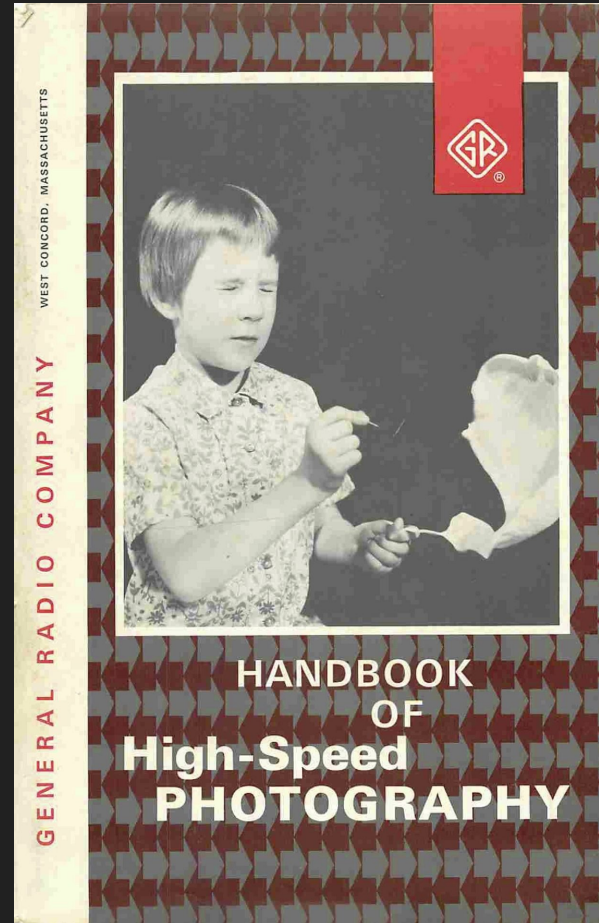


Touching Shadows

WORKSHOP INTENSIVE

Sensory Evidence &
Material Witnessing

October 30-November 3



Finding a Subset of The Known Universe to Work On / Work With / Learn From / Learn With

Where do we begin?

What documents / objects / artefacts / media might we gather?

What documents / objects / artefacts / media can we create?

How does an environment, a relation a thing, pay witness?

How might we sense the computational, the algorithmic?

How could we sample a (collective) imaginary?

How do we allow a thing to speak of itself?

How might we sense the institutional?

Finding a Subset of the Our Personal Universes to Work On / Work With / Learn From / Learn With

How do speak well of individuals and collectives?

How to establish commoning / commonality?

How do we compose a common world?

How do we live together?

How do we work together?

What should we work on, together?



How might we help you?



Critique or Composition?

- What does it mean to be “critical”?
 - Has “critique run out of steam”? “A bout de souffle”
 - How do we find a perspective from which you can be critical at all?
-
- Composing, recomposing and imagining (multiple) truths that are “different” or “better” or “something” other than those already “instituted”

Objectification vs. Personalisation

- To see how one's self is touched by these issues?
 - How much we sensitise ourselves to these issues?
 - What material, sensible or tangible traces can be derived?
-
- How can we personalise, sensitise and render tangible in a common way — together?

Personalisation vs. Common Interest

- Who and what can be allies?
 - How do we connect with and rely to them?
 - How to find a common “language”?
 - What is our communality rooted in / based on?
-
- How to find a common voice?
 - How do we represent and act as a “body”?
 - How do we preserve our personal concerns within a common concern? Do we have to at all?

Anti-Methods & Extra-Disciplinarity

“Thus science is much closer to myth than a scientific philosophy is prepared to admit. It is one of the many forms of thought that have been developed by man, and not necessarily the best. It is conspicuous, noisy, and impudent, but it is inherently superior only for those who have already decided in favour of a certain ideology, or who have accepted it without having ever examined its advantages and its limits. And as the accepting and rejecting of ideologies should be left to the individual it follows that the separation of state and church must be supplemented by the separation of state and science, that most recent, most aggressive, and most dogmatic religious institution. Such a separation may be our only chance to achieve a humanity we are capable of, but have never fully realised.”

— Paul Feyerabend (1975) ₉

Anti-Methods & Extra-Disciplinarity

“The extradisciplinary ambition is to carry out rigorous investigations on terrains as far away from art as finance, biotech, geography, urbanism, psychiatry, the electromagnetic spectrum, etc., to bring forth on those terrains the ‘free play of the faculties’ and the intersubjective experimentation that are characteristic of modern art, but also to try to identify, inside those same domains, the spectacular or instrumental uses so often made of the subversive liberty of aesthetic play”

— Brian Holmes

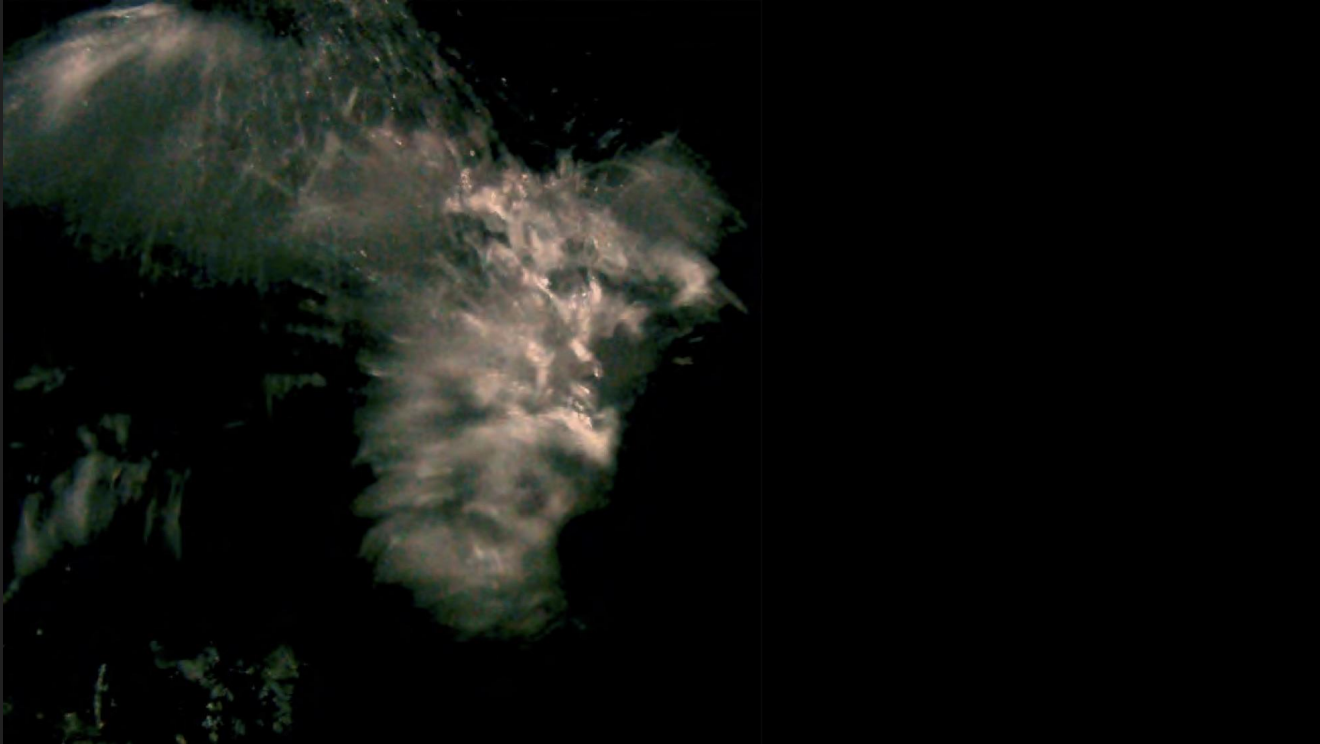
Extradisciplinary Investigations. Towards a New Critique of Institutions (2007)

Anti-Methods & Extra-Disciplinarity

“During more than eight centuries, ‘university’ has been the name given by a society to a sort of supplementary body that at one and the same time it wanted to project outside itself and to keep jealously to itself, to emancipate and to control... with the relative autonomy of a technical apparatus, indeed that of a machine and a prosthetic body, this artifact that is the university has reflected society only in giving it the chance for reflection, that is dissociation.

— Derrida (1983)

Sensory Evidence & Material Witnessing



The choices of the documentary makers deliver the honesty of small human vision anchored to an organ, but widened and made resilient with technology. These artists take their instruments into the outskirts of Leviathan's cadaver, towards darkness the human eye cannot survive, as if it could be measured, as if it could be seen. Revisiting the corpus, daemons and phantoms appear, inscribed into the image like narratives of the always already lost: visuality is what it is not.

Ways of Approaching the World of which We Are a Part

“Luminous opacity, diasporic intimacy, asymmetrical reciprocity, impolite tactfulness, homoerotic heterogeneity...”

“This luminous space where ‘men and women come out of their origins and reflect each other’s sparks’ is the space of humanness and friendship that sheds lights on the world of appearances we inhabit. In other words, friendship is not about having everything illuminated or obscured, but about conspiring and playing with shadows.”

“Such storytelling works like a *fermenta cognitionis* (literally, “yeast of knowledge”), producing and rescuing insight and intimations that, in Arendt’s description, are not “intended to communicate conclusions, but to stimulate others to independent thought, and this for no other purpose than to bring about a discourse between thinkers.”

“Tact, in other words, is connected to the art of measuring that which cannot be measured”

“...a particular form of worldliness... a ‘vigilant partiality’ that tests the boundaries between personal affect and worldly concern”

“The arts of existence of the broadest, non-disciplinary sort.”

“Oh.” (realisation, understatement, ambiguity, acknowledgement) and “Ach!” (wonder, astonishment, seized,)

(Boym / Arendt / McCarthy)

Ways of Approaching the World of which We Are a Part

“I also try and make work that speaks in the same way, that works by articulating a complexity of material, explicitly in both form and content. Perhaps this is a way of doing things that creates close ties and connections between things, people, and myself, and that is something that more often than not has the feel of a friendship of sorts.”

“Friendship is, at its most relevant in relation to a labour process: as a way of working together... friendship as a form of solidarity: friends in action.”

Realms of attention: “action (what [Arendt] calls *vita activa*, active life), but in her terms separates it from labour (the production of humanity’s own survival) and work (the construction of the material world).

“Why should affect not be part of how to die?... What kind of freedom does the exclusion of desire presuppose?”

(Condorelli)

Ways of Approaching the World of which We Are a Part

“The distinction between the generation and dissipation of forms, or between the complication and explication of thoughts, is always ambiguous, the double face of a process without any fixed model.”

“Overcoming the hylomorphic definition of creation, the conceptualisation of a material unfolding also challenges the dichotomy between *concrete* production and *abstract* thinking, suggesting that thought (as the generative matrix fo creation) is not conceived *by*, but is *in* and *of* the autonomous materiality of the body, a body that thinks not only by words or concepts, but also by images, gestures or numerical figures.”

“Thought can only be generated in the *sensing body in movement*, a body that is creating and being created elastically, folding and being folded by its environment”

“The nature of thought (and therefore of philosophical creation) as necessarily linked to a sort of collaboration ‘at a distance’”

“While a body is consciously moving, it is also always imperceptibly, rhythmically thinking.”

(Portanova)

Ways of Approaching the World of which We Are a Part

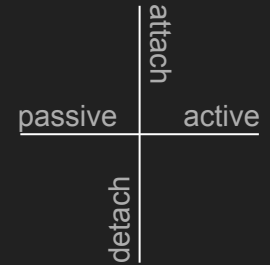
“The attachment is what gets experienced. The experience requires a body. It is fortunate that bodies, having returned to the forefront of the social sciences, are in vogue... [it] is the body that we cannot escape, but that at the same time is a support and a medium that reacts... The body is decidedly made of exactly the same material as the attachments that weigh on it.”

“The actor, returned to the saddle once his excessive qualities were removed.” (Interesting conception of what ANT & STS are trying to do!) “... A new programme in which the essential was not to liberate oneself but to sort the good attachments from the bad, by leaning not on grand overarching principles, but ‘the justice immanent to things.’” (Interesting way of conceiving of our methods development this week)

“Attachments are heavy and circular. They play outside of the linguistic dualism between active and the passive and between subject and object, which is best expressed by words such as pleasure or passion.”

“Humans do not seek to untie themselves from their connections. They seek to live through them— or to die by them... both amateurs and carers develop an art of making their objects of care exist more — be they things or beings.” (like this idea of something existing *more*)

(Hennion)



Ways of Approaching the World of which We Are a Part

“How can you have a systematic means for getting to what you do not know? For example, what you do not know might be so profoundly unsystematic that systematically getting to it is logically impossible. Or it may be that your systematic way is not suited to the most important object that you do not know but ought to be thinking about. So there remains a paradox deep inside the idea of research, and this paradox might explain why it is such a hot-house activity.”

“The world in which we live is characterised by a growing gap between **the globalisation of knowledge and the knowledge of globalisation**.... At the same time, even for modest jobs, businesses or careers of any kind, young people are faced with questions that transcend their own local experiences and are permeated by global forces and factors: call centers, specialised production techniques, new methods of borrowing and investing money, and new technologies for organising information and expressing opinion, all make it hard for people with strictly local knowledge to improve their circumstances. In a word, while knowledge of the world is increasingly important for everybody (from tourist guides to pharmaceutical researchers), the opportunities for gaining such knowledge are shrinking.”

(Appadurai)

Ways of Approaching the World of which We Are a Part

“We also need to enlist affectivity, memory and the imagination to the crucial task of inventing new figurations and new ways of representing the complex subjects we have become. Science itself is socially inscribed and ecologically integrated not along the nationalistic axis but in a nomadic web of posthuman earth-wide connections.”

“I welcome the multiple horizons that have opened up since the historical downfall of androcentric and Eurocentric Humanism. I see the posthuman turn as an amazing opportunity to decide together what and who we are capable of becoming, and a unique opportunity for humanity to re- invent itself affirmatively, through creativity and empowering ethical relations, and not only negatively, through vulnerability and fear. It is a chance to identify opportunities for resistance and empowerment on a planetary scale.”

“We now need to learn to think differently about ourselves and to experiment with new fundamental schemes of thought about what counts as the new basic unit of common reference for the human.... we need new frameworks for the identification of common points of reference and values in order to come to terms with the staggering transformations we are witnessing... Concrete, actualized praxis is the best way to deal with the virtual possibilities that are opening up under our very eyes, as a result of our collectively sustained social and scientific advances.”

(Braidotti)

Ways of Approaching the World of which We Are a Part

“The cosmic machinery of representation”

“I am reminded of how a small child plays for hours arranging and rearranging blocks and marbles, toy animals and postage stamps. Then the life in the collection crackles. Then we sense what Walter Benjamin meant when he said that a true collection amounts to a *magic encyclopedia*. What he meant was that because it is the offspring of both design and chance, a collection can function like a fortuneteller’s wheel.”

“The entire procedure is dishonest because fieldwork is essentially based on personal experience and on storytelling and not on the model of laboratory protocols. With the repression of subjectivity goes the repression of chance effects too. Written in the third person and passive tone, “This project is aimed at...”, everything is nailed down, and there will be few surprises up-setting this little apple cart. But then the laboratory thing is a charade, anyway, a ritual in which few believe — which makes it dishonest in an especially insidious way, that of a “public secret”, like the emperor’s new clothes.”

“The story is lost in its conversion to “information” or, worse still, to “data”, these being the stepping stones toward the holy grail of the General and the Abstract, that beloved X-ray way of Knowing raised on the shoulder of **sensuous immediacy**”.

“Does not enchantment resurface under certain conditions, maybe extreme conditions, in this world of machines, corporate control and consumerism that we call modernity?” (Taussig)

Ways of Approaching the World of which We Are a Part

Quintilian called this form of presentation *evidentia in narratione*—a manner of presentation “in which a truth requires not merely to be told, but to a certain extent obtruded.” (...) Unlike science, politics is not driven by a desire for a well-constructed truth, and unlike law it does not seek to render judgment on past events from the vantage point of the present order: rather, it is driven by a desire to change the way things are.

We were (...) committed to the possibilities of (...) a counter-hegemonic practice able to invert the relation between individuals and states, to challenge and resist state and corporate violence and the tyranny of their truth. (...) we should avoid the temptation of an anti-universalist perspective which regards truth simply as inherently relative, contingent, multiple, or nonexistent, and instead view truth as a common project under continuous construction.

(Weizmann)

institution(alised)
critique

sensitised
bodies

ideosyncratic
techniques

Commandes

CNNum — Conseil National du Numerique: Comment voulons nous être calculés ? C'est qui le nous qui est calculé ?

CRI — Partager les lieux, acteurs and knowledge practices toward a "science participative internationale"

HOPITAUX — "Imaginer des dispositifs permettant de recueillir les commentaires, doléances et propositions de l'ensemble des personnes fréquentant régulièrement ou ayant affaire aux hôpitaux"

Kompost — Pompidou CNAC-GP, "15 jours d'Hors Pistes", new decision making processes, new community models or enactions (May 1968, Deleuze, etc.)

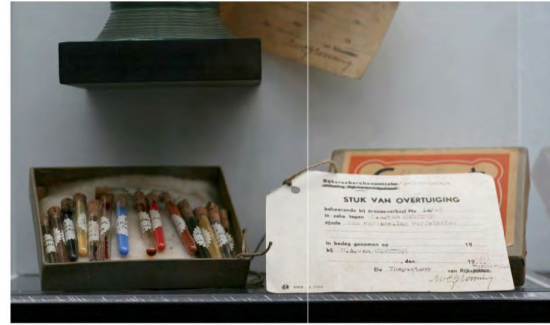
PEROU — "commune de l'hospitalité" / "Marcher dans le rêve d'un autre"

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS, EVIDENCE LOCKERS & MATERIAL WITNESSES

We are embarking on a week about making and doing things that sample, trace, intervene and produce evidence. This will be documented (documents will be made from it) and take the form of conceptual and actual SAMPLE DOCUMENTS, EVIDENCE LOCKERS and MATERIAL WITNESSES that groups will produce from fieldwork to locales and through encounters, and present on the last day of the intensive. These will be based on a discussion and development of your own speculative methodologies, geared toward opening up the cadre of potential actions available in the kind of ethnographic, sensory, expressive and aesthetic interventions the course as a whole is concerned with: How might evidence and material witnesses be rendered, presented, modulated and re-presented?



MARGHERITA PEVERE'S "HERBARIUM". *Orchis papilionacea*. Series of 7 botanical tables. Dried wild plant specimens mounted on cardboard and labelled, glass frames (2012)



Evidence against *HAN VAN MEEGEREN*, a collection of pigments (1947)



HERMAN DE VRIES' "*Catalogue Earth Museum*" (2015)

Tasks for Today...

Use the attached template INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION to sketch how does or could the issue addressed in command affect you personally?

- List the actual, literal, physical, community, governmental, power, affordance, constraints that do or could personally touch you and/or the communities in which you are personally involved.
- How can you make, in trust and personal honesty, and amongst within solidarity of the SPEAP community, a transubstantiated link to the command context / problem / issue... How does the 'shadow' of these issues, institutions, policies, logistics and algorithms, touch you, and how might you touch them?

Use the attached template GROUP REFLECTION to develop in your commande groups collective issues, tensions, themes, interests or grievances. What are the least general common aspect to your personal / individual grievances? How can you develop these common aspect?

- What are the objects / entities / localities / institutions that you could interrogate / sample / trace for these? Where would you 'go' to collect evidence? Make a list of these 'entities' (locations, objects, medias, people, etc.) that would be possible to interrogate ... a subject/object list!
- At least one of these should be a physical space you can go to in or around Paris. At least one of these should be an 'object'. At least one of these must be online / digital. At least one of these must be a living human being you can speak to / email / contact. What, who or where could sensorial evidence and material witnesses be gathered?

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

How does or could the issue addressed in command affect you personally?

Name:
How does or could the topics in your command affect you, personally? Key relational terms

Approach/Profile

Interests (Which of the interests or issues in your command would be closest to you?)

Skills (List the capacities you might wish to bring, embody or provide to your *commande* group?)

Role (What role(s) would you like to take up in your group?)

GROUP REFLECTION

How does or could the issue addressed in command affect You, as a collective?

Describe Your <i>Commande</i> (one sentence)
What are the issues common to all members of the <i>commande</i> group? Common relational terms

Describe the approach(es) that You (as a group) could imagine taking to...

Initial empirical, fieldwork, investigative, research?

What, who or where could sensorial evidence and material witnesses be gathered, collected or produced? (Make a list of the 'entities' — locations, objects, medias, people, etc.— that would be possible to interrogate)

Key skills, roles and interest areas you'd like to highlight in your group?

Questions... Comments... Ideas... Complaints...
Modulations... Suggestions... Jokes... ?