- 10.those which can be analyzed
infinitely and inexhaustibly
- 11.fragile texts
- 12.those which invoke the
presence of other artists
- 13.those that tremble as if they
were mad
- 14.those engraved with a laser
as fine as a camel's hair
- 15.very saturated texts
- 16.those that might have caused
some pain
- 17.texts which are exactly as
complex as it is deemed most
likely necessary
- 18.texts that should probably
be shorter
- 19.texts which don't need to be
read
- 20.texts that lend themselves to
touching
- 21.texts cut out from other texts
- 22.texts which hope to elicit at
least a subtle smile
- 23.texts which could be felt on
the tongue
- 24.texts which is necessary to
share no matter how cryptic
they are
- 25.others
- 26.potentially banal
- 27.overtly vain
- 28.rather needy
- 29.texts which are textural in
nature
- 30.alliterating texts

31.those that resemble flies
from a distance

32.texts which have an
unpredictable impact on
distances, durations and/or
intensities

33.texts which require certain
lighting conditions to be read

34.texts that perform, or rather,
that play

35.those comprised exactly of
either 43 or 24 characters

36.texts which are maybe,
actually, possibly, other texts

37.texts which are either
transparent or opaque

38.those that put the focus on
the periphery

39.unfoldable texts

40.those which account for very
dark or very light, or
otherwise very gray thoughts

41.those which change when
looked at from a certain
angle

42.texts to be talked about

43.texts to be read in solitude

44.texts which are not
necessarily bound to their
medium

45.diffuse texts

46.texts which can't help
themselves

47.texts which can't be helped

48.puzzles (or, otherwise,
puzzling)

49.wordless texts

50.texts which speak as if they
were stating something

51.texts which don't include a
single letter F



times I feel like I'm
all the thoughts in
anxiety, and that it be
that it will only stop
things are as large as e
work, or as large
.. Like the map tho
te enough when it be
s the kingdom it
ent. - But the thought

Thinking the thoughts out is also a
form of mapping. Just like in Borges'
short story "On rigor in science",
sometimes I feel like I'm trying to
think all the thoughts in all their
complexity, and that it becomes so
big that it will only stop when the
thoughts are as large as everything
this work, or as large as the
world... Like the map that is only
large enough when it becomes
as the kingdom it covers
as the kingdom it covers

The feeling-thinking of publishing thoughts (1/2)

The Green Box is a publication of sorts, but I like to think that it's not about publishing thoughts. Rather, it's about the thinking processes – and, more, about letting the thinking processes perform.

I find that idea interesting, that the thinking processes perform. That is, somehow, how I'd like to see (my) artistic work – specially my performance work. More than sharing some sort of *finding* I think of creating a thing that produces effects – the main effect being, maybe, some kind of experience of thinking. Not only thinking, or not exactly thinking, I guess, otherwise it wouldn't need to be so convoluted and vague... The concept of thinking-feeling is triggering for me, even if I'm not sure I understand it, or I can reproduce its arguments. Trying to talk about this composite of *feeling* and *thinking* activates me. It problematizes the way I think about thinking, how there is an aspect to it beyond the cognitive. A sensation, a bodily experience. It allows me to accept being triggered by thoughts even when I don't understand them... I think.

When I described The Green Box to a friend as a performance, he questioned that idea – I understood his objection to calling it *a performance*, though I still think the performative aspects are essential. This Green Box can produce something eventful, something performance-like. That's what makes it relevant to the kind of artistic work that I am interested in.

So what does it mean that The Green Box is about letting the thinking processes perform? It means that the texts are thought of as part of a larger whole which includes the conditions in which they are presented, and the writing techniques which I allow myself to play with. The texts perform in the sense that they demand a specific time and a specific space to read them (more specifically than, for example, a pdf file or a printout). They demand a certain investment from the reader. They offer certain obstacles - they are heavy, bulky or fragile. But these obstacles offer, in turn, other affordances: they invite unexpected operations and they allow for new situations to emerge, which without the specific support and frame of The Green Box, wouldn't. The Box - the texts - the thoughts, perform.

When I started the Master in Theater at the Toneelacademie Maastricht, I presented my project 'Vision with/out Image' as the focus of my research. I notice now that this piece, this thesis, has grown from it but its focus is slightly different. Text has become even more central, because in this research process I have come to realize how central writing and text are to my thinking and working process. And this being a thesis which reflects on these working processes, it circles a lot around how words can be used, and how certain ways of working with words shapes or facilitates my thinking process. Still a big part of the exploration in my project remains around ways in which words can be installed in the space. Questions around *other* ways to engage with vision and the visual are still very relevant.

From the beginning it was important for me to work on a *piece*, an artistic work rather than only on a piece of writing. This was partly inspired by the framework of Research-creation. And it's related to the desire to create experiences of thinking more than arriving at thoughts that have to be communicated. I find a potency in how form, in how the medium of the texts produces a more in the experience of reading. Maybe this could also be done just with words – and I am definitely busy with the choice of language. But there's something about how the materiality of The Green Box adds. The very basic assumption was that by making the thesis an object, it would demand a specific engagement – the reader needs to find a specific time and a specific place to get to reading. It's a sort of appointment. Like going to the theatre.

Enter here another framework: 'The design of everyday things'. I'm not sure I can call it a framework, but Don Norman's (iconic) book on industrial design definitely has a part in this. We could think of The Green Box as the interface of my thesis. The concept I got most interested in is *affordance*, in the sense that Norman uses it (though, interestingly enough, the term also has a place in process philosophy). It refers to the characteristics of things which we as users perceive and, somehow, *read*. These characteristics inform us, more or less consciously, about the ways in which we can interact with these things. It is a crucial aspect of design. We artists, and especially performance makers, are busy with similar questions. We make choices in order to design our audience's experience. I would normally call it dramaturgy. With The Green Box I got interested in how the choices of materials will lead the reader to create frames for their experience. But also how they will generate physical operations which in turn will make bodily and spatial awareness a bigger part of the experience of reading. They will also operate on another level: the relations between materiality and textual content are also meant to trigger frictions which could inspire other thoughts (more thoughts). This chain of operations is what I describe as the texts -or The Box- performing. But maybe that's unfair to the reader, and I should acknowledge that it is also them who will be performing.

This piece could also consist in organizing small events, sharing The Box somewhere with a group of people, reading together (at least in the sense of sharing the same space). This is still interesting to me. Other people's interactions with The Box would also become visible to us as readers, and that might add another layer of emergent somethings... Whether it is someone else's expression, or movement, or their handling of a material, we might notice things or be inspired to something new. In sharing, other physical attitudes will appear – when someone asks us to pass them a certain text plate it will be not only our body that we become aware of. Someone might feel like sabotaging the Box. Handing over a plate of glass will not be the same as giving a piece of paper. And the light reflections on a certain plate might not be noticed by the reader but by the person standing at the other side of the table. Hopefully, the texts will start moving things in the room quite literally.

Reinvent language in order to reinvent the world.

Editing (text) as a strategy for self-reflection (part of the process) and as a strategy for communicating with others (part of the product) –

The past years I finally learned, truly learned (aprehended), the value of continuity, of having time for my artistic work, of really having time, of having the time to waste time, to not know what to do. The value of having the time to enter the atelier and start thumbing through books, reading random passages or looking things up, moving back and forth between writing and reading.

(I jote down a tangential thought: maybe the practice of writing is a practice of being alone, a way to learn to not be lonely).

I also connected for the first time with the discipline of writing. It's not that I had never done (some of) this — of course I appreciated continuity and having time, and I've most certainly had my fair share of time wasting and of not knowing what to do. But when you actually have the time, and you start regularly doing it —entering the atelier without having a plan and allowing random passages of old books to inform your day—, you start seeing it at work. You see how productive it is.

Working on my Master's research plan felt like my first proper experience of writing something large and complex over time. That is, to not only respond to inspiration, blurt something out and let it go, but to go back to it repeatedly. Re-writing things. Or, actually, basically writing. Spending time with the writing you've already produced is not necessarily easy, but it is productive... again, a back and forth movement between new and old thoughts, between things that you have already written and what those words trigger anew.

Sometimes it just feels the writing has run its course. Done. I've put out what I had, and that's it. There's a very clear moment when I feel like I can't continue writing anymore. Sometimes it's after a few minutes and sometimes after an hour. The question of discipline and continuity (the question of practice and techniques) has to do with the strategies that allow you to continue working after that point.

Sometimes the writing feels like the most challenging part of this process—project (of the Box, of Vision with/out Image, of the past couple of years...). I think it's the one element which requires real persistence. It demands not only a lot of my time, but some other quality, some other investment. I don't know if it's about me or about writing as a discipline in general, but I feel that it's less tolerant to a casual approach. As I write this I wonder how does this text feel, will these become the criteria to judge it too?

And I also have to wonder: have I managed to establish more or less a writing practice the past couple of years? The question is: I've done it a lot, but is it really a practice? It's all very nice, to share this meta-methodological reflections, but I still feel often that I'm not getting very far with writing. But hey, maybe writing about writing is a way to get myself started...

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research plan felt like my first proper experience of writing

W R I T I

Where does research (or creation) start? Why is it important to have a lot of time, to be able to drift and wander?

N G I S A

Are ideas and thoughts something different? And concepts? How does the thinker-maker encounter the ideas?

When? Where?

P L A C E

Where do the ideas remain after they have been thought?

H O L D R



W R

Maybe the one recurring hypothesis in my
interesting encounters. Trying to be aware of the
how I could steer the work in certain directions.
That's more or less my idea of what dramaturgy

This exploration (or experimentation) opens
that separation, but sometimes it seems difficult

N G

W R I T I

Here come quotation, some material to work with, and process. Quotations

Maybe we have an essential aspect of a way to keep it

N

others. With the year what and how much

And if collaboration with a choreographer or a producer through how those composers, producers

P

about this - specific language the approach of task - but the place of these interactions

H

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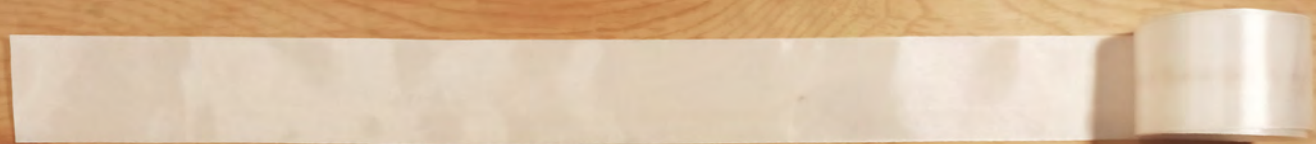
H O L D R



Sometimes I imagine the words in a specific place. This has to do with responsibility, a care for some degree of readability. Maybe that

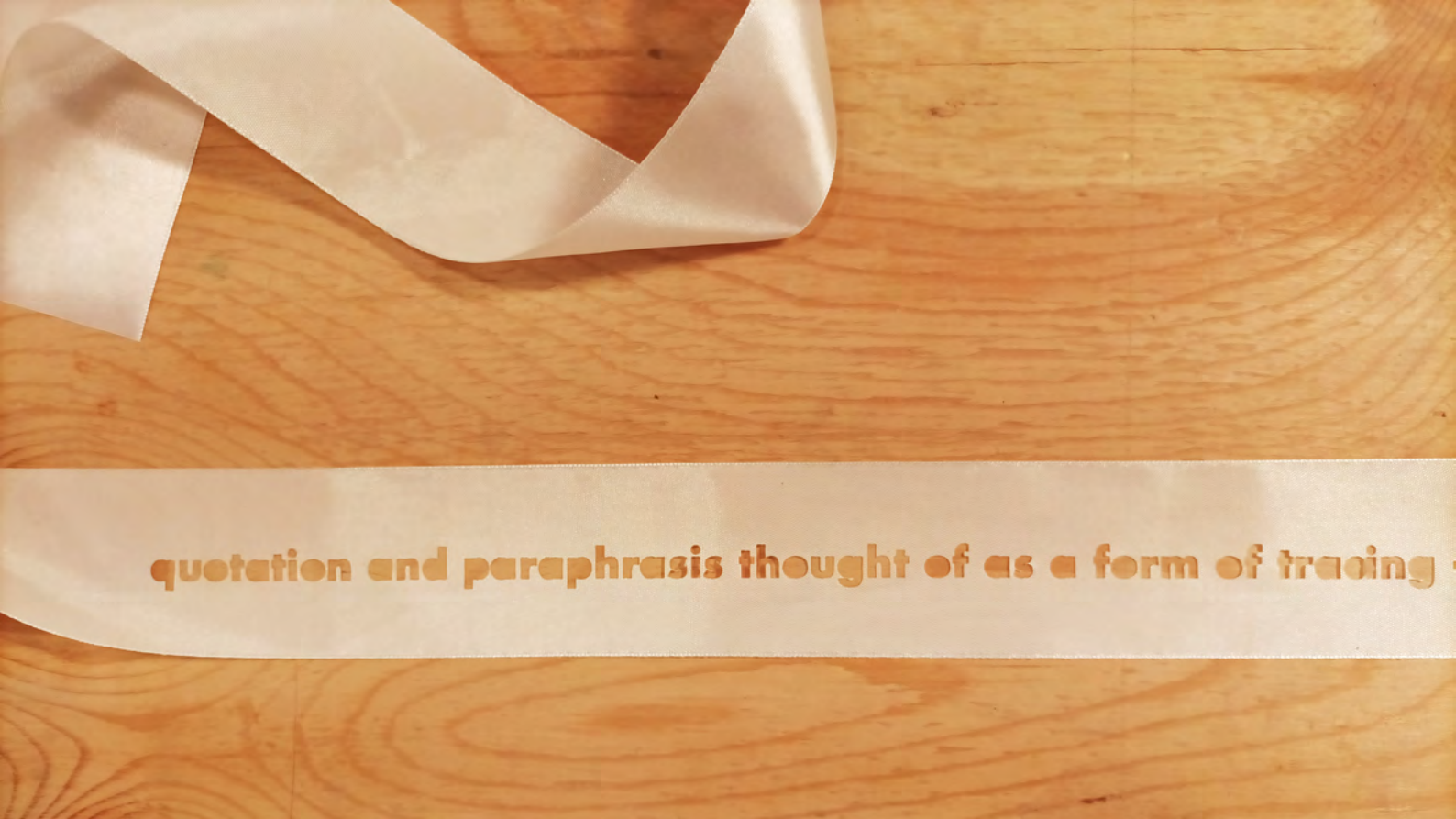
words, writing, practice (3/2)





quotation and paraphrasing

quotation and paraphrasis thought of as a form of

A white ribbon is draped across a light-colored wooden surface. The ribbon forms a loop in the upper left corner and then extends horizontally across the middle of the frame. The text "quotation and paraphrasis thought of as a form of trading" is printed in a bold, orange-brown font on the horizontal section of the ribbon.

quotation and paraphrasis thought of as a form of trading

A white paper strip is laid out on a light-colored wooden surface with a prominent grain pattern. The strip is knotted on the left side and extends horizontally across the middle of the frame. A small, rectangular white label is attached to the right end of the strip.

quotation and paraphrase thought of as a form of tracing - tracing as a form of movement



quotation and paraphrasing the

Frameworks: Duchamp — what the hell am I doing? (1/2)

Suddenly, the whole trajectory of reading and writing about Green Box feels like a bit of a strange detour, I get lost in it... am I researching the piece in itself? Does it have anything to tell about my research? Does it in some way serve my research?

I realize, or think for a moment, that it's just one more of writing. During one of the iterations of I have been feeling stuck. digital box) with a little collection of pdfs. In this folder (a folder of articles about Duchamp which I had not an escape, but

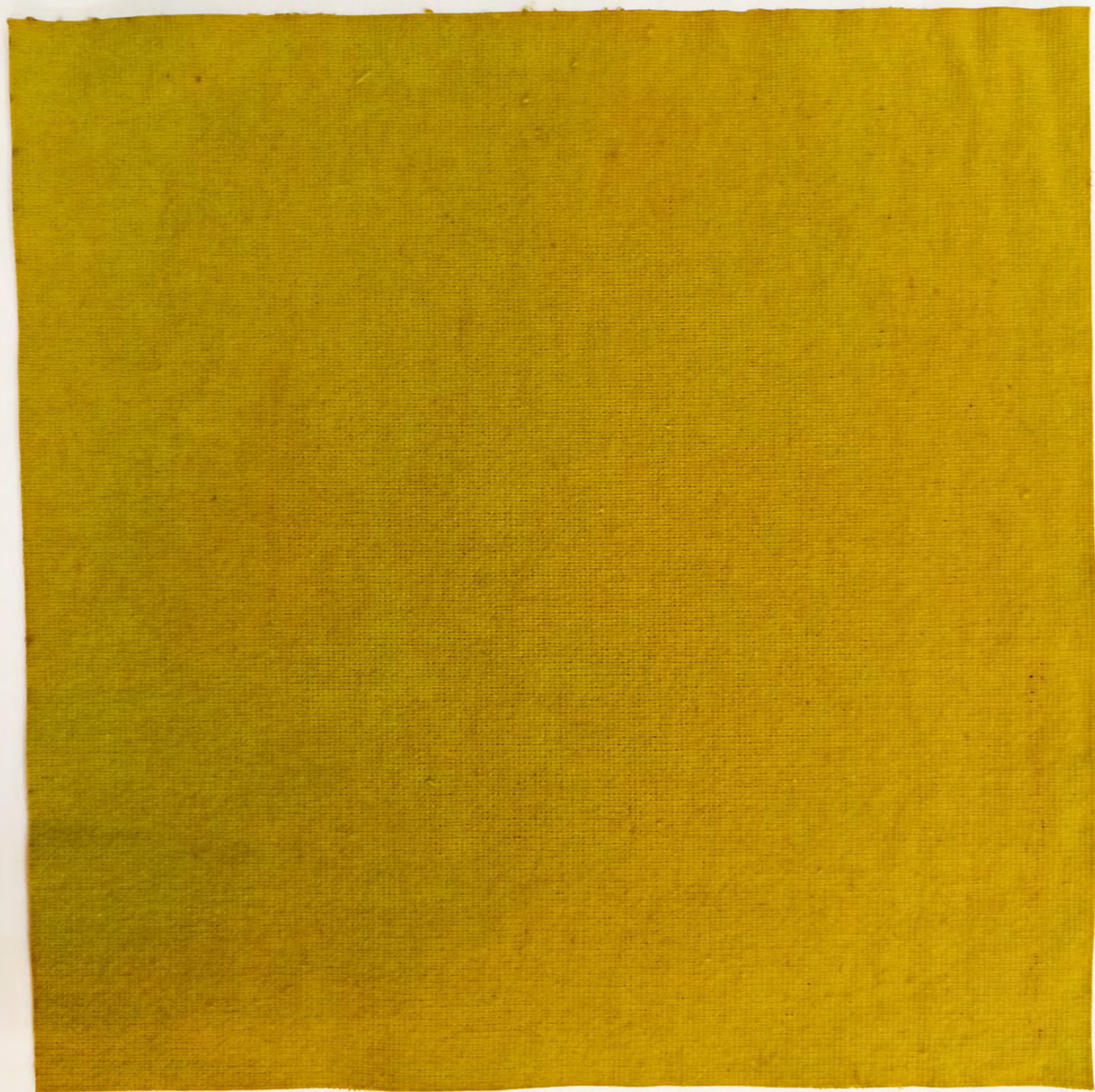
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digital box) with a little collection of pdfs. In this folder
folder I moved a series of articles about Duchamp
ended in getting. It became not a subterfuge, not a
work done. And if I felt stuck or lost and didn't know
about Duchamp's works and trying to make notes
my mind in motion, to get un-stuck.

I got now with the idea that Duchamp's work
is no profound knowledge that I need to un-
opportunity for a practice or simply some thing

Among other articles, Octavio Paz's le-
things which I had started in the
Duchamp's piece



Duchamp, reading Duchamp (1/2)

I have been reading Duchamp's writings. I started about Duchamp's Green Box, and was very triggered by that specific work, and I knew his work in general kind of, and I was doing some research. And I don't only mean googling, but buying books. And I like reading books. But buying books, I have more money than I used to, so I do can afford to buy obsolete, this buying books. Me, I like it more and I have less time, so I buy more and I read less. I read Walter Benjamin once, and it was great but I also don't like he somehow argued that it's not only ok to collect, but collecting in itself is an important activity.

So I've been reading the writings of Marcel Duchamp. I read "Marcel Duchamp", which is a relatively thorough collection of his The thread is writing - texts. It's been very interesting, doing more than googling Marcel Duchamp. But

The thought behind The Green Box...

...is to reflect on aspects of (my) artistic research, both with the ideas that it can be shared -a publication of sorts to be read by others- and that making the Box is in itself a practice, an exercising of the strategies and tools discussed in it.

Central to The Green Box is the practice of writing, but the idea is to move beyond writing and text. The idea is to focus on modes in which texts are also invited to perform, in which they produce something beyond the intellectual concepts. The texts (or The Box) are designed in order to produce an event, or a series of events. That each reading of the Box is eventful, performative. Maybe not so much doing something as creating conditions for the reader to experience the reading as more-than-reading.

Why is this interesting? Or, why would this be the focus (the project) of The Box? On the one hand, in the ethos of research as creation and creation as research, it makes sense to seize it as an opportunity to practice - to keep exploring, testing, researching. On the other hand because the material and performative elements of the Box add something to the discourse of the Box. It reminds us, also, that discourse is not only textual, however central text and language are to the (my) approach to research and creation. And finally, simply because that is what I have been doing with my artistic work the last couple of years, and this is how this piece can also contribute to that research. Even more simply: because The Green Box is not only about that research, but it's also a part of it.

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החלפת הרכיבים הנ"ל

במכונה הנ"ל

התוצאה היא

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התוצאה היא

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1. ILLUSTRATION
OF THE
VOLUME AND
ANALYSIS
OF THE
COSTS

2. ILLUSTRATION
OF THE
VOLUME AND
ANALYSIS
OF THE
COSTS





THERE IS ALREADY
SOMETHING AND IT
ALREADY MAKES
SENSE.

I JUST DON'T KNOW
YET EXACTLY WHICH
SENSE IT MAKES.



Laying out process, experimentation, research, emergence, practice, technique (1/2)

I often feel like this after reading: like I found the key, but I forgot where the house is (that's a line from a song, by the way).

This, for example, is a text that I have read dozens of times. I never feel like I have fully grasped it, but again and again it comes to my mind each time I start a new project. I was told about it once, in Berlin, by a friend who had read it in a book by Giorgio Agamben, who writes that this story was recounted by Walter Benjamin (after having heard it from Gershom Scholem) to Ernst Bloch, who probably discussed it with several other people before publishing it in *Spuren...*

Giorgio Agamben, 'Halos' – from the book 'The coming community':

"A rabbi, a real cabalist, once said that in order to establish the reign of peace it is not necessary to destroy everything nor to begin a completely new world. It is sufficient to displace this cup or this bush or this stone just a little, and thus everything. But this small displacement is so difficult to achieve and its measure is so difficult to find that, with regard to the world, humans are incapable of it and it is necessary that the Messiah come."(...) "Everything will be as it is now, just a little different."

There is nothing new about the thesis that the Absolute is identical to this world.(...) What is new, instead, is the tiny displacement that the story introduces in the messianic world. And yet it is precisely this tiny displacement, this "everything will be as it is now, just a little different," that is difficult to explain. This cannot refer simply to real circumstances, in the sense that the nose of the blessed one will become a little shorter, or that the cup on the table will be displaced exactly one-half centimeter, or that the dog outside will stop barking. The tiny displacement does not refer to the state of things, but to their sense and their limits. It does not take place in things, but at their periphery, in the space of ease between every thing and itself. This means that even though perfection does not imply a real mutation it does not simply involve an external state of things, an incurable "so be it." On the contrary, the parable introduces a possibility there where everything is perfect, an "otherwise" where everything is finished forever, and precisely this is its irreducible aporia. But how is it possible that things be "otherwise" once everything is definitively finished?"

It's not that I quote Agamben because I understand him. I actually quote him because I don't understand him... to quote him, to read him over and over again, to write about the quote, is to keep attempting to understand him. And myself - why does this image keep speaking to me so strongly.

It's not that I am trying to talk about artists as Messiahs ':' but there is something about this story that resonates with my understanding of artistic practice and research, with this sense of searching for something which is right in front of you and yet seems ungraspable. It resonates with the idea of exploring and experimenting in the hope that you might run into something extraordinary. This hope that by doing something potentially banal, you might end up managing to transform the world.

THINKING WAS

BEEN TRYING
NOT TO THINK

It's not that I want to mystify artistic work, or the world – more like something resonates with me in looking at things as if their boundaries were blurry. Maybe it's a way of dealing with complexity, of trying to engage with things without reducing them, without assuming that I can explain them or solve them.

Could this parable re-told by Agamben be a way to think about research and experimentation? By trying slight variations each time we are indirectly, imperfectly trying to approach perfection – trying to reach Paradise, some other another world. Marcel Duchamp comes to mind now: *a work that is definitely unfinished*. And Brian Massumi: *the meaning of an event can be rigorously analyzed but never exhaustively*.

There was a period when I used to practice Yoga quite intensively, and I remember hearing about Kundalini. I was curious about their understanding of enlightenment, and I liked the idea that it would not be something that you build towards, that you can quantify (how much effort have you already put *towards* it), but rather something unexpected and inexplicable – something you can't control, something that just happens, beyond us and our efforts. It just is what it is. And yet, you do need to work for it, you need to create the right conditions... Something that emerges, something that might emerge. Choreographer Deborah Hay asks: *What if where I am is what I need?*

What brings all these references together for me is not so much the mysticism, but rather a sense of detachment and acceptance – not out of cynicism, but more to take some pressure off of things, to just get back to working. Maybe it is actually the opposite of mystification.

So artists set out to transform the world, in a series of apparently random yet persistent attempts. They repeat. They iterate. Sometimes they develop practices. Manning & Massumi, from the book 'Thought in the act': *"Experimental practice embodies technique toward catalyzing an event of emergence whose exact lineaments cannot be foreseen. As for Gilbert Simondon, the concept of technique as we use it includes the idea of the conditions through which a work or a practice comes to definite technical expression. Technique is therefore processual: it reinvents itself in the evolution of a practice. Its movement toward definite expression must be allowed to play out. Technique is therefore immanent: it can only work itself out, following the momentum of its own unrolling process. This means that what is key is less what ends are pre-envisioned – or any kind of subjective intentional structure – than how the initial conditions for unfolding are set. The emphasis shifts from programmatic structure to catalytic event conditioning."*

Since the beginning I have been busy with questions around technique and craft, about what enhances or hinders artistic creation. I would like to think and write more about it – about this definition of technique, to try to think it in relation to the concept of enabling constraints, to bring up another orientalist parable and talk about the learning path of Shu-ha-ri (*follow the rule, be the rule, break the rule*)... And from there to talk about iteration, and to analyze creative processes by conceptualizing phases of divergence and convergence. But right now, here, I'm only using this to lay out a plan (a plan for implementation which is always also a plan for learning). This will all have to wait a little bit. Today, this is where I am. And what if where I am is what I need?

ke to thi

ounds l

sometimes I like to think about
what thinking sounds like

I remain occupied with thinking what this thing is

I remain occupied with rethinking what this thing is, how to give it shape. How to give shape to the product because I need to give shape to the process – I need to create focus. I'm not managing to write much these days, but I constantly feel that what I need to do is writing.

I try to clarify what the concept of The Green Box is so I can communicate it. Maybe finding these clarified and communicative descriptions will help me with the actual work of making the box. I have started (once again) mapping the contents of the box. I try to better understand what are the different topics it's exploring, so that I can understand how to articulate them and organize them. Maybe I need to prioritize. Maybe I need a narrower scope. I am searching for the enabling constraints.

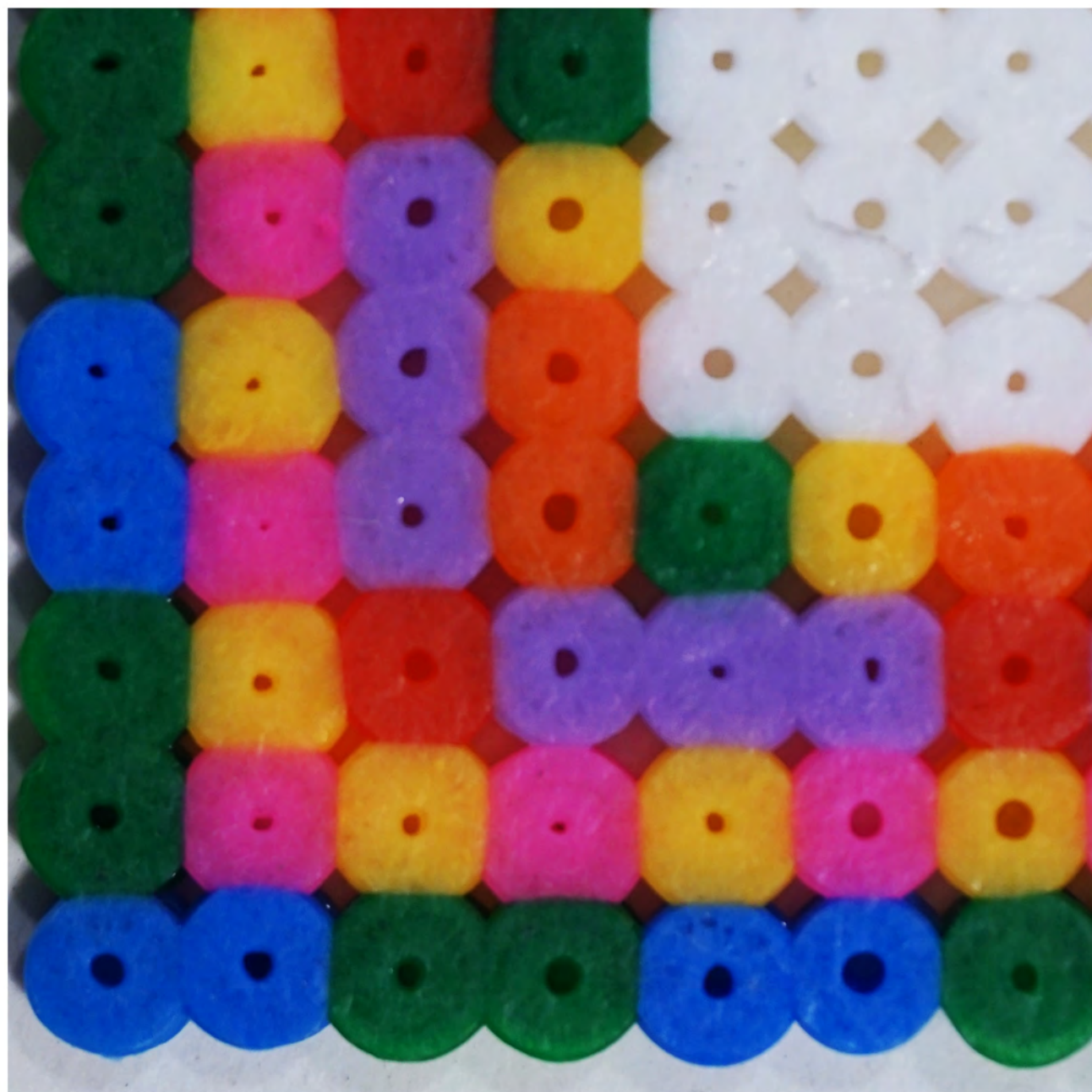
So I try to map the contents. I start reading what I have, and I try to place it somewhere. Doing this physically somewhere might help. I try to lay things out. I print the texts. I start writing things on post-its. I stick the post-its to the back of the prints. I create new folders in my computer. I copy multiple texts together into one new file. I re-write. I create more new files by separating each section of the file I had compiled earlier. I print again. I tape some of the prints together to make a foldable poster. Occasionally I go back to reading what I have been writing. I create new lists in excel files, lists of texts, lists of materials and lists that cross-reference texts and materials. To-do lists, too. I make lists of all the files, some lists also include the excel files with the lists. I put the post-its up on a wall. I also tape some of the prints on the wall. I keep trying out different ways of mapping.

Another thing that starts accumulating in my atelier are boxes. It seems so silly, but it's rather relevant, this having a box – an actual box. To engage with the writings within the frame of their container. Literally, to take the texts out of a box. (*It would be great to work on the actual Green Box, but it's unexpectedly challenging, so I keep postponing it*). When I first handed over a draft to my mentor in the Master, I used a simple wooden box I already had. Unsurprisingly, it was surprisingly effective: putting everything inside an actual box for the first time had a huge impact on her/my experience.

I keep thinking that I should gather (more) materials. I've done some, but not enough – not diverse enough, not specific enough. I kept postponing it partly because of the costs. But it is clear that making actual, concrete experiments, makes for the most concrete steps in the project. It remains un/surprisingly effective. It's, again, one of those things that you know, but part of managing the work process is finding a balance between the effort and costs, and the outcomes. Working with a laser on material objects is a perfect example for the costs analysis model of Artful Making, which I reference in the text about the Agile framework (originally from my research proposal).

One more thing I have been working on are fonts. Nothing very fancy, but I have been editing fonts, adjusting to the needs of some of the text plates I'm making. It just takes a lot more time than I had hoped, but I expect that will make it easier (and quicker) to experiment with the combinations of text and material.





I notice (once again) how difficult it is to think concretely about a piece without rehearsing. How difficult it is to feel what the work needs (where the work is) if I don't, for example, read the words out loud. Or sit in the dark.

The thinking needs to be performed.

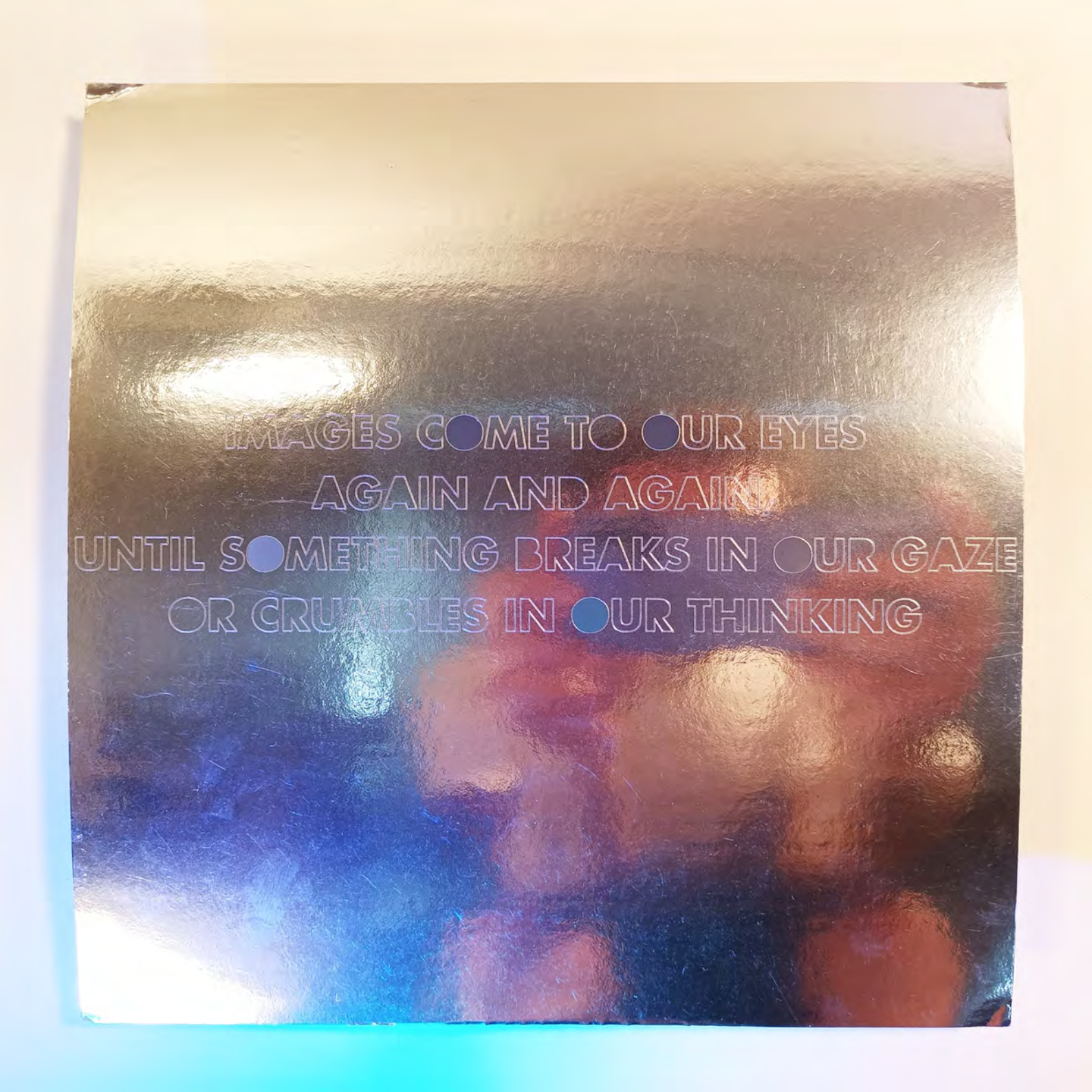
I mean, I have no doubt that things (thinks) develop and grow also in the background, when we are not actively thinking them (thinging them). That's why having time to let things go is so important. But still... I'm longing the rehearsal space now. I feel the distance.

Thinks need to be thinged.

develop and grow also in
when we are not actively
(thinging them). That's why
let things go is so important
longing the rehearsal space
distance.

Thinks need to be thinged.

There is another way of looking at things*

The background is an abstract composition of textured, organic shapes in shades of blue, green, and yellow. The colors are layered and blended, creating a sense of depth and movement. The texture appears fibrous or marbled, similar to stone or aged paper. The lighting is soft, highlighting the various tones and creating subtle gradients.

IMAGES COME TO OUR EYES
AGAIN AND AGAIN
UNTIL SOMETHING BREAKS IN OUR GAZE
OR CRUMBLES IN OUR THINKING

COLOUR IS AN ACCIDENT

OF VISION

A FUNCTION

THE BEHOLDER

NOT

AN INTRINSIC QUALITY

OF THING

20
COLOR IS AN ACCIDENT

● VIS ● N

A FUNCTION OF
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**NOTHING • STOPS • YOUR • GAZE
• IT • WANDERS • OFF • UNTIL • SO
METHING • STOPS • YOUR • GAZE***

A · R A N D O M
· D I S T R I B U T I O N · O F · T
H E · M O S T · A T T R A C T I
V E · C O L O U R S · W O U L
D · N E V E R · Y I E L D · A S ·
M U C H · P L E A S U R E · A S
· A · D E F I N I T E · I M A G E ·
W I T H O U T · C O L O U R *

FORM IS CONTENT APLENTY

**There is always
an image**

I like statements. I like reading them, and I like writing them. I don't mean it in the sense of speaking with an unwavering conviction. It's not so much about making statements, but more literally about writing and reading them as a game, repeating them, tracing them, reading out loud. Statements as a form, maybe even a manierism.

I often think I'd like to avoid universalism and prescription, to invite open forms of discourse and discussion. But I also love statements, which seem to be exactly the opposite of that. They are interesting as a form because they actually bring that question to the fore, the question of their truth value, their accuracy, their authority. What's exciting about statements is that they immediately invite me to question them. Maybe they're a form of provocation.

It was the work of Jenny Holzer (again) that got me really interested in statements as a form. In her work we often come across Truisms, things that look like truths but... but not really. There's something dubious about them, and that invites thinking. They can be pretty humorous, too. Statements are not exactly the same, but they operate in a similar way. They perform. And in that performing they invite us to debate. I like reading statements and mulling over how much (and how exactly) I disagree with them. In my mind I start rewriting them.

There is another game I like: to state something in order to, a moment later, recombine the words so that they make a new statement. And another, and another. These variations, these plays with words, relativize the statements even more. A small variation in wording can turn meaning around. Each variation offers new thoughts, and in between them we encounter new thinkings.

WORDS BELONG

IN SPACE

IMAGES UNFOLD

IN TIME

WORDS UNFOLD

IN SPACE

IMAGES BELONG

TO TIME

TIME UNFOLDS

IN WORDS

IMAGES UNFOLD

SPACE

WORDS UNFOLD

IN TIME

IMAGES BELONG

TO SPACE

TIME UNFOLDS

SPACE

IMAGES BELONG

TO WORDS

WORDS BELONG

TO TIME

IMAGES UNFOLD

IN SPACE

Vision and scope (1/2)

An attempt to put practices and concepts to work — the goal not so much to explain findings as much as to re-create opportunities for thinking and creating.

I am often finding it difficult to tell what The Green Box is. Though it's actually a very concrete thing: it's a box with texts in it, which are inscribed on diverse materials with different techniques. The conjunction of texts, materials, formats and forms is meant to produce a more in the experience of reading. But I have been struggling to communicate what the contents of those texts are. Actually, struggling to define that, more than to communicate it — to better determine for myself what it is about. But maybe not... If making the Box is a process, a creative process, a research-creative process, then maybe it didn't need to be defined too precisely in advance. And yet, I have been struggling. And feeling the need to better define what I am working on in order to be able to do it. I have been thinking about scope, questioning whether I need to define some boundaries for what the texts are about. Vision also seems like a relevant word. Re-reading my initial writings I came to think that I should clarify the vision. But then I also came to think that actually that vision is clear enough — I am less interested in what the Box is, and more in what the Box can do.

Thinking more specifically, I do think there is a clear vision. And at the same time the scope remains confusing. These problems are not only painful, they are also interesting. They bring up a relevant problem: how much, what, needs to be determined in advance of the creative process?

I have been thinking from the beginning about The Green Box as an artistic work — a piece. Not only because it makes it more exciting, but also because it makes sense. When writing about artistic research in the context of the Master programme I found Research-creation as a framework. The idea that research is a creative activity resonated a lot with me, it opened up ideas on how to position myself. I am not an academic, nor is my project. Often people bring up questions about hypotheses, or something to validate, and a way of validating it (damn questions about goals and validation come up on many levels and contexts...). The best I have come up with is a recurring hypothesis that certain things, put together in a certain way, might produce certain interesting somethings. For certain people, at least — at least in certain moments. And to be honest I'm not even too concerned with validating that. But then again, I am interested in research — I think. And though I don't think I have a clear definition for what

(artistic) research is, working on this piece (this series of texts that I'm collecting in The Green Box) is a way to explore that question (among so many others). Exploring, in the sense of letting the question trigger a process of thinking. Letting it be productive. Productive of something — creative.

Working on TGB makes sense when I think about it as an exercise, though that's not such a sexy word — earlier I called it an attempt. Maybe a practice, though I try to use the word practice carefully, and anyways I actually don't think that this is a practice... yet. Maybe it's not a practice, but a practicing, a putting-in-practice. A practical way of exploring concepts — activating them, making them move, letting them play.

When I write, there are moments I get stuck. I don't know anymore what to write. I feel self-conscious. The thought comes up, for example, that the writing won't be very interesting for others. Because yes, there is an interest in letting it be read by others (maybe there's that issue of validation). I do want an audience. And I would like them to enjoy this Box. To experience profound admiration for it. Maybe making art is just an excuse to encounter other people. But I am myself my initial audience, maybe my ideal audience — well no, not really ideal, but priority. I make work because I get triggered by things. At a following stage I hope to share that excitement with others, and be informed by them. But I don't start from the desire to trigger others as much as from the excitement triggered in myself. I know there's a risk of hermetism, of things remaining too private — but still, that's what drives me.

But I was writing: when writing there come moments I get stuck. My mind wanders to other places. In this project it often drifts towards materials. I start searching online for other sorts of papers, or I check marketplaces for second-hand lego blocks. There are multiple aspects to this desire to work with different materials — some concepts behind it relate to what I have described as making the Box perform. But I have to think also about the process of work, to keep it moving. About getting un-stuck. The past couple of years I have been working within the frame of the project 'Vision with/out Image'. That is also a sort of collection within which multiple pieces can be developed — The Green Box is actually one of them. One of the interesting aspects of working on a collection is the possibility to shift focus, to have something else to work on when I get stuck. The formal complexity (or is it just complicatedness?) of the Box mirrors that. It allows for movement, for shifting and drifting, it offers alternative focal points — the materials, the forms, the techniques — as a way to deal with the moments of friction.

...to tell what The Green Box is
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...there is a clear vis
...the

INDETERMINACY
RATHER THAN
DOUBTFULNESS

What if instead of treating texts as visual objects I started thinking about performance? To work with texts in ways that create a feeling of listening quietly, of being in the space with something. The texts could act upon the environment. The research would be about what makes the texts perform.

"Research implies an attentive posture, an openness to what is already happening." *

The objectual quality is still fascinating. I find it more interesting to work with written text as a form than, for example, with audio installations or people delivering words. There is a sense of animation/animism — if the texts are objects, the work with lighting, the spatial choices can make them alive. Something of that feels very gripping — maybe a certain uncanniness. Maybe it's again about that idea of blurring boundaries, of making things perceivable but not fully graspable. The texts engage our thinking, but the thoughts are still somewhat foggy. It's more a search for indeterminacy than a matter of doubting what I'm doing. What kind of position am I claiming for myself? Do I even have anything to say? I want you to read me, I do want to speak, but not as if I knew exactly what I'm saying. I want to speak in order to practice thinking, to explore encounters. Speaking, actually writing, actually making art, as an excuse to create an event, an eventful moment — and see what happens.

"...the question of movement is at the heart of any inquiry into research-creation, but a movement from one to another is not what is at stake here, but rather the question of what it means to sense the mobility of thought itself." *

There can be a subtle but profound and precise way in which the (written) words engage their surroundings. In electronic signs or projections the words move (like a voice moves), but they also light the room — they move it too. Lights and reflections bounce around and orientations are disorientated. The surrounding architecture is in turn animated by the animated texts.

"...movement is the site of a creative practice of 'thinking-feeling' in order to 'activate the conceptual at work in the pre-articulation of the experiential'." *

And the movement moves on, on to the body of those who watch. The gripping feeling I get from the texts' performance — I feel moved. I feel affected.

"Research-creation explores becoming, which more than any object is what art is, is what concepts do — it puts the movement back into thought." *

What is fascinating is the texts' capacity to move something, to move us. That relation between the texts' rationale — their complex yet unfoldable networks of meaning — and the situation in which they immerse us — the activity they deploy in the room.

The background of the image is a piece of marbled paper with a complex, organic pattern of brown, tan, and cream-colored veins and spots. The pattern resembles natural stone or biological growth. The text is centered horizontally and vertically over this pattern.

activity and change are the matter of fact

A Dramaturgy:

Maybe facing the impossibility of sharing is a form of sharing.

Dramaturgy:

Is it a conversation or a monologue?

Is *this* a conversation? Or a monologue?

Are both things equally interesting?

Dramaturgy:

Balancing control and release — which is another way of asking whether it is a conversation or a monologue.

Dramaturgy:

Choosing the choices that shape how the experience is experienced — choosing the choices that shape the forms to give certain directions to how the experience could be experienced. Choosing the right words. Choosing the right words specifically and differently in specific and diverse situations.

The problem of anticipation:

The experience is already shaped before I get to do anything about it... The forms of the work of art interact with the shapes of the anticipated experience — the specificity of the work engages with clichés, previous knowledge and expectations. With desires.

Artistic processes are scattered, uneconomical, asymmetrical, complex, collaborative, individual and collective at the same time.

I've started noticing that it can take up to a couple of years to get over my own anticipation, my own prejudices about what the work will be, so that it becomes something it always had the potential to become but which was not evident from the beginning. I didn't use to think in such long time spans, but these recent years I've come to experience very differently the duration of my creation processes. I take more time now. Not because I make a plan of it. If anything, it remains very problematic in relation to planning, and to trying to place work in the professional field :/

Still – in terms of my artistic development, something has really shifted recently. And it feels strange but it's also very exciting. This new sort of time frame has brought me to notice the anticipation and projection also in my own working process. Time-traveling, again.

Two references come to mind. On the one hand, Gilles Deleuze: *"It is a mistake to think that the painter works on a white surface. (...) The painter has many things in his head, or around him, in his studio. Now everything he has in his head or around him is already in the canvas, more or less virtually, more or less actually, before he begins his work. They are all present in the canvas as so many images, actual or virtual, so that the painter does not have to cover a blank surface but rather would have to empty it out, clear it, clean it."*

The second reference, maybe a counterpoint, is H. S. Becker in "Art worlds" - reading this was important for me to come to terms with dramaturgical ideas which I usually dislike: *"Conventions make art possible in another sense. Because decisions can be made quickly, plans made simply by referring to a conventional way of doing things, artists can devote more time to actual work. Conventions make possible the easy and efficient coordination of activity among artists and support personnel. (...) Though standardized, conventions are seldom rigid and unchanging."*

Your anticipation, my anticipation... By the way, saying that artistic processes are 'individual and collective at the same time' is another way of talking about collaboration, especially collaboration with the audience. It's also about dialogue and monologue, and something in between, something that is both monologue and dialogue, and not exactly either of them.

Artistic processes are scattered, uneconomical, asymmetrical, complex, collaborative,

individual and collective at the same time.

Installation

(in·stal·la·tion - in(t)-stə-'lā-shən), n.:

To create a space in which to place bodies and ideas

To place bodies and ideas in order to create a space

It's funny how more and more things which didn't use to make sense to me start making sense when I think about them *very* literally. Maybe this is just the result of growing older.

The past couple of years I have been fiddling with the idea that space creates time. That is, that different spaces imply different times. It came up in a conversation with a friend-colleague while I was working on the installation-performance 'Remarks in Colour'. And I could relate to it, this cliché finally made sense, because we discussed how working on the spatial set-up would also determine other durations and times for the audience's displacements. It made sense to think that the spatial design was, ultimately, a way to compose the way people would spend time in the installation.

At the base of The Green Box is the idea that the reader needs to spend time, a specific time, in order to engage with it — The Green Box is not made to be read casually. It demands space, a specific space. You probably can't shuffle through the contents of this Box in the metro, or while sitting on the toilet.

I still think, to some extent, that the box is performing. I guess reading is always live, but this piece tries to emphasize that. Reading as an encounter — producing something in-your room, entering your space. Maybe trying to make a common space for you and me.

Installation

(in·stal·la·tion - in(t)-stə-'lā-shən), n.:

To create a space in which to place books

To place bodies and ideas in order to c

Tribute 03/10 - Joseph Kosuth

Razer sharp words, words like knives. Precise, perfect choices
Jenny Holzer's words.

Massumi talks about the emergence of meaning as the moment when the gouge cuts into the wood – you cannot see the furniture yet but it is already there, implicit in that gesture. Another one: the meeting point between cone and plane in Bergson's diagram represents the moment when action and perception become conscious. When I collaborated with Diego Gil in his research about Collective writing machines, we drew an analogy between Bergson's cone and the tip of a pencil. That is my image of what a work of art does. I often fantasize about tools and how they create a specific point of contact to let worlds emerge: the scalpel that cuts the skin, the tattoo needle, the pencil that stains the paper, the stylus of the record player, Borges' fine camel hair brush - the beam of the laser cutter. The precision of that point of contact is what the artist works on - maybe the smaller the point of contact, the larger the worlds they can invite.

Within the series of tributes in this Box I wanted to include one for Jenny Holzer. Her work has been an inspiration for my project. Her words keep coming with me over the years. It's like sharing the journey with a stranger. A travel companion: someone you can unexpectedly rely on, someone you might never see again. Sometimes I wish I could meet her. But oh, protect me from what I want.



Tribute 05/10 - Jenny Holzer

You could try this standing, or sitting on a chair, one of these office chairs which can rotate. Just start turning. Turn around for a while. Keep turning, and if you feel ok, start tilting your head sideways. The idea is to turn for a while with your head tilted. For as long as you can I guess...

This is another one: start walking in a straight line, with your gaze fixed on a specific point on the wall. Probably works better in a larger space, but nevertheless, just walk as far as you can, and then come back. Keep going, just walking back and forth on the same line, with your gaze always fixed on the same point. Try to not stop, to stop as little as possible, to dissolve the moment of changing direction. Keep going. And then at some point, keeping your gaze focused on that specific spot, stop stop walking.

You could also spend some time blindfolded. Go do things. Move around the house. Eat an apple. Go to the toilet. Just sit down. Check every now and then how does the lighting feel.

Sometimes I think one of my biggest issues is that I get lost too little. And at the same time, in a general sense, I feel generally pretty lost. It would be nicer if it was the other way around, if I could feel confident about my general orientation, and be able to get lost more often. I do feel like I get lost, though, quite often, in the details. Wait, that's actually exactly what I mean - I think. I get lost in the details which is the same as saying that I lose the general orientation.

There was a period I was busy with the idea of disorientation as a strategy to move away from the visual - to disorient myself in order to not think so visually, to connect with other things.

To think proprioceptively about meaning-making, to think about it in terms of movement - sense does not emerge from stillness.

When I was working on the performance 'The Visit', I wanted to create an encounter with someone who was in a different room. I wanted to make myself present remotely — I was performing through the computer, but wanted to be felt in the spectator's room.

One of the questions around this was how to bring their attention towards their own bodies, towards their own positioning in the space.

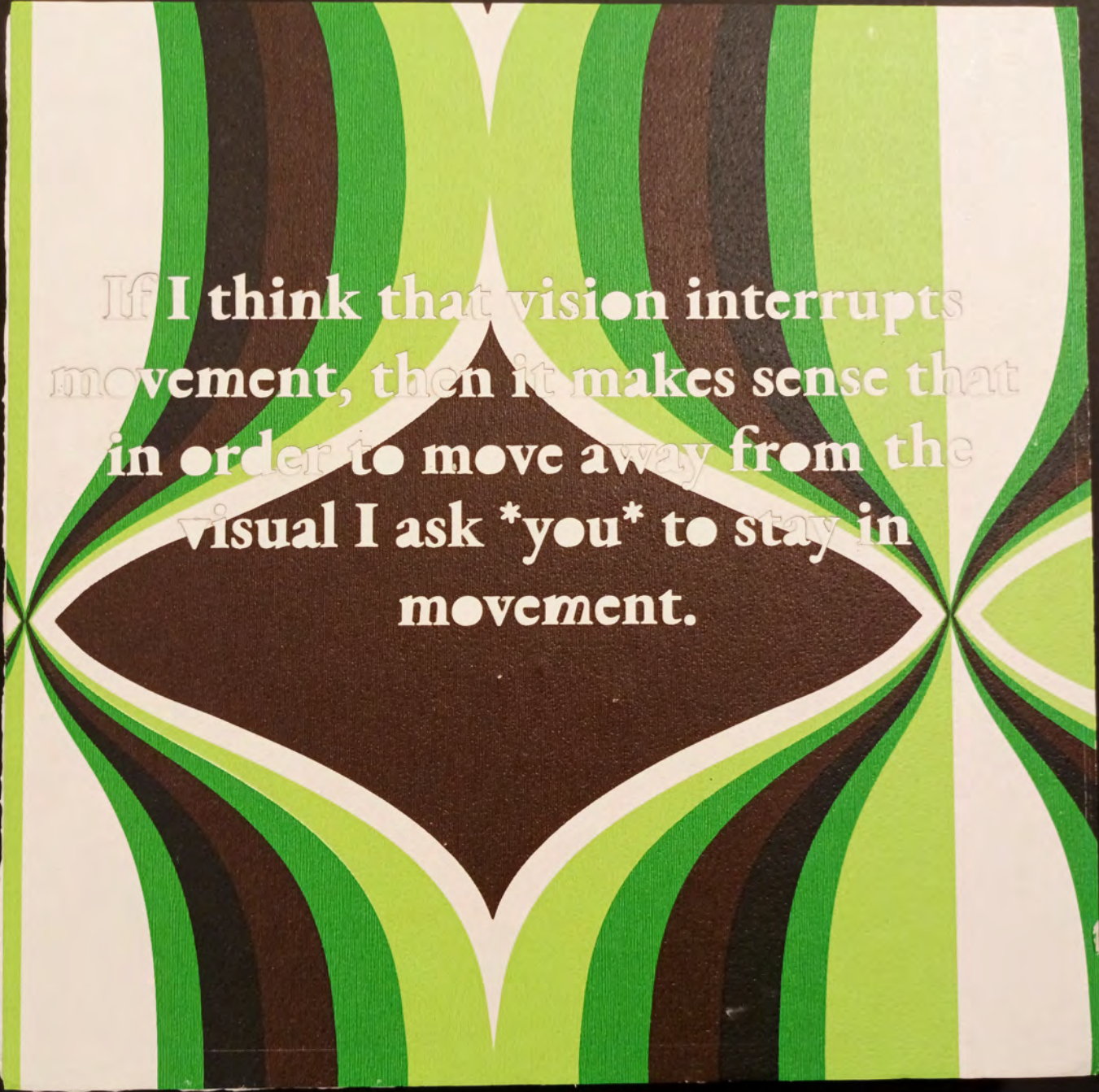
With The Green Box I also think sometimes of the object as an avatar, as a way to make myself present somewhere remotely, as a form of encounter. But in this case I guess it is not so important to think about my own positioning, but about how to facilitate, how to invite the reader to deploy the materials of the box, to give them a body and a space.

The Box performs — the reader performs. With the spectator's help the box can perform.

An installation: to put ideas in the space, to create a space that can host the ideas.

In order to read, you need to install. You need to deploy. To unfold.

Thinking about 'The Visit', there was a question about the symmetry or asymmetry of the situation. At the beginning of the performance the audience could see the space in which I was. That brought up a question about how my room mirrored or not their own space. And how this short glimpse into my location influenced their experience later, when they couldn't see it anymore. What I'm trying to bring back here is the question of symmetry and asymmetry, which is not so much about the location anymore but about placement. And about who makes that placement. A question of activity and interactivity. Writing about 'The Visit' I reflected on how submitting to the asymmetry of the set-up contributed to a feeling of intimacy, to experiencing an actual encounter. I did not start working on The Green Box with a focus on making something interactive — I tend to think that reading, listening or watching are always already interactive. But even though our activities, mine and yours, remain very asymmetrical, this asymmetry seems somehow more visible because of your necessary pro-activity.



If I think that vision interrupts
movement, then it makes sense that
in order to move away from the
visual I ask *you* to stay in
movement.

Process, truths and masterpieces (1/2)

I guess the point of this box is process – that it's interesting to share the process of thinking, the process of making, that that is as interesting as the pieces themselves... There's an interest in including the creation processes in the works of art. Or: in making them transparent (and apparent) in themselves.

This leads to the question of why process-oriented art is interesting. Some time ago I read a series of articles by Argentine writer Tamara Tenenbaum about the death of Fiction and about the death of Truth – and about a certain longing for them. She draws a connection between this lack of grand Truths and a decadence of Fiction. Now I read about Byung Chul Han's new essay addressing a similar point. Apparently he talks about Narration, rather than fiction. He seems to work on a distinction between Narration and narratives, saying that the current fascination with storytelling (and its appropriation by marketing, coaching and political discourse) is a deformation of the function Narration used to have in the creation of collective identities. In the individualistic social sphere (the *social media* sphere) everything is about reality -self staging, identity modelling- and yet nothing is true.

When I ask myself why I am interested in process-oriented art, I wonder if it also has to do with that. If focusing on processes is a way to deal with this apparent impossibility (or is it an incapacity?) to hold on to Grand Narratives. Maybe prioritizing process is a way to avoid saying things as if they were truths, a way to not commit to the statements, even my own statements (*there's another thread here, by the way, which I owe some attention to... somewhere else in this box -this box which is or will be also full of statements- I will have written about statements as a form, as a stylistic choice, as a way of performing words...*). In my work I wish to find ways to say things without positioning the work (or myself) as undisputable. I associate this to the attempt to keep things in movement – and for that I tend to think of forms which allow for the live production of activity, as opposed to a collection of reproducible shapes or images. Trying to avoid an arrest of meaning, trying to avoid stating things as if sense wasn't something that needs to be made (*this is, by the way, what I mean when I say I want to work on vision without image – to explore the visual without letting it be reduced to pictures*).

Focusing on process is a way of making transparent, of sharing what is being done and said – what is being thought – thought in doing – so that these thoughts, that discourse, can be perceived as a proposition. To bring the audience (the reader) along, confronting them, inviting them to argue against. The work tries to be specific in order to be disputable. I've experienced these sort of frictions clearly in teaching. I've often experienced a response to my workshops and classes in which the propositions seem to feel vague for the students... I have struggled with what I saw as a need for specific answers and evaluative feedback – people like to have confirmation. But the way I feel like I can teach something is by sharing practices – that is, by focusing on frames and forms in which certain questions can be addressed and investigated, rather than by sharing answers. Once more, the

hypothesis that by putting this and that together, by trying certain things out, something might emerge which might be interesting - an experience, an instant of intimacy, a moving or affective moment.

Working towards unknown results requires working with intuition. Alain Badiou, in his book about Deleuze, says intuition is a narrative adventure. It's a process, a progression, a parkour of thought, not a flash or an image. We don't find "*a starting point like in a naked repetition; the repetition is, rather, a pathway, or the progressive description of the totality of a problem field*".^{*} Successive approximations. In the creation of a work of art (or in the hosting of a workshop) we sense possibilities and we try to articulate something by setting up certain boundaries for a series of activities. We invite others to participate. And we might see a discourse emerge.

Is focusing on process a way to relativize the work? To avoid responsibility? Trying to produce intense, powerful, affective experiences, without pretending that *that* specific proposition (that artwork, this exercise) is a definitive truth, but just a moment, a shared moment, a frame to share a moment. And that it is not shared because of a belief in its moral superiority, but rather from a desire for connection - a certain located, modest, momentary togetherness.

Lately I have been thinking about *masterpieces*, wondering if works of art can still be called masterpieces - if we still believe that we are capable of producing them. Is the idea exhausted? Is the field (the world) saturated? Have we moved beyond the hierarchical frames of mind which allowed us to look at someone as a master and single out a work of art with awe? I'm thinking again about that zeitgeist, the one of the death of Truth and the death of Fiction (or Narration). I think these things have already been in discussion for maybe over 50 years now. But this feels different, not anymore a sophisticated and circumscribed intellectual debate but something more massive, something about generalized social values. Earlier on it might have felt emancipatory, like decoding the matrix - but nowadays it drags us more towards the feeling of a generalized, profound and persistent pessimism. It seems to pop up regularly in the attempts to explain partly the many recent successes of nihilistic political projects. Mind you, maybe the despair is only mine.

What about theatre, specifically? Not long ago I saw a piece by one of the contemporary masters, and it was rather disappointing. It was very well made - the mastery was there. But I had no connection with the work. Two years ago I watched another performance by another master, my true favourite, the master I do profoundly admire. I attended William Forsythe's "*A quiet evening of dance*", and I had very mixed feelings about it. The piece was good, very good - it didn't claim to be more than what it was: a quiet evening of dance. Even the title framing the work was kind of masterful. But it didn't feel like a masterpiece. I long for works of art that blow my mind, that will stay with me for the rest of my life, but they are not easy to come across... or are they? Maybe I just don't go often enough to the theatre.

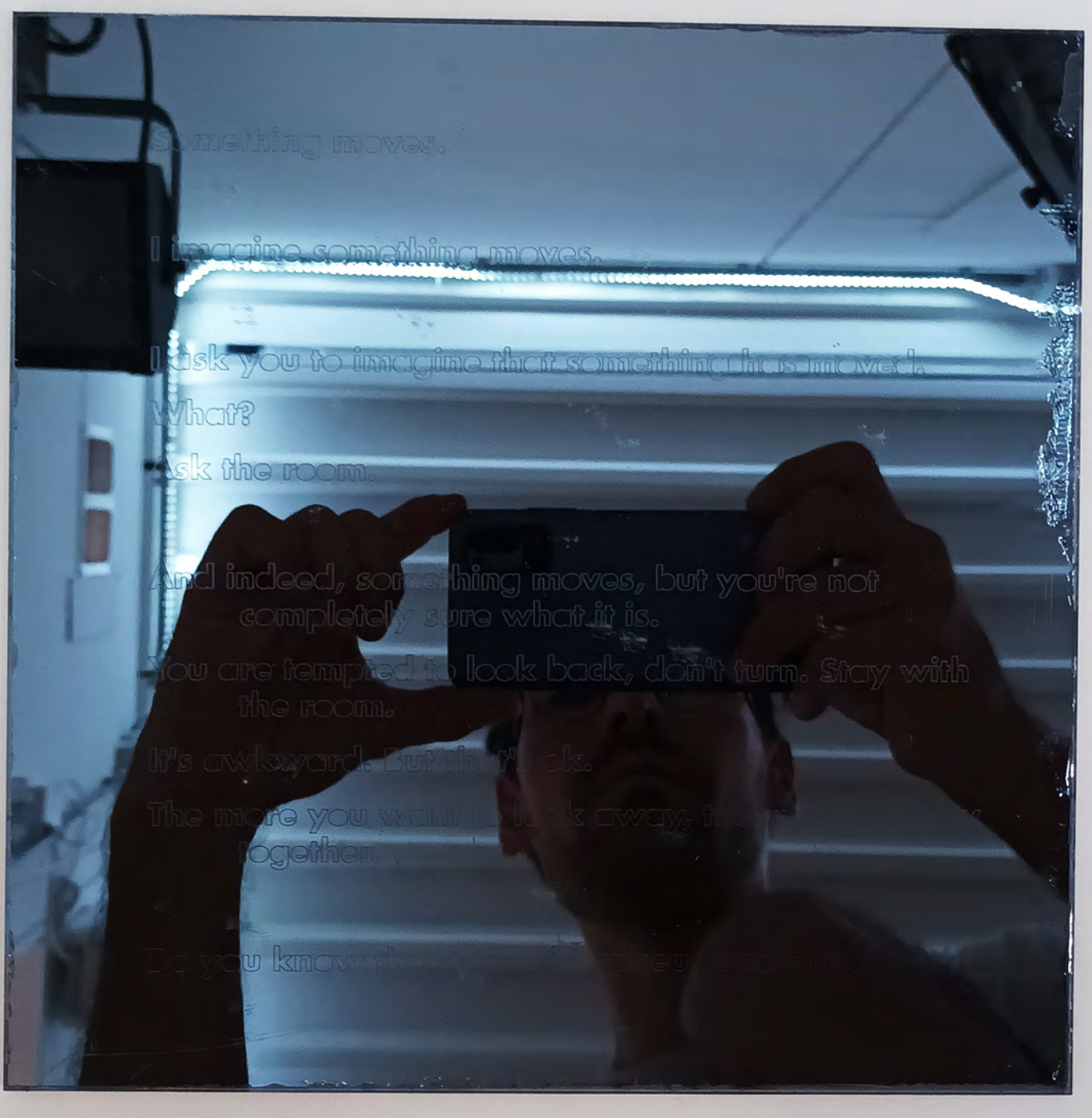
Self-referentiality itself

At some point, the re-occurring thinking about the recurrent thoughts about the recurrent feeling of getting stuck in the writing about The Box demanded I question all this self-referentiality – I did start pondering how much of it is too much. Often when I felt blocked I thought that I should write more about The Box itself, about why and how this project makes sense. But exploring that question became a tricky spiral: the more self-referential the project, the more I questioned in which way it's interesting, and the more I engaged with that question, the more self-referential the inquiry got...

I have no doubts that this is very interesting. But I also wonder if it really is — or maybe I would like to make the question more dramaturgical than ontological: how can it be interesting? What can I do? Actually, that's also not exactly the question... There are things in the Box, already, which make it interesting, because they make it do interestingly — The Box is already, in all its messiness and incompleteness, full to the brim with activity (and activity and change are the matter of fact). The dramaturgical question that has been nagging me is actually how much articulation and frame does all that activity need. How much does the box need words that help the reader with reading, with knowing how to deal with the object. Does the reader need instructions, or help? I think the frames are more interesting if they are intrinsic, if they emerge from the interactions (I think those would be Don Norman's affordances mentioned somewhere else). But the risk is that things become too cryptic or too subtle, and get lost. How to stimulate the reader, the audience, how to nudge you in directions? How to guide your attention to your current experience of interacting with the Box? That is a dramaturgy I am often interested in: to help the audience see themselves seeing.

A small break – this all sounds very casual, but it does exhaust me. I'm thinking around something but not managing to touch it. Maybe I don't need to do that much more, maybe the dramaturgical nudges are already there. But in this process of writing this feeling keeps coming back. I know this is all kind of messy – that's ok. I'll get to edit it at some point. For now I just need to write in order to be able to think.

At this point I realize: I need to make a box. I need to start seeing this in its materiality. I need it to be more like a rehearsal. Proposition: I'll print what I have, just get the texts on paper — I'll make a box, or find one. I need to start engaging with this piece with my hands — oh, wait, I'm already doing that somehow...

A person is shown from the chest up, holding a camera with both hands, framing the lens towards the viewer. The person's face is partially visible, looking down at the camera. The background is a room with a bright, horizontal light source, possibly a window or a light fixture, which creates a strong glow and some lens flare. The overall tone is somewhat somber or contemplative.

Something moves.

I imagine something moves.

I ask you to imagine that something has moved.

What?

Ask the room.

And indeed, something moves, but you're not completely sure what it is.

You are tempted to look back, don't turn. Stay with the room.

It's awkward. But that's ok.

The more you want to look away, the more you stay together.

Do you know what I mean? Father and son.

Something moves.

I imagine something moves.

I ask you to imagine that something has moved.

What?

Ask the room.

And indeed, something moves, but you're not
completely sure what it is.

You are tempted to look back, don't turn. Stay with
the room.

It's awkward. But that's ok.

The more you want to look away, the more you stay
together.

Know the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

TRYING TO FIND
A PROTOCOL TO
PRODUCE
MADNESS

I like to think we are producing new ways of relating—to, creating a proactive approach to relations. Autonomy not by ignoring the other but by modulating it through separation (“no autonomy is ever a purity of disconnection — other than that of Death”). I try to not work functionally. I try to move dissolving through my rational body and through my will, and I try not to do things but to allow them to happen. I hope I can go mad.

like to think we are producing new ways of relating - is, creating a
reactive approach to relations. Autonomy not by ignoring the other
or by modulating it through separation ("no autonomy is ever a
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functionally. I try to move dissolving through my rational body and
through my will, and I try not to do things but to allow them to
happen. I hope I can go on.

bibliography



THOUGHT IN THE ACT

Practices in the Ecology of Experience

ERIN MANNING +
BRIAN MASSUMI

Writing on the Wall

Word and Image in Modern Art

Simon Murray

I RUN FROM YOU
I SLEEP BESIDE YOU
I SMILE AT YOU ON MY KNEES

Thomas Merton



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**make research more autonomous
in order to make creation more entangled**

*** quotations**

The Green Box v.1 – *

A collection of used and discarded quotations

***"...separating quotation and author so that the words can be treated
as words and wordings more than as an invocation of someone's
authority..."***

"A random distribution of the most attractive colours would never yield as much pleasure as a definite image without colour" *

Aristotle, "Poetics"; quoted Kassia St. Clair in "The secret lives of colour"

"But colour is an accident of vision, a function of the beholder, not an intrinsic quality of real objects; whereas form is not only real but offers the security of perception through more than one sense, since we can apprehend form not only with vision but also with touch." *

Michael Baxandall, "Patterns of intention" (1985, Yale University)

"Images come again and again towards our gaze until something, at some point, breaks in our seeing or is demolished in our thinking." *

G. Didi-Huberman, "Pensar con imágenes" (Ed. Diana Wechsler), 2022, EDUNTREF

"there is another way of looking at things language allows us to create new thoughts to interact with others to change in every moment of our lives everywhere in the real world the human longing for freedom requires an understanding of different languages and cultures different attitudes different times and places all of which speak of the same human needs and aspirations there is another way of looking at things" *

Maurizio Nannucci, "There is another way of looking at things", 2012 (installation)

"Nothing stops your gaze it wanders off until something stops your gaze" *

is a paraphrasis of a sentence by Georges Perec in "Species of spaces", but I haven't been able to find the original sentence anymore.

"Meaning is never a principle or an origin, but rather a product – sense needs to be made" *

is a paraphrasis of Gilles Deleuze in "The logic of sense", taken from the book "Deleuze. El clamor del ser" by Alain Badiou.

"Activity and change are the matter of fact" *

Alfred North Whitehead, quoted by Brian Massumi & Erin Manning in "Semblance and event"

"This gives us a second approximation of what meaning is: more a meeting between forces than simply the forces behind the signs. Force against force, action upon action, the development of an envelopment: meaning is the encounter of lines of force, each of which is actually a complex of other forces. The processes taking place actually or potentially on all sides could be analyzed indefinitely in any direction. There is no end, no unity in the sense of a totality that would tie it all together in a logical knot. No unity, but a region of clarity: tool meets wood. The meaning of an event can be rigorously analyzed but never exhaustively, because it is the effect of an infinitely long process of selection determining that these two things, of all things, meet in this way at this place and time, in this world out of all possible worlds." *

Brian Massumi, "Meaning is force" ("A user's guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia")

"Experimental practice embodies technique toward catalyzing an event of emergence whose exact lineaments cannot be foreseen. As for Gilbert Simondon, the concept of technique as we use it includes the idea of the conditions through which a work or a practice comes to definite technical expression. Technique is therefore processual: it reinvents itself in the evolution of a practice. Its movement-toward definite expression must be allowed to play out. Technique is therefore immanent: it can only work itself out, following the momentum of its own unrolling process. This means that what is key is less what ends are pre- envisioned –or any kind of subjective intentional structure- than how the initial conditions for unfolding are set. The emphasis shifts from programmatic structure to catalytic event conditioning." *

Erin Manning & Brian Massumi, "Thought in the act"

"It is a mistake to think that the painter works on a white surface. (...) The painter has many things in his head, or around him, in his studio. Now everything he has in his head or around him is already in the canvas, more or less virtually, more or less actually, before he begins his work. They are all present in the canvas as so many images, actual or virtual, so that the painter does not have to cover a blank surface but rather would have to empty it out, clear it, clean it." *

Gilles Deleuze, "Francis Bacon, The logic of sensation"

"Conventions make art possible in another sense. Because decisions can be made quickly, plans made simply by referring to a conventional way of doing things, artists can devote more time to actual work. Conventions make possible the easy and efficient coordination of activity among artists and support personnel. (...) Though standardized, conventions are seldom rigid and unchanging." *

H. S. Becker, "Art Worlds"

"What if where I am is what I need?" *

choreographer Deborah Hay's practice proposition

"It is because vision interrupts movement with formed images that it must interrupt itself to see movement as such."

Brian Massumi, "The Bleed" ("Parables for the virtual")

"Vision is a mixed mode of perception, registering both form and movement. For it to gain entry into the quasi corporeal, the realm of pure relationality, pure movement, it must throw aside form in favor of unmediated participation in the flesh."

Brian Massumi, "The Bleed" ("Parables for the virtual")

"A thing has as many meanings as there are forces capable of seizing it." The presence of the sign is not an identity but an envelopment of difference, of a multiplicity of actions, materials and levels. In a broader sense, meaning includes the paths not taken. It is also all the forces that could have seized the thing but did not. It is an infinity of processes." *

Brian Massumi, "Meaning is force" ("A user's guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia")

"The wonderful thing about [written] language is that it promotes its own oblivion... My eyes follow the line on the paper, and from that moment I am caught up in their meaning, I lose sight of them. The paper, the

letters on it, my eye and the body are there only as the minimum setting of some invisible operation. Expression fades before what is expressed, and this is why its mediating role may pass unnoticed." *

M. Merleau-Ponty, "The phenomenology of perception", quoted in S. Morley, "Writing on the wall"

"Indeed the activities of seeing and reading occur at quite different tempos and involve different orderings of perception – the brain must configure consciousness in distinct ways for each activity and we simply cannot do both simultaneously."

Simon Morley, "Writing on the wall"

"The Western mode of writing had the effect of severing language from the body, for the alphabet disengages language so that the audible, pictorial, tactile and olfactory aspects of communication are funnelled into one sense: the visual. And while handwriting still has some connection to the body, print severed this connection altogether. Grounded in hierarchical logic and analysis, print objectifies time and space, and by removing language from the specific context of bodily gesture and vocalization, creates the illusion of a disembodied and permanent realm of discourse."

Simon Morley, "Writing on the wall", following Filippo Marinetti

"There was a first ophtalmologist in history: Georg Bartisch. Besides being the father of modern ophtalmology, he was the author of *Ophtalmodouleia, Das ist Augendienst*, a large handbook for eye surgeons, in which he set his findings in text and images. I am not surprised. The first eye expert was, in a way, also a writer. (...)

The paradox is not that Bartisch leapt from illiteracy to science, but the fact that in decoding so well the eyes' work he ended up bequeathing a precious object to literate culture. A book about the eyes. *Ophtalmodouleia* is a greek word which means "in the service of the eyes", but can also be translated as "when the eyes are upon you"; that is to say "under observation".

I still ask myself what does it mean, an eye that looks at another eye in that way."

Mercedes Halfon, "El trabajo de los ojos"

"All writing is a closure, but it's also thought that needs space and time in order to be produced."

Mercedes Halfon, "El trabajo de los ojos"

"When nothing arrests our gaze, it carries a very long way. But if it meets with nothing, it sees nothing, it sees only what it meets." *

Georges Perec, "Species of spaces"

"My body seeks more than one view of itself."

Deborah Hay, "My body the buddhist"

"To see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry-an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld."

Arthur Danto, "The Artworld"

"No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not onesided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it."

T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the individual talent"

"Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things."

T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the individual talent"

"This exchange of translations may remind us of one of the principles of intellectual emancipation formulated long ago by Joseph Jacotot: an emancipated woman is a woman able to speak about the activity that she performs, able to conceive her skill as a form of language: not a system of signs but an address which is a way of weaving a form of community. An emancipated community, he said, is a community of artists, a community of narrators and translators."

Jacques Ranciere, "Modern times"

"Research implies an attentive posture, an openness to what is already happening." *

"...the question of movement is at the heart of any inquiry into research-creation, but a movement from one to another is not what is at stake here, but rather the question of what it means to sense the mobility of thought itself." *

"...movement is the site of a creative practice of 'thinking-feeling' in order to 'activate the conceptual at work in the pre-articulation of the experiential' (Erin Manning)." *

"Research-creation explores becoming, which more than any object is what art is, is what concepts do—it puts the movement back into thought." *

Thain, Alana, "Affective Commotion, Minding the Gaps in Research-Creation" (introduction to "INFLExions No. 1 - How is Research-Creation?", May 2008)

"A rabbi, a real cabalist, once said that in order to establish the reign of peace it is not necessary to destroy everything nor to begin a completely new world. It is sufficient to displace this cup or this bush or this stone just a little, and thus everything. But this small displacement is so difficult to achieve and its measure is so difficult to find that, with regard to the world, humans are incapable of it and it is necessary that the Messiah come."(...) "Everything will be as it is now, just a little different."

There is nothing new about the thesis that the Absolute is identical to this world.(...) What is new, instead, is the tiny displacement that the story introduces in the messianic world. And yet it is precisely this tiny displacement, this "everything will be as it is now, just a little different," that is difficult to explain. This cannot refer simply to real circumstances, in the sense that the nose of the blessed one will become a little shorter, or that the cup on the table will be displaced exactly one-half centimeter, or that the dog outside will stop barking. The tiny displacement does not refer to the state of things, but to their sense and their limits. It does not take place in things, but at their periphery, in the space of ease between every thing and itself. This means that even though perfection does not imply a real mutation it does not simply involve an external state of things, an incurable "so be it." On the contrary, the parable introduces a possibility there where everything is perfect, an "otherwise" where everything is finished forever, and precisely this is its irreducible aporia. But how is it possible that things be "otherwise" once everything is definitively finished?" *

Giorgio Agamben, 'Halos', from "The coming community"

"First of all, consciousness could not be the immediate term of an investigation of thought. In fact, we know that we only start thinking under pressure, forced, submitting ascetically to the impersonal imperative of the outside*. Considering those conditions, thought cannot have its origins in consciousness. In truth, in order to start thinking we need to move away from consciousness; one could even say that it's necessary to de-conscienticize oneself. As Deleuze claims, recurring to Marx, 'While it is the **nature** of consciousness to be false, problems by their **nature** escape consciousness'."

Alain Badiou, "Deleuze. El clamor del ser"

"sure but hermetic guide" * is an expression Octavio Paz uses to describe Marcel Duchamp's Green Box.

"Constraints can either be governing or enabling. Governing constraints hinder actors to do something or only allow them to do it in a certain way. Enabling constraints make it possible for actors to do something that would not be possible otherwise."*

Alicia Juarrero, Dynamics in action

"Think of your plan as a plan for learning as much as it is a plan for implementation." *

Jim Shore and Shane Warden, "The art of agile development" (2007)

"Art brings back out the fact that all form is necessarily dynamic form. There is really no such thing as fixed form – which is another way of saying that the object of vision is virtual. Art is the technique for making that necessary but normally unperceived fact perceptible, in a qualitative perception that is as much about life itself as it is about the things we live by. Art is the technique of living life in -- experiencing the virtuality of it more fully, living it more intensely." *

Alana Thain, "Affective Commotion, Minding the Gaps in Research-Creation"

"...in Canada's academic milieu, linking the interpretive disciplines (humanities and social sciences) with creative ones (art and design). This involves the creation of knowledge in and through creative material and performative practice." *

Hexagram, "What is research creation?" - <https://hexagram.ca/index.php/eng/scientific-orientations/what-is-research-creation> (accessed 2020.05.16)

Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) defines research-creation as "...an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms). Research-creation cannot be limited to the interpretation or analysis of a creator's work, conventional works of technological development, or work that focuses on the creation of curricula." *

SSHRC, Definition of terms - <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programmes-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22> (accessed 2020.05.16)

"Discussing the role of printed words, Bruno Latour asks 'how much explanatory burden can they carry?' He argues that the reduction involved with transforming three-dimensional objects into two-dimensional objects

on paper (words) has resulted in similarly two-dimensional thinking. Through the abstraction of writing, objects and 'the world out there' are reduced in dimensions and can be dominated in a different way." *

Schneider, Arnd and Wright, Christopher - "The Challenge of Practice" ("Contemporary Art and Anthropology", 2006)

"Words, in many practitioners' as well as researchers' view, are often seen as opposing feeling, disrupting the senses, corrupting experience and should be allied with thinking, conceptualising, cognition and rationale; the 'others' of feeling bodies."

"...I will argue that both feelings and words are part of practices and that, rather than opposing feeling, words enact feeling and facilitate feeling bodies. (...) I argue that words do not just represent or describe realities – they do for example not just describe feeling bodies – but they also perform realities – they also produce feeling bodies."

Ulrike Scholtes, from "Feeling techniques – Making methods to articulate bodily practices"

"Duchamp claimed that his goal was to put art back in the service of the mind – to free it from merely perceptual, retinal preoccupations. (...) Central to his philosophy, therefore, would be the principle of indifference, an attitude that was intended to ensure the avoidance of self-expression or the taking of a position in order instead to pursue a detached art of practical, though unorthodox and often amusing, philosophical speculation. (...) it is to the more neutral and consciously non-artistic realm of the 'verbal' rather than the evocative realm of the 'poetic' that Duchamp wants to direct us. By emphasizing the linguistic component, Duchamp also drew attention to the fundamentally discursive nature of his enterprise, placing his work at the service of analysis rather than expression."

Morley, Simon, "Writing on the wall" (2007)

"Intuition is a narrative adventure. It's a process, a progression, a parkour of thought, not a flash or an image. We don't find "a starting point like in a naked repetition; the repetition is, rather, a pathway, or the progressive description of the totality of a problem field". *

Alain Badiou, "Deleuze. El clamor del ser"

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