Live the Problem
art and other things

Sarah Gruiters

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

———————————————————

Acknowledgements

contents

Abstract.

Live the problem: art and other things.

This project brings into question both the way we approach objects, images and spaces in an art context and in our everyday environment. Rather than solve the issues raised, it chooses to embody them. I draw directly from the information I visually consume and act as a filter; firstly through collecting, collating, then through making. I produce both objects that resemble art and objects that resemble commodities (that have the potential to exist outside of the field of art). The collective body of work exists as an installation where individual objects do not summarise the whole. Objects have both external referential relationships as well as strategically developed relationships to each other within the installation. The installation presents itself as a cluster of objects that point to where they came from, to each other, and to where they might head next. I aim to loosen up art seeing and focus life seeing: to restore faith in immediate response to artwork as well as encourage a deeper attention to our everyday environment.

figure 1: Final installation panorama (November 2011)

next page
figures 2 - 5: Final installation overview (November 2011)

INTRO

Live the problem is a project that addresses its questions and concerns by reflecting them. By participating.

This exegesis is laid out in two sections; the first will provide background context and ideas, as well as broad concepts that inform the project. The second section will look more closely at the work, method and the ideas present in it.

In the first half I will discuss my specific concerns regarding what it is like to be in the world right now; the affects of an image and information saturated society, as well as the renewed attention we are showing our immediate environment (things and spaces).

I will show how, if anything, *Live the problem* is an attempt to loosen up the way we approach looking at art - to restore faith in immediate responses and to encourage a more attentive look at our everyday environment. Not explicitly, but by providing objects in an installation that encourage you to consider both their position within 'art' and their position within 'life'.

Lastly, I will discuss how tangible concerns have shaped my practice: the practicalities of life, my thoughts on commodification, my interest in practices that agitate the boundaries of art and design and more broadly, the tension between generalist and specialist.

I will begin the second half by introducing the idea that my work is a cluster of internal relationships borne out of external ones, with me as the filter between. I will then discuss my position on the issue of appropriation and influence in relation to contemporaries.

Within this half there will be a simple walk-through of my method (i.e. how the work comes to be). Along the way I will be discussing specific concerns related to both process and the nature of the finished object or installation. I begin by explaining how I collect and collate information and move through to making. I discuss the reasons for my interest in self-made work, as well as the implications this method has on the work itself. I go on to provide examples of the different relationships my objects have to their references as well as discussing my position on the act of copying.

From here I discuss how the made objects are treated. My move to develop internal relationships between objects within the installation that counter the external relationships they have with references, my attitude and aim when arranging, and finally how I see the objects having their own independent trajectories and my view of the installation as an event.

With the project I am simply *presenting* or reflecting what I perceive to be a complicated relationship in contemporary society with firstly image, and secondly our immediate experience of objects and spaces.

My interest in objects and spaces that we have an immediate (day to day) relationship with is in part personal, and in part an observable trend that runs in tandem with society's development of the virtual in a reactionary way. In an interview theorist Jane Bennett (2010) is asked to comment on the growing contemporary interest in things:

> There is definitely something afoot, something about everyday (euro-american) life that is warning us to pay more attention to what we're doing. There is the call from our garbage …
> A second kind of call is coming from the weather… For those of us who are philosophically-inclined, the response to such calls has been a renewed focus on objects, on an object-oriented ontology, or a renewed interest in materialisms — there have been in the last decade materialist turns in literary studies, anthropology, political theory, history. Part of this may be a pendulum swing in scholarship: a reaction to the good but overstated insights of social constructivist approaches.
> (para. 10 – 12)

I am interested in the implications of growing up in an image-saturated society. Though I cannot separate myself enough to define exactly what they may be, I believe our relationship to image to be complicated by the sheer number of images we encounter everyday, their use as a communication tool and the ease with which 'anyone' can produce images. 'Super-hybridity' is a term that describes this phenomenon, coined by Jorg Heiser (2010) and discussed in the September 2010 Frieze Magazine (p. 96). Stemming from the term 'hybridity' it is used to describe a particular kind of contemporary practice that draws (and contains) references from a multitude of sources and at a fast pace.

> In recent years, a number of artists, musicians, filmmakers and writers have dramatically increased the number of cultural contexts they tap into when producing work as well as the pace at which they do so – the younger, the faster, it seems. This phenomenon could be termed 'super-hybridity' and is obviously to do with the dynamics of globalization, digital technology, the Internet and capitalism. (p. 94)

In my opinion 'super-hybridity' is not a phenomenon that people choose to subscribe to, rather it describes a particular aspect of contemporary work that is a by-product of our environment. I don't believe it reflects an ironic stance, but a kind of new natural state - a normal interaction with our current environment.

Though these concerns are not solved through objects, they inform my decision making process implicitly. For example, an interest in lifestyle and personal accumulation of things influences the type of objects I make to be domestic or have domestic potential. Or that with an interest in the psychological influence of physical spaces comes a focus on installation, specifically the manipulation of formal elements within it.

I take the position of participator; I choose to negotiate our relationship with image, things and spaces through making. My work does not act as a commentary on something; it *is* something. My own goal with this project is, as with most art, not to change things but to simply reflect the state of change. *Live the Problem*[1] [2] (like a self help mantra or manifesto) goes some way to explaining my thinking in this position.

Andrea Zittel is an artist who has been described as a "one woman lifestyle company" (Glueck, 2006, para. 2) but rather than providing lifestyle solutions her work could more aptly be described as providing lifestyle questions – not just to viewers, but to herself (Wills, 2010). She has said; "I don't create products I create experiments for myself." (cited by Wills, 2010)

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 6: A-Z West

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 7: Andrea Zittel self portrait in self-made smock

When I am in it...
Sometimes I end up in videos or photographs, I make clothes to fit me and I often make or fix up furniture for my own needs. I don't intend to be the subject of my work; I don't view myself to be the protagonist. I am more a convenient stand in, a sub or a fill-in. I also acknowledge the absurdity of the intended neutrality of this position.

*figure 8: c*rop of video still, wearing peel jeans (2011)

Jean Graves (2007) describes Zittel's practice as "self-help" in that it leads by example, it asks the question: if she can, why can't I?

1   Problem – The questions, the things I am trying to work out, to understand.
2   There was a plaque reading 'Live the problem' behind Rem Koolhaas in a portrait of him in his office with an article I read once. At least I think there was. I can't find any reference to it. Real or false memory, it has always stuck with me: an affirmation of position.

figure 9: lumpy bottle (2011)

figure 10: slotted cactus (2011)

(finding identity through things / forming identity through things.)

I believe that we need to be more conscious of what we are creating. We have a responsibility to be responsive to - and critical of - the world that we construct for ourselves. We need to realise the importance of the spaces we create, the things that we have and use. The things that people choose to live with are often aesthetics in useful guise. This is obvious in objects such as vases.

> When a vase is without a flower, what do you do with it? This doesn't look like a vase when you don't have a flower in it, it doesn't look like a candlestick when you don't have a candle in it. And this is important because it makes people want to live with the object and not to have a candlestick. (Ettore Sottsass cited by McGuirk, 2007, para. 10)

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 11: Nilo: vase designed by Ettore Sottsass

Active not passive.

The designer Bruce Mau (2005) attempts to reclaim the term 'life style' in the introduction to his book of the same name. He argues that life is something we actively produce, that we actively shape our world.

> Rather than accepting that life is something that we passively receive, accept, or endure, I believe that life is something we generate. We use our capacities. And that all boils down to style. Style may be presented as theory, serendipity, or happenstance. But fundamentally style is a decision about how we will live. Style is not superficial. It is a philosophical project of the deepest order. (intro.)

Untapped resources.

Our external world shapes our internal. If we know that low ceilings and fluorescent lighting produces bad working environments or that green is a calming colour, surely there must be endless layers of complexity in the subtleties of the spaces and things we create for ourselves. In an interview Liam Gillick (2007) offers up an anecdote to support his claim for the importance of our spaces; "I absolutely believe that visual environments change behavior and the way people act. It's no accident that the North American and the Vietcong argued about the shape of the negotiation table to peace talks." (p. 180)

A loosening up of the way we approach looking at art, a simultaneous focusing of the attention we give our own private objects and spaces.

Loosen art seeing / focus life seeing: I am
interested in bringing into question both the way we approach objects, images and spaces in an art context, and our everyday environment.

Though I find the language around art to be engaging, I am of the opinion that art does not have to be a totally closed way of looking; that one can also find ways into the work by approaching it the same way one might approach regular objects and spaces - the same skill set you use in life. I want to restore confidence in the validity of an immediate response, as well as present the idea that things and spaces we encounter in regular life can provide thinking points, and that our own world is worthy of engaging with, worthy of seeing. The following quote in reference to the practice of Gregory Maass and Nayoungim highlights a fundamental aspect of art that legitimizes for me the inclusion of the way we look at everyday things.

> What do I think of them? Well, as usual when I first look at a work of art I don't think anything. It's as if my thinking migrates to somewhere else, to somewhere called seeing, and to what is to be seen, the 'what is' being less on the side of thinking than seeing. Works of art draw out the seeing in thinking, they foreground the seeing in thinking, they step to the side of thought and sense of seeing. And if what I see thinks then it shows its thinking, puts it up to be viewed, and the thing thinks in terms of how it can be seen. (Dronsfield, 2008, para. 4)

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 12: Gregory Maass & Nayoungim, Sockdrier and Alfred Hitchcock in Guillin (2008)

figure 13: Gregory Maass & Nayoungim, The Best Neighborhood (2010)

I am interested in utilizing immediate recognition. If I encountered, for example, a really good-looking water bottle in a gallery, I might think *I want it*, which would in turn make me think, *is that a valid response to this artwork?* as well as causing me wonder *why I can't have this object in my own life?*

> While one does not necessarily have to have an aesthetic relation to artworks, one can very readily have aesthetic relations to entities which are not art and to the artfully designed, packaged and advertised merchandise that surrounds us on an everyday basis in particular. (Sianna Ngai, cited by Steenstra, 2007 para. 17)

I am interested in the practicalities, the systems that things[3] move through or sit within. I work with an acceptance of the economics of the art world. To me, the art market is an entity that does not seem superior to, or even that clearly defined from, other market economies.

> One of the paradoxes of art is the demand for the artist to produce the work for himself. But he is, after all, a person as well, for whom kudos and recognition are important. He needs to make a living from what he does. And because it's important, for example, what others think about his art, he has already limited himself. Success is always the biggest danger of success.
> (Keller, 2010, p. 61)

This image has been removed
by the author of this thesis for
copyright reasons.

figure 14: Brad Troemel Canvases #4 (2010)

The artist Brad Troemel (2010) advocates non-material Internet based work as a way to avoid systems currently in place. "I want art that is free to experience, free to make, and free to promote. I want Free Art." (para. 1) Though I find this argument logical and its outcome successful, I do not particularly like the move to non-material work as a solution. Instead of choosing to make non-material artwork, I make *material* artwork that has (potentially) somewhere else to go; it is not dependent on the art market. I am reflecting issues around commodification with a practice that mingles objects resembling commodities and objects resembling art.
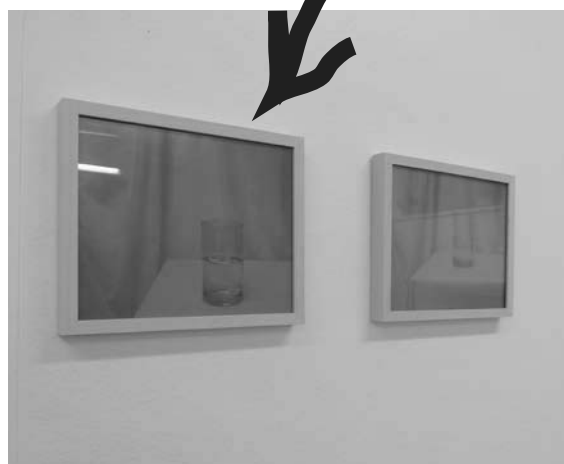
figure 15: Sup er tee (2010)   *figure 16:* 2 1/2 glasses of water (2011)

---
3   things - individual objects as opposed to the installation as a whole.

My interest in design started with a combined question of survival (how to make a living) and loss of faith in the agency of art. Something that was initially a practical deviation from art for arts sake has been brought along into the project as a conceptual concern.

For a long time I was reading about people whose practices sit between art and design. All have taken a clear position in defining their practice, where they situated themselves.[4] There is no consensus between them yet each point is valid, none seeming more convincing than the other to me. Having spent a lot of my life trying to decide what I want to do; to choose, to figure out what position to take. Not being able to reach a comfortable decision I have ended up giving myself permission to be actively undecided. I keep making even though I have not reached a decision about my position. My practice acts like a container for all these different pathways I wanted to follow.

I am of the belief that generalist work is just as important as specialist work. Jonathan Lethem, in his essay *The Ecstasy of Influence: A plagairism*, discusses a phenomenon Don Swanson[5] termed "undiscovered public knowledge" - the idea that not only is there is something to be found by looking across disciplines, but that you can find this by taking a generalist look at existing specialist research or work. Swanson did this himself in the case of Raynaud's syndrome in this manner. (Lethem, 2007)

> Left to its own devices, research tends to become more specialized and abstracted from the real-world problems that motivated it and to which it remains relevant. This suggests that such a problem may be tackled effectively not by commissioning more research but by assuming that most or all of the solution can already be found in various scientific journals, waiting to be assembled by someone willing to read across specialties. (para. 48)

---

4   For example:
Jurgen Bey – designer interested in art
Bless – fashion designers (can look like art)
Dexter Sinister – graphic designers (run a publication that was initially focused on graphic design which later loosened up to become more inclusive. they also brought their ideas around publications and distribution into projects within art institutions.)
Donald Judd – drew a clear line between what was furniture and what was art.
MM Paris – Graphic Designers (that the title gives them freedom to do whatever)
Jorge Pardo - "perpetual reproduction of style"
Tobias Rehberger – artist (can look like design)
Studio Job – designers who see themselves to be slowly morphing into artists.
Superflex – artists working on real community projects (etc)
Henrik Vibskov – fashion designer (fringe projects)

5   A library scientist from the University of Chicago.

My work, collectively[6], presents itself as a cluster of internal relationships borne out of external relationships.

I act as a filter.

Ideas for work come from my relationships to things and images as opposed to coming out of the ether. I consume and collect a lot of information in the form of images, texts and ideas. I use external things to reveal my own motives to myself. I allow myself to be guided by intuition and discover intention through the patterns of things I am collecting. A large quantity of this is from navigating the Internet supplemented by thoughts borne from response to my immediate environment.

I take a position that accepts influence as a given and takes appropriation to be a non-issue. In a studio discussion led by Talia Cherit with the artists Van Hanos, Alex Hubbard and Ryan Kitson (n.d.) they talk about their position on the issue of appropriation.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 17: Van Hanos's studio in Harlem, New York

VH: It's tied to the Internet and our ability to see everything and anything. We register things without footnoting them.
AH: When you find something really good that expresses it for you, it's yours.
VH: It brings in the artist's choice as a really relevant tool.
TC: It feels like choice and intuition are being reintroduced (and accepted) into our practices after a long hiatus.
(para. 20, 23, 24, 25)

I am interested in a shift of focus from artwork that springs forth from an imagined internal creative well to an embrace of influence. As Jonathan Lethem's essay attests this is nothing new. In a section entitled "Contamination Anxiety" he uses the musician Muddy Waters as an example of not only impure relation to source but also the acceptance of, or relaxed attitude towards these relationships.

> In nearly one breath, Waters offers five accounts: his own active authorship: he "made it" on a specific date. Then the "passive" explanation: "it come to me just like that." After Lomax raises the question of influence, Waters, without shame, misgivings, or trepidation, says that he heard a version by Johnson, but that his mentor, Son House, taught it to him. In the middle of that complex genealogy, Waters declares that "this song comes from the cotton field." (Lethem, 2007, para. 8)

---

6   Collectively – in the install, as a collection of objects rather than individual works.

I respond to all of this information by making,
by doing the same,
by participating.
mimicry,
appropriation,
allowing myself to be influenced,
adopting others stances.

I believe British artist Helen Marten's practice is one that responds to the same cultural conditions that I am interested in, those specified by the ways in which the world is filtered through media. She describes her practice as "environmental window shopping" (Baker, Marten, 2011, para. 7) and talks about a kind of natural, everyday appropriation that comes from simply paying attention, attention that can pop up as wanting to use something, to own something or as, "a little surge of jealously" (para. 6). She believes that this kind of appropriation is "inevitable" (para. 5) and "immediate" (para. 2). Importantly, Marten's work is also an example of an art practice that is not specifically art referential.

> I selectively bounce between the parameters of architecture, fashion, design, history etc etc, but everything is so hilariously bound up in push and pull relationships anyway, that playing the name game with influence is difficult because everything blurs and overlaps so pervasively. But I love the inevitable filtration processes of modern culture... (Baker, Marten, 2011, para. 5)

These images have been removed
by the author of this thesis for
copyright reasons.

figures 18 - 23: Helen Marten - clockwise starting top left: La-z-Boy (2010) / untitled installation shot (2010) / Unreasonable sleep! (2008) / Um you mean we have to be serious now? (2010) / FATSO (2008)

My regrouping[7] usually begins with trawling the Internet. I do not go looking for influence or ideas - it is simply that it is a fertile place for the give-and-take of information and ideas. You can amble, stumble, surf, dig around and naturally, associations and ideas begin to form.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 24: The Interet

I copy large quantities of pictures to my desktop, download texts and bookmark things I think deserve more attention. I am guided by my intuition in what I choose to compile. I trust that the things that I notice have some relationship to my interests and concerns – that my interest in commodification or appropriation will subconsciously dictate what I notice. These pictures and text then get organised into folders with groupings that are relevant to me. Like a cluster of notes, they get organised and re-organised. They do not have references back to their sources, the categorization begins to take prominence over reference in my decision making process.

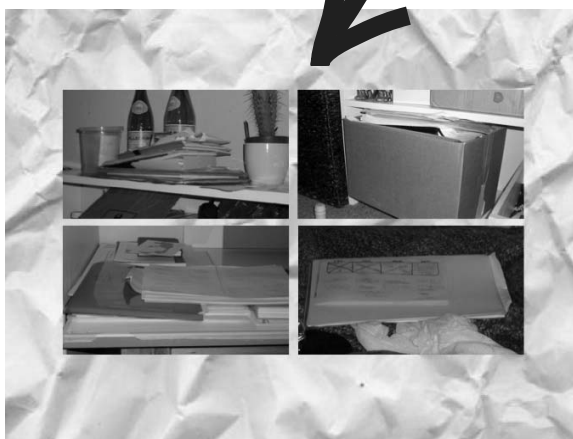*figure 25:* screen shot of my desktop

figure 26: compiled pictures of my notes

I always have piles of notes that to help me to pinpoint what it is in each of the images collected that I am paying attention to. I also keep a page of current to-dos and a page that maps out all the groupings or objects and areas I want to work in. It feels akin to studying for an exam by rewriting notes. These notes are the first steps towards bringing ideas into something physical. This could be because practicalities start to define current possibilities (time, money, know how). A lot of the decision making and idea forming simply cycles round in my head, the notes and drawings act as a kind of shorthand for myself; they are simply reminders in the form of key words and quick sketches that would not make much sense to anyone else reading them.

---

7   Starting sort of at the beginning /slash/end of a cycle for example, after the lull of having completed something for discussion.

'

After the collecting and the collation of ideas begins the process of **making**.
Of course a portion of the ideas around the work are shaped prior to the making, but
the process of making provides valuable insight into how the object acts.

Thinking through things.

Much of the work is stubbornly self-made - I have trouble letting go. This is not how I have
always made artwork; in previous years I worked primarily with found objects. It is more a
condition of how I was raised and how I go about living my life, so is therefore something that
is difficult to describe objectively. In my family if you do not know how to do something, you
figure it out. There is a respect for professionals and trades people (you may figure out you are
not capable) but also a curiosity - my Dad always wanted to know how things worked, to try
to make things himself and my Mum has a strong focus on her immediate environment – the
home, the garden, keeping it all in order, improving, tweaking it (or getting Dad to). So I grew
up paying keen attention to my environment and believing I could do something to change it.

I do not simply want things (consume) - I make the things I want (produce). Or more specifically,
I make things the *way* I want them. For example, I wanted a tray for putting things on when I
work on my bed.
I wanted a shirt.
I wanted a small stool ...

The tray I wanted to have dimensions
suitable for a laptop without interference
from the lip of the tray, for my paper piles of
paper, that would be easy to move and store
and with a simple unfussy design.

figure 27: tray

The shirt is still a work in progress, i have
been trialing pattern alteration and fine-
tuning along the way.

The stool I found in a junk store, it was beat
up but had nice dimensions. I cleaned and
sanded it, re-bolted, re-glued and painted it.

figure 28: blue shirt

figure 29: blue stool

Addicted to googling 'how-to's

Not knowing how to do something may get in the way of achieving the intended result but it does not stop me delving in. I believe it is important to invest in understanding, appreciating and fine-tuning what is *actually* happening in the work. My intentions for an object inform the object; but that an object rarely act as I have envisaged does not necessarily mean that it is unsuccessful.

> *See what is interesting about the way these objects actually are.*
> *Imaginary thing is very different to the actual thing.*
> *What I am trying to do and what the object is actually doing are often (distant)*

Constructing through construction.

It can be important at times that an object does actually function so that a viewer can understand that it *could* exist somewhere else (in a shop, at home). Yet in other instances functionality falls by the wayside in favour of abstract concerns. Decisions are made pragmatically, I just do what I am capable of doing - I am not posturing. For example, I can sew well enough that a suit succeeds at being a suit, and is not just a representation of a suit. I can build a table well enough that it functions, but not well enough to suggest it could exist anywhere else. I am intentionally working across the spectrum, presenting a collection of objects that as a whole do not belong in any one place.

figure 30: table made with Dad   *figure 31:* shiny green suit

Professional Amateur

> It would be nice to think of the artist as professional amateur, some kind of category that develops method rather than knowledge, that allows to explore different fields, like an actor whose method allows him to be a doctor, a kid, a politician. I consider myself an empiric. (Adriana Lara cited by Kunsthalle Basel, n.d., para. 16)

I could utilize this concept of the method actor to make up for the particular qualities objects carry, specifically where some fall a little short on their 'made' personality. For example, the idea for this image *(figure 30)* was to create a moody, gothic inspired image of pop objects with reference to vanitas. Yet, they only *act* like that, they do not in reality function as intended.

figure 32: Popcorn / Tissues (2011)

In a way I am training my own judgment through a physical understanding of objects in the way that Enzo Mari (Obrist & Mari, 2008) describes how he thought that consumers could gain appreciation through constructing their own object of Mari's design.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

Hans Ulrich Obrist – You spoke to me about your work on self-design and provided the examples of the transmission of values through objects.

Enzo Mari – One of my projects, a divan-bed, responded to concrete needs – that is, the facility of using it, solidness, elegance, low cost. However, it was a complete failure when comericailized. It was then appreciated by my better colleagues, by critics, and by people who were not conditioned by the pornography of mass fashion. This is why I thought that people could acquire some form of judgment if they were trained to construct an object – a table for example – with easily accessible instruments and materials. I created twenty small models to encourage this exercise. I said I would send out a small catalogue for those who were willing to pay the shipping costs.

figure 33: Enzo Mari seated on a self-assembly chair from his Autoprogettazione project designed in 1974 (2010)

A few examples of the ways these things come into being ● ● ●

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

+

figure 34: Kwangho Lee, Electric wire with wooden structure (2011)

+

figure 36: Hotel Basico

=

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 35: Gerrit Rietveld, Red and Blue Easy Chair (c. 1923)

Often my objects are a combination of influence. This diagram is overly simplistic undermining the thought process, but is a clear example of additive influence. This tall mint structure *(figure 37)* is in reference to this lighting display *(figure 34),* Rietveld[8] style construction *(figure 35)* and the colour scheme of Hotel Basico in Mexico *(figure 36)*. It is not just formal attributes at play, there has to be a conceptual alignment also. For example, things that were important about these influences: the ad hoc and secondary nature of this lighting display single it out as an example of the many images I came across of people currently executing structures in Rietveld style.

figure 37: Tall mint structure (2011)

figure 38: Tesseract in fries (2010)

This is an image that hints towards a more complex relationship with image and information. I had been reading about fourth dimensional space and was describing a tesseract[9] to my brother over burgers using what was on hand; fries. This triggered me to think about the ways in which people use everyday things to explain big concepts. I chose to negotiate this idea that I had gotten stuck on by simply making a full model of a tesseract in fries.

---

8   Gerrit Rietveld (1888–1964) dutch furniture designer and architect.
9   A shape describing the abstract concept of 4th dimensional space.

An object's interest, or complication, is not always in its additive/referential nature. An object can arrive through something as simple as copying. The object could be something I want or just an exercise to understand a form. The stool on the right was made from the picture on the left (no measuring involved) and so I made a stool that is approximately equal to these stools by Shin Okuda aka WAKA WAKA.[10]

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

≈

figure 40: copy stool

figure 39: Stools by WAKA WAKA

This idea of copying becomes an interesting dilemma in and of itself. The design and art studio ROLU[11] have a furniture project that approaches the concept of copy with a similar attitude to my own. The project began as what they describe as a kind of "exploratory exercise" (John & Olsen, 2011, para. 18) borne out of their virtual research. In the process they discovered value in this translation and began to develop this project further. The furniture itself is heavily derivative, if it is not a copy; the focus instead is on the action, and the materials. "These pieces continue to explore some of the same ideas we've been interested in regarding very fluid and quick reactions to work were influenced by. And this idea of high art concepts expressed through simple raw materials." (para. 6) For me, though this doesn't resolve the issue, I find kinship in the pull through from virtual to physical, the personal gain experienced in the process of the reiteration of objects through making and the focus on these copies or reiterations possessing their own value.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

Matt Olsen of ROLU said, "In one literal way, our furniture is in part a response to this visual river we are paying attention to and participating in... we're trying to reach into it and respond with something physical." (John & Olsen, 2011, para. 2)

figure 41: ROLU, Shape Chair Zig

I do not intend copying to be a disrespectful act. In Boris Groys' *Politics of Installation* (2009), he discusses the concept of original versus copy; that they are locked into a relationship where neither one is superior to the other.

> We are unable to stabilize a copy as a copy, as we are unable to stabilize an original as an original. There are no eternal copies as there are no eternal originals. Reproduction is as much infected by originality as originality is infected by reproduction. (para. 15)

My copy of the chair by WAKA WAKA is a different thing simply because I made it. Not only is it a different object created by my action of replication, the context is different -different person, place, project.

> Every change of context, every change of medium can be interpreted as a negation of the status of a copy as a copy ... In this sense, a copy is never really a copy, but rather a new original, in a new context. (para. 15)

---

10 "WAKA WAKA is a project focusing on furniture and utilitarian objects designed and handmade by Shin Okuda." (Okuda, n.d.)
11 ROLU is a Minneapolis based design and art studio with a focus on landscape based work and furniture. Their web presence consists of a company site, a studio site specifically for their furniture, a tumblr for their documentation, progress and general sharing, and a blog as a site for their research.

Combinations
images of trial arrangements can be found on pages 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43.

The process of trialing combinations and spatial variants begins as objects accumulate. I start to see the collected body of objects as a whole and to develop the relationships between these objects. I am interested creating a situation where there is push and pull between the external/referential relationships and the internal relationships between objects: An installation that is internally referential.

Helen Marten is an example of an artist whose works and installations have their own internal dialogue to match to the external one. Richard Wentworth (cited by Kellaway, 2010) describes Marten's aim as being to produce, "a family of objects and ideas with some sort of circuitry." (para. 4) I have become interested repetition or reiteration as a strategy to develop a way of presenting cohesion amongst the body of work. I am supporting the notion that there is something conceptually the same about these objects with their formal similarity. I provide a kind of false coherence; the installation appears to be cohesive - to come from one line of thinking - even if individual objects might not share the same intention or set of concerns.

For example, the concrete vessel has a cameo role in a drawing featuring Wile E. Coyote, an image repeated slightly differently in the two images of glasses of water, a formal relationship between a fabric print of curls of fruit peel and lengths of knotted rope, or simply the formal relationships of repeated colour.

figure 42: concrete vessels

figure 46: 2 half glasses of water

figure 44: peel print

figure 43: Compromised Wile E. cactus

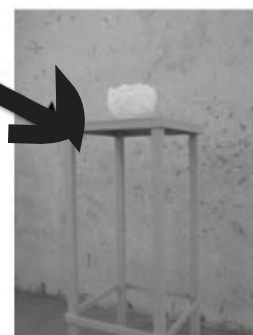figure 47: tall teal structure

figure 45: knot

figure 48: tall teal table

"The process of articulating is trying to make it a little less inadequate than how we felt it was three minutes before." (Wentworth, 2001, para. 16)

Saying something several times in different ways, each way a little bit wrong, hoping that with the collective babble some understanding has been reached.

"A certain type of perfection can only be realized through a limitless accumulation of the imperfect." (Murakami, 2002)

The way I deal with installation is akin to rearranging furniture. When I rearrange the furniture I have a series of objects that have an existent relationship to each other, for example, you would not have a tall dresser in front of a low window or in another instance you might ideally like your bed to catch the morning light. These same attitudes are how I naturally approach arranging objects within a space (just with a different set of parameters for optimal outcome).

I am interested in producing an installation that does not prioritize individual elements. Within my practice there is a flattening out, a kind of *sameness* in the way objects are treated when they are installed. It is not that the objects do not have *any* hierarchical relationships, simply that they are treated in a detached manner in the installation. Either yes it belongs or no it does not.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 49: Ian McDonald, Wearing (flaxen), (2011)

Ian McDonald (2011) is a ceramist/sculptor whose work negotiates the terrain between functional and non-functional.

I work in both realms (functional and non-functional) for a few reasons, but mostly because I don't see any difference. In most cases the separation is sort of an academic exercise, but it doesn't change the way I think or work, so I leave it alone. (para. 5)

I have been specifically interested in the relationships he draws out between object and support. I myself am interested in creating situations where the object's thing-ness and support's object-ness come in and out of focus.

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

figure 50: Ian McDonald, HouseWearing (everything else). (2011)

... this is where the sculptural arrangements are born, in that the difference between the support (pedestal, furniture) and the object (sculpture, accessory) is so small that I just collapse it all together. I don't really start out thinking functional or non-functional, it's all just happening at once. (para. 5)

McDonald also describes his decision to create functional objects to be a conceptual approach employed for the purpose of avoiding referentiality - that he enjoys the complication of an object that is what it is; "It looks like a bench and acts like a bench because it is a bench. I really like all of this complication, and prefer to stay open to multiple avenues of thinking." (para. 5) This is useful to think about in relation to other ways the work might play with the relationship between external and internal.

I am interested in the kind of complication that occurs when work holds the possibility of several paths of thinking; that the work can be both full and empty of meaning at the same time.

...but we can never be sure. Von Bonin is a master of uncertain and ironic symbols, and it is her seeming non-commitment to any particular reading of her work that makes it so much fun. If we try to hard too figure out what's going on we will miss the point. (Alessi, 2010, para.7)

Conclusion.
The installation: the event.[12]

Every thing that I make has its own trajectory, a trajectory that is informed by intention. I work on objects or ideas individually. a concrete bowl, a pair of pants digitally printed with fruit peel. These *things* don't necessarily have pure 'art' intentions, they have their own individual trajectories (though they are never innocent of installation).

It's a pit stop, a gas station diner on many different people's journeys.

Within my work individual pieces or factions do not act to summarise the entire project. They do not work as microcosms and as such can not be held up as examples of the whole. The collective body of work exists as an *event* via installation.

It has been asked: is the work representational or actual? Can it, does it, will it function in other contexts? Much of it (though not all) aspires to. In the event (the installation) the work is both actual and representational. It oscillates between the two. Even though the Art is in the installation, individual objects have potential to enter into different markets - to be gifted, sold, reused and repurposed.

The installation is unsettled; it gestures outside of itself and its formal relationships create a movement of the eye - easy connections across space, combined with objects that do not allow your intense investment, create a kind of visual jumping around. *For me,*

works are not only referential,
pointing to where they came from,
they tip forward to where they might head next
and diverting attention away from themselves,
they point to each other.

---

12   event – "Physics: A phenomenon or occurrence located at a single point in space-time regarded as the fundamental observational entity in relativity theory." ("event", 2010)
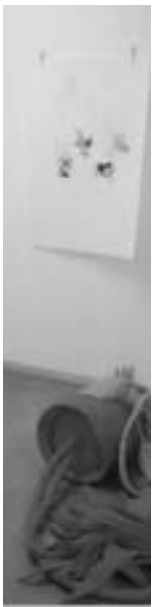
pages 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43. *figure 51:* images of combinations of objects and install trials (2010 – 2011)

I N V E N T O R Y *(running)*

tongue bowl
gold bowl
wiggle top bowl (found)
plants with eyes labels
Concrete bowls:
   grey lumpy out/smooth in
   grey lumpy out/paper in
   terracotta
   green
   blue
moon bowl
concrete tall tube vase
concrete square containers x3
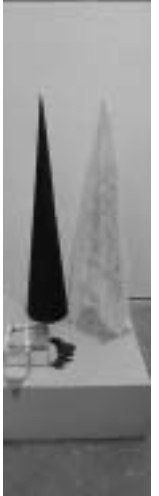
monkey with backpack

candlestick holders

bead swirl

really tall vase

knots of rope

Slotted cactus (wood)

squiggle (wood)

Rough balloon bowl

hanging plant holder maroon

hanging plant holder disc

Clamp + box

glass topped paper

tray

circle

lumpy san pellegrino stand –x3

shiny cereal box

hair + rocks mousemat

dear-like papier mache sculpture

hook with blue rubber dip

paint drip corner

futon-ish slab

long grey tube (pillow)

furry blue nose (pillow)

orange yukka (pillow)

small fluro green plant (pillow)

med mint greent plant (pillow)

carpet mat (found)

straw mat (found

aluminum shelf (found)

vers blanket (found)

beach chair redux

paper cone lamp

black shapes

black hexagon table

black curtain portion

globe light

sawhorse makeshift table

cardboard box and wooden zig
zag

reupholstered swivel chair

furry pom pom blanket chair
addition

floating white planks

tall skinny hinged wall portion

big square of ply platform

yellow lights / yellow cord

table i made with Dad (+ white perspex)

dk blue A

teal tall table – now mint

teal taller frame tapper – now mint

tiled top table

+ tiles

white box punch triangle

Clamp + box

Plinth with notch cut out

Tall table cork

Frames x3 with hanging cardboard manekins (3 each)

copy stool

plank

impaled plinth

blue stool

round stool (found)

wooden gift box

wooden drawer

gold corner line

2 section platform to fit wall

scrap wood clothes rack thing

found white plinths

sawhorses x2 (found)

+cushions 1x wool 1x canvas, strapped on

beam + nail

>

blue bag

leather belt x2

skinny leather belt x2

yellow tote

laptop case wool with leather spot

>

tooth shape anklet

tooth shape necklace

beaded necklace triangle back

beaded spill necklace black

beaded spill necklace silver

beaded spill necklace gold

brass leather anklet

>

Peel jeans

Peel fabric

eye punch and knots print shorts

picnic Kerchiefs

scarf grey lines

Sup er tees x5

underwater drawing sweater

Lava print silk dress

Ice cream face top

Purple wrap skirt

heart tee

smiley leggings

double blue dress (silk and jersey)

red tee dress

navy shirt

marroon trousers

wool hug jacket

silver pants

white + silver pattern pants

orange marle l/s top (later tank)

orange shirt

orange marle singlet

shiny green suit (with lime singlet)

brown merino skirt

blue yellow colour block singlet

navy texture high waisted shorts

white + navy check high waisted shorts

cream merino pom pom hat

Pink jeans

Mustard merino l/s top

Zig ziag skirt

Cream merino top (later tank)

big grey jersey skirt

grey marle merino pencil skirt

grey jersey tank

grey marle jersey tube wrap skirt

red tee

oversized screensaver style dye tee

knee gap sheer merino leggings

sheer merino tee

>
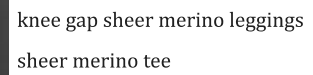
freehand spirograph drawings blown up

black stick wall lines

moveable mickey hands (cut out)

lemmings sub

Tesseract in fries

Cake face slide

Noodle brain

Tropical beaker

TreeHitTree

Popcorn and tissues

2 half glasses

jiminey sisiphus potato success

Compromised Wile E cactus

Pizza droop

3 arm pinnochio real boy

tree eat tree

desktop screenshot shiny box

Doodlebook - book of compiled doodles.

blue bunny in truck

hat and bridge

round spot tree

mist walking away

3 pink jackets

spot chopping board

enormous snow balls

looking in a deep hole at the beach

flick globe

tent local

1-10 painted nails

two chips as one

oreo + banana stack

beam me up

on the streat carpet-like circle

scare crow

two windows two shirts

big lump of cactus

muffin in tee

bottle stack in red

me in yves klein blue

fresh water salt water split

lady and the tramp eating brains
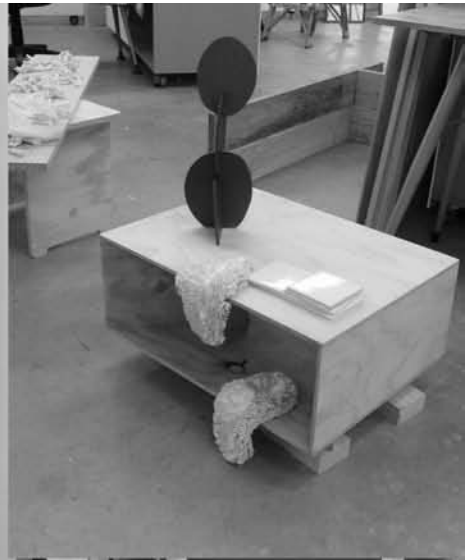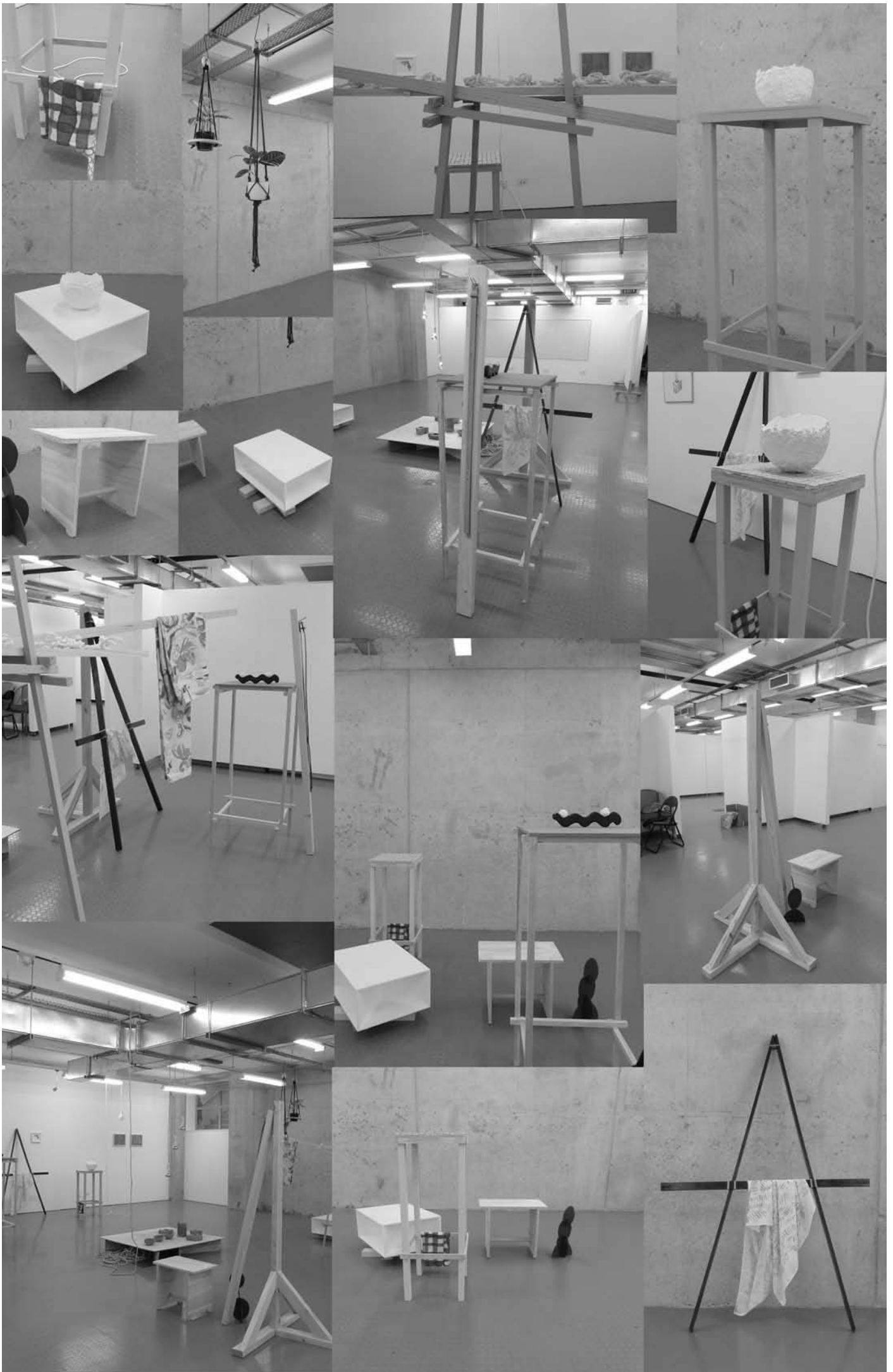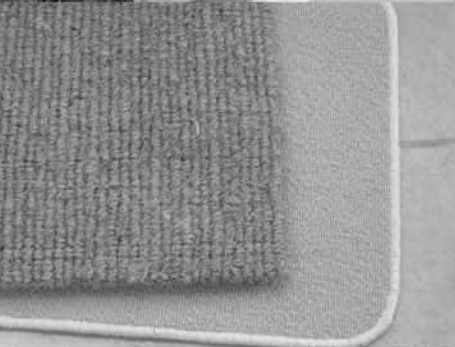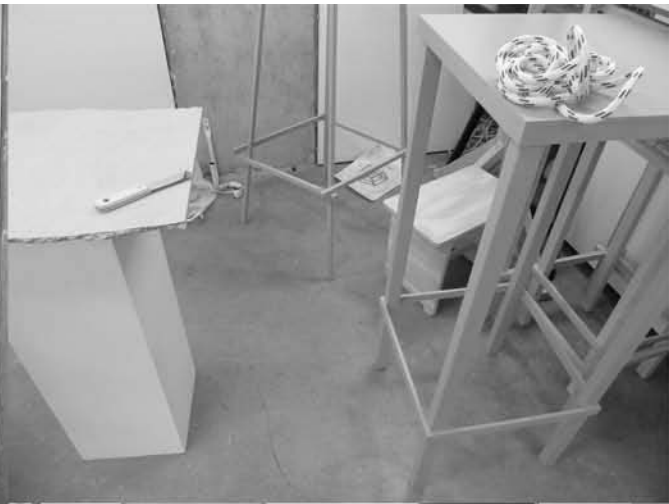
figure 52: Install (September 2011)

Live the problem
thesis examination documentation

figure 53: Live the problem - final installation from front, panorama (November 2011)

figure 54: Final installation panorama (November 2011)

this page and previous page
figures 55 - 59: Final installation overview (November 2011)

image works
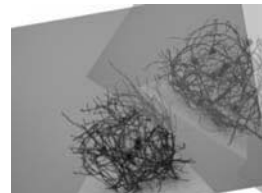
figure 60: tumbleweeds (2011)

figure 61: tesseract in fries (2010)

figure 62: postcard images - #1 -5 cartoons on designer chairs, #6 beaker nikau, #7 popcorn tissues still, #8 noodle, #9 cake face slide (2010, 2011)

figure 63 : 2 1/2 glasses of water (2011)

figure 64: lemmings sub (2010)

figure 65: nice tree (2011)
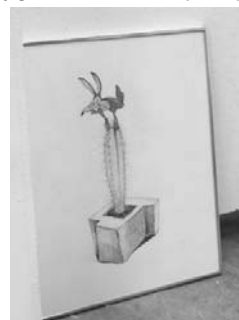
figure 66: compromised Wile E. cactus (2011)

figure 67: pizza slice(2011)

stills from video

figures 68 - 83 : stills from video (2011)

*A*pple Screensaver - Specturm
this is the base of the video

wake up suddenly from screensaver duvet wearing
screensaver tee

heart thump tee

honey drip hand wearing watch strap bracelets

swirl on sponge
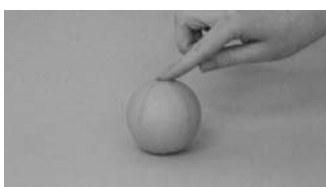
let go orange split

melt swirl candle

popcorn tissues

moving concrete bowls around

lights turn on

rocking bowl

walk past wearing peel pants

move things around

put silk scarf on dk blue A

swing pot plant hangers

draw string tight hood of purple jacket

white wash plinth, video on TV, gold corner
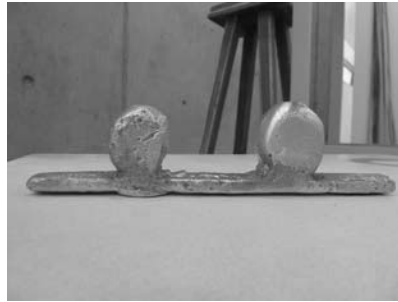
aluminium serious face

aluminium smile

wiggle
grey plinth cut

leaning shelf, talk rietveld syle table, coconut, pole with nets, stack of postcards

dk blue A - wood, spray paint, rubber bands
Silk scarf (dashes)
Silk scarf (dots)
concrete vessel square

hanging dowel with S hooks, disc plant hanger, maroon plant hanger, sup er tees, peel jeans, aluminum serious face, judd-esque box spayed, tall mint table, sanded tall stool, dissembled tall mint structure, bamboo in waiting.

concrete bowls

plants in plastic
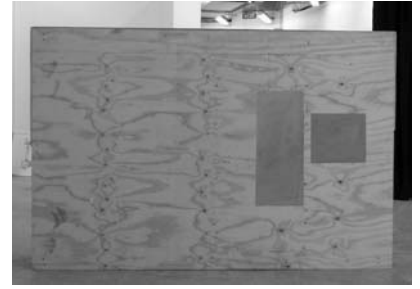
obstruction wood with wood tone
painting patches

3 lumpy san pellegrino bottle mounds
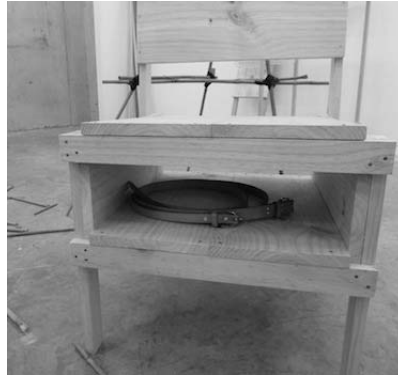
chair of enzo mari design - slight edit
leather belts

vase box stand in ply

slotted cactus - dk green

ply plinth plain squat, blue bag, moon bowl, 3 lumpy san pellegrino bottles,
cyclindrical concrete vessel, 3 framed images

vase surround ply, doodle book

judd-esque stool
paper stacks with glass tops

disc plant hanger (found plant)

maroon knotted hanger (found plant)

leaning shelf with framed image

chair edit (with armrest)

ad-hoc bamboo support

found stool, silk kerchiefs

luxe beach chair edit - wool and canvas
woollen jacket

screen saver t-shirt

screen saver duvet

ply plinth with notch out of it, concrete
bowls

day bed, L shaped curtain, screensaver duvet and tee, screen saver video in background
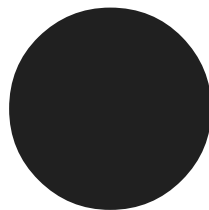
table from enzo mari design, copy stool, found chair with backrest added, found stool with silk kerchiefs, cactus

REFERENCES   REFERENCES   REFERENCES   REFERENCES   REFERENCES   REFERENCES

Alessi, A. (2010, November 15). Cosima von Bonin [Review of the exhibition *Far Niente for Witte de With's Sloth Section, Loop # 01 of the Lazy Susan Series, a Rotating Exhibition 2010 – 2011.* Cosima von Bonin]. *ArtSlant*. Retrieved May 20, 2011, from http://www.artslant.com/ams/articles/show/20007

Baker, N., & Marten, H. (2011). I like my Heroes Marble Chested. *TANK magazine*. Retrieved May 18, 2011, from http://www.tankmagazine.com/magazine/magazine-feature/i-like-my-heroes-marble-chested-1541

Bennett, J. (2010, April 22) "Vibrant Matters: An Interview with Jane Bennett" Interview with philosophyinatimeoferror. *PHILOSOPHY IN A TIME OF ERROR*. Weblog, . Retrieved September 29, 2011, from http://philosophyinatimeoferror.wordpress.com/2010/04/22/vibrant-matters-an-interview-with-jane-bennett/

Chetrit, T. (n.d.). Van Hanos's Harlem Studio. *The Highlights*. Retrieved September 10, 2011, from http://thehighlights.org/wp/van-hanoss-harlem-studio#van-hanoss-harlem-studio

Coomer, M. (2011, February 22). Cosima von Bonin's Far Niente…. *artreview.com*. Retrieved May 20, 2011, from http://www.artreview.com/forum/topics/cosima-von-bonins-far-niente

Dronsfield, J. (2008). Funny Heterogeneous / Gregory Maass & Nayoungim - An essay from the catalogue *It's nice to be nice, try it*. Retrieved October 3, 2011, from http://nayoungim-maass.com/texts/dronsfield-funny-heterogeneous.html

Event. (2010). *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* (4th ed.), Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Retrieved from http://www.yourdictionary.com/event

Gillick, L. (2000). Interview with Catsou Roberts and Lucy Steeds. In A. Coles (Ed.), Design and art. (pp.178-185) London Cambridge, Mass.: Whitechapel ; MIT Press.

Glueck, G. (2006, February 3). Art Review 'Andrea Zittel' - Rethinking the World by Cutting it Down to Size. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/03/arts/design/03andr.html?pagewanted=1&_r=4

Graves, J. (2007, August 8). You're the Inspiration - Andrea Zittel and the Art of Self-Help.*The Stranger.* Retrieved from http://www.thestranger.com/seattle/Content?oid=284732

Groys, B. (2009, January). Politics of Installation. *e-flux*. Journal, . Retrieved September 23, 2011, from http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/31

Heiser, J. (2010, September). Analyze This. *Frieze Magazine Issue 133 (Super-hybridity?).* 94-102.

John, D., & Olsen, M. (2011, May 12). A SLOW CONVERSATION ROLU & YHBHS. *you have been here sometime*. Blog, . Retrieved October 4, 2011, from http://youhavebeenheresometime.blogspot.com/2011/05/slow-conversation-rolu-yhbhs-my-belief_12.html

Kellaway, K. (2010, October 17). Meet the best new artists in Britain | Helen Marten chosen by Richard Wentworth. *The Guardian | The Observer*. Retrieved May 18, 2011, from http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/oct/17/marten-moth-paterson-veno-artists

REFERENCES   REFERENCES   REFERENCES   REFERENCES   REFERENCES   REFERENCES

Keller, S. (2010, November). "Sam Keller on the Importance of Art" Interview with Janine Schmutz. *RES Art World/World Art* Issue 06, 58-66. Retrieved from http://www.resartworld.com/old_issues.htm

Kunsthalle Basel. (n.d.). Exhibitions · Archive · How to Work. *Kusthalle Basel*. Retrieved October 3, 2011, from http://www.kunsthallebasel.ch/exhibitions/archive/105

Lethem, J. (2007, February). The ecstasy of influence: A plagiarism. *Harper's Magazine*. Retrieved October 4, 2011, from http://harpers.org/archive/2007/02/0081387

Mau, B. (2005). Life Style (illustrated, reprint.). Maclear, K., & Testa, B (Eds.). Phaidon.

McDonald, I. (2011, April). YHBHS interview with Ian McDonald. *you have been here sometime*. Blog, . Retrieved October 5, 2011, from http://youhavebeenheresometime.blogspot.com/2011/04/yhbhs-interview-with- ian-mcdonald-i.html

McGuirk, J. (2007, September). Arik Levy has nine fingers. *ICON MAGAZINE ONLINE*. Retrieved October 3, 2011, from http://www.iconeye.com/read-previous-issues/icon-051-%7C-september-2007/arik-levy-has-nine-fingers-%7C-icon-051-%7C-september-2007

Murakami, H. (2002) Kafka on the Shore.

Ngai, S. (2005) The Cuteness of the Avant-Garde. *Critical Inquiry* Issue 31.

Okuda, S. (n.d.). look at WAKA WAKA. *lookatwakawaka*. tumblr, . Retrieved October 4, 2011, from http://lookatwakawaka.tumblr.com/

Obrist, H. U., & Mari, E. (2008). *Enzo Mari: The Conversation Series.* Germany, Walther König.

Steenstra, S. (2007). Warped Flow Gadget / Gregory Maass & Nayoungim - An essay from the catalogue, *Warped Flow Gadget*. Retrieved October 5, 2011, from http://nayoungim-maass.com/texts/steenstra-warped-flow-gadget.html

Troemel, B. (2010, January 13). Jogging : Brad Troemel. blog, . Retrieved September 29, 2011, from http://bradtroemel.com/index.php?/project/jogging/

Wentworth, R. (2001, April). "The Language of Stuff" Interview with Stuart Horodner. *Sculpture Magazine*. Vol. 20 No. 3. Retrieved May 18, 2011, from http://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag01/april01/went/went.shtml

Wills, L. (2010, July 6). Andrea Zittels Investigative Living. [Blog Post]. Retrieved From http://www.improvisedlife.com/2010/07/06/andrea-zittels-investigative-living/

FIGURES LIST   FIGURES LIST   FIGURES LIST   FIGURES LIST   FIGURES LIST

figure 1: Final installation panorama (November 2011)

figures 2 – 5: Final installation overview (November 2011)

figure 6: A-Z West. Retrieved from, https://www.wonderwall.se/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/zittel.jpg

figure 7: Andrea Zittel self portrait in self-made smock. Retrieved from, https://www.wonderwall.se/wp-content/
uploads/2011/09/andrea-zittel-portrait.jpg

figure 8: crop of video still, wearing peel jeans (2011)

figure 9: lumpy bottle (2011)

figure 10: slotted cactus (2011)

figure 11: Nilo: vase designed by Ettore Sottsass. Retrieved from, http://www.yoox.com/item/YOOX/MEMPHIS+MILANO/
dept/design/tskay/2A5DD3A9/rr/1/cod10/580003014Z/sts/sr_design80

figure 12: Gregory Maass & Nayoungim, Sockdrier and Alfred Hitchcock in Guillin (2008) , Retrieved from, *http://
nayoungim-maass.com/worx/gana-art-center-seoul.html*

figure 13: Gregory Maass & Nayoungim, The Best Neighborhood (2010). Retrieved from, http://nayoungim-maass.com/
worx/the-best-neighborhood.html

figure 14: Brad Troemel Canvases #4 (2010). Retrieved from, http://pietmondriaan.com/2010/06/09/brad-troemel/

figure 15: Sup er tee (2010)

figure 16: 2 1/2 glasses of water (2011)

figure 17: Van Hanos's studio in Harlem, New York. Retrieved from, http://thehighlights.org/wp/van-hanoss-harlem-
studio

figures 18 - 23: Helen Marten - clockwise starting top left: La-z-Boy (2010) / untitled installation shot (2010) /
Unreasonable sleep! (2008) / Um you mean we have to be serious now? (2010) / FATSO (2008). Retrieved
from, http://helenmarten.weebly.com/work.html, except *figure 18:* Unreasonable sleep! (2008). Retrieved from,
http://www.cataloguemagazine.com/contemporary-art/magazine/selected-pieces/helen-marten/

figure 24: The Internet. Retrieved from, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet

figure 25: screen shot of my desktop

figure 26: compiled pictures of my notes

figure 27: tray

figure 28: blue shirt

figure 29: blue stool

figure 30: table made with Dad

figure 31: shiny green suit

figure 32: Popcorn / Tissues (2011)

figure 33: Enzo Mari seated on a self-assembly chair from his Autoprogettazione project designed in 1974 (2010).
Retrieved from, http://www.dezeen.com/2010/04/16/sedia-1-chair-by-enzo-mari-for-artek/

figure 34: Kwangho Lee, Electric wire with wooden structure. (2011). Retrieved from, http://www.kwangholee.com/
main.html

figure 35: Gerrit Rietveld, Red and Blue Easy Chair. Retrieved from, http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.
php?object_id=4044

figure 36: Hotel Basico. Retrieved from, http://www.hotelbasico.com/explore.html

FIGURES LIST   FIGURES LIST   FIGURES LIST   FIGURES LIST   FIGURES LIST