

LOOKING FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS

Lucy Meyle and Ziggy Leve✓
BLUE OYSTER PROJECT SPACE
3 MAY - 3 JUNE 2017

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Looking Forward and Backward

One better project space
 and more...

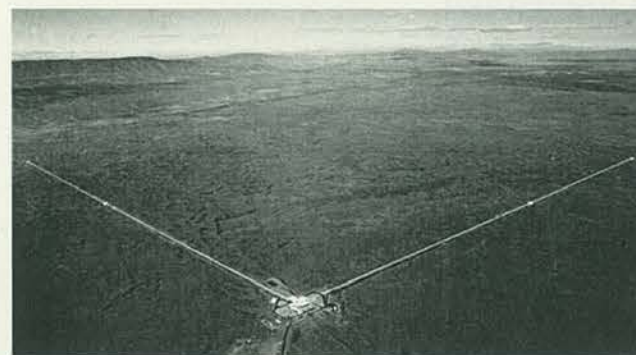
Preface

This text was generated via a series of email exchanges between Lucy Meyle and Ziggy Lever over fifteen days leading up to the exhibition *Looking Forwards and Backwards* at Blue Oyster Project Space in May 2017. Each artist began an email 'chain' simultaneously based loosely on the idea that a writing exchange could produce fruitful points of departure in the making and thinking behind the work. This idea was adopted from an earlier iteration of this project (*Working Together*, 2015) in which a series of letters were written between the artists to pass the time on long train journeys. In writing sitting opposite each other in the train compartments, one of us was always looking forwards and the other was always looking backwards out the window. The writing is by nature fragmentary, and as such should be read for the moments where thought flows, digresses, and fizzles. In a sense this writing documents ideas in practise, looking for words.

the lines of that sculptors generally work from the structure outward, and the imagery comes last, maybe as a sort of coating. But I often start with the imagery and build a structure to support it, to bring a picture more fully into someone's experience." Is this what we are doing with the asters photograph? Starting with an image or a series of images and then building out from those images?

I think we are - building outwards both in the literal sense, but also building the idea (hopefully) outwards into something that includes more than the image of the flowers. Not that just the image of the flowers would be a bad thing, since it is a beautiful image... so much so that I don't really want it in here, it is going to take up the whole room, you know? There is a Chekov bit that goes "art does not have to solve problems, it just has to formulate them properly." The aster photograph does that for me, the problem being something you can roll around in your hand for ages and not get any real answer to. But anyway, the flowers have become a shorthand for us, almost a diagram, of the whole process of this exhibition. It is tentative and gentle, each side of the aster bush reaches towards the other - to me it looks like someone has walked through the bush actually, like forging a path. In my mind also it is near the beach. There is not much in the photo to suggest that, but there is certainly a whole landscape just out of the frame, which comes forward to meet me whenever I look at the photo. So I suppose that is what I'm hoping about the 'building out from' you mentioned, not just an actual construction of something in the gallery - which has to happen no matter what - but this building outwards, onwards, backwards, forwards, which the work might be able to suggest.

- 3 Timelines. There is a general sense that the movement of time is linear and perhaps horizontal. This can be imagined by an arrow of time shot from a place of the past, past the present moment, and forward into the planes of the future. It is easy and perhaps necessary to think of time like this because we have a social responsibility to the continuity of events. Time spans out as an unbroken field marked and measured by the sun, the moon, the rain, and the hours. This is the forward movement of time from birth to death as articulated by our clocks, relative to our position on Earth.

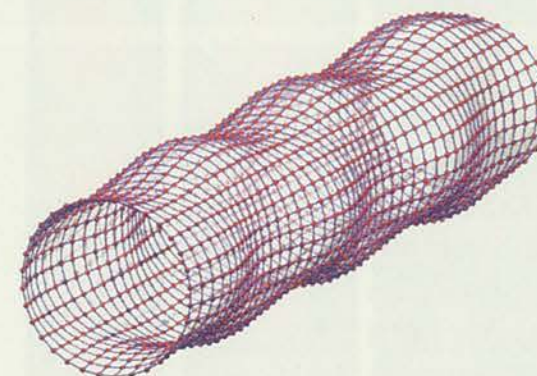


As gravitational waves sweep past Earth, they alternately stretch and compress the arms of Advanced LIGO's twin detectors, located in Hanford, Wash. (pictured), and Livingston, La.

In the interstellar space unbounded by the mass of nearby suns, gravitational waves undulate the very fabric of spacetime. Predicted by Einstein in the 1920's, gravitational waves were discovered on Earth for the first time in February 2016 by the *Advanced Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (Advanced LIGO)*. Two laser beams co-ordinate to shoot down identical mile long tunnels, reflect in a mirror and bounce back to be measured.

Because gravitational waves distort space and time the experiment shifts with the laser, and so two sites are needed to observe the wave without background noise via minuscule changes in the duration of each bounce. The gravitational waves recorded by LIGO are the result of diffraction

between neighbouring black holes, and as they spin around each other gravity push-pulls the black holes at increasing velocity until they eventually merged. On the left is a mesmerising illustration of the way a gravitational wave distorts space and time both vertically and horizontally.



M. Pössel/Einstein Online
Gravitational waves alternately stretch and squeeze space-time both vertically and horizontally as they propagate.
Image source: <https://www.quantamagazine.org/20160211-gravitational-waves-discovered-at-long-last/>

Vertical timespaces. Gravitational waves interfere in a common sense understanding of space and time as linear, although the fact of nonlinear time was always true in experience. Duration is the experience of time, accounting for our propensity to feel

the pressures of time. What does the movement of the sun, the moon, the rain, and the hours feel like? In the present, we feel we can relate to the past through

playing in the video, the kinds of sounds where someone who has never really played is just experimenting with sombre chords. By naming the work *Notes for Milton*, *Turner* the playing inherits a kind of sadness, like a love song for Milton and Turner, or if you know the history, a sadness for two English potters who both claimed to have independently 'invented' the willow pattern depicted on the lip of the cup in the 1760's. My motivations for making the work were subjective and intuitive, and including the history and the dedication in its title was a strategy to introduce that intuitive making at a different angle. A new set of relations and contexts reflected in the mirror.

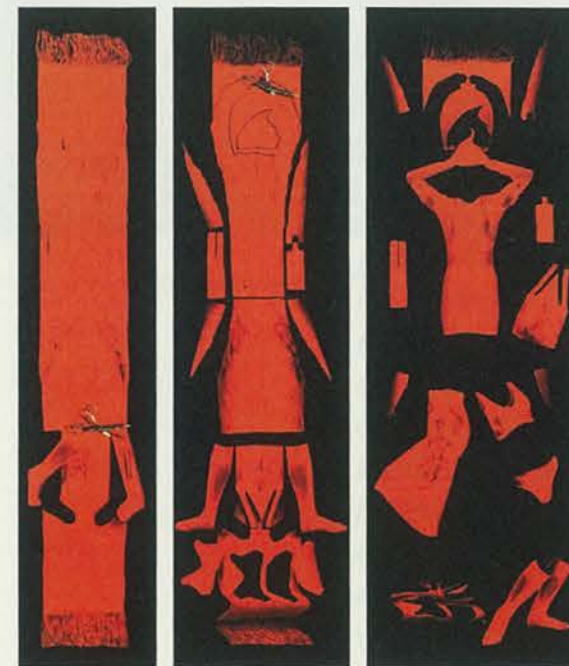
I think that the question Maggie Nelson opens around how to make something 'granular' and open at the same time, something that is 'true' to our experiences but spacious enough to make room for the subjectivities of others is always in the back of my mind. For our work together, the way we talk about developing a practising of working together might seem insular or overly self reflective, but I also think that in our practising we are exploring ways to approach collaboration in general.

Maybe one way to think this is through the idea of strategies and tactics. I heard Larasa Kosloff talk about how she comes up with strategies before making the work, then during the actual making she is working tactically. I think her example of this was in team sports, like football. Before the match, the football coach and the team will train to use different strategies, but in the playing of the game the footballers have to work tactically. They have to be open to opportunities and situations that they have no strategies for. How does this idea of strategies and tactics come to form in practise? How can we unfix hard methodologies around collaborative engagement to an open field of strategic play and tactical potential?

This morning I read an interview between Marina Pinsky and Buck Ellison, two artists I had never heard of. In the first few lines Pinsky mentions a conversation she once had with a sculptor friend, who "said something along

- 4 memory, however memory is made anew with every recall as some aspects are reinforced over others. In the process of remembering the past it is made subjective in the ever present-future. Light traveling from distant stars is similarly distorted by the effects of gravity, yet it still may be that the closest we can get to looking into the past is to look up at the night sky.

Death of the observer. In art theory after Roland Barthes' *Death of the Author* (1968) the authority of the artist over their work, and even the autonomy of the artwork is challenged by the subjectivities of the viewer and everything that is not 'the work'. One way that artists have related to this idea since then is through the creation of expanded installation practices that absorb and appropriate everything around them into the experience of the work. This idea is often relayed as an immersive, or site specific way of working. In science, and especially in quantum mechanics, the observer and the equipment must be considered part of the experiment. This was perhaps the *death of the observer* as made clear by the infamous quantum particle wave experiments of Nils Bohr in which observation seemed to change the data. Another way we might know this is when cooking, from the old maxim: a watched pot never boils. What subjectivities are made in the wake of these deaths?



Issey Miyake, Fujiwara Dai. A-POC Queen Textile. 1997. Issey Miyake, Inc., Tokyo. The Museum of Modern Art. Gift of Miyake Design Studio.

That image reminds me of seamless socks or seamless garments, you know the ones where each warp (or weft?) thread is somehow circular. When I see them I'm like "how??? where does it join???". Being ignorant of weaving techniques and all that probably helps keep the mystery alive for me I guess. Issey Miyake pioneered a technique for that, calling it A-POC, or A Piece of Cloth. It requires no sewing, the garments come off the machines ready to wear with only a few cuts. My interest isn't in the idea of seamless-ness, but of this idea that there is no front, back, or sides to a garment. Cut-and-sew techniques make room for a body by guessing at

I think as artists we sometimes get asked pointed questions like "who is the work for?" which can sometimes be a hidden critique or condemnation of the real and perceived insularity of the art-world. "Who is the work for?" can sometimes be a statement rather than a real question: "I don't understand the work or am unwilling to engage with it as I feel that it's an inside joke." I think if we take the question as is, without its real and perceived subtexts, we can come to a more interesting answer, or a better question. Sometimes dedicating a work to someone or something in a title can be a way to subvert the relationship between artwork and audience. An example of this from my own work is *Notes for Milton, Turner, a twenty minute long looping video of the lip of a willow pattern cup*. You can hear the sounds of a piano

 "How do you construct something that stays true to its autobiographical experience, in this case, but it feels spacious, so other experiences that don't match it exactly aren't getting warning signs that the party is closed? I am really fascinated by it. My partner Harry has a tattoo that says – it's from Eduoard Glissant – on one arm it says, "Our Boats are open"; on the other it says, "and we sail them for everyone." It's something we talk about a lot. How to make something very specific and very granular and very idiosyncratic, that somehow feels like an open boat? It's kind of a great mystery."

other day, about how she felt shy about inviting people to her exhibition opening because she didn't want to be a burden, or make people come to something which was 'about her'. Aside from the fact that our friends and family want to support us, its also like - who is our work about if not about us? I don't mean in terms of content necessarily, but the kind of specificity and commitment that comes from making work about ourselves or our friends or our communities. I was reading an interview with Maggie Nelson, and something she said in it speaks to your comment about moving from the general to the specific:

- the size and shape, but lot of Issey Miyake clothes are able to stretch heaps or also pack down really small, expanding and contracting depending on what type of body is wearing it.

<https://www.wired.com/2004/04/miyake/>

The flexibility of 'making room' in this way seems connected to what you talk about in terms of experiencing time. It can be F A T or thin depending on what is inside of it, pushing it outwards.

There are certain moments in my memory where I have felt time expanding or contracting in some way. I think most people are aware of this through the feeling of boredom, based on the common

representation of time in a classroom during an exam. In this representation of expansion feeling time, the clock's second hand is seen to slow down in the last minute of an hour. Another example of this to more humorous effect could be in *Monty Python and The Holy Grail* (1975) when Lancelot is racing towards a castle after receiving a message from what he thinks is a damsel in distress. In the film, we see two guards looking out, then a shot of Lancelot as he sprints towards them in the distance, then the two guards, then the very same shot of Lancelot and so on. Eventually the sequence cuts to Lancelot entering the frame with the surprised guards - we never see the middle of the scene in which he would be getting there. What makes this funny is that the guards act just as surprised as the viewer feels when Lancelot finally reaches them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJoM7V54T-c> 00:34 - 01:21

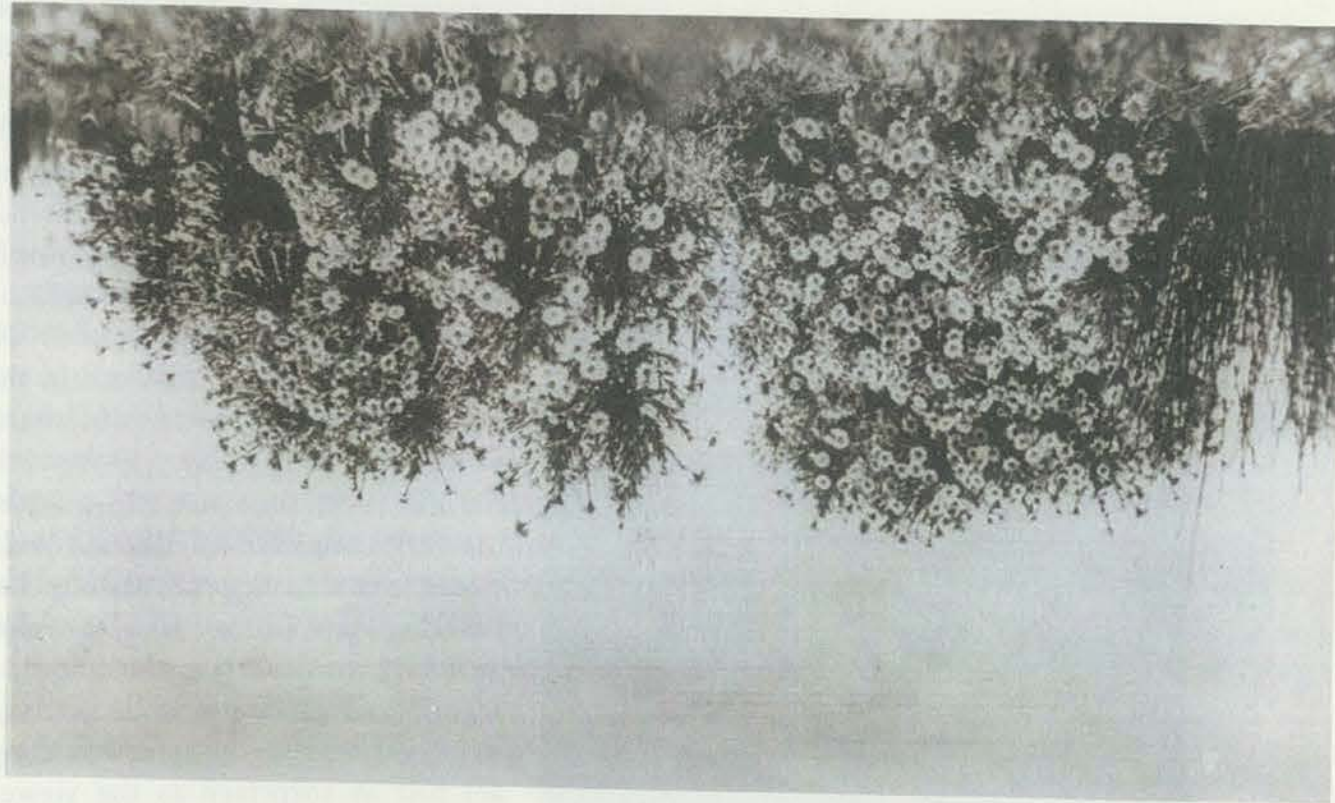


Monty Python and the Holy Grail, 1975. Directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones.

I think time contracts in times of shock or stress. This is when you often hear people saying that they cannot keep up with time. I often feel this way. I think what you are getting at by 'making room' in your description of the expandable garment is actually about making the fabric of spacetime. To me its fitting that spacetime is referred to as a fabric more than any other structure because of the way fabrics are used and reused into different forms like curtains or clothing or upholstery. Perhaps the field of fabric that we are testing on the floor as a nod to spacetime

Sometimes that feels funny, looking at it from the outside I'm like - are we being self indulgent? Making a project where we talk a lot about collaboration and working together? Which I suppose is a question everyone should be asking about their work, maybe more often than we all do. Ngahua was saying that the

Asters, Chatham Islands. Image courtesy of Hocken Collections, University of Otago, New Zealand.



8 That Hocken image of the asters has become a real guide post for me now. A plain flower, too, in the same family as daisies? They look a lot like the ones my mum used to have growing down the side of our house, and I think she pulled them up and planted something else instead a long time ago, but I can see the stalky flowers with long petals and the shape of the leaves very clearly. I very much feel like there is a lot of the 'us' in this project and the writing, obviously, along with a lot of 'you' and a lot of 'me'.

- 6 and cosmology is a way to re-make or re-shape or return to an embodied experience of temporality in the exhibition format.

I love that bit in Monty Python! It is funny but also weirdly accurate. That something we recognise as being 'dishonest' (a.k.a, constructed) is closer to some sort of truth. I wanted to put so many scare quotes in that last sentence, but do you know what I mean? Like the saying 'its funny because its true', I often think is around the wrong way. Something that is proper

funny is often relatively far from the truth. It is that distance, that difference, which can reflect something back onto the point. Even moving along from funny, the space of the exhibition does a lot to make things just 'dishonest' enough that we can have a moment of insight or something. You're right, thinking about space-time as fabric is such a normal way to think about it, it is an apt metaphor. But now the metaphor has reached this point of non-strangeness, it fails to add anything new to the conversation, right? Space as a field, space as a donut, the more familiar I am with those figurations the less moved I am by them. Maybe because I am always reading them or seeing them flat, rather

than moving around them. I like that idea of some new 'truth' (scare quotes again) lurking within something strange or funny, something silly, like Monty Python.

Perhaps the idea that spacetime is no longer strange has something to do with the way that it is diagrammed. I think time is much harder to visualise, especially if we are to accept current ideas around non-linearity, or anamnesis (the past present future due to return), or the immediation of affect. Representing the flow of spatio-temporalities in the 3rd Dimension as a field is perhaps related to a particular relationship us humans have with the horizon. Looking at the horizon from the top of a mountain or looking out at sea I sometimes get the feeling my position in the world makes sense in its spatial context. From here, I can see to the edge of all that I can see, and anything beyond that sits outside



A french cruller donut. <http://sweets.seriousseats.com/2012/02/doughnut-style-guide-definition--cake-yeast-old-fashioned-cruller.html>

too tied up in Felix Guattari's philosophy and the ocean of new materialisms in general for this discussion! I think in working together throughout this project we have been developing ways to work together that have stemmed from a kind of responsibility to each other as artists and people, but that also have ramifications in the world as well. Through collaborative methods I think that we have the opportunity to re-negotiate autonomy, not just the autonomy of the artist in a work, but the autonomy of ideas. This is not to say that we should be or act like one entity, that would be an unattainable utopia and maybe a bit boring too! I think a sense of individuality, or going away by ourselves and coming back together is important to the way we have been making so far. Maybe moving between micro and macro states, which you described to me as contracting and expanding, and which we have talked about many times, can be a model for how we might work together. So maybe there are times when our individuality softens and we are both together, and then later we are autonomous bodies again. Like falling in and out of sync, feeling very close and then very distant, being present to something specific then drifting it out into the general.

Perhaps this is why we are so drawn to that image that we found in the Hocken collection of the two aster plants sitting side-by-side. Parts of the bushes are out of focus, and the silver gelatine has a dream like quality. Today I read that our dreams are full experiences that activate the same parts of brain as in our waking life.[1] Looking at the image again, I see that the flowers are blooming towards the space in between the two bushes, which is also the centre of the photograph. Is this space between the two asters where we are, that we must move towards, that 'looks to us like nothing'?

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/apr/10/scientists-identity-parts-of-brain-involved-in-dreaming>

7 of relation to me and my body. The horizon marks the space between the *possibility* of what I can do, how I can act, and the *potential* of things to come. A donut shaped universe also makes sense to us in this way because we can think it in our hands like any other object. I think the less strange these representations of abstract ideas are, the easier it is for me to embody them. We need new questions to keep things strange,

or we need to look closely at old ones. Sean Connery says in *Highlander* (1986), "Why does the sun come up? Are stars just holes in the curtain of night? Who knows?". Are stars just holes in the curtain of night? The fabric of the night sky perhaps started as a pretty simple way (but nonetheless moving) way to explain stars. Darkness was a threadbare curtain, and behind the curtain was the light of day. Maybe space is an ocean. After-all it is the new hostile and unknown. In science fiction language we have ships, waves,

drowning, and even naval law in space. But space is not really like any ocean here on Earth. We need a new framework. Maybe this framework will come through humour as a tool to re-distribute some of the standard models. Maybe what you were referring to as the 'dishonesty' of jokes is about apprehending absurd aspects of real and imagined experiences of society and the world.

It is that blend of the absurd amongst the real experiences which is the thing which sets the metronome to a different beat isn't it? Because you're right, it's about apprehending the absurd in the real or imagined - not just labelling the whole thing completely absurd, because with that you can sort of ignore it. In her book *Nonsense* (1980), Susan Stewart says: "all discourse bears reference to a commonly held world. The discourse of common sense refers to the 'real world'. The discourse of nonsense refers to 'nothing'. In other words, it refers to itself, even though it must manufacture this 'nothing' out of a system of differences from the everyday world-the common stuff of social life-in order to be recognised as 'nothing'". This idea of categorising something as nonsense, as the design collective Metahaven note in their book *Can Jokes Bring Down Governments?* (2015), is something which happens all the time.



Homer stepping into the 3rd Dimension, *Treehouse of Horror VI*, The Simpsons, October 1995

and rehearse them to us as part of positioning yourself – bring everything else, your passions, your interest procedures, and connect into a situation from that angle. Don't perform yourself – co-catalyse a collective event with us."

[1] Brian Massumi 2016, "Affective attunement in the field of catastrophe" in *Politics of Affect*, 115
[2] Brian Massumi 2016, "Immediation" in *Politics of Affect*, 171

I still don't know what ethico-aesthetic means! I have trouble with doubled-barrelled words. Ok I just googled it, are we talking about how we are making and remaking what is in the world and of the world? And that with that, there must come some sort of ethics? We're swimming in the new-materialist ocean here, right? I love this quote from Alice Fulton that Karen Barad uses, it has stuck in my mind more than anything else, and I've quoted it to you before:

"Nothing will unfold for us unless we move toward what looks to us like nothing: faith is cascade."

Did I just 'rehearse' myself to you, as your last quote might suggest? I'm having trouble with that one. I want there to be enough room in our collaboration for 'rehearsal', certainly. I'm not always someone who does *now*, I like to have time to myself to think things over and then return. Equally, talking with you and sharing thoughts, processes, and tools in the moment is important too. There is an idea that because the relationship in collaboration is so important (and it is), that there is no room for each of us, separately. I don't know how feel about that.

I think I have been using the term ethico-aesthetic because it implies an ethics in the making as you say, but maybe that term is



"Now! ... That should clear up a few things around here!"



Elephant drawing from the First Bible of Charles the Bald, 846AD

8 They use an example within politics - "Isn't it exactly the day job of most politicians to manage reality and sense-making, deciding what other get to see as nonsense and what is legitimate?" Points of reference which have one foot in sense and nonsense I think are the most powerful, which is what jokes do incredibly well. Because could there be such a thing as an abstract joke? Is a line drawing funny on its own? There has to be something added - the line becomes a drunken worm, it becomes the trail of a snail working its way up a path. It is like that drawing of the elephant I showed you from the First Bible of Charles the Bald (great name). It is one of the first known drawings of an elephant, and it is obviously done by someone who only had the elephant described to them in vague terms - its got... this bendy nose, some horns but down near its mouth, short tail, large ears. Whoever drew it got those aspects onto the page but the sizing and arrangement is totally wrong in comparison to a real elephant. Is it where the identifiable and the unidentifiable get knotted together that there is this redistribution of understanding about what it is that we do and don't know?

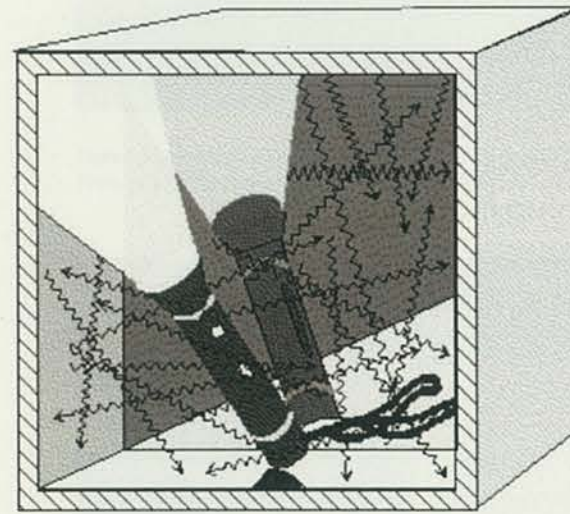
The way that space and time and the universe is represented as a net could be another example of this technique of drawing like in Charles the Bald's elephant. Just like Charles, we have never actually seen the elephant, and because we are unable to observe it from some outside place we are modelling it on speculations and theories based on a micro-feedbacking and assumptions, like watching the stars and coming to the idea that the universe is expanding in every direction. The feedback from observations allow theories to divide up the universe into knowable facts, leading us to believe in its structure as a disc or a donut. I was thinking about the distribution of meaning and Ranciere's idea of *The Distribution of the Sensible* when I stumbled across this Gary Larson cartoon:

5 works about collaborating together? We have different colloquialisms which come from our different skills or educational background... some of what you say is totally Greek to me sometimes, it definitely upsets the rhythm.

 It is true that we both come from different backgrounds of making, but I don't think that the differences in our individual practices upsets the overall rhythm of collaboration or co-creation. The points of departure between our ways of working and being together can certainly present challenges in the ways that we communicate ideas to each other, but perhaps it is in misunderstanding that the door to ethico-aesthetic responsibilities can be enacted. I have recently been reading Brian Massumi's *Politics of Affect*, and one thing that they keep coming back to is the idea that in any given situation we (humans) are not just our individual perceptions of ourselves, but implicated/implicating bodies in and of co-creation with the world and others. This field of co-creation exists between you and I and the couch, this pen, that feeling of sadness hanging in the air. Massumi calls this *differential attunement*: "We are all in on the event together, but we're in it together differently." [1] I think that the idea of differential attunement has helped me think through the ethico-aesthetic relationship that we talked about earlier in relation to language and poetics. For Massumi 'the event' is a way to frame this dynamic, it could refer to our exhibition, or to the way we eat together, even a thought is an event for Massumi. The events that we are in attunement to are more like fields of potentiality - even if we could understand and control all factors of the event before it happened, we still wouldn't really know what it will be because it hasn't happened yet - there will always be forces outside of our control. Perhaps our responsibility to co-creating events is to re-understanding poetry - not to design with any proforma or ready-made languages. This is what I mean when I said that poetry is language actually making the world. There is an ethico-aesthetic poetry in the way we engage with events:

- 9 Discourse practises are useful insofar as they help distribute ideas and methods of thinking the world into parts. When the metronome of discourse misses a beat, to use your phrase, time and meaning is re-distributed on a new future axis. I think this is what humour can do. You asked me if there could be such a thing as an abstract joke. Maybe the joke always abstracts an aspect of the unfunny world through its re-distribution of the discourse. I have been thinking about an idea in *Why Bother?* by Angela Keefer that 'abstraction is the foundation of politics'. Maybe the net-like models that propose a shape for time and for space and even for the universe are net-like because nets are a distribution of contiguous squares. What happens at the borders? The image below was taken

from a study about laser physics exactly what the study was about I can no longer remember. Like Charles the Bald, I have not got enough information to come to a solid representation of meaning with whats going on in the study, I can only go from the image. There seems to be a box of some kind with a flashlight inside. The inside backing of the box is mirrored, and the light is reflected in it. Wiggly lines with arrows bounce around the inside of the box in all manner of directions. How is the light supported in the box? It seems to just float in space.



I don't know how to think the ideas here in this image but I can imagine making the diagram as an object and how I might do it. I am often excited by the potential in these incredibly specific and abstract scientific diagrams. What happens when they are re-imagined in different contexts? Is abstraction re-thinking and re-feeling what images can do?

Those diagrams are very specific, directed attempts at modelling or explaining something, but once you take away the caption or explanation we're left with this abstraction. Or maybe not quite abstraction? It is close but also not, I can see there is something there. It is like looking at a pixellated photo, there is information there, there is representation there, but *what is it? where is it?* I like what you said about abstraction as re-thinking or re-feeling. Moving in the bit between abstraction and hints of non-

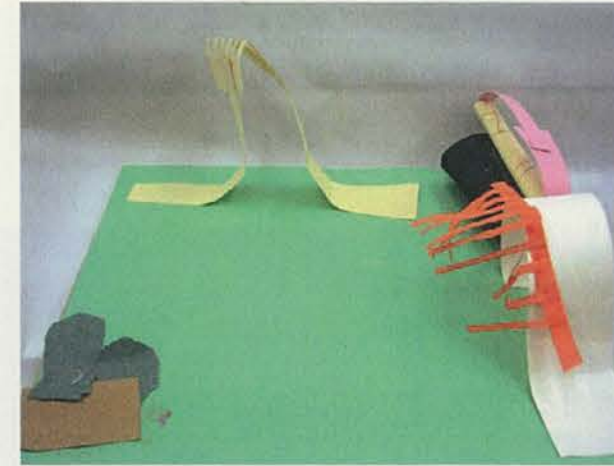
Definitely! It is interesting to work within a certain vernacular of art making, a certain context I guess, and not fall into the traps of it. Like we were talking about having blankets on the ground in this show and you were like: "if we have things on it, then it will look like 'installation art', in a bad way". Tropes, tropes, (written) poetry, as much as art, falls into that trap - like a certain spacing (or, rhythm) that once was a radical departure from whatever else was happening around it, now is the format for all others. As someone who didn't go through undergraduate art school, it's been weird to learn these forms and formats about installation and sculpture but not be too beholden to them either. So in that sense I feel OK about using certain ready-made parts of installation language, but I also don't know enough, or rather, have an entirely different set of reference points for things which come from design. Is that an obvious part of what

The idea of poetry as language developing and thought is totally mind-blowing in its implications! To me this suggests an ethico-aesthetic responsibility in the way we engage with language as *language actually makes the world*. This means that we must think carefully the colloquial use of language (ready-made languages) and restructure them to every new context. Say the installation format is a ready-made language, or ready-made way of language-ing the experience of art, how are we to change its pre-accepted pre-existing rhythms on the micro scale?

and poetic thinking on a single plane. According to Alfred North Whitehead and Isabelle Stengers, speculative philosophy demands experimentation with language; every use of words that takes them to be ready-made for use must fail. Speculative poetics thus investigates literature as the laboratory of language. Non-arbitrary language evolves recursively, that is, in ever referral back to itself, language develops the world further."

- 10 abstraction is so exciting to me. That is what is so delightful about children's drawings or artwork, its all blobs to me but NO it is jellyfish having a meeting or something.

There is a website which is just primary schools in the US posting these 'studio' photos of their class'



Dream Playgrounds from the 2nd graders at Blue Grass Elementary, Iowa, <https://www.artsonia.com/museum/gallery.asp?exhibit=113228>



Maquette of Alvar Aalto's Villa Schmidt, by Lucie Bila, <http://atlasof-interiors.polimi-cooperation.org/2014/03/20/alvar-aalto-villa-schmidt-helsinki1968/>

artworks. One of my favourite series are these coloured paper models of 'dream playgrounds'. All of them are anchored by flat fields of green or gray or blue, then shapes of purple and pink loop up from the ground to make... slides? Some forms are obvious but there are a couple which are completely foreign landscapes - yellow mountains hold red paper fringing next to pink pools. In the realm of models, there is also a website where people upload their scale models of famous architecture. The models which I like best are where the author has taken photos like they are a tiny person walking through the house. Sometimes there is a strong sense of light or time of day. I know these are maquettes but they feel very real because of this shift between distance and point of view.

In trying to describe something through these models - the playground or the architectural maquettes there is this - what you

said - this redistribution/rethinking/re-feeling of the thing itself. I doesn't even have to be completely abstracted, its more about that shift which happens between viewpoint to viewpoint, in the translation.

I love the idea of a dream playground! There is a definite sense of space and scale in that image, I am enjoying putting myself into it. Perhaps we could think about the table in the back space In the same way that the children imagined a dream playground. So far we have been talking about turning the back space of the gallery into a kind of reading room with objects, and making objects based on some ideas

3 I was just reading through a text and this jumped out at me:

"The idea of poetry is that it might be somehow unhinged from the parameters of everyday speech. Or equally, that something colloquial is provided with new rhythms."

(Helen Marten, 2012, A Cat Called Lettuce: A conversation between Helen Marten, Beatrix Ruf, and Polly Staple.)

Talking about poetry makes me feel gross, it is sometimes a catch-all word for 'beautiful' or 'strange' or some kind of combination of the two. But this is a definition I can get behind.

'something colloquial provided with new rhythms' is such a simple way of describing poetry, it appeals to me because it seems so gentle and open. I was thinking that it meant 'something out of its context', and of course that might hold true, but now I'm thinking it is also something else - some kind of molecular change that poetry enacts, enabling things/ words/images/sounds to be bound to whole other categories of things so easily and so quickly.

I too have often felt the cringe of 'poetry' - especially faux beat poetry that is a hang on from the sixties. Having said that I think that my work is primarily concerned with a kind of poetic association between stories and things. Working from your definition of poetry as providing new rhythms, I think that an exhibition has the potential to engage with 'colloquial' languages of looking and making in a way that forges new paths between them. Perhaps in this definition poetry is the thinking rhythm of the world.

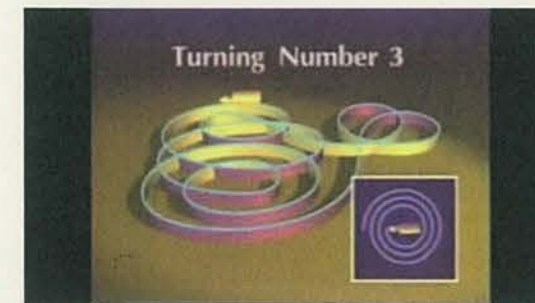
Here is a passage I recently stumbled across on the website *Speculative Poetics*:
(<http://www.spekulative-poetik.de/programmatik-der-reihe/english.html>)

"Language, literature, and thought are part of the world. Thinking literature thus consists in situating natural language, literary artifacts,

- 11 around a diagrammatic representation/abstraction of the ideas in this text, so in a way thinking about the table as a model is no big stretch. I was watching a youtube video about topology yesterday. In the video a topologist had designed these clip-together models of *klein bottles* that he was using in teaching situations. At one point he said that he realised he could make endless new shapes by clipping multiple models together, and so he had all these variations made. There was a point in the video, when he was getting excited playing with the models, that I thought about the objects we have been testing as

having this duel potential to be serious and funny at the same time. I also thought about this text as a kind of clippable material that we are playing with, each email is like a segment attached to the last but still able to be detached in some way. Here is a topology video from 1994 titled *How to Turn a Sphere Inside Out*.

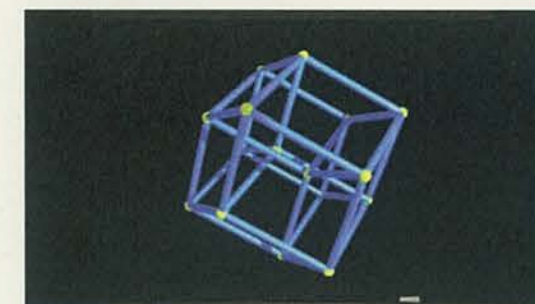
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKqt6e7EcCs>



The proposition of the title, and the forced banter between the two presenters is kind of mesmerising,

but the reason I am sharing it with you is for the way the video sets up the rules of the game before turning the sphere inside out. These rules seem kind of arbitrary, but when followed they lead to an amazing end! There is a similarity in tone and perhaps vintage with this other video about the Ludwig Schläfli and the 4th Dimension:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rG6aIVGquOg>



In the video the narrator (who sounds like a teenager from East London) takes on the character of Schläfli, and to a slightly disconcerting piano track states that to see 4D shapes 'what is important is to prepare yourself to forget about the world which is familiar to us, and to imagine a new world, that our eyes and our senses have no direct access to.' The video then goes on to show a series of shapes of increasing complexity and a cello ramps up the intensity.

Preface

This text was written as part of a parallel email exchange during April of 2017. Ziggy started an email chain (beginning on the other side of this publication), as did I (starting on the next page). In responding to each other, each text has developed its own set of concerns. These texts are conversational, and so reflect what a conversation can mean: lines of inquiry are discarded, there is miscommunication, there is a need for further explanation of ideas not fully formed. Conversation is a low-stakes game where enthusiasm and excitement flow: drawing ideas, jokes, and thoughts together onto the same field. Preferring flexibility, we decided that points don't need to be solidified or referenced when you're just talking. Even amongst this looseness, a conversation does require commitment. It requires a commitment to response and an openness to that response. These texts sent between Ziggy and myself are not only a writing to but a writing *with*.

2nd - 3rd - 5th
1st - 2nd - 3rd
4th - 5th - 6th

1st - 2nd - 3rd

Looking forwards and backwards

Lucy Moyle and Ziggy Leve
Blue Oyster project space
3 May - 3 June 2017