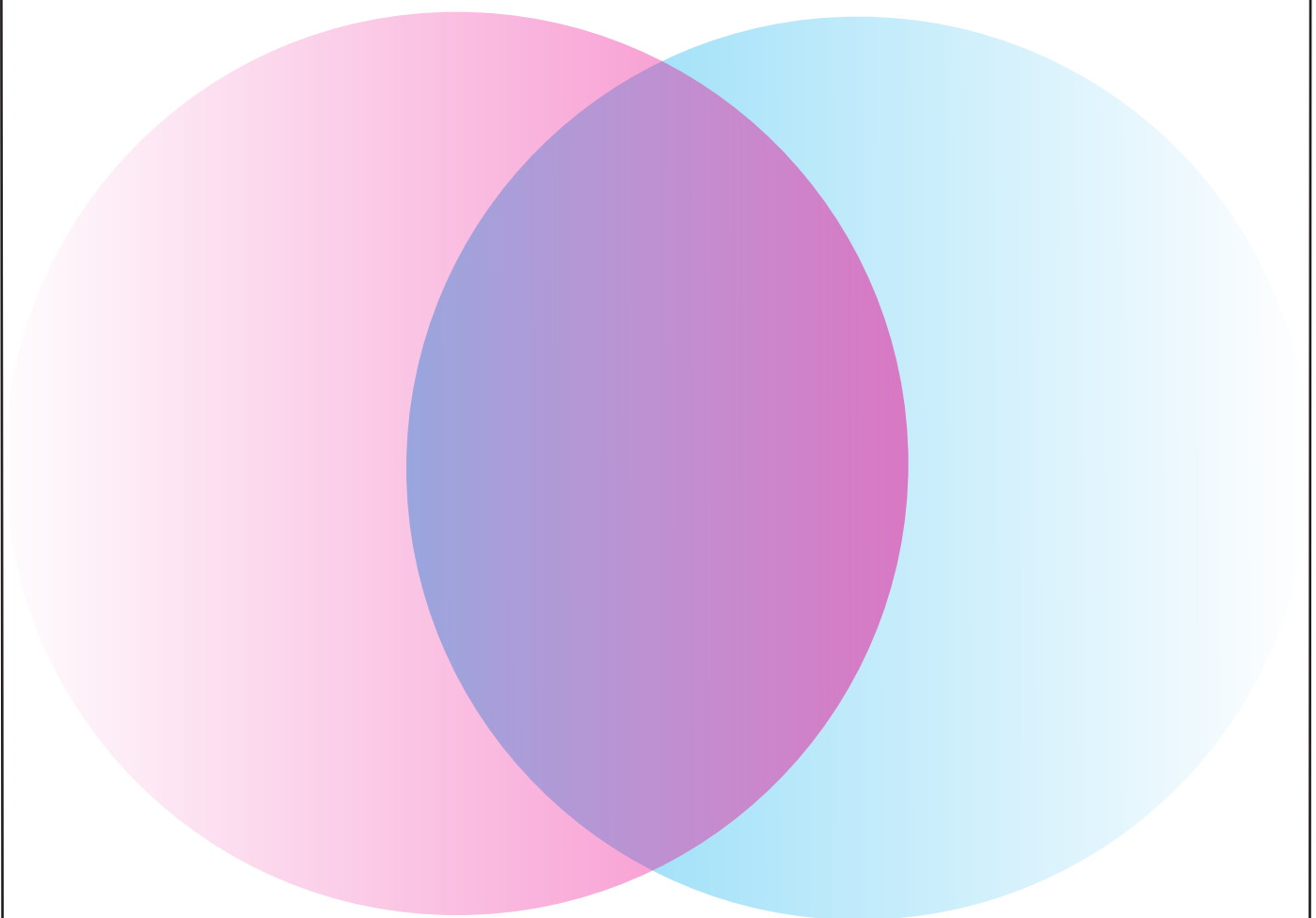


# Exhibitions are not Books

Chloë Lalonde

Viewing and  
making as an  
a/r/tographer



Exhibitions are not Books:  
Viewing and making as an a/r/tographer

Written component master thesis  
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts (MA) at the  
University of Applied Arts Vienna,  
Institute of Fine Arts and Media

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Matriculation number: 12139593  
Vienna, May 9 2023



Programme number: S 066 776  
Study programme: Art & Science  
Supervisor: Univ-Prof. Julienne Lorz,  
Expanded Museum Studies





To Louise, for being Louise,  
Montreal, for being Montreal,  
and Vienna, for being Vienna.

Thank you, Malashree, Charlotte, Els, Lucie, Jannis,  
Francesco, Márton, Karl and my other friends and  
colleagues in Vienna and the department of Art &  
Science for their support, reminding me that I have  
a body and I live in a city. No dinner party could ever  
express my love and gratitude for each and every  
one of you.

Thank you Gerda, Brishty, Valerie, Martin, Julienne,  
Caroline and Virgil for their mentorship, feedback  
and guidance.



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## introduction

/Exhibitions are not Books: viewing & making as an A/R/Tographer/, assumes The Exhibition to be a third place and a place of learning outside of traditional western academic systems; notably as it differs from that of a Book.

Turning to A/R/Tography, an entangled Practice of being an Artist, Researcher, and Teacher (or Artist and Cultural Worker), and Art writing, my artistic research attempts to transform embodied knowledge and record it tangibly in two accessible mediums, an Exhibition and a Book.

The Book, this thesis publication, embraces the print medium by experimenting with alternative and accessible forms of text formatting. It serves to articulate my thoughts on the Exhibition as a medium through embodiment.

As a third place at the forefront of the Art world, where an Exhibition occurs changes everything, overshadowed by private profit-oriented organisations, social affiliations, institutional politics, tourism... These spaces are sometimes physically and conceptually inaccessible to the general public and the Artists that depend on them. I see The Exhibition as a place of learning outside of the classroom where knowledge can be shared in a format beyond language. Such a third place requires both physical and conceptual accessibility.

The Exhibition space itself often speaks louder than the Work within it. Sometimes I am so distracted by the colour

of the walls, the flow of the people, the availability of text, that I am not thinking about the Artwork, but how the space dictates my experience of it.

I long for Exhibitions that speak for themselves, Exhibitions that do not need to be read, but demand to be heard. Exhibitions that scream, that take up space, that demand to be felt, to be experienced.

Can Exhibition spaces ever truly be third spaces if they are not accessible to everyone, if they are not intersectional? If the space is too noisy, too bright, and not barrier-free? How was an Artist's Practice communicated? What story is being told? What is being learned? How are Cultural Workers trained to facilitate the activation of an Exhibition space? What is assumed? What was overlooked?

Are there sign language interpreters? Audio-guides? Interactive Work? Space to move around? Space to sit down? Are these accessibility features advertised, made actually accessible?

How do people know that they are available? Do they have to make a phone call? Write an email? Or can they expect such essential services to be readily available on hand, during a spontaneous visit? Who is the target audience? Where is it located? What language is the most prevalent in communication? What colours are the walls?

I pose these questions as a way to frame my query, hold them in your mind throughout.

I explore how knowledge can be articulated in different mediums, I explore the tactile qualities of this articulation by leaning into the mediums of The Exhibition and The Book, drawing out how the type of knowledge they can convey cannot be compared but holds the same weight.

Throughout this text, a metaphorical thread connects ideas of showing and telling attributed to language (the written and spoken word) and the visual. The foundations of language impact knowledge sharing in the Art world, and the use of the visual to communicate without words. But what then is left behind by the visual world? The practical component of my thesis seeks to communicate an experience beyond cohesive, linear language.

If my artistic research is successful, my reading and listening audience should have an embodied understanding of what to expect from my Work, which seeks to put the ideas I bring forth about Exhibition making into Practice.

Entering my installation, once again assuming The Exhibition as a third place, should not require reading, or additional interpretation of any kind. Although text, in the form of this thesis, is available to all those interested, for further reading, or listening. The installation assumes overstimulation and provides accommodations, water and something to satisfy small hungers.

It is an installation, in an Exhibition space. But it is also an Exhibition, an Exhibition of that installation, embodying an

artistic research Practice rooted in synaesthesia that does not matter.

From my hands, to yours, my mind to yours, my body to yours. Just remember that we both have bodies and that I live in a city. At the time I am writing this, I live in and between two cities actually. And you might also live in a city, or you might not, it doesn't matter. But at the moment you are in the installation, remember that you have a body, and remember that you are in a city.

**Part one, Groundwork for artistic research**, begins with an essay on whiteness and positionality, proposing culturally responsive pedagogy and A/R/Tography as useful tools for Working and Practising. To further clarify the lens with which I look through, I invite Readers, Viewers and Listeners to engage with a selection of texts for accessible Exhibition making that have helped me define the mediums of The Exhibition and The Book.

**Part two, viewing Art and Art writing**, considers various 'objective' and 'subjective' methods of viewing, reading and writing about Exhibitions, referring to excerpts of in-situ and ex-situ pieces of writing from viewing studies that are included in the annex.

**Part three, Art making**, outlines my Art Practice and the approaches I have taken to making an immersive installation of a drawing titled /remember you have a body, remember you live in a city/. Part three is divided into two sub parts; 'how I am doing it' and 'what I am doing'. By

putting the \*how\* before the \*what\*, I cue you, The Viewer, The Reader, and The Listener, into my thought process. You follow my Art Practice, carrying the lens with which I look through and then, together, we confront The Work.

**Part four, Exhibition making**, outlines the importance of collaboration and the realities of confronting The Exhibition and The Book as mediums for personal Practice within institutional frameworks. The installation I have made was meant to be exhibited as a solo or duo show. The process of room allocation at the university restricts this and at the moment I am writing this, the exhibiting circumstances of my installation are unclear to me.

## **reading this publication**

I invite you to listen along to the audio transcription as you read, or you can choose to read or listen alone. If you are listening to me, I am reading following the table of contents and I will draw out certain elements, like keywords and references as they come up.

I am trying to articulate an idea without separating aspects of my personal Practice and personality. I am trying to show you, not tell you.

What I require from you, dear Reader, Listener and Viewer, is openness. Knowing is not an isolated process. But in some ways, this has been a one-sided conversation, between myself and other mediums. I seek dialogue, collaboration, and conversation.

Further leaning into The Book, considering approaches to designing this thesis publication, I have written a short style guide to facilitate your reading.

Accessibility guidelines recommend a font size of 16px or larger, using a font without serifs, and including emphasis without italicising. I include notes in-text in grey with square brackets ( [ ] ) to delineate personal commentary that I think is necessary to include, but side tracks my point. I also use square brackets to suggest two or more equivalent word options separated by a slash ( [ / ] ). I use parentheses ( ) for citation and to give examples (ie, pronunciation). Double quotation marks ( " " ) are used for

quotes and to delineate a word as an object in a sentence. Some parts of quotes are underlined, this is my emphasis. Individual quotation marks ( ' ' ) are used to indicate sayings, terms of phrases or supposed truths that I don't necessarily agree with, if I was speaking to you in person using these words I would make quotation marks with my hands, also known as air quotes, to delineate change of tone towards sarcasm, satire or criticism. Slashes at the beginning and end of a series of words ( / / ) indicate the name of a publication, text, Book, essay, article, podcast, Exhibition and so on. Asterixis ( \* ) are used for emphasis. Words that are bolded and footnoted are defined. When referring to authors, I first use their full names and follow by their first name, opting for their preference (pen name, personal name) if it was indicated in my research.

The words "Exhibition", "Book", "Art", "Artwork", "Work", "Practice" and any [professions/roles], which includes identifiers such as "Learner", "Viewer", "Reader", "Listener", are capitalised throughout, unless they are mentioned in a quote from another text. Acts, such as "viewing", "reading", "writing", "working", "making", and "practising", are not capitalised. I am also not capitalising the names of western languages and institutions when they come up in an attempt to highlight the priorities of this artistic research.

## **part one: groundwork for artistic research**

## on whiteness and defining my positionality

To help you understand further about where I am coming from, allow me to introduce myself. The first names my parents gave me are Chloë and Paige, the surnames I inherited are Finn and Lalonde.

I was born into a woman's body. I do not hate it, I do not seek to change. I acknowledge that I have been socialised as female and that I am perceived as female. But the idea of this makes me uncomfortable and this discomfort associated with bodies is symptomatic of dysmorphia and dysphoria.

I am a white multidisciplinary Artist and **Cultural Worker**<sup>1</sup> born in Tiohtià:ke (say; jio-jia-geh) / Mooniyang / Montreal, raised in so-called Laval / île Jesus / 'jardin de montréal', Turtle Island, so-called Canada. I grew up on the stolen lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka (say; gan-i-enne-geh-ha-ga), one of many Indigenous Nations of Turtle Island. Later, I attended Concordia University on the same lands, where I studied Art education and anthropology.

This is important, because my family history is directly entangled with the genocide of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation. Fortunately, as I see it anyway, my first ancestor to set foot

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<sup>1</sup> The term "**Cultural Work**" includes any Work related to the broad scheme of the cultural world, this includes every element of society that is not specifically Art, including Teaching and Researching. In this regard, I will often be using the term "Cultural Worker" in exchange with Researcher and Teacher.

on Turtle Island's soil was murdered after his settlement, and unfortunately, he was martyred - much documentation attests to this, including a monument on the west island of montreal and a painting by a professor at concordia which is part of the montreal museum of fine Art's collection of contemporary Art.

Where one is living, working and practising, where a person is from, changes the way they know and understand things, affecting their way of working and practising. In choosing to continue my studies in vienna, austria, I chose to move away from the decolonisation discourse prevalent in my north american circles.

Since I have been old enough to **Work**<sup>2</sup> and lucky enough to Work jobs I want to Work, I have worked as an Art Teacher in various community centres, a Writer, writing various types of texts associated with Art for various publications, often rooted in aesthetic response, an Editor and sometimes, a Designer. All these roles can fit neatly under the label of Cultural Work.

The way I see it, teaching supposes hierarchy, unless it is structured horizontally which would be a deliberate pedagogical act on behalf of the Teacher, and thus the horizontal structure still has its roots in a hierarchy. Whereas mediation encourages and facilitates dialogue, an exchange of ideas between people and mediums.

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<sup>2</sup> The word "**Work**" implies paid, emotional or mental labour.

In /White Women Teaching White Women about White Privilege, Race Cognizance and Social Action: toward a pedagogical pragmatics/, written in collaboration by Diane Gillespie, Leslie Ashbaugh and Joann DeFiore, Joann writes of her experience being othered by her white female students as a first generation Italian immigrant. Her student explained that they were able to justify Joann's anti-racist teaching material due to her dark curly hair and ethnicity. Reading this I felt a sensation of absurdity, cringe, a lump in my throat.

I have a similar experience, in that my hair colour makes me aware that I am often the only red-haired person in a room. This is also my only experience of feeling othered. I have an awareness that, like the colour of some people's skin, my hair makes me visibly different. I often forget my hair colour is bright red, some mirrors and some lighting make it look different, and I have never really seen what my hair looks like outside in the sun. The brightness of my hair, when I notice it, shocks me. I in no way wish to equate these experiences of othering at all, let me be clear. I acknowledge that this is not a synonymous, nor a parallel experience to systemic oppression and racism. But it is an awareness I carry with me and have learned from. My interest in the visual was the starting point for learning more about what is not so visible; How historical, political and economic factors are embodied in social and cultural codes and norms, from the languages we speak to how we approach our relationships with education, the community and working environments and the construction of race.

The impact of these structures are embodied in what I am doing, and in who I am because of my white privilege. How do these experiences contribute to who I am, and how can I use this awareness to decolonise the way I Work and **Practice**<sup>3</sup>, as an Artist and Cultural Worker? How can I give all of myself to this conversation?

In /The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the discourse of 'white privilege/, Zeus Leonardo promotes the rigorous examination of white supremacy, or the analysis of white racial domination in addition to studying white privilege. Quoting Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Zeus writes;

“We live in a condition where racism thrives absent of racists’ [...] There must be an alternative explanation: in general, whites recreate their own racial supremacy, despite good intentions.” (Zeus Leonardo, 144)

How do I recreate my own racial supremacy? If I do not assume responsibility for the history of white supremacy in my Work as an Artist, Research and Teacher, who will?

“To the extent that racial supremacy is taught to white students, it is pedagogical. Insofar as it is pedagogical, there is the possibility of critically reflecting on its flows in order to disrupt them. The hidden curriculum of whiteness saturates everyday school life and one of the first steps to articulating its features is coming to

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<sup>3</sup> “**Practice**” here implies personal artistic Work, the application of methods and ideas, that is unpaid and rooted in a habitual, intentional way of being.

terms with its specific modes of discourse [...] state sponsored curricula fail to encourage students of all racial backgrounds to critique white domination. In other words, schools may teach white students to naturalise their unearned privileges, but they also willingly participate in such discourses, which maintains their sense of humanity.” (Zeus Leonardo, 144)

In [/Can White People Ever Be Radical?/](#) an article written by Zarina Muhammad (ZM) of The White Pube, ZM demonstrates exactly what Zeus is getting at in the quote above; these places and systems are rooted in white ways of knowing and they will not disappear, there is only changing the way they Work.

The article argues that whiteness exists in a powerful centre that produces, sustains and maintains dominant western culture. In contrast, radicality is generated at the margins and produces new and alternative cultural forms through subverting dominant culture. ZM argues that white Artists cannot be radical because their access to power prevents them from achieving the necessary instability for radicality to be possible. They are limited to reproducing power and reconditioning things in the service of power.

Dismantling these systems and making spaces for intersectional, accessible ways of working and practising as a white person, is not a radical act. It is an act of common human decency - acknowledging the oppression

perpetrated by white western frameworks and making sure you Work differently, in opposition to.

What I have learned, as a white Artist and Cultural Worker engaging in decolonisation and anti-racism, is that if you don't feel uncomfortable, it isn't working. If there is no discomfort there is no change.

I aim to communicate an Artist's Work to the general public through conversation. My writing Practice is one that facilitates my own knowing of the world, and it gives me an outlet to share with others. Sometimes I am in touch with the Artist's directly, other times I do my own research. When possible, I choose to Work with pieces that I have an interest in knowing more about, sometimes I hold a bias, which is only natural. But I do not only engage with Work that comes naturally to me. I push myself out of my comfort zone so I can engage with **Art Work**<sup>4</sup> and topics that I do not necessarily understand.

My time in vienna has been the only time I was not engaged with my entire Practice as an Artist and Cultural Worker. I was not really working, sure I had some short-term freelance writing contracts. But I was not teaching actively for the first time since I started teaching. This time has allowed me to develop my artistic Practice, reflecting on Exhibitions I encounter through my studies, in classes, socialising with my peers and tourism.

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<sup>4</sup> By the words "**Art Work**" I imply paid Work in the Arts of any capacity. You can be an Art Worker, who makes an Artwork, or you can be an Art Worker, or Cultural Worker, who facilitates the creation and distribution of Artworks.

My interest in The Exhibition as a medium stems from a desire to have conversations and share knowledge in a place outside of the western capitalist system. This is not to say that the western, capitalist system does not affect Exhibition spaces, because it really does. But fundamentally, The Exhibition as a medium, though rooted in these constructs, can and should exist independently from it.

The Exhibition allows for possibility, outside of the institution, the museum, the school, outside of state funded projects... outside of traditional western academic ways of knowing, learning, and sharing information...

To answer a question I posed earlier, quoting Zeus Leonardo; I recreate my own racial supremacy by taking up too much space.

Recently I have become very comfortable with being very honest and open, what was once uncomfortable to me has become very comfortable. This is also something I need to keep in check in order to respect my peers' boundaries and energy levels. Engaging with this while developing my Practice as an Artist and Cultural Worker is what I will be juggling for the rest of my life. It is necessary Work.

## **revisiting culturally responsive pedagogy**

The white women writing about teaching white women about white privilege (see Diane Gillespie et al.) highlight the importance of storytelling and narrative methodology as a tool for pedagogic reflection; Storytelling and narrative methodology “allows for the discovery of new meanings in past actions; these new meanings can then evoke new possibilities for future action.” (238)

Situated within culturally responsive pedagogy, storytelling and narrative methodologies make space for different ways of knowing and skill sharing. It allows students and Learners to make space for themselves in any dialogue.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is an essential tool for working as an Artist, Researcher and Teacher. During my first year of studying Art education, a reflection on culturally responsive pedagogy was assigned to small groups. Speaking to the subject, we cited the following, culturally responsive pedagogy is defined in the 2012 ontario ministry of education as “teaching that recognizes that all students learn differently due to the differences connected to background, language, family structure and social or cultural identity, acknowledging cultural uniqueness of each student, nurturing and facilitating effective conditions for learning.”

Culturally responsive teaching strategies aim to include a variety of materials and time frames for diverse learners, and aim to involve students and their families as much as

possible by defining, open discussions, and peer-teaching. Opting for virtual speakers on niche subjects, team-based projects and storytelling. Culturally responsive pedagogy demands for accessibility. And in order for something to be truly accessible, it must be physically barrier-free, accepting of all bodies and open to diverse ways and expressions of knowing. It is intersectional, therefore it must also be decolonial, de-centre the white gaze and prioritise **deeply rooted**<sup>5</sup> voices.

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<sup>5</sup> Sundus Abdul Hadi uses the words “**deeply rooted**” to counter whiteness and the “limits of the colonial construct while using the english language”, including and acknowledging “the multiplicities of ethnicities who are connected not just through struggle, but through deeply rooted ancient identities, familiar spirits, and shared experiences of resistance to white supremacy and colonialism”, while opposing other synonyms for being placed, or valued in an inferior position to whiteness (such as the terms Black, Indigenous, and People-of Colour). I will be using Sundus’ term throughout my thesis in this regard.

## revisiting A/R/Tography

[A/R/Tography](#), a term developed by Rita Irwin in 2005, describes a way of working and practising beyond western notions of 'rational', 'subjective-objective' knowledge. A/R/Tography as a word is rooted in the western academic system, coined by a white researcher in british columbia, canada, but attempts to move beyond it to define a process of embodiment, of being-with, of **more-than-human**<sup>6</sup> ways of knowing.

In the article, /A/r/tography as an Ethics of Embodiment/, Lisa La Jevic and Stephanie Springgay discuss A/R/Tography as an Art-based, interdisciplinary research methodology, where distinctions between Artist, Researcher, and Teacher blur. A/R/Tography is an embodied Practice of being an Artist, Researcher and Teacher. Engaging with ethics, positionality and drawing from feminist cultural theory they write of the body as being-with, citing Nikki Sullivan's /Being, thinking and writing with/;

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<sup>6</sup> This term "**more-than-human**" is derived from my privilege of studying Art and social sciences, though my ability to cite it now escapes me. I believe it is no bother, as quite simply put, a more than human approach to knowing the world includes \*every\* \*thing\* that is more than human, and thus encourages a person engaging with these words to consider;

1. What does it mean to be human?
2. And why not use the words "human and not human" instead of "more than human"?

After some consideration, a person with no prior engagement with "**more-than-human**" critical theory can come to the conclusion that these words mean to include everything. Every thing that is human, every thing that is not human. A more-than-human approach has now come to mean an awareness that multitudes of things exist outside of you.

“to be a body is to be with other bodies, to touch, to encounter, and to be exposed. [...] it is the relationality between bodies that creates a particular understanding of shared existence.” (Lisa La Jevic and Stephanie Springgay, 69)

“No conversation starts from zero [...] our words, which are never ours alone, are always already ‘appeals to move, to be moved, together [...] each was/is moved, touched, inspired, angered, comforted, called forth, by the thoughts, the words, the very being-there of the others. And these thoughts, these words, bore the trace of other encounters, other exposures, other touches, not only too numerous to mention but never present, although, of course, never absent either.” (Nikki Sullivan, 55)

Nikki Sullivan suggests a story or a myth as they call it, to enact the singular-plural. The way in which individuals are alike but retain their individuality, and how, even in community, the individual voice is needed. A/R/Tography as research methodology embodies this notion, challenging western academic traditional research methods in favour of a Practice drawn from the liminal spaces between Artist, Researcher and Teacher. It is a nonlinear process, and innately requires an ebb and flow, a dialogue.

My application of A/R/Tography engages my experiences making Art with my experiences working in Exhibition spaces as a Facilitator, Curator, Mediator and Art Educator,

as well my experiences teaching painting and drawing at community centres, and my experiences writing about exhibitions and working in publication design. Identifying the spaces between these identities, clearly separating them, is not an easy task.

My experiences as an Artist, Researcher and Teacher have led me to be committed to promoting sustainability in the Arts, specifically in Art making, that surpasses reusing 'trash' in Art lessons (ie, creating crafts with common recycling paper and plastic waste).

I strive to deepen not only my own understanding of Art materials, but my **Learners**<sup>7</sup>, by diving into a direct material approach, specifically returning to the fundamental techniques of paper making and weaving as the foundation of most painting and drawing projects, which I have recently decided to refer to as a slow painting Practice ([see part three: Art making, on Practice and painting](#)).

While my personal Practice as an A/R/Tographer is grounded in the question of access to material, my involvement in Cultural Work, the mediation and facilitation of Exhibitions in contemporary Art spaces (including but not limited to guided tours, workshops, curating and writing projects as they relate to Exhibitions), centres the accessible and reflexive nature of aesthetic response in a variety of forms. When engaging with an Artwork, or an

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<sup>7</sup> **'Learners'** is a word Community Art Educators are taught to use to refer to students that are not actually their "students", as community spaces forgo the usual student-teacher hierarchy.

Artist's larger body of Work, I attempt to step into their positionality with my Learners, using the Artist's Practice as a lens to see the world, falling within a culturally responsive pedagogy and a pedagogy of movement.

I believe that Art should not only be accessible in its materials, but fundamentally, socially and culturally, beyond whether or not an event is free of charge and physically accessible to those with reduced mobility. If it is not the case, I see such happenings as being grounded firmly in white colonial, oppressive structures, or traditional western ways of knowing.

The way such an event (Exhibition, workshop, Art lesson, etc.) is communicated in writing should also be accessible. And in other words, I believe Art communication (Art writing, lesson planning, guided tours, etc.) should surpass the need to rely on complicated critical social, cultural and scientific theories inaccessible to those that may not have had the privilege to study them.

Classifying a subject as falling within the category of Artist, Researcher or Teacher is nearly impossible. For Artists, Researchers and Teachers, or Artists and Cultural Workers, like myself, experiences under one identity always feed the other. It is hard to define within traditional academic frameworks for this reason as well - it exists beyond it.

Whenever possible I try to engage all parts of myself in my Work. As an Artist, I am a maker of Art. As a Teacher and Cultural Worker, I think about the context in which my Art is

received by others and how to activate it. As a Researcher, I never stop seeking and producing information, which I then absorb as an Artist and make with in mind. As a Teacher, I bring what I have learned to my interactions with Learners. As an Artist and Researcher, I too am a Learner. Sometimes I am a Teacher and a Learner at the same time. As an Artist, I engage with myself as a performer of teaching and researching. I perform the roles, the act of making, the act of Art working, the act of teaching.

/surface tension - away-from-keyboard or; they're working, their work[-ing], they're work-ing ?/, is the convoluted name I have given to a time where my Practice was entirely fixated on weaving and working. I was working (teaching, facilitating, editing, writing and producing) more than I was practising. With the name of this piece I hope to place an emphasis on the way in which language and syntax can change meaning. The Work is mine, I am doing it - I am working - but what does it mean to Work? The distinction between these various types of Work became more and more unclear to me as they were all happening at once, drawing a tension between Art and Work. On Work breaks I would weave, away-from-keyboard, while listening to podcasts - trying to build up a canvas to paint on.

My approach to interacting with Exhibitions becomes that of an A/R/Tographer; I take an A/R/Tographical approach to viewing and making Exhibitions. The identities of Artist, Researcher and Teacher feed each other in a series of interconnected, cyclical spirals, but not overlapped circles, not a venn diagram.

By having revisited culturally responsive pedagogy and A/R/Tography I hope to further clarify the lens with which I look through as I approach several Books about accessibility, visibility, care and decolonisation in the Arts.

### **texts for accessible Exhibition making**

/Take Care of Your Self, The Art and Cultures of Care and Liberation/, written by Sundus Abdul Hadi, is derived from her thesis Work in concordia university's masters programme in media studies. Sundus is interested in "the creation of safe spaces to convene in the presence of art and community, engaged in conversations on decolonization, self-care, and empowerment and with care at its core." Since writing the Book, she has opened a bookstore in montreal as her collective, WE ARE THE MEDIUM's headquarters.

Sundus discusses the use of language in reclaiming identities in the context of oppression, and suggests that using different words and creating new narratives can help to dismantle colonial constructs (see footnote 5, deeply rooted).

For Art to reach its potential in promoting care and well-being, for The Exhibition to be a **third place**<sup>8</sup>, it must be accessible and independent from the colonial construct. Sundus emphasises the importance of decolonial and intentional care Practices that resist systems of oppression in her reflection of her own experience curating an Exhibition. Sundus maintained the authenticity of the Artists' voices, allowing their experiences and expressions to speak for themselves, rather than being impacted by a curatorial statement. Creating a cohesive narrative around the Works in The Exhibition, and taking The Viewer on a journey through the diverse stories embedded in the Art is key to care-full curating. Sundus defines care-full curation as "an approach where complex issues are invoked with a goal that a collective convening might lead to an empowering or transformative experience" and "a reminder to be self-aware of the roles [Cultural Workers play] in perpetuating problematic systematic tropes." (Sundus Abdul Hadi, 106-107)

Her Work has encouraged me to reconsider my own use of language, looking at the root of words and their capitalisations, and the way in which I engage with Exhibitions as an Artist and Cultural Worker. An embodied understanding of the impact of the curatorial statement on

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<sup>8</sup> In sociology the "**third place**" is defined as a place outside of the home or school where an individual feels part of a community, safe to be themselves. Third spaces vary per individual, some theorists suggest it is in fact the location of culture in a society - somewhere between the home (first place) and school (second place). Other third spaces include shopping malls, bars, community centres, churches, barber shops, salons, etc.

any given Exhibition has informed the underlying point of my thesis; Exhibitions are not Books. The Works of Art in an Exhibition are not akin to illustrations in a Book.

Carolyn Lazard is an american Artist and Activist who Works with, and through chronic illness. /Accessibility in the Arts: A Promise and a Practice/ is a physical and audio Book that lists exactly what Exhibition spaces can do to be the most accessible to their Audiences. Her comprehensive list of accommodations covers sign language interpretation, audio description, chemical sensitivity and air quality, childcare, closed captions, communication, consent, content warnings, food and dietary restrictions, harm reduction and overdose protection, image captions for web accessibility, lighting and flash recording, live streaming events, mobility, personal care assistants and service animals, restrooms, seating, sensory rooms, sliding scales and economic justice, text, touch tours and transportation. She also explains how to list access information in event descriptions online and addresses how to navigate budgeting issues.

Carolyn's Work is essential for all Artists and Cultural Workers, as well as anyone else who wants to know how to make any space more accessible to the general public. The physical publication is designed in an accessible format. Sturdy, affordable and lightweight paper, large font, simple black and white design that does not compromise aesthetics. Her publication is one I will follow regarding literally everything I do going forward.

It is accessible online, to read and listen here:

[promiseandpractice.art](https://promiseandpractice.art)

/Decolonising Design, A Cultural Justice Guidebook/ was written by the first Black dean of design in the entire world, and in ontario, canada, Elizabeth (Dori) Tunstall. Dori situates her experiences working in australia, the united states and canada, providing a land acknowledgement for each country. Each chapter ends with a comprehensive list of key takeaways, which are again compiled at the end the Book. Design here is meant quite vaguely, referring to the making of things, the creation of spaces, objects, ideas... and this Book tells you exactly how to be a responsible agent in this domain. The act of decolonising requires putting deeply rooted individuals first, by centering community, and making things that centre joy and healing. It is important for white people to position themselves in the fields they engage in, learn from experience, redistribute existing [financial] resources and when possible cede their roles to deeply rooted individuals to address systemic exclusion by changing evaluation criteria to make space for deeply rooted ways of knowing.

/This Is What I Know About Art/ is a pocketbook that chronicles Kimberly Drew's experiences as an Arts Writer, Researcher, Activist and Cultural Worker. She stumbled into Art history in college and spent her time researching Black Artists for her Tumblr blog, Black Contemporary Art, before eventually becoming an intern at the Harlem Studio Museum, which is a cornerstone in the local community of

African descendants in new york city. Kimberly later published a text that was designed to challenge western frameworks with Jenna Wortham; /Black Futures, an archive of collective memory and exuberant testimony, a luminous map to navigate an opaque and disorienting present, an infinite geography of possible futures./ Her work centres deeply rooted storytelling.

Positionality matters, sharing experiences matters. Situating oneself as a lost student does not undermine one's Work - it contributes to the dismantling of oppressive western knowledge systems and capitalist discourse. And using social media to do so is very much okay. Kimberly writes in a way like she is speaking to The Reader, it is easy to understand her, her voice is clear. You can see yourself in her shoes. This does wonders for representation and accessibility. Art writing, casually, is just as important, if not more so, than traditional western Art criticism. We, Art Writers, write to lift up the hard Work of others. To create bigger spaces for those voices and, hopefully, reduce the white colonial gaze in the Art world.

/The White Pube/ has always accompanied me throughout my Art writing journey. More so than any other form of Art criticism. I was captivated by their tone. Reading their Work, I permitted myself to write in the same way, conversational, pro-internet and social media, further challenging traditional western frameworks. /The White Pube/ has also asked some interesting questions about the Art world, questions I find myself confronted with too, and seeing them stumble, re-publish texts with edits and

emphasise commentary via podcasts, youtube videos and social media is why I like them so much.

Some of my favourite texts include, [/Are White Girls Capable of Making Art That's Not About Themselves?/](#), [/The Problem with Diaspora Art 2/](#), [/Level One Identity Art/](#), [/Can White People Ever Be Radical?/](#), [/Why museums are bad vibes/](#), and [/What I've learnt from being a brown critic on the Internet \(and what i need now from our readers\)/](#).

Most of these Art thoughts, as labelled on their website, are casual **institutional critiques**<sup>9</sup>, diving into certain movements and trends the writers of The White Pube, Gabrielle De La Puente (GDLP) and Zarina Muhammad (ZM), encounter in the Art world. Recently they have been unpacking radicality, whiteness, diaspora and identity Art. The accessibility of their writing allows the reader to easily situate themselves, apply the writer's words to their own life.

It is accessible online, to read and listen here:

[thewhitepube.co.uk/art](http://thewhitepube.co.uk/art)

Aria Dean's article, [/Closing the Loop/](#), cited by [/The White Pube/](#) in [/Are White Girls Capable of Making Art That's Not About Themselves?/](#) is about selfie-feminism and the visibility of the female body; specifically the Black female body being overshadowed by the white female body online and the "flattening of subjectivities" on the internet. She

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<sup>9</sup> "**Institutional critique**" is a form of Art writing that comments on the role of institutional frameworks in the Art world.

devises a “new politics of looking and being looked at.” From Aria Dean I take this idea from the selfie and apply it towards Art spaces. If spaces are created from a white, colonial gaze - they are not accessible. “Saying nope” to this gaze as a white person requires constant communication with yourself and the world around you. Keep yourself in check.

It is accessible to read online here:

[thenewinquiry.com/closing-the-loop](http://thenewinquiry.com/closing-the-loop)

### **on the lens with which I look through**

By listing these texts I am hoping to show you where I am coming from, what my Practice is rooted in. I situate myself by outlining my privileges and the lens with which I look through as I attempt to live this Practice.

‘Practice what you preach’, ‘Practice makes perfect’, ‘be the change you want to see in the world’ - all proverbial phrases, sayings, that apply here.

What I want to see in the world is inherent accessibility, intersectionality and active decolonisation by addressing positionality, especially when it comes to whiteness. I want white people to explain why their voices matter, I do not want deeply rooted people to justify theirs. They should not be the ones doing this Work.

The 2022 film directed by Noah Baumbach, /White Noise/, is about chatter - white people taking up so much space with their voices that it becomes a lull, a wasteland of endless noise. As a white Artist, my Practice is grounded in sustainability to make sure that I am not contributing waste to the global ecosystem with my 'subjective' Practice that "doesn't matter" ([see part three: Art making, Synaesthesia](#)). I believe that for white Artists to be making Art, they need to do so in a way that is actively engaging with decolonisation, promising and practising accessibility. The world does not need more white noise.

A criticism here I anticipate and will address immediately is that I am adding to the chatter - I am adding to the white noise in the Art world.

What I am \*not\* saying is that white people should not be Artists and Cultural Workers. I am saying they, we, white people, need to do the Work. To position ourselves actively in this dialogue instead of pretending it does not exist. My intent here is to make my positionality clear for future projects I will engage in, to say that I will follow the Practices outlined in The Books outlined in my literature review, and that I think all other white Artists and Cultural Workers should too.

This is the lens with which I look through.

Participating and engaging with Exhibitions is part of being an Artist. It is the way we share our Work with the world. What I am doing in this thesis, in addition to unpacking the

lens with which I look through, is unpacking the places of learning, the mediums that I am interested in, that I engage with; The Exhibition, and The Book.

### **on The Exhibition & The Book as mediums for embodied knowledge**

[Note: I love Books. Do not get me wrong. It is going to seem like I have something against the medium throughout this text. My love for Books stems from a childhood love for illustrations, a teen obsession with novels and a young adult fixation with publication design. I was the Editor-in-Chief of my highschool yearbook. I designed a specific format for the bit next to the graduation photos that usually includes a list with the student's nickname, ambition, etc. I gave people a blank piece of paper, a 'white cube' that they could draw or write anything in. In a way, this became an Exhibition in a Book. Some drew pictures, others wrote the same lists, some made collages. And some needed to be censored according to what the school deemed appropriate. When it came to mine I drew a silly little picture, a spiral doodle flower garden and hidden within I wrote, "everything is moving too fast, I just want to stop and smell the flowers".]

Following my 2018 article, /[More than free wine and cheese](#)/, which outlines The Vernissage as a rite of passage for Artists, I would like to assume then that The Exhibition is a phenomena, a happening, necessary for Artists;

“The way I see it, holding a vernissage is a way to legitimise one’s work by exposing the art in question to an audience, possibly for the first time. When a vernissage takes place, the artist’s work is subject to critique by all those who visit, peers and professionals alike. Being an artist isn’t just about creating work; it’s about sharing that work with others, capturing their attention and making them think. A vernissage is a celebration of an artwork’s first step into the world”. (Chloë Lalonde, 2018)

With this assumption, if The Vernissage is a rite of passage for Artists whereupon their Work is revealed “to the world for the first time,” The Exhibition is the **medium**,<sup>10</sup> or third place, that allows that to happen. The Vernissage then, is the ritual event that celebrates it. The role of The Viewer, as an actor or participant in such an experience is essential. Now considering The Exhibition as a medium and a third place, what is a medium but a form that holds a subject? Marshall McLuhan’s, “medium is the message” haunts me.

I understand “the medium to be the message” to imply that an element itself (ie, its design) is the message, not the

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<sup>10</sup> Google divides the definitions for the word “**medium**” into four main categories; Art, biology, computing and occult. Long story short, the noun, “medium” describes an element that holds something. Something is thus contained within a “medium”, and the “medium” is the way of moving or transforming said element between one state, or one point, and another. The word “medium” can also be an adjective describing the midpoint between two elements. It can also be a title, a profession (occult, mediation, mediumship), but I won’t go into that now.

element's content. The act, presence, happening, existence of an element often implies more than its intended content, its influence on society and culture is the message. An element itself does not have to have literal content in order to have a message. The notion of The Exhibition and The Book as mediums challenges this understanding, as they are naturally both mediums that contain knowledge, whether embodied in Art or writing, and require additional design in order to do so.

If The Exhibition is a medium, then it is an element that holds something... the subject, the content of an Exhibition can be anything, Art, science, history... there are lots of types of Exhibitions. As a third place, the knowledge held within, the subject, the content of an Exhibition is often framed by the institution, the physical space that supports it. Regardless of the form it takes, any type of Exhibition contains knowledge.

Another prolific medium that contains knowledge is The Book. Like The Exhibition, The Book can be broken into many different types and categories, but their main distinction is that one is usually made out of bound paper and can be carried, and the other is contained within a space and can only be experienced, not carried. Where an Exhibition has Viewers, a Book has Readers, it can also have Listeners - if the format of The Book is audible, but even if it is illustrated, it requires being read. In fact, oftentimes, Exhibitions also require being read.

A major difference between these two mediums is that one requires sight, the ability to read and understand language (although the invention of braille has allowed for sightless reading - it still requires the ability to understand braille), and the other does not require that at all in order to exist. That being said, many types of Exhibitions do rely heavily on sight, but artistic developments and entanglements with technology have increased the sensorial flexibility of these third spaces, reducing the necessity to see and to read, while increasing somatic sensibilities and placing an emphasis on sharing knowledge through sensory transmission.

The Exhibition thus becomes a medium that can embody any and all types of information; academic knowledge, land-based knowledge, knowledge derived from personal experiences, etc. As a third place, The Exhibition is distinct in that it is a phenomenon that can exist outside of typical knowledge-holding places, outside of Books, outside of schools, and other systems of governance.

However, of course, it can be used by these institutions as a way of sharing knowledge. It is here that I adopt Elizabeth Ellsworth's title "Places of Learning". In her text of the same name, she describes various experiences of places where learning can happen, The Exhibition being one of many of these.

"The exhibition attempts to 'prolong the thought-path of movement' of minds/brains and bodies into and through the spaces between [binary thought]."  
(Elizabeth Ellsworth, 147)

In */Places of Learning/*, Elizabeth writes of the role of pedagogy and the location of “the learning self” through the analysis of several different spaces. She writes of how Artists, among other professions, can create content-based experiences in the public sphere, including Exhibitions, with pedagogical intent, in a way that emphasises embodied knowledge. She views these many third places and places of learning as experimental pedagogy. Describing Art as offering the potential for different ways of knowing, she explains that it does not necessarily lead to certain knowledge or the learning of it but that it depends on the will and interest of “the learning self”.

“Artworks set us in the midst of knowings that are not tellable, but those knowings are ‘sense-able.’ What artworks know is how to invite experiences that allow the realities of propositional knowledge to ‘pass into’ acknowledgment of other realities that exceed propositional knowledge, and back again. In this way, aesthetic experience is like the experience of the learning self.” (Elizabeth Ellsworth, 162)

In parallel, bell hooks (Gloria Jean Watkins) writes in */Teaching to Transgress/* of pedagogy and the classroom as a site of excitement and pleasure. The aesthetic and somatic experience of pleasure is thus favourable to pedagogy. Their three key takeaways consider education as freedom, teaching so anyone can learn, and the classroom never a boring place of learning. bell hooks writes about teaching as a Black person who did not want

to be a Teacher, but wanted to be a Writer, and the systemic oppression that weighs on the classroom within white, western academic frameworks. Situating the aesthetic experience, the experience of the learning self and the role of facilitating such experiences through Cultural Work beyond binary oppositions and allowing for the integration of explanation and poetry, rational deliberation and emotional sensation, allows The Exhibition to be a medium that is a third place and a place of learning.

Learning is not bound to the classroom, that is certain. In /Research: Practitioner, Curator, Educator/, an extract written by Lolita Jablonskienė proposes that research is “a praxis; which is to say, it is an act, a doing action, an embodying and enacting of ideas, an act of engaging politically and ethically”. I would like to suggest that the act, or process of Exhibition making too, is an act of research as much as it is also a place of learning. Moreover, the same is true for the world of print; text, writing, Books, and Book making.

“The experience of the learning self is not an aesthetic experience [...] Aesthetic experience ‘speaks’ as if to say: ‘I know, but I can’t explain what I know through propositional language. Let me ‘tell’ this knowing through paint, sound, metaphor, media, built forms, sensation, emotion, or silence.’ The experience of the learning self ‘speaks’ as if to say: ‘I know, but I can’t explain how I came to know this. I came to know this in a nonconscious time/space.’” (Elizabeth Ellsworth, 162)

The Exhibition should constitute as an enactment, or embodiment of experiences of information, of knowledge, as it differs from an illustration, explanation or display of the latter. An Exhibition should \*show\* and not \*tell\*. Leave the \*telling\* for the written and spoken word.

“If there is one ‘human universal’, a fact of shareable knowledge that is accessible to everyone across all human experience ... it is the fact of embodiment. We all experience that indirectly shareable fact. We all inhabit that shared knowledge in and through the fact that we are bodies. At the same time, we all experience the fact of embodiment in absolutely singular, unique, unrepeatable, and, significantly, unshareable ways. Along with the fact of embodiment comes the fact of movement/sensation, which is one way to name the universal and shareable fact of being in relation. As living, moving, sensing bodies, we all exist only and always in relation even as our individual experiences of relationality are singular and unshareable.” (Elizabeth Ellsworth, 166)

The way I see it, if an Exhibition space relies heavily on language instead of embodiment in order to communicate its purpose, it is a Book.

And what is a Book rather than a compilation of knowledge you can hold in your hands? A Book can also not be read by those with impaired vision, or those that do not understand the language it is written in. To write means to expect your Audience has the ability to read.

Reframing The Exhibition in a way that does not rely heavily on language to communicate ideas encourages a multifaceted, embodied way of knowing. It encourages dialogue, conversation between Viewers in and beyond The Exhibition [space].

The Exhibition is not merely another medium to illustrate research, but embody it. Artworks in Exhibitions are not there to illustrate a text that frames The Exhibition, such as the curatorial statement. The text is just an additional feature, providing more information. It has the potential and the power to demonstrate new futures, alternative realities. As a research method, The Exhibition is a tool to communicate and convey information in a non-linear, embodied sense. Exhibitions can be cited and referenced in the same way texts are. The information they hold is just as valuable, surpassing notions of subjectivity and objectivity, towards an embodied way of knowing, being in, with, and a part of, the world.

[Note: Remember, I do not hate Books. The Exhibition is a different medium - and it should be embraced as such.

When I was in what I believe is my second year of CEGEP, a post-secondary schooling unique to the province of quebec, I chose to enrol in a course about Artist Books, and one of our assignments was to create a Book that was not a Book.

I was particularly fixated with this one spool of thread at the time, which, at the time I am writing this, I still have. I got it from Miss Jill, my old preschool teacher, who my mom kept in touch with. When the school closed down Miss Jill gave my mom all their Arts and craft supplies, this string was among them - the rest of the supplies are mostly in closets at my parent's house. Anyway, I'm obsessed with this string, I think it is cotton. It is taut and has bits of stuff in it, might just be dust.

I used it to bind regular computer paper together, about 2 centimetres thick, and I made a Book cover by wrapping a flimsy piece of cardstock until it was completely covered. I don't remember why I ended up glueing the pages together, I probably had a different intention for The Book before I submitted it for the assignment. But yeah, I glued the pages together and stuck pieces of ripped pages from an old Book on the first page. I proceeded to highlight letters / words that suited my 'secret' message.

All / m / o / s / t / s / C / h / i / r t / o / p / h / r / e / n / i / c

Almost schizophrenic. A person dear to me had been having episodes and remembering this makes me feel a pinch in my stomach, a lump in my throat. It is dark green, purple, rich burgundy. The Book that is not a Book embodies that time in my life.

Anyway, my Work was simple, kind of boring actually. I must have been 18. Looking back now, I would propose The Exhibition to be a Book that is not a Book.

I did well in the Artist Book class despite my lame project, but it was easy to do well. My dad always told me I am taking the easy way out by studying whatever I want. This maybe also enforces my Practice now, my need to do everything from scratch. I do everything I want to do, but I make it hard for myself, often deliberate, often not. But I enjoy it and that's what matters to me. Publication design is a part of me. I love it. I am not technically good at it however. But I want to be. Maybe while I am also listing facts I should mention that before I went to preschool with Miss Jill I was enrolled in a school for the deaf as a 'model student' since my mom worked there. I am not deaf. But my cousin is, and I wish I was taught sign language but I wasn't. I don't think he knows sign language either. Let us not go into the problematics of my mom telling me I was a 'model student' at a school for the deaf. She just worked there as a secretary I believe, and I was three and in need of preschool - childcare is hard Work. I think this is interesting to know too, because my childhood interest in ears stemmed from growing up around children who were hard of hearing and had lovely colourful devices on the sides of their heads. I used to sit behind kids in elementary school and play with their ears - yes, creepy, I know. But whatever. I was always aware of this. Now I 'hear' colour?]

/Publishing as a Relay/, a conversation between Anna Sophie Springer and Caleb Waldorf, in /Art Writing in Crisis/ a collection of essays I unpack further in part two, highlights their individual publishing ventures.

Anna-Sophie, based in Berlin, manages a publishing house

that creates Books-as-Exhibitions. Together, Anna-Sophie and Caleb speak about how the materials of a Book last longer than the spaces of Exhibitions, considering The Book as medium and describes the context of publishing a Book based on an Exhibition within institutional frameworks as a way of archiving. A Book's availability and accessibility, whether physical or digital, preserves an Exhibition, sometimes for longer than the Art within it.

I can't help but think about C/A/R/Tography. Rita Irwin, who I previously mentioned as the person who coined the term A/R/Tography, wrote a follow up article, about her experience of slow scholarship with a colleague. They spent a lot of time walking and reflecting on the experience of walking and working on a collaborative painting. Their Work emphasised the necessity of slowness in academia, something that I do think is really valuable and needed. The letter "C" here stands for "cartography" (mapping) and for "curating". I was very frustrated with this article because of the way in which they disseminate the painting that they made together. They talk about curating an Exhibition in their article by designing the page in a way that presents different close-ups of the painting, dispersed with words like one would write a poem kind of sporadically on a page, not aligned, a type of poetry I should say that I do like.

When it comes to this, situating images in text in this way, a Reader only sees what the maker wants them to see. In fact, as a Reader, your experience is always curated and guided.

So an Exhibition in a Book - if The Exhibition and The Book are interchangeable mediums, writing is to Books as Art is to Exhibitions and the publisher is the Exhibition maker, organiser or curator.

The Exhibition should speak for itself. The Viewer, if they so choose, should seek out more information when questions come to mind, and that information should be available in a secondary component, such as an Exhibition text, website link, podcast or audio file. The Viewer, as an entity, might often feel like The Exhibition does not 'make sense' unless they are told exactly how they should engage with it. Contemporary popular western culture, capitalism, social media, television, all contribute to this desire for immediate stimulation.

Sometimes Exhibitions are made as a secondary component to a research project, The Viewer's experience an afterthought. I don't mean to say that research projects and Books are bad and should not be prioritised as means of sharing knowledge - I am saying that Exhibitions are a format of their own. A medium independent and very unique from The Book. Viewers are often used to learning through the immediacy of visual mediums like documentary film, encountering another person's way of knowing might be abstract and unfamiliar to them.

But, as a third place and a place of learning, Exhibitions should express an idea, a research method, without displaying it. Exhibitions should embody the knowledge, the story they are trying to share - rather than expect

people to \*read\* along the way through physical space. Exhibitions should \*show\*, not \*tell\*. A Book, by nature, or any writing for that matter, is partial to \*telling\*, not \*showing\*.

Creative writing and poetry are two written mediums that partake in \*showing\* and \*telling\*. Explanation is conducive of \*telling\*, \*displaying\* is conducive of \*showing\* - however it is the way in which an element is displayed that it transmits the information it embodies.

The medium \*is\* the message.

That being said there is a risk in \*showing\* too much. Showing too much can be a telling of its own. Showing too much can render an Exhibition a blockbuster, social media phenomena, where Viewers are just trying to get a good picture of themselves, 'just to show.' Such blockbuster Exhibitions are like picture books, easy to flip through, and don't require much analysis, but there is probably some substance if you spend time with it.

In thinking about The Exhibition and The Book as mediums for embodied knowledge and citing Marshall McLuhan, I acknowledge that in order to transmit and share information to as wide an Audience as possible, we have to assume little about them in order to be as inclusive as possible.

So how then, can Exhibitions and Books join forces, leaning into both of their strengths to share information ?

Through accessible, inclusive and intersectional design. By studying Exhibitions, reading, viewing and writing about them in the next section, I have highlighted some that may appear to contradict my initial thought. However, it is only through writing, Book-making, that this idea is fully articulated.

## **part two: viewing Art and Art writing**

## **on viewing, reading, and writing Exhibitions**

As part of The Viewing body, I don't go to an Exhibition to read wall text. The Work being exhibited ought to be prioritised, it should make Viewers want to read the wall text for more information, but Viewers should not feel like they need to read the wall text in order to understand what is going on. I would rather take home a printed publication with text and images.

In coming across the idea of embodied knowledge in anthropology. I decided that is what I would do moving forward, I would hold information like a drop of water, soak it in. I have thought of myself as a sponge a lot since then, as a sponge sitting in a sink filled with water, too wet, too self absorbed to do any more Work. There is a scene in /Locke and Key/, a netflix show based on a series of Books, where they unlock their brains and throw Books inside and then know them completely. I want to do that. I want to absorb the information, know it all by heart and spit it out again in action, in Practice, in my own Work.

It is different to understand something with your body than it is to know with your mind. To me, to know with my body is to know beyond language. Depending on language is to know with the mind, to intellectualise. As an Artist I want to know beyond verbal articulation, but reading and writing helps me articulate. Soaking up information in any space allows me to know with my body before I attempt to articulate through writing. To read Exhibition texts traps an idea in my mind in someone else's words, colours. Often,

because I am a sponge, I assume it to be true. I can only attempt to challenge it, engage with it critically through writing. Knowing with my body precedes knowing with my mind.

Writing helps me know for myself, it helps me articulate my ideas. Reading other people's writing helps me associate my ideas to those that have already been articulated, it joins a larger conversation.

I have read countless essays, articles, texts, publications and Books, I have sat through many talks, panels, lectures, conferences, documentaries and youtube videos about what it means to make and write about Art today. So much so that I am now struggling to communicate my own ideas. I have difficulty distinguishing an idea that is mine and one that I have absorbed from somebody else. Absorbing other's Work floods my brain. I feel like I've been a sponge for too long, and I've absorbed so much I can no longer, and I drip slowly. I need to remember that I am in a sink filled with water. Or on a counter, or the floor, or a garbage bag, or whatever, it doesn't \*matter\*.

My experience from engaging with Art as a Viewer has evolved from writing about Art as a student journalist. Art writing enabled me to confront questions I had about the industry, seek out answers from Artists and Cultural Workers. It allowed me to study Exhibitions, seeing trends in the ways people were thinking about the world, through Art.

## on 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' in Art writing

In the Momus podcast episode, [/Present Imperfect/](#), Sky Goodden, founder and publisher of Momus, “an international art publication, podcast, and mentorship platform for art writing and criticism”, quotes one of her mentors (unnamed); “If you want to understand how to write good criticism about art, read good criticism about books”.

Sky, living and working in Canada, adds that there is never going to be an assumption that a person reading a Book review will have read the Book in question. In literary criticism, it is necessary to describe a subject without any presumed knowledge and “draw circles out from a point”, preserving the Work in question longer than the duration of Art in an Exhibition. This is a feature she believes Art writers should adopt in their Work. She continues, “too often with art we are relying on the jpeg or relying on a presumed insider familiarity so that we don't do that work”. The episode is about [/Art Writing in Crisis/](#), a collection of essays from established Art critics writing about Art writing and publishing in the present age.

[Note: Last year I posted a photo of [/Art Writing in Crisis/](#) on my Instagram with the caption, “reading and thinking about writing about writing about art but also editing an Exhibition statement while walking and hoping that Charlotte will stop me from getting hit by cars”. This post was the prelude to this thesis. I was reading and thinking and writing about Exhibitions while making Artwork,

designing an Exhibition and a text, while engaging with the remaining non-Art aspects of my life.]

One of the underlying requirements for publishing with Momus is: “What makes your pitch art writing and not coverage?” What is the difference between Art writing, Art criticism, and reporting?

I am not a student of Art history, which is a field of study that usually supports traditional Art criticism, and although I have worked in student journalism, I am also not a reporter or a journalist.

I am not a critic, not in the classical, ‘objective’, well-read sense. But I am critical, and well-read in another sense.

I am an Art writer. I write about Art in some way or another, the level of criticism varies. I write to ask questions and seek to answer them. Sounds simple enough, but writing as a process reveals a lot and just as much about me and my own biases. A lot might need to be cut, rearranged and added along the way to follow a clear line of thought, but deep down I strive for a mess. Tiptoeing the line between ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’ always.

Since working in student journalism I have written a few pieces for magazines, and I have also written Exhibition texts as a freelance Cultural Worker. Oftentimes only by looking at the Work online, but when I can, I dig deeper and speak to the Artists. Sometimes a gallery doesn’t want you to do that. Once I made a note on a document that became

the title of an Exhibition. No one thought twice about it. I was not part of the organisational team, but as a Writer, I ended up curating the online-only Exhibition by presenting a point of view and thus creating a framework in which to view the Artwork.

Writing comes with a lot of power. It can change the way Art and ideas are viewed and interpreted. As an Artist and a Writer I believe that text should not frame an Exhibition, this is the role of the curator and the Artist, not the Writer. If text comes first, then the Artworks are second, illustrating it.

In order to make sure my writing is valid, I need to consistently read others' Work. I respond to it usually in writing. Artists understand the world through their Practice, their Art. Writers, specifically Art writers, understand Art through writing. And Readers understand the writing, and the Art by reading. A telephone game, much is lost in translation.

All of these mediums, the making of an Exhibition and a Book, are poured through the sieve of someone's 'subjectivity.' This is why positionality is important and 'objectivity' is impossible.

Subjective, non-objective Art writing - like that done by The White Pube, Kimberly Drew, Aria Dean, among others, is important because it highlights the individual experience, individual ways of knowing. Trying to communicate that

with others, have a conversation and move forward on real and different projects.

An essay, any piece of writing that pulls from another, pulls from one body of Work to situate their own voice in a conversation. Interpersonal relations help spread that voice, amplifying it.

I used to say that good writing can make or break an Exhibition. A bad Artist statement can ruin the way an Artist's Work is perceived. It is true, to some extent and I hate that. As a Writer, I love to know other people's Work, I love to sew paragraphs together, but this often frames and curates a perspective that \*I\* think \*you\* ought to read and believe. But this is me, dangerously tiptoeing the line between writing about Art and writing that is Art, or 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity'... This quickly falls into inconsiderate, oppressive territory. The opposite of care-full curation.

My writing has never sought to intellectualise or justify the Work of Artists, it has always been to highlight the experience of that Work and try to understand the circumstances that lead to its creation and the techniques that were used to do so. I have always been trying to make embodied knowledge tangible, to find words for that which is beyond language, with accessible communication, leaning into The Book, publication and writing as a medium.

Much of my work is grounded in writing, but my [Art] Practice tries to push away from language. And what I seek

from Exhibitions is affect, as GDLP puts it, in her 2018 article for /The White Pube/, /why I don't read the press release/.

“The reason I can give or take the press release for exhibitions is cause frankly, I can give or take the artist too. I’ve found myself in this room, just me and the art, and I want it to change or match the state I’m in,,,,; i want it to affect me. now, i don’t want understanding of art, I want affect.”

[Note: Used to the way I write, I know what mistakes to anticipate from myself - I always, always, write “right” instead of “write” - or the other way around. In fact, I just did this, and erased it and corrected it three times. Same for “now” and “know.” Look, I am aware homophone mistakes are common, but I think the meaning behind these words reveals a lot about the way my brain works. Writing is righting, righting is writing, knowing is nowing, nowing is knowing. The act of being present, the act of knowing, of writing, and of being correct - are all in the same way an attempt to understand the world around me, recording it to share with others. I had to look through years of old handwritten notes in order to remember why I think certain things about Exhibition making for this thesis. I am aware that I hold a specific opinion and it is informed by x, y and z text - but because I wrote about it years ago I just cannot trace the thread, I cannot really explain why I know the thing.]

## **on aesthetic response, poetic inquiry and notetaking**

Within Art writing, Art criticism, as it compares to aesthetic response, is \*supposed\* to be objective, reflective, historical, theoretical and critical pieces of writing about the circumstances of a Work. It can be quite intellectual. It isn't always the most accessible to read to someone not involved in the same discourses on a daily basis, just like with scientific studies. Aesthetic response embraces the 'subjective' qualities of viewing, experiencing and writing about Art.

Turning towards aesthetic response, a method of engaging with Artwork that prioritises another Practice of being-with, I propose that much can be learned from these initial reactions to inform the making of an Exhibition.

I spoke with Marie-Helene Lemaire, head of education at montreal's Phi Fondation, about her pedagogy of movement, which she developed under the framework of her PhD in communication studies from concordia university. I asked her what she meant by movement, literal movement, or theoretical movement. She said both; the movement of ideas, the movement of bodies in Exhibition spaces, specifically in her case, the gallery she Works at for which she developed the pedagogy in relation to guided tours.

For Marie-Helene, poetry is an essential step in planning and facilitating visitor interactions with Exhibitions. Poetry

is part of her Practice. Writing, more generally speaking, journaling, stream of consciousness writing, is part of mine.

Her pedagogy of movement draws from Mieke Bal's idea of travelling concepts to form the basis of the guided tours.

To me, this is a framework that outlines an embodied, responsive, very human Practice that does not actually need to be framed. I am quick to judge overly-academic approaches in Art education, Art writing and aesthetic response. To quote Audre Lorde, I don't want to use the master's tools.

In 2018, I was enrolled in a special topics class in Art education which focused on aesthetic response. We voyaged through Henri Matisse's Work, via projection, mapping it with our eyes, sketching out the paths we took and then trying to verbalise it with the group. At the same time, I was enrolled in David Howes' course; /Arts, Aesthetics & Anthropology/ - which was, notably, not an Art class but within the department of anthropology at concordia university.

This period of my studies kicked off my interest in aesthetic response, especially in relation to my Work as a student journalist, a painting and drawing teacher, and a synaesthetic person. In /Arts, Aesthetics & Anthropology/ we read /Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society/, which my professor co-authored with Constance Classen. It covers the role of the senses in cultures around the world and concludes with a chapter on synaesthesia,

which was the first time I encountered my way of knowing in an academic framework.

The description of the Book reads:

“Ways of Sensing is a stimulating exploration of the cultural, historical and political dimensions of the world of the senses. The book spans a wide range of settings and makes comparisons between different cultures and epochs, revealing the power and diversity of sensory expressions across time and space. Howes and Classen consider how political issues such as nationalism, gender equality and the treatment of minority groups are shaped by sensory practices and metaphors. They also reveal how the phenomenon of synaesthesia, or mingling of the senses, can be seen as not simply a neurological condition but a vital cultural mode of creating social and cosmic interconnections.”

Flipping through the pages as I write this I am reminded of a reason why I was put off by it and kept it slightly more towards the back of my mind. It characteristically, as an anthropological text, implies other cultures' ways of sensing are non normative - revealing that the Audience to be a white audience seeking to learn about different ways of sensing. Perhaps this is not an intention, but I am sure all anthropologists and sociologists have 'good' intentions - it is an inherent issue in the field, and why my research focused on material culture and Art making.

That being said, I explore Art with the interest of an Artist, Researcher and Teacher - studying anthropology was also something I fell into because I did not have enough of a portfolio at the time, and since I studied media, communications, Art and culture in CEGEP, completely burned out from media and communication studies, I decided to lean into culture in university, hence anthropology. Questionable choice in my opinion but it has allowed me to study how white people make Art and all of the varying factors that are involved in that.

My Art education class visited an Exhibition at concordia's FOFA Gallery, /The Material Turn/, and we guided each other in gallery games. I wrote about this experience for /The Concordian/.

"Gallery games are generally dedicated to breaking down the intimidation of art galleries, as well as deconstructing the composition of featured artwork; participants question the context in which the artwork was created and the choices made in the process."  
(Chloë Lalonde, 2018)

My main takeaway from the experience, at the time, was the following:

"I realized the pieces could be observed as artifacts, products of their time and place in society, and results of the artists' own experiences. On their own, they don't exactly have a use [...] The projects featured in The Material Turn provoke conversation between

digital matter and physical matter. My experience participating in the gallery games forced me to consider another pathway, relationship or difference between the viewer of artworks and a participant in art, and the value viewing and/or participating has in the artworld.” (Chloë Lalonde, 2018)

I was so taken by finding the purpose for Art and identifying the utility of Art objects. I was, after all, coming to terms with the climate crisis and struggling with my own Practice as an Artist, Educator and anthropology student interested in material culture and whiteness.

Being a writer is all encompassing. You forget you have a body. You write in one position for so long you wonder why your legs are sore. You make excuses not to leave the apartment because it is snowing and you have to write, you have a deadline. But in reality you are just talking to yourself, and hoping maybe, it will one day reach others.

Experiencing Art produces an aesthetic response rooted in an embodied understanding. The same way you feel pain if you are sitting in the same position, or standing all day, the way your body engages in a space, the way your body subconsciously absorbs information from Artwork has a physical effect that, while you might not be aware of it, tends to be the underlying reason for a lot of Art writing.

“Absence of light in the Tribuna bores me, and I am unwilling to look at anything.” (Vernon Lee, 84)

“I can look and enjoy breathing naturally, without effort, walking about in the picture in a leisurely spirit. I shy off the Madonna because (1) it is impossible, except at great distance, to see both her and the angel; (2) because of a wall which I hate; (3) raw colour. I retreat to the middle of the room-see the whole-Wonder, miracle!” (Vernon Lee, 85)

“[Bellini’s Allegory] hangs too low. Consequently the floor always remains under my eyes, and feels as if under my chest.” (Vernon Lee, 89)

Vernon Lee’s writing in */The Psychology of an Art Writer/* defines the aesthetic experience as situated in the body, the emotion felt does not cause bodily symptoms but rather, is those symptoms - the aesthetic response is a somatic response. Beginning from feeling into a given Artwork, the Gallery Diaries, part of */The Psychology of an Art Writer/*, are free of the technical vocabulary of academic writing. Vernon’s diary tracks their mood, the weather and the atmosphere in the gallery that contributes to their aesthetic response to any given Artwork.

Vernon’s writing usually focuses on individual Artwork but sometimes draws out the spatial arrangement of an Exhibition. She writes that she’s aware when she is alone with a building, she has this feeling of being heightened and she conceives the place as a god. She writes about the staircase, the frieze, and a sense of liberation, a sense of being where she ought to be. In this instance, the place dictates how she feels, the architecture has a sense of

grandiosity and the impacts are experienced directly. Progressively, her gallery diary entries mention how she walks around her day-to-day life with an aesthetic awareness and aesthetic appreciation for the way in which light falls on objects, and how people interact with them. She sees everything as painting or a sculpture.

With my artistic research, in-situ and ex-situ Art writing, I make clear my findings, revealing my aesthetic response and embodied stance on certain Exhibitions and illustrate further how they have contributed to my own Work.

In my writing I often recollect energy levels. I hope this does not come off as being lazy but rather exhaustion. Absolute exhaustion caused by working and studying, thinking that I must Work rigorously all the time to excel in my field, if I want to make it as an Artist and Cultural Worker. Absolute exhaustion caused by late-stage capitalism supported by the institution of western academia.

If working at such intensities is causing my energy levels to drop so low I cannot read or view Exhibitions without it draining every ounce of me - I cannot be a good Artist or Cultural Worker either. When loving Work, the balance between pleasure and research is... delicate.

These things ebb and flow into each other. There is pleasure in research and pleasure in Work. There is also pleasure in socialising, and socialising in research and socialising in Work. It can't be broken down into simple

rules or guidelines - but you can keep track of your energy levels and ability to engage with different mediums. I think Exhibitions can Work on our bodies the same way that Artworks do. In my own Art writing I will often highlight the ways in which the Exhibition has been curated or designed in a way I found to be incredibly distracting to the Work. Among my peers I am known as being a harsh critic, oftentimes I find more to dislike and struggle with finding things that I actually like. Realising this, I've made an effort to list things that have brought me pleasure in Exhibitions. In the responses that will follow, I also want to make space for my negative reactions in order to unpack them.

## reflection on viewing studies

The Exhibition has become a medium as dear to me as my Practice as an Artist and Cultural Worker itself. I am not writing about what I learned from a given Exhibition in comparison to its curatorial statement. Exhibition spaces transmit so much information, I am not arguing about their capacity to be places of learning, I am telling you that they are and that the information that can be learned is endless and varied. What I am doing is trying to figure out if they are Books, and what I mean by that exactly. Are these Exhibitions truly intersectional, accessible third places and places of learning? How do they embody their contents? Do they show? Or do they tell?

I invite you to consult the [annex](#) for more detailed information on my viewing studies. In viewing and reflecting on these Exhibitions I have experimented with varying ways of writing specifically in the form of note taking, memory-based reflection and poetic inquiry. I've decided to annex these pieces of writing and summarise my findings for you in the following pages.

I indicated the name of The Exhibition, where it was held, when I visited, why I visited, when and how I wrote, and the type of space it was held in. All the information found was compiled from the spaces' websites. I wish to acknowledge the way in which these institutions receive support might affect the way they make Exhibitions. I have, until now, avoided institutional critique because I see it as white noise, as is a discussion of the problems raised by western

academic frameworks. I've excluded and avoided discussion of most Exhibitions of a museum's new acquisitions, collections and biennales. These types of group Exhibitions are often too restricted by western institutional frameworks.

Some institutions are required by their funding agents to put together Exhibitions on specific themes in order to get more funding. As institutions, museums need to acquire, collect and disseminate Art Work. It is important to consider these as **expositions or exhibits**<sup>11</sup> of collections, archives, and libraries. It is important to hold these institutions accountable, it is important for them to be transparent, and for them to know that Viewers see them - we notice.

But as a Viewer, there is a lot we do not know. I am certain a lot happens behind closed doors, and that I cannot speak to. I can only speak to what I witness.

In experimenting with different [Art] writing styles, note taking, poetic inquiry, and aesthetic response, I unpack my thoughts on the subject through the process of writing, I ring out my sponge, allowing my thoughts to seep through the pages. I have not differentiated the types of writing outside of the annex, rather I have stitched the paragraphs

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<sup>11</sup> "**Expositions**" and "**exhibits**" differ from the word "Exhibition" in that they refer to a display, whether discursive in writing or a presentation of objects in a collection. The word "Exhibition" describes the act of exhibiting, but here I use the word instead as a noun, referring to The Exhibition as a medium, a happening, and opt for the words "exhibit" and "exposition" when referring to the act.

together here and consider the entire written component of my thesis part of this seepage, the product of the Art writing.

I chose to follow poetic inquiry intentionally after chatting with my friend and classmate Malashree Suvedi, who asked me to follow a score she wrote based on the American Poet, Mary Oliver's Practice, as part of her thesis.

I told her I would wait for the right moment to do so, and I would send her some things from my notes app in the meanwhile. After sending them over, Malashree asked me, "didn't you say you weren't a poet?", "I'm not", I said.

At least I am not trying to be.

I started taking notes on my phone at Exhibitions when I forgot my notebook at home. Before that I would just take photos. But it definitely changed the way I write. I also write this way in public transportation - whenever my notebook is just too far in my tote bag or whatever. I write on my phone for accessibility, and my notes are just words. I let myself make mistakes, typos, and I don't correct them. However, some of the poems I wrote with a poetic intent. I noticed, after the fact, well even during, towards the end, that I was thinking lyrically and my mind sought rhyming words to round out an image. I wrote them on paper and transcribed them with as much precision the software would allow. I struggled to read my handwriting, a messy half-cursive, half-block lettering, so they are not exact and in some cases, I added edits in parentheses. Capitalisation

and punctuation is intuitive, and transcribed from my handwriting, it is also not exact. My spacing, also intuitive. I decided I would not look at any images of the Exhibitions while writing, just the list of Exhibition titles on my working document. I think that while doing so, I hovered over certain Exhibitions with my mouse, so I may have pulled some words from the texts visible on the screen. I decided not to edit this to preserve the intuitive inquiry.

Looking back at these poems (see the [annex](#)) now I notice a recurring pattern, I am initially impacted by colour, then materials, apparent viewing order (navigation), space (crowded, clutter, emptiness / room) and words (as images, and symbols) I am not surprised by this, but I am interested in my intuitive word choices particularly, “emporium”, “this way and that”, “and again”, “dot”, “- less”. The first three terms seem to me to be something that was on my mind at the time, connoting wayfinding and wonder. I’m not sure about the word “dot” - if I were to speculate I would say perhaps that, given the way I used the period (.) in my writing, to make or articulate a point, to end the emphasis of an idea, perhaps the word “dot” serves the same purpose. Whereas “- less” on the other hand holds space for both absence and presence.

I remember the first Exhibition I saw in vienna last year, Ines Doujak’s /Geistervölker/ at Kunsthalle Wien. I remember being taken by the room, the way it invited you inwards, allowed you to explore this world of the virus. Along one wall the Artist had installed a plush bench, headphones pinned to the wall and transcripts invited the

Viewer to sit and listen, or read along with the transcription of the podcast episodes, which were also available on Spotify - there was a QR code you could scan and listen to whenever you liked. I didn't have much time then, so I sat for a bit and quickly listened to different excerpts of each podcast, I believe there were four or five. But I listened on my way home, and finished them once I was there. The audio lingers with me still today. In my mind's eye I see glimpses of a large car, gruesome characters, a baby, a circle on the floor with text. But the sounds of her Work, her voice, stays with me - I may not know the words by heart but I absorbed them. \*Hearing\* it \*felt longer\*.

The problem I see with Books is that they require attention and energy to be read. If you are sleepy, you will probably have to reread them. I think the same is true with Exhibitions that are also Books.

An included audio component is like a gift. Something I can tune in to whenever I want, with low energy. And if I need to rewind the track a bit to listen again, because say, I was running water and it ran louder than the audio, I will rewind. Listening and speaking, conversing, allows me to absorb information. I am getting pretty good at brushing off written words as 'meaningless' symbols. Residue from reading a lot for school, I tell myself. This makes me sad because I love to read, I do. But just as going to Exhibitions for me has become a thing of Work more than a thing of pleasure, so has reading. I am trying to find a middle ground again. And I think care-fully curated, intersectional and accessible Exhibitions is the answer to that. I have to be as intentional

with Exhibitions as I am with words and with reading Books. I read something because I am trying to get something out of it. Knowledge or pleasure, there is also pleasure in knowledge. But there is always a goal. It is similar with Exhibitions.

/Embodied Structures/, the name of the 2021 Contemporary Immersive Virtual Art (CIVA) Festival taking place at the Belvedere 21 in Vienna was a group Exhibition. Large neon orange labels identified the Artwork with QR codes taking you to the Artist's profiles on the CIVA Festival website and guided you through the space. Other than these incredibly large, neon orange pieces of wall text, there was little explanatory text in the Exhibition. It was designed leaning into digital aesthetics. There was seating (benches with cushions strapped to it), and the room felt welcoming and spacious. Engaging with the Work required a lot of energy, specifically because of the medium; digital and video Art.

Each piece used headphones, requiring sound and sight. In order to thoroughly engage with each piece (and there were many) you had to commit to spending at least 5 minutes with the Work, which in some cases required waiting in lines. The target audience seems to be someone with time.

/Embodied Structures/ was a Book, more specifically an essay, in that it required being read due to the nature of the Artwork. Virtual Art is hard to classify within this Book-not-Book framework, as video inherently shows and

tells at once. My suggestion here is that less is more - though it is a festival, and the point of a festival is to bring many things together. The Exhibition as a medium within a festival is certainly an interesting one. It exists already within a certain framework, the schema of a festival, and thus stands apart from most other types of Exhibitions.

In comparison, the Friedl Dicker-Brandeis Exhibition at the University Gallery at Heiligenkreuzerhof was outright the Exhibition of a Book, or more specifically, the exposition of archival material from the Artist's body of work from the university of applied arts' collection. The Exhibition space itself only included text in german, limiting the target audience - however the assemblage of the Artworks really spoke to the Artist's Practice. The Viewer had an understanding of the social, historical, political and economic background that influenced the Artist's work. What was frustrating about this space was that although it was inviting, further information was only accessible to anyone who could understand german. Although this Exhibition was literally the exposition of research and required being read as a Book, the space managed to embody the Artist's multidisciplinary Practice - though the accessibility of that space was not intersectional. This Exhibition showed, and allowed you space to assume, nodding in confirmation in a language I cannot speak fluently.

[Note: I was raised in a province that is trying to preserve its 'historical' language (french). Remember, quebec is unceded Indigenous land - the 'historical language' is not

actually french or english. Current policies are bordering on fascism, limiting the use of english in the workplace, in schools and other institutions. Small Exhibition spaces run by francophones publish their communication in french only because that is what they are required to do by the law - english translation is not mandatory. I acknowledge that the legal language in austria is german and that there is no requirement to translate anything in english. It is a question of accessibility and who they deem their audience to be. This is partially interesting to me as an international student - it seems different departments of the university can choose whether or not they want to be bilingual, and that is okay - it just creates an interesting tension between the facilities speakers and non-speakers have access to within the institution. I am pro multilingual information in Exhibition spaces, in all spaces actually, if it is not multilingual, it is not accessible to everyone. My thesis, as a Book, is only written in one language however. I do not have the means to translate it. However if you really wanted to, you could copy paste chunks into Google translate. You cannot do this with an Exhibition though.]

At first glance, the /Embodied Structures/ and /Friedl Dicker-Brandeis/ Exhibitions seem to counter my idea of an Exhibition that is not a Book. The will to learn requires a certain amount of energy and the medium of an individual Artwork in an Exhibition contributes greatly to how that information can be learned. But in the end, /Embodied Structures/ was telling, /Friedl Dicker-Brandeis/ was showing.

Some Exhibitions, like /Faking the Real/ at Kunsthaus Graz follow a traditional essay format in that the rooms or sections within an Exhibition are grouped by subject or chronology. And it makes sense to do that in some physical spaces and with some subject matter. Containing information can help The Viewer understand how they are expected to engage with and navigate through the space and the Artwork. Just like how some texts include a bit of text that tells you how you are supposed to read it.

/Faking the Real/ was interesting in that there were sections, no closed rooms. But the space was not truly accessible. There was very limited seating and a lot of Work. That being said, the same is true for the /Friedl Dicker Brandeis/ Exhibition, but it was less overwhelming.

/Faking the Real/ was crowded and overwhelming, likely on purpose given the subject of the Exhibition. That being said, it did speak for itself. But as I write I am seeing that the distinction between an Exhibition that is a Book and an Exhibition that is not a Book lies somewhere between whether or not the Exhibition is successful at embodying information, and how accessible that embodiment is. Remember, in order for something to be truly accessible, it must be physically barrier-free, accepting of all bodies and open to diverse ways and expressions of knowing. ([See revisiting culturally responsive pedagogy](#))

These two aforementioned Exhibitions are ones that embody linear ways of thinking - they are Exhibitions that embody information as a Book would. They require being

\*read,\* but this experience of \*reading\* is so immersive - The Viewer can know it with their body before conceptualising it in their mind; the life and Work of Friedl Dicker Brandeis or the problems of the media in western culture.

On the other hand, the Ludwig Wittgenstein Exhibition is the epitome of a Book - it was telling. I remember the curator saying that she did not want to make a Book, but she did. There were so many photographs, illustrating what? It made no sense without reading the text. The photos could not really speak for themselves, they were being spoken for. It felt like the museum was trying to fill up time between Exhibitions by sorting through collections of photographs and associating it to Wittgenstein's theories, only because he mentioned being interested in photography. It makes more sense as a research project. After seeing this Exhibition twice I still do not remember anything other than a blurred perception of faces.

The Basquiat Exhibitions in montreal and vienna, in comparison to /Friedl Dicker-Brandeis/, were Books in that they emphasised reading, they were telling. They made more space for text and framing the Exhibition than they made space for his Work. Both Exhibitions, in montreal and in vienna were frankly lacking - they were just bad Exhibitions in my opinion. They did not represent Basquiat well. That being said, montreal plugged a hole by situating their Exhibition, focusing on Basquiat's relationship to music. This gave them a framework to Work within. The Exhibition in Vienna had no such framework and felt empty.

Basquiat deserves all his Work in one place. The Exhibition should give you the feeling that everything he ever made is there, even if it isn't. His Work demands to take up space, not room to breathe.

/Sound is Liquid/ was not a Book, and it might have been my favourite Exhibition I've seen this year because of its simplicity. The photographs on the wall in varying sizes and minimal use of text encouraged Viewers to wander freely. First I walked the perimeter, then I 'ping-ponged' through the space, making physical connections between images that caught my attention. Eventually I found a small pile of papers on a bench, The Exhibition text. I sat down and read it. It highlighted connections and gave context on photographs I had not considered yet. I navigated the space with my new map, walked the perimeter again and repeated the process.

After thinking through these exhibitions in my viewing studies, I created a list to classify them and isolate my findings, 'objectifying' them further. It should be noted that this list contains other Exhibitions I have not written about in my [annex](#), but that I have visited in the last two years. I have not written about them for either of the following conflicts of interest; I could write a thesis on The Exhibition alone, a case study is not enough or I have already have written an article about The Exhibition, my Artwork was exhibited or I was part of the organisation in some capacity, my response was too personal, too rooted in artistic pleasure or too tied to the aesthetic quality and subject of the Artwork and not enough about The

Exhibition as a medium - rendering it not relevant to my research, or my notes are not elaborate enough and I cannot recall much from the experience.

| Legend: Group Solo Duo                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exhibitions that are Books                                                                                | Exhibitions that are not Books                                                                                                                                                                       |
| /The Narrow Gate Of The Here-And-Now/, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin                                 | Ines Doujak, /Geistervölker/ and Belinda Kazeem-Kaminski, Kunsthalle Wien                                                                                                                            |
| Stanley Février. /Museum of the Art of Today / Department of the Invisible/, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts | Ai Weiwei, / In Search Of Humanity/, Albertina Modern, Vienna                                                                                                                                        |
| /Embodied Structures/, CIVA Festival, Belvedere 21, Vienna                                                | David Hockney, /INSIGHTS/ Kunstforum Wien                                                                                                                                                            |
| Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic and Sonja Ivekovic, /Works of heart [1974-2022]/ at Kunsthalle Wien              | /Views of Within: Picturing the Spaces We Inhabit/, /How long does it take for one voice to reach another?/, and Ragnar Kjartansson, /Sumarnótt / Death Is Elsewhere/ , Montreal Museum of Fine Arts |
| /Whiteness as Property/, Künstlerhaus Vienna                                                              | /A corps perdu, sharing madness/, Galerie de l'uqam, Montreal                                                                                                                                        |
| /Photography as analytical practice/, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Leopold Museum, Vienna                         | Lucie McKenzie & atelier E.B. Meyer*Kainer, Vienna                                                                                                                                                   |
| /Seeing Sound: Basquiat and Music/, Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal                                         | /Friedl Dicker-Brandeis/, University Gallery at Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna                                                                                                                           |
| /Basquiat: The Retrospective/, Albertina, Vienna                                                          | Saskia te Nicklin, /I bring you                                                                                                                                                                      |
| /The Art of One World/,                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                                                             |                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Montreal Museum of Fine Arts                                                                | the motions, but without the emotions/, Wonnerth Dejacó, Vienna              |
| /Do Nothing, Feel Everything/, Kunsthalle wien                                              |                                                                              |
| /yea I made it up, yea its real/, 3655 st laurent, Montreal                                 | Brishty Khatun Alam, /MAAAAAACH!/, Kunstraum Memphis, Linz                   |
| /Sonnet to science, ode to magic/, and /At a distance - from within/, Projet Casa, Montreal | /Faking the Real/, Kunsthaus Graz.                                           |
| /Ways of seeing/, Albertina Modern, Vienna                                                  | /La vallée/, Fabrice Hyber, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris |
|                                                                                             | /Un regard engagé/, Alice Neel, Centre Pompidou, Paris                       |
|                                                                                             | /Monet Mitchell/, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris                             |
|                                                                                             | Huang Po-Chih / Blue Elephant/, MUMOK, Vienna                                |

Out of the Exhibitions I have listed that are not Books,

10 are solo Exhibitions,  
4 are group Exhibitions,  
2 are duo Exhibitions.

The most successful type of Exhibition, that is not a Book, is an immersive one. It just so happens that solo Exhibitions are the most successful at being immersive, embodying an Artist's Work completely. But this is not always the case, especially if the Artist is no longer alive. Requiring The Viewer to engage in a specific way characteristic to

readability is an inherent quality of the medium of The Book. Not providing seating, trigger warnings, multilingual translation restricts the way The Viewer can engage with the knowledge being shared by an Exhibition, and restricting these ways and expressions of knowing is another quality of The Book as a medium. I suppose, what I mean here is not only are Exhibitions not Books, but that more generally speaking, or writing if I am to be literal, is that Exhibitions are not texts.

Thinking in broad terms of texts, rather than Books, texts contain an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. If Exhibitions are not texts, they should not follow that structure, but even in thinking of such an Exhibition, I can only articulate those thoughts linearly, in writing.

But how could I go about my own Work in a group Exhibition knowing it is easier to make an Exhibition that is not a Book with solo and duo Exhibitions. What kind of Exhibition would I make that is not a Book, is that Exhibition a group Exhibition? How can I make an Exhibition that is a poem? A painting? An Exhibition that has a structure which embodies the Work within it?

I can imagine myself working on an Exhibition that is a painting, where the difference between individual Artworks blur. What kind of proposal can I make? Would writing out an example make it an Exhibition that is a Book, an Exhibition that is a text? Is an Exhibition that is a Book synonymous with an Exhibition that is a text? Perhaps every Exhibition that is a Book is an Exhibition that is a text,

but not every Exhibition that is a text in an Exhibition that is a Book, /Faking the real/, /Friedl Dicker-Brandeis/ and /A corps perdu, sharing madness/ would be examples of this.

There are Exhibitions that I have listed that are “readable”, you go from room to room, absorbing each work until an image forms - you are reading the Exhibition. It is an essay, a novel, an article. Art fairs are like magazines, Biennale’s like volumes of publications.

It is a project based idea, it has to happen to you. As a writer, I can whip a text up very quickly, but an Exhibition cannot start off as a text if my desire is for it to not be a Book.

The transformation of a Exhibition into a Book comes into play when the overall medium does not consider nonlinear ways of knowing, physical accessibility, multilingual and multi-sensory ways of Viewer engagement. It is an intricate balance of showing and telling.

A group Exhibition, if not care-fully curated, is oftentimes an Exhibition for the sake of an Exhibition. Many group Exhibitions take from a curator’s ideas. They begin with a text, and the Artwork illustrates said text. Other times, the text comes second and can better frame the Exhibition on display - but to me, this still requires being read, very rarely is the meaning of the Artwork embodied in the space of a group Exhibition, unless it was born in collaboration.

Until now, I have spoken of Exhibitions as a medium in a general sense, and those I have written about have had a lot of support from the institutions they are shown in to communicate a specific story, following a linear narrative, whether that of a person's life, or unpacking an idea with and through Art.

In embarking on the practical component of my artistic research, I use my experience of synaesthesia to explore multi-sensory, accessible Exhibition making, transforming a series of abstract drawings into an installation in an Exhibition space. There is no linearity to it. As an Artist and Cultural Worker, I am interested in exploring multi-modality, haptic, and non-verbal communication, especially when it comes to Artwork and the Exhibition as a medium. Writing, or producing content for Books as a medium is easy, you can state an idea, decide it is wrong, form another opinion, go back and edit. All you need is time. But Art making and Exhibition making, requires space. Both, space and time are limited resources bound by many factors, social, cultural, personal and institutional. I have an idea, my preliminary thoughts on the Exhibition and the Book as accessible mediums for embodied knowledge feel clearer, but I won't be able to fully conclude this idea until I put it into Practice.

## **part three: Art making**

## How I am doing it

### **synaesthesia, it doesn't matter**

I have discovered in the past few months, in a class critique, that the experience does not \*matter\* - in that it literally does not materialise, which is why I struggle with capturing it in any material and documenting it so (physical, written etc.)

I've always known I had synaesthesia. Even from a young age I would write in colour. Now I can hear it, I know what shape it is, what it might feel like, and I can almost taste it.

I don't like writing about my experience with synaesthesia, because writing makes it tangible, and this is not something that is tangible. But the tangibility isn't the problem, maybe it is the predetermined form, the shapes of the letters and the lack of actual visible colour. Knowing my synaesthesia for myself, I can draw it out, with the right colours, and follow intuitive forms, forms and colours I know to be true. During my post-secondary education I realised how to manipulate it. I began exploring with a variety of mediums, colouring pencil, marker, oil pastel, chalk pastel - pastels Work the best, their immediacy is key. I began by moving away from words to grasp concepts, expressing them in paint, which is just as efficient as working with pastels, but at the same point in my life I was struggling with paint as an Art Educator and Artist concerned about the environment. Paint at the time was the only waste I produced in excess.

So, in a refusal to use plastic paint and non-biodegradable materials, and stemming from a research paper I wrote on the material culture of paint and another on [sub]urbanisation of so-called Laval / île Jésus / 'jardin de Montréal', I began experimenting with making my own pigments and watercolours, out of my own food waste and plants that grow in my parents' backyard in Laval, or around me wherever I am.

This slow painting Practice has a downside, not only does making paint, hand-made paper and weaving canvas take on Art-object lives of their own, use up a lot of time, years of my Practice, but my colour palette is limited. I have not yet produced the exact colours I would need to see this through within my current material framework. For the most part, the colour of things available at the store is what I am restricted to - capturing the exact shades with materials is almost impossible. It is easier online - however that is of no interest to me.

In 2018 I led a series of classes with homeschooled youth in Montreal where we painted to music and analysed the similarities between the resulting drawings. I was curious to answer the following questions; Can different types of synaesthesia be developed in individuals who already possess one type? Can a person be trained to develop synaesthesia naturally, by heightening their aesthetic response, and not by memorising the methods of another synaesthete? How can this then be validated, legitimised? And is it possible to do so without studying the brain?

Considering my position as an Educator, variety in aesthetic, and synaesthetic experience[s], participant observation, impact of parents involved I observed that learners cue into either a songs' rhythm and melody, or cue into the lyrics, illustrating them, or the instruments they can identify in the song. They used socially-coded colours to represent songs they deemed happy, sad, loving, etc. When a colour-association appeared arbitrary and repetitive, I made the assumption that the learner I was working with might also have synaesthesia. We tend to have our own rules for things.

Afterwards, I noticed that the colours changed in pronunciation, repetition and language. For example, the colours for the words "sky" and "ciel", are blue-yellow-white and light pink-indigo/black-blur/halo, but these would be socially-coded as blue in either language. Before long I made the connection to sound, the meaning behind the words and eventually gesture in regards to pronunciation, but I am not yet finished with that mode of inquiry in my drawings.

In 2019 I began trying to illustrate music, but it was too complex to grasp, I am not musically-inclined. I opted to Work with silence and ambient noise.

/sound of silence/ is a durational drawing performance that can last for as long as the sound does. First performed in concordia university's drawing studio in October 2019, it can take place anywhere. Then, I used soft pastel on fabric

to record the sounds of the studio around me, mapping them, in their appropriate colours and forms. It was during a day of presentations, the room was quiet, I sat before my class and drew the buzzing electricity, the sound of the air in the poor ventilation system, someone rustling papers, coughing, blowing their nose.

The second time I performed /sound of silence/ was during our first Open Action Night (a project space I facilitated with my good friend Merlin Heintzman Hope as Sessions Aléatoires), taking place in concordia university's Visual Arts (VA) building in an old cafe space. This time, I began before people noticed. As those present chatted away I drew out their sounds until they began to notice. Some, like Merlin who knew what I was doing, tested me, making specific noises to see what I would catch. I arranged to be interrupted by another sound-based performance in order to finish.

There is no documentation of the third edition, performed during the performance night at the VAV Gallery. At this time I drew on the floor, house music was playing, thumping around me, blocking out all ambient sounds. It was definitely a challenge, and certainly not the ideal location for this to occur.

A fourth and otherwise undocumented edition took place outdoors at L'Grand Festin d'Art Ici in montreal's Jarry Park in September 2020. It was windy, I was overstimulated and not at all focused.

/sound of silence/ remains a pillar I cling to in my Practice. But it still felt too easy. When I finished my undergrad I was experimenting with different mediums, learning the basics of textile Arts (since I was already trying to weave my own canvases and make my own paper) and entertaining the idea of creating a virtual space with creative coding - a medium I quickly decided was not it for me.

I decided to stick to textiles, and to bring a drawing to life for my master's thesis. Fibre Arts, I found, is suitable since it embodies the Artist's energy at the time of creation. If I am stressed, anxious, focused, you will see it in the Work. And since I had a budget from the university, I could sustainably source my materials in the right colours I would need them in.

But at the same time, the colours of the materials I have access to are out of my control. So I can only pick the closest colour available to the ones I have in mind. I can only use the materials I have access to, materials that the stores have on their shelves.

### **on Practice and painting**

I am not a textile Artist, though it is one of my primary mediums, it is just that, a medium, a foundation for my Practice. I'm not concerned with perfect technique. Rather I am interested in my own glitches, what a process led by intuition reveals. I'm interested in the ephemerality, temporality of Art, Art spaces, Exhibitions...

I feel called to Practices and ways of being that centre a hands on, or embodied, way[s] of knowing. I've always been able to learn better, to grasp simple concepts, by doing them myself. Watching someone else do it, unless I can really put myself in their place, or reading about it will not be sufficient. I live with hypermobility, so I need to know what a specific gesture feels like in my body to make sure it is what it is \*supposed\* to be, \*supposed\* to look like. And this is the same with most things, from basic coordination in sports, taking dance classes, to learning to draw, sew and following complex weaving techniques. It was in trying to teach myself how to do these simple, but complex crafts that I forged my own way. This is where the urge to know for myself comes from.

I, like most people who know from a young age that they want to be Artists, began with painting. And I, as a young person who wanted to be an Artist, was obsessed with the craft section (markers and pastels especially) at Art supply stores. And I, who admired painting and wanted to be an Artist, bought paint supplies. And later, I, who became an Art Teacher and aware of the climate crisis, saw this same phenomena unfold with every child I worked with. I began to despise painting. It wasn't the painting itself, but the materiality of it. I hate[d] the paint jugs we use[d] in the community centre, the list of materials I had to send out to parents for them to purchase. I began to hate the art supply store, I mean, how can I hate it, it's such a beautiful representation of creative possibility. But I hate it for that reason; my Art Practice depended on this store existing. The children I Worked with, who c[a/o]me from diverse

backgrounds and whose parents ha[d/ve] varying incomes, might not be able to afford a specific material. My material lists became generic and often let go of a material's quality, in favour of affordability (which is a legit, valid and real problem).

Shortly after I began material investigations to deconstruct and find what I called sustainable alternatives to painting. I wrote /PAINT: A study of paint as a political and environmental object/, in the context of my bachelor's in anthropology, which was later published in concordia university's anthropology and sociology student journal. I used the paper as an excuse to study "how Concordia students and young children interact with paint, and why this interaction is subject to environmental interest [...] by analysing images of paint in and out of use, focusing mainly on the idle characteristic of these images and how in its idleness, paint holds the potential power for transformation."

My research opened up many doors, it gave me participant-observation access to painting classes at the university I did not have access to in my programme, and thus, an introduction to a variety of painting methods and traditional techniques I was not aware of. These included a range from egg tempera and encaustic painting, to painting on bedsheets instead of primed canvas. It must have been this, combined with the fact that I was enrolled in a fibres class, that got me thinking about weaving my own canvases and making my own paint. Years of tuning into this Practice later, I am ready to paint.

## Language, poetry, Art

This is me trying to understand my own language. These words here, “language”, “poetry”, “Art”, are a stammer, they are sullied words, metaphors to help me communicate my idea to you.

Thinking about Audre Lorde, I am trying to step into the erotic and use the female body I was assigned to at birth and the power that comes with it to answer these questions to the best of my ability. This would be different if I was a man, and I don’t want to address my relationship with my gender at the moment, but as I brought it up myself let’s just say that I am grappling with a “more-than-human” approach to being a woman, I love my body, I would have loved any body I was born into I think, unless I was a man. But I still view my body as other, it fails me sometimes, I forget my limits, joints click out of place and my hair is beyond me. The only agency I have is in accessorization, tattoos and clothing. I still only feel my consciousness in my fingertips. I still forget that I have a body and this is the body that I have. I’m trying to remember, I am trying to know it better, that’s what is important.

Reading about Art writing, painting, performance Art and installation, Vernon Lee, Hilma af Klint, Agnes Martin, Joan Mitchell, Helena Almeida, Yoko Ono, Marina Abramović, Lygia Clark, VALIE EXPORT, Aria Dean, Legacy Russell... I suppose a lot of Artists born in female-coded bodies feel the same way. Their Work is as much about their body as it

is not about their body and about what it is to be a woman, or what it means to not be a man.

For some reason being a man allows you to forget that you have a body, it allows you to think about everything else that has nothing to do with you, but people who are not men, not heterosexual white men, tend to have a different understanding of the world.

In the back of my mind I hold /The White Pube/ article about white girl Art. I think about Artists that I know in montreal and that I am known amongst my friends for not liking because I think that their Work is too white. Engaging directly with white histories of inheritance. I am tired of those stories, I am tired of white french canadian stories, I am tired of white stories, forget french canadian. But my Work is as much a white french canadian story as the others that I don't like. I seek to lose my body in my work, to reduce myself to sensations that can be shared and felt that are rooted in everythingness.

What I admire from Artists of the late to mid 20th century was their passion and audacity to do what it was that they wanted to do, unapologetically. They demanded to take up space, putting their bodies and minds in the public sphere. Joan Mitchell is among these.

In Marion Cajori's documentary about Joan Mitchell, the interviewers, there are more than one, are always asking Joan to overly intellectualise her Work. They want to know why she used this colour or that colour and if she starts her

inspiration always from landscapes, and if she ever feels angry when she paints and how those different sensations arise in her or if anything happens to her body when she paints (as if they expect she's overcome with some kind of esoteric spiritual connection to her Practice). Joan's reaction to these questions is always dismissive, she makes the interviewers aware that these are the wrong questions they should be asking. She wants to paint because she wants to paint and so she paints. Her inspirations for her paintings are everything, good and bad things alike. The way that she deals with the world, the way that she processes the world is through painting.

In the documentary Joan says painting is like riding a bike with no hands; she doesn't exist when she paints. It is purely visual and at some point beyond language, no words can describe any further. Her Practice is an embodied one. Everything she sees, everything she has experienced ends up making its way to her paintings. She's not overcome by sensation when she paints; painting is just what she does; it is a lived Practice.

I see the history of painting evolving slowly around me. As a Teacher I've been able to analyse the ways my students interact with paint which has become widely accessible at dollar stores and quite affordable at higher end retailers like DeSerres and Michaels in Canada. The history of painting begins with a means to an end. People saw this, recognized that the purpose of painting was to capture images, essentially either to photograph or to idolise biblical figures and scenes that could not be photographed.

But once the photograph was developed the purpose of painting changed into a more expressive place. For centuries people experimented with different ways to paint, different ways to see the world through painting. But at the time Joan Mitchell was painting, painting as a Practice became just a way of life, it became beyond meaning. Since then painting as a Practice has become incredibly accessible. What I have seen now, slowly unfolding around me in my peers and in my own Practice is an intentionality towards materials, what we are using to paint, what we paint on and what we paint with. Painting is evolving towards a slow, conscious Practice. The problem with painting the way that I see it is that it is completely dependent on the ability to see. Sure the act of painting is a different one and does not require sight arguably, and some museums like the Leipzig Museum of Fine Art have adapted some Works to include tactile versions of paintings in plastic structures in front of them in the room... but not for every painting, and not every element in that painting can actually be felt. However it enables a person to use their body to feel in order to understand what is seen.

Given the abstract nature of my Work and the intentionality behind the materials I Work with, I chose to make a drawing come to life in an installation. This is a multi-faceted way of working and the considerations are endless, especially since I have been designing it for a room that has not been assigned to me yet. In other words, this installation is The Exhibition of a drawing. And this drawing, though it engages primarily the sense of sight, stems from a neurodiverse way of understanding the world.

[Note: I am not clinically diagnosed as neurodivergent. Women, historically, are regarded as 'hysterical' and 'emotional' when seeking any diagnosis to help them understand, justify, validate, the varying ways in which they see the world. Often, only severe cases of neurodivergence are diagnosed. I believe that there is no true neurotypical way of knowing - only one that is bound by social norms. The western world embraces this idea of normalcy in a way that puts down peoples divergences in favour of a homogenised society, a homogenised way of knowing. Synaesthesia, by definition, according to google, is a physiological, psychological and neurological condition - it is not 'neurotypical.']

Joan Mitchell was also synaesthetic, yet I am not sure she knew that her way of thinking and being in and with the world had a name, at least not at the time the documentary was filmed. I only know that I am synaesthetic from my own research and through auto-ethnography.

Nelson Henricks, an Artist and Professor of Art history at concordia university, recently transformed Mitchell's coded alphabet into an installation. His Work uses video to explain to an assumed non-synaesthetic audience what it is like to have synaesthesia. It is quite literal, coloured paint is poured over tactile letters and he uses a microphone to amplify the \*sound\* of the colours. He presents this Work in a way that mocks a Gallerist - Artist relationship, again here, these notions of objectivity and subjectivity. The Artist representing the subjective, personal experience of

Art and the Gallerist, representing the objective, objectification of the Artist's Work; a series of colour canvases, each representing a letter. The installation doesn't invite the viewer to engage more directly. The wallpaper is suggested to read "dont you like the green of a", and the coloured canvases standing in for the alphabet are presented on the opposite wall. The viewer assumes this to be true, absorbing this 'subjective' information as a fact, but can't do more with it. Perhaps they can attempt to decode it, but the variations of colour are so subtle it would take a lot of back and forth to fully be able to do that... the installation is not there for you to decode, but rather to confront you with this way of perception. I visited this installation with my parents actually, because I wanted them to understand my Art Work.

My mom has Alzheimer's and does not go out much, so I leaned into my experience as an Community Art Educator and gave her a tour, explaining everything, whispering in her ear and reminding her to not point at things (her shadow would cast on the small television screen) or talk too loudly. The museum was free that day, so there were many visitors. She was interested, but it was hard for her to grasp, I could tell. My dad on the other hand was completely abrasive. He thought it was silly and could not grasp this way of knowing. He later told me he preferred the other two video installations. They presented 'objective' experiences, ways of knowing he could connect to and preferred the immersive experience, being surrounded by the screens. I visited this Exhibition on March 5th, 2023. Deep into my research for both the written and practical

components for this thesis. I was glad that my installation is designed to show, not tell, the experience of synaesthesia. Furthermore, I do not care for The Viewer to decode my experience of synaesthesia. I am simply recreating an environment, the environment that was with and around me over the past two years and I want to share that with you instead of telling you about it. I hope it will be interesting, allow you to discover a multi-faceted way of working. To remind you that you have a body and live with / alongside other people who also have their own bodies.

The process is the product here. Certain people in my life will be able to extract more from it, that is certain. But that is for them to know, and you, who doesn't know - to feel and piece together. In any case, it is not all that deep. I am just trying to make space for everything.

### what I am doing

### **remember you have a body, remember you live in a city**

The installation is a drawing. It draws from the experience of synaesthesia, trying to express something that is not tangible, considering accessibility, multisensory experiences.

This sense of being overwhelmed, excited, bewildered, going to sleep rocking, waking up with a headache, leaving things behind, opening up to something new.

The feeling of when my arms float beside and above me.

Knowing a colour of a thing to be true.

I've noticed recurring forms in my drawings, the red sperm shaped thing, the pink bean, soft green prism and the blue guy. The yellow and blue dust, layers of fog and jagged dark green and purple (that jagged feeling, a pinch in the stomach), the safe space (cocoon).

I bring these guys to life in textile, felt, and paper. Found, gifted and bought. And I hope to do so in a way that embodies the approach to exhibition-making I have outlined thus far.

The material I Work with, that which was bought, comes from the department's allocated budget for student project Work, not my own funds. I am lucky enough that the materials I use can be reused, so the budget from each semester's project Work quickly adds up (approximately 200 euro a semester, excluding the first semester - that is a good amount of money to buy string with). Anything else is either found or gifted.

My materials are accessible by nature. The materiality of the installation is limited to that which I can make myself, thus embodying my energy at the time of creation. I am prone to dissociation and lack a body-awareness when I am not doing something that explicitly engages a part of my body, or I get fixated on only one aspect of my body when it is in use, like my fingertips, and forget that my toes are cold and my legs are lacking circulation when I am curled up on the couch typing the way I am doing at the

exact moment I write this. I am interested in what can be learned by the repetition of intuitive processes and the performative, embodied, act of making and working.

For the Exhibition of my installation to not be a Book, it must follow these guidelines.

By trying to embody my research thus far, I acknowledge it might be difficult to engage with those who are not used to engaging with contemporary Art spaces. In taking this stance into consideration, I benefit from my experience as a Cultural Worker. How could I make my installation approachable to the general public?

### **elements within my installation**

After my initial attempt to create the red sperm shape and the pink-ish bean shaped objects made out of paper clay, from paper pulp that was about to go bad at the paper making studio. The pink objects were dyed with a beetroot powder given to me by the facilitator in September 2021. The blue batch was already dyed by the paper making studio, and the yellow batch was my last one. I got carried away and experimented with different paper clay recipes. I added plaster to the usual cornstarch/flour mixture. The yellow was an aesthetic choice, riboflavin, it is also from the batch of gifted food-grade dyes. I am always drawn to pastel combinations of yellow, blue and pink.

The forms of the objects resemble those in the drawings, I emphasise their forms in recreating them several times.

When I realised they would simply not Work to represent the larger forms in the drawings (they would rot through before they air dried and the colour was just too wrong), I allowed myself to make 'useful' objects, candle holders and small dishes. But I incorrectly used my fingers to make holes for candles and most of them do not fit actual candles, and the material is not waterproof so it is not actually a useful object. In any case, I used up the paper clay - I am not sure what the role of this will be yet, I will only know upon installation, but either way, candles, though cosy, can be hazardous, especially in paper clay holders.

The cocoon is the nucleus of the installation. It represents me. A starting point. It is a safe space, where you can forget that you have a body and dissociate in comfort. It is made out of rope I found in a paper bag labelled "zu verschenken" (to give away) on the street outside a florist's in Vienna's 6th district. Once this collection of rope was finished, I felted my own rope, from wool I was given by various people over the past few years, and then the leftover rope from my two felted soft sculptures (the red and pink guys). Lastly, the cocoon has to be big enough to house the tallest of my classmates, otherwise it would be inaccessible, so I used part of my budget to buy the only pre-felted rope I could find after visiting wool stores in my neighbourhood. Thus, the colour of the cocoon is completely arbitrary. The cocoon, and the paper clay objects, at the moment I am writing this, are the only forms in the installation that abandon synaesthesia.

What I am currently calling the red guy is a sperm shaped object, wet felted from bought and pre-dyed roving, as is the pink guy, a bean shaped object. These are made to be stuffed, but at the time I am writing this, they are not stuffed and I do not know what to stuff them with. Current ideas include fabric scraps; cuttings from weaving and old clothes. But I do not think I will be able to accumulate that much weaving cut offs in time, and it is impractical, and heavy to use old clothes - I need to consider luggage as I am travelling between two cities. It might be of better use to use my budget to buy some kind of stuffing.

At the time I am writing this, left to do are the blue and green guys, which I have begun to realise are one, multicoloured form. They pulse green and blue in different drawings, but they are not always both present, but they are moving, changing in time, spinning in space.

I intend to weave and dye these myself with the remaining chlorophyll and blue spirulina from the same gifted batch of food-grade dyes from the facilitator of the Artist centre. As well as the hanging fabric, what I am referring to as The Atmosphere, the jagged grey, green and purple fabric that catches the light. This I expect to acquire at Concordia University's Centre for Creative Reuse, or buy on the Plaza St. Hubert while I am in Montreal this spring. I am either supporting local small businesses or diverting waste from the landfill.

These dye baths, of course, will not be exact, precise colour solutions. Nothing is exact in this installation

because it simply \*does not matter\*. What does matter is how your body engages in the space. I want you, The Viewer, to have to navigate through a space that feels familiar to you, though it is associated with very personal, subjective stimuli. I am interested in seeing if you will feel the same way I feel, or have felt, during the moments of creating it, under the circumstances I was creating it.

The guys should be lightweight and hang at different heights, between 60 and 180 centimetres off the ground, at least one metre apart, so The Viewer has room to move around as they please.

Somewhere near the entrance I want to use a paper clay object to hold sensory care items, such as earplugs and blindfolds. I can use fabric scraps for the blindfolds and I have yet to locate a sustainable option for ear plugs - perhaps I will opt for the muffling provided by the blindfold when covering the ears.

I want to include recordings from my Work in progress, some will be woven into the guys, though perhaps none will be in the cocoon as I initially thought, as it should be a safe sensory space - this is a site-specific, skill-based decision factor. The sound should only be audible when you are near the speaker. The exact placements are yet to be determined. A QR code with the link to my thesis audio and digital file will be located near the entrance, like with Carolyn Lazard and Ines Doujak's Work.

There will be minimal wall text other than the name of the installation and guidelines for engagement. A read only copy of the thesis should be available, maybe an mp3 with the audio file too. I would like to seek comfortable seating with backs for listening, situated in a place near a carafe of water, glasses with the option of paper straws and some fruits or other vegan snacks. I am still debating if I want to include the original drawings somewhere in the same room. I like the idea of creating some distance - if our department has an open studio Exhibition at the same time during the Angewandte Festival, perhaps I will display them there, and if so, I will mention that in the Exhibition space.

As it stands, I have an appointment with Asher O’Gorman for coaching in the university’s Applied Performance Lab (APL). I will certainly finalise my ‘rules for activation’ before installation in June, however I will include my preliminary thoughts here. I am on the cusp of signing up for ballet. I hope to reconnect with my teen life as a contemporary dancer and include some elements in my movements, stretching and somatic explorations. I would like to move between the guys in a way that feels good in my body, not the way one thinks one ought to move in an Exhibition space. Perhaps I will invite my friends, classmates and the general public to move around and dance with me in an open-format workshop-performance.

## **preliminary guidelines for interaction & engagement**

- Be careful, mindful of yourself, others and the guys.
- Consider what might it feel like to be inside of a painting or a drawing? Inside of someone else's head?
- Indulge your curiosity: you can touch things with clean hands, you can swing the guys, dodge them, dance, play...
- Invitation, but not an expectation, to take a moment to read or listen.
- Make your way to the cocoon, going inside it, staying there facing the threads for a bit, turning around and coming out.
- Remember, this is the Exhibition of a drawing, it has only existed as individual gestures, marks, forms and colours before this. I am not sure if it will be cathartic, I hope it will.

## **part four: Exhibition making**

## **on the student curatorial experience, collaboration and care-full curation**

Throughout my research, I have noticed that the Exhibitions-as-Books phenomena occurs a lot in group scenarios, where more emphasis is placed on the making of an Exhibition than the individual Artwork. It is also common in student-led projects, where emerging Artists, who need opportunities and exposure, are juggling the development of a curatorial project in addition to their own work. But as Art students and emerging Artists acquire more experiences, even though they often Work for free, sometimes even paying out of pocket to build their resumé, they erase their involvement in student-led projects. Why do student-led Exhibition projects hold less value than other Exhibitions?

The student curatorial experience can be defined by Exhibition making for the sake of having an Exhibition. Most of my curatorial experience stems from such projects and I have not really worked on an Exhibition making project outside of a university framework. So all I know is the intensity of group Exhibitions and the head butting that occurs when one individual calls themselves the curator and imposes an idea on others who do not agree with it.

Working within universities, I also understand the institutional red tape, I understand the complexities of the cogs at Work in this machine. In universities, Artwork can be created in parallel to the creation of an Exhibition, or an entity (individual or group) can come together to illustrate a curatorial text they have already written with Artwork, or

lace together a text that attempts to make sense of the Artworks being exhibited.

Exhibition making is a pedagogical tool for professional artistic development, but what Sundus Abdul Hadi described as care-full curation is fundamental to such a pedagogical tool being successful and fulfilling to all involved.

In 2022, I was part of a group of students within the department of Art and science that self organised for our annual Exhibition. Our project partner and the circumstances in our department were unstable and confusing. We created committees and individual roles within those committees. We knew who to approach for what. We organised communication workshops about how to speak to each other and how to have group discussions without speaking over each other. An idea we kept coming back to was how to be part of murmuration.

Some were a bit resistant, not comfortable communicating their boundaries in this way, and that was, and continues to be okay. We are still low-key traumatised from this experience, we healed together through karaoke parties in the studio and swimming in the Donau, but it should be mentioned that we communicate really well with each other now. It is important to say that this experience did exhaust and burn out my entire class, that since then the community feeling in the studio has not been the same. I had been seeking the same intensity and the same group dynamic when I came back to Vienna from Montreal in

October 2022, and was disappointed when it wasn't there. But I found a home amongst a group of friends that were there, and we got to know each other outside of working on projects, we got to know each other more as individuals, instead of as part of a murmuration. In this experience of working together on such an intense exhibition that was so short in duration we got to know each other's demons, and as friends we could really create genuine connections, not only did we know each other's Art Work demons, but personal demons too.

Working in a group requires care-fill curation, it requires murmuration, an incredible, radical openness. It benefits from knowing the ins and outs of each other's brain. It requires transparency, it requires an understanding that life gets in the way sometimes, it requires an understanding that every individual has a certain capacity, they have certain skills that they can contribute and certain areas that they would not like to engage with. It requires knowing each other's boundaries. This is what I learned only last year, thanks to /From There Through Here/, the /Art & Science/ department Exhibition in June 2022.

Thinking about /From There Through Here/ in my Book-not-Book framework is interesting because the Work and the Exhibition developed side by side, already framed by the department's annual theme - this is part of the student curatorial experience, in some ways these Exhibitions will always be Exhibitions that are Books because the idea comes first, and the text sews together individual Works. Relying on text to "sew together Works" is

characteristic of Exhibitions that are Books, even if the Work 'speaks for itself'.

Another reality exists as part of the student curatorial experience; one restricted by the University's logistics and internal bureaucracy. The nature of my research places me rather interestingly. I have been trying very hard, until now, to avoid institutional critique. I am not speculating the future of The Exhibition, the gallery, the museum, nor am I speculating the future of the university. I acknowledge that there are many factors out of my control. While I may have big plans, the reality of room allocation during the summer semester graduation and festival at the University of Applied Arts is a complex puzzle piece. I foresaw this, in fact, in October I organised a proposal for the students in my department who had indicated they intend to graduate in the summer. I know the room I wanted would be tricky, but I thought if I planned ahead I could Work around that. My efforts were quickly turned away. I was told that students had to apply individually in March. So I waited, and designed my site-specific thesis with the same room in mind regardless.

Last year, Malashree and I were two of many students who took our department's annual Exhibition in our own hands. I was part of the curatorial and PR committees, she was part of the curatorial and crisis committees. Malashree, Charlotte Bastam and I have formed quite the formidable trio. Together we are loud, we call out what bothers us, demand accountability and transparent communication. We have learned so much from each other. I am so grateful. If it

was not for the two of them, I might be writing a very different thesis. I knew from the get-go I would write about Exhibition making - but the way I was going to do that, I wasn't so sure of.

Collaboration here is core, to Exhibition making, to Art making, to Art writing. Collaboration is core to being-with, it is core to worlding. I cannot do this alone, I cannot have a one sided conversation. This is why Malashree and I decided to join forces for The Exhibition of the practical component of both of our Master's theses.

### **a proposal for a duo Exhibition**

poiētēs, itself from the Greek, poiein, meaning 'to make.' Poiesis 'the activity in which a person brings something into being that did not exist before.'

Though we met last year, we both have held onto this definition for years.

We both Work with colour and material, specifically fibres and textile Arts. Our Practices have been called 'craft shit.' We recognise we are engaging with craft and craftwork as a medium through which we understand and navigate our materials. We Work intuitively and outside of many post-industrialised concepts, a ball of string for us is just another tube of paint. But like words, string has a form to follow, it can be fluid, it is flexible. Our Practices are painterly, whether with words, knots or brush strokes.

In working in each other's presence, literally and figuratively, we've come to realise an entanglement. We wish to emphasise that. The 'singular-plural', the collective, subjective, retrospective 'I'. We recognise that we are both part of a dialogue that has existed before we joined the discussion, in and with the world.

We share a love for the written and spoken word. The title of our Exhibition reflects this. The title /three or four people later, warm at the heart, cold at the toes/ is pulled from one of our poems. We will be playing on this poetic inquiry by also titling the Exhibition in Nepali, french, and german; they will not be an exact translation but rather words that embody these same ideas. Thus the title also becomes an exploration rather than a static object.

Academic systems inform us, though we wish to challenge them through poetic [self]-inquiry. We both engage with different languages in distinct ways. We cite those before us, list their names in our research, hold them close to our minds and hearts. Like sculptors we mould languages as if it were clay. We cite our materials, tell their stories, and reject the notion that they are mere objects.

We find understanding in each other. Our Work and Practices align and coalesce, we are still different people with different Practices but the way in which we approach our Art is through embodiment and intuition. Both of us are strong proponents for embodied and experiential knowledge. The Works we will present for our duo show will reflect on that. There is also an intersection in the themes

we explore in our theses. Thus instead of fragmenting our Work, we believe it would not only be beneficial but also befitting for them to be interwoven; it is conceptually important for us to include other voices, especially the voices that help us grow.

This is also why our duo show will include a joint collaborative textile piece. It will also act as a room divider, a metaphor for 'being-with' that allows our Work to flow into each other, be part of the same conversation while remaining distinct.

Together we question the role of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity' in research; whether it be artistic or scientific . We question the words and accessibility of the systems used in these frameworks. We are tired of trying to make space for other ways of knowing. Tired of arguing why this is worthwhile. We just want to take up that space. Embody it. This exhibition is a scream. We want you to hear it.

Due to the following technical requirements, we would like to request Flux 2:

- Accessibility and visibility ( our needs are site-specific and have been designed with the Flux room in mind)
- Natural light (site specific need, allows sun to shine through translucent fabrics and emphasise certain colours at different times of the day)
- Space to engage with the Artworks and welcome many visitors for happenings, activations via performance[s] / workshop[s]

## **on the reality of room allocation for master's thesis, or institutional critique**

The moment I am writing this, I have been made aware that the space I have been allocated to exhibit my installation will likely not take my technical needs into consideration. I am frustrated, as I can only Work within the institutional framework, but when the institution itself presents limitations, how am I to present my Art Work to the best of my ability?

In order for my research to make sense, it needs to rely on the institution that it exists within. But I have learned that I cannot rely on the institution, and I understand that there are bureaucratic factors at play.

As a person who loves and hates Exhibitions and the Art world at the same time, as a person who made a promise to themselves that they would fight for accessibility, intersectionality, care-full curation, for diversity, equity and inclusion - I acknowledge there are hundreds of students looking for space, and the institution of the university probably follows some kind of framework when making these decisions that I was not partial to.

I learned that I can make promises, rules and guidelines for myself, but the \*where\* of it all, as I wrote in my text on positionality in the first part of my thesis; where one is living, working and practising, where one is \*from\*, not only changes the way one knows and understands things, but the way one expresses them.

In considering the presentation of my installation within the context of a group exhibition at the Sala Terrena, part of the University Gallery Heiligenkreuzerhof, it is important to note that the collective, group Exhibition here does come second to the presentation of individual work. Regard each artist's work as independent. It has been curated to ensure everyone's needs are met under the circumstances.

In this sense, if we regard the Work exhibited in the Sala Terrena as a group Exhibition, instead of a cluster of solo Exhibitions, it is a Book. In order for the work to 'make sense' together, a collective text should be written. There will not be one, because this is not a group Exhibition.

If individual pieces come together to make a larger cohesive composition, is an Exhibition a painting? Exhibitions have the capacity to be better than paintings, because they can bring the painting to life, it can be experienced beyond the visual. That's what makes an Exhibition not a text, not a Book, and not an image or a painting, it's inherent physicality, multi-modality, space-taking, place-basing qualities, it's intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, accessibility, white-cubedness.

As I write this now, I still anticipate sharing an Exhibition space with Malashree, but I do not know how it will come together. Despite my extensive planning and sketching, this installation is site specific, and it will conform to the space it will inhabit. Although the space I have been allocated is alright, I wish the Exhibition of this installation was

elsewhere. I wish I had more control. But I don't, and that's okay, I have a body and live in a city after all. I need to remember that. I am part of a composition, a cluster - not isolated.

I wrote somewhere, I forget where, that I see institutional critique as white noise and that I don't want to speculate about the future of The Exhibition. But I see now that this is still white noise and it will still be read as speculation, even if they are ideas I am articulating to put into my own Practice.

On this note, I end my thesis, with a quote from a text written by Geeta Kapur, /Curating in Heterogeneous Worlds/ in /Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present/;

“The artist is always situated but also always liminal to the established order of things and, thus, peculiarly placed to question the hegemonic tendencies of the national and the global [...] artist and artwork can be intuitively positioned as much as they accept conscious curatorial positioning to gain navigational abilities between and beyond simple binaries and thereby also the degree of entropy that makes the creative process and the sites of its occurrence unpredictable.”

## **soft guidelines for making exhibitions that are not Books**

- Read /Take Care of Your Self, The Art and Cultures of Care and Liberation/ by Sundus Abdul Hadi, /Accessibility in the Arts: A Promise and a Practice/ by Carolyn Lazard, and /Decolonising Design, A Cultural Justice Guidebook/ by Elizabeth (Dori) Tunstall.
- What is your goal? Consider what came first, the Art or the Exhibition?
- Are you organising a group Exhibition or a solo Exhibition, who are you in relation to the Work you are doing? If you are working as part of a group, clearly identify your roles, boundaries and set intentions together. How are the finances distributed? Who is being paid (Artists and Organisers), how much and for what?
- Where is the Exhibition located? What are the restrictions put in place by this location? Which communities are you engaging with directly? Who is your Audience?
- What are the physical accessibility features of the space? What needs to be enhanced? Are there toilets? Is there a kitchen? A telephone? Internet connection?
- What will you do if someone walks in and needs help? Will there be a gallery-sitter?

- Have you considered public programming, mediation and Art education to activate the Artwork and increase engagement with your viewers (workshops, performances, talks, podcasts, guided tours, etc)?
- How will your Exhibition live in different mediums and platforms before, during and after The Exhibition dates? Consider social media, documentation, web diffusion...
- Make sure there is adequate space to move around, generally speaking, wheelchairs need approximately one metre of space to move comfortably.
- Make sure The Exhibition space has seating, preferably open seating with back support.
- How much wall text is in the space? Is there an Exhibition text available to take away? An audio recording? Are you expecting your viewers to read in order to grasp the concept of your Exhibition? What languages is the text in? Who might be left out by the language you are using?
- How do you expect your visitors to engage in the space and how does the space facilitate this engagement?
- How does the design of the Exhibition contribute to the knowledge you are trying to share in the space, are you showing or telling? How are you doing that?

What colours are the walls, do they speak to the Work? How does the space embody the Work?

- ➔ Is the space really noisy? Consider lighting as well, how can the Work be experienced more than visually... How might you take measures to address this if it is not intentional, and if it is intentional, make sure you provide accessibility options, such as noise cancelling headphones or earplugs as excess noise often contributes to over-stimulation, audio description and touch tours.
- ➔ Reflect on the experience, how were your goals and intentions met? What can be improved in the future?

## **conclusion**

Sometimes I prefer to 'read' through Exhibitions instead of actual writing. Following the accessibility guidelines I have listed, I cannot imagine an Exhibition or give an example of one in writing that I might make that is different from the one I have already made, the one I have proposed with Malashree, the one I will be a part of.

Well, there you have it, as an Artist and Cultural Worker, which I have decided I prefer more to Artist, Researcher and Teacher, I am interested in the Exhibition as a medium, in addition to the Book or the text, as third places and places of learning. I aspire to create Exhibitions that are paintings, installations, with no beginning and no end, that place accessibility first, over design aesthetics, prioritising Viewer experience, to the extent that The Viewer is no longer a Viewer but an active Participant.

I am interested in mediums, generally speaking. I scrutinise the production and distribution of Art in the current stage of late-capitalism. How can we resist institutions and social systems from within? My artmaking practice seeks alternative, non linear and non verbal ways of knowing in experimenting with mediums. If the medium is the message, how can my mediums embody a message outside of their materiality? Leaning into abstraction and synaesthesia, I represent everyday scenarios 'subjectively' - attempting to leave behind social and cultural connotations of colour. How can I sculpt, write, curate, sew together, frame, paint, draw, perform a message that is rooted in and attempts to move beyond western ways of knowing?

Being an emerging Artist and Cultural Worker, the personal becomes entangled with the professional, this is A/R/Tography. The inseparable identities, everything between the lines, the invisible labour, the institutional framework. My brain has never stopped turning, I dream about making and working, then I wake up and I do it. In considering accessible, multisensory experiences to knowing a subject, to working together with people in the same room as you, to working with people digitally, to taking care of family members, to working, to making... Science and Art become subjects for the medium of The Exhibition and The Book.

My Work dissects these mediums and creates soft guidelines for working and practising Exhibition making, embracing various ways of knowing with accessibility, inclusion, and care. This thesis is multifaceted, trying to do a lot at once. As I wrote, somewhere, I forget where - I seek everythingness, I seek affect, I seek Exhibitions that are so loud they scream, demand to take up space.

My underlying interest in this project is articulation, how different mediums, that of a Book, that of an Exhibition, that of a drawing and that of an installation can articulate the same idea, the question of the tangibility of a personal Practice, the notion of taking of space, and having room to breathe.

If the process of redefining and re-identifying the role of The Exhibition begins with a direct act to decolonise these

spaces, and the roles people take in facilitating these spaces, the same is true for how I write about it and the form it takes.

My writing flows in and out of the personal, experimental, and analytical styles. Personal bits of narrative dispersed throughout contextualises the practical component of my thesis, it is in fact what it attempts to embody.

I contemplate Exhibitions in a way that is very conversational, I poke and prod, make blunt statements and generalisations.

I am not arguing for subjectivity in [artistic] research. I am not arguing for A/R/Tography. I am not arguing for the importance of positionality, of culturally responsive pedagogy, and accessibility in the Arts. I am not arguing for permission to take up space, I am not speculating futures.

I am not arguing.

My writing has not been academic, but draws from academia and writing frameworks and my understanding and appreciation for writing as a method and Practice has strengthened. Before beginning this endeavour, I viewed the academic text as a rigid framework. I did not understand its various features, and as I sought to design this text, while writing it, I realised their value and adopted interpretations into my own Practice. Considering this piece of writing as an outline for my actions, attempting to control the time ahead, creating 'guidelines' for myself,

seems to me now as counterintuitive. What I seek now is to make Art, to write, to Work and Practice with community, collaboration and intent. My writing Practice exists to experiment, articulate and express that. As I edit, the more I want to read. The more texts I stumble into that I want to cite. I am in awe, of the world and all of the Work that has been and continues to be done. This Work is not done yet. It is dependent on the institutions it exists within, the frameworks that came before it. This is the first seep. Bound by social, cultural, personal and institutional factors, there is still much I am not able to articulate, you can ask me after I print this, after you read it, after I set up the installation, if I can summarise it. Or maybe I need to seep again. I probably will. But regardless, the Exhibition, and The Book, remain flexible, distinct mediums, third places and places of learning. And for them to be truly accessible, engaging with these mediums requires genuine care and openness.

**annex**

## viewing studies

My viewing studies teeter between notes I have taken during The Exhibitions themselves, and reflections after the fact. I will try to make this clear in their presentation. I will also eliminate my opinions about specific Artwork within The Exhibition and refer instead to the overall Exhibition statement and the way in which the individual Work may or may not contribute to it. I will try to note my initial impression as it often contributes to the tone of my writing. My notes are poetic inquiries, some are more grounded than others.

I started by sorting my viewing studies chronologically in the following sections:

1. Notes transcribed from paper, on exhibition statements or in my notebook
2. Notes from my cell phone note pad
3. Reflections after the fact

And have finally settled on sorting them further into

1. In-situ notes & ex-situ reflections
2. In-situ only
3. Ex-situ only

The site-specificity of these notes is significant as my energy levels fluctuate during the writing of this thesis. In-situ, meaning on-site, ex-situ, meaning off-site. These latin terms stay with me from my bachelor's degree in anthropology.

## in-situ notes & ex situ reflections

### **Embodied Structures, Contemporary Immersive Virtual Art (CIVA) Festival, Belvedere 21, Vienna**

**Purpose for visit:** Work

**Type of Exhibition space:** Contemporary Art Museum associated with a World Heritage Site, and the site of the Austrian State Treaty, funded by the Cultural Department of the City of Vienna. CIVA festival is organised by the sound:frame association, an Agency for AudioVisual Art, and supported by the Cultural Department of the City of Vienna.

**In-situ, February 18th, 2022**

**Transcribed from notebook, parts redacted**

Absorb first, questions later. I am not a reporter, I am an Art Writer. Interesting the switch to english (from german) despite not being bilingual. I mean, QC isn't either. But within canada... it's obligatory isn't it? In Ontario for example - Ottawa specifically. Signage. But EU?

Head curators - 2 white women, body politics, female body, queer body, contemporary hybrid realty + impact on diverse bodies → role of media.

These ideas are revolutionary to boomers - old white journalists - maybe revolutionary is too big a word - radical? Men and conservative women - or but i am judging based on physical appearances at this press conference

I don't want to be a curator - not really. I want to hold others, institutions accountable first. But how has my own involvement in curatings, jurying, making Art and writing about Art altered / situated my approach? How does it validate my actions?

Recognize and unlearn

Structures → forms → bodies → entities

Internet as mirror

Body should not be forgotten in the virtual spaces - act of forgetting is destructive to femmes + queer bodies

Open discourse, re tours, accessible - free

Artist intro - mostly local, white, queer

You can't talk about bodies without talking about non-white bodies → check Artists

QR codes on wall takes you to Artist page on civa web

Emphasis on wall test - it takes up a lot of space (visually)

why orange lines, black circles? Outlining walls + floors, outlining Work - Aesthetics? Curator choice ? Visual display - visual merchandising?

The lines make you aware of your body in the space, it is crowded. It links the Work together - headphones - noise in spaces - projections v screens

Pillows strapped on benches

Comfort, relaxing your body - experience as a viewer.  
→ judith butler

Material intentionality in curatorial Practices - working with a pre-existing space, access to materials + tech + support / frames within history that which came before it in the same space, white cube attempts to remove that

Plus side, wall text identifies Artists is large, visible - included where they are from & what they look like / no censorship / no removing the Artist from their Work

Headphones hurt my ears after a while  
And I am hungry, spending much time here, aware of my body in this space.

### **Ex-situ, March 1st, 2022**

I remember what I was wearing there, my hair slicked back in a tight bun. Rebekka's houndstooth scarf. I remember walking back to my apartment in the 6th from there, through the Belvedere's grounds. This was my first time visiting the Belvedere 21. I just got my Visa, literally the day before. I was approaching Vienna with the same ownership as I approached Montreal. I had pitched the CIVA Festival to a magazine in Montreal, which is why I was granted press access. I didn't end up writing about it, the magazine finally answered me weeks later after the festival was over, rejecting the pitch. I haven't been to a press conference since then. This Exhibition scarred me honestly. It is not my niche, I'm not the biggest fan of digital Art, but I can

appreciate it. I remember being so taken aback by how violent the graphic design of the space was. Neon orange tape lines throughout, The wall text was bigger than some of the Work and the font was hard to read. I carried this fear with me when a classmate mentioned wanting to use floor tape in /From There Through Here/. I am very against creating literal mind maps, but I think it worked well in FTTH in the end, it was needed. It was not needed at the CIVA Festival. Alone, the Work spoke well for itself. The vinyl was distracting from the Work, and given it was not my niche, I was already sceptical. I did sit with some pieces for a while, play some games. This Exhibition required time to get to know the Work, more so than my experiences with MOMENTA, where time made everything better. Here, without the luxury of time, you would leave with an incomplete story, an incomplete vision of The Exhibition.

## Poetic inquiry, March 17th, 2023

orange tightrope

matrix guide.

Digital Sign

little time

Cushioned bench

Rest behind -

be comfortable,

stay a while

But not too long

three straps.

Instructions.

high pitched.

headache.

Black dots.

corner points

structure - less

video capture.

Second life

another place.

Somewhere to go.

notthecase

fight won,

new (W)ork.

who? we no

not i nor you

could

eternal glitch.

**/Friedl Dicker-Brandeis/, Universitätsgalerie im Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna.**

**Purpose for visit:** Class

**Type of centre:** Art collection and archive of the University of Applied Arts.

Exhibition travelling to Zurich, Switzerland. Presented as part of Vienna Art Week.

[Note: I've seen this Exhibition twice, once with Till's class, painting and drawing, the second time with the Art and Science Department, the tour was given by the same man. The second time, both curators were present. Documentation, curatorial statement, description text was only available in german at the time.]

**In-situ, transcribed from notebook, no redaction, not edited**

**November 10th, guided tour, Til's class**

University collection 300 objects 65, 0 0 0 0? Thousand

Curator addresses Exhibition for catalogue - exhibiting stuff Plus preservation plus how collection deals with itself / Art and Science positioning

Exhibition acknowledges that it is a Book. explores notions of how FDB is collected at the University - letters not all transcribed, Exhibition is research Practice - exhibiting to examine. Letters transcribed in booklet. looking for specific

Fields within their collection - acknowledges gaps - Keep us direct as possible, avoid stylization.

Imaging, collage to explain theoretical texts, visual processing, way of knowing, accessibility.

As a naked as possible, cultural production understand the way that the Work speaks to itself, what it is.

Things on the wall should be seen with other things, things on the table are meant to be looked at individually, red. analytical engagement.

2-4 different ways of showing the Work, not aesthetics but practically, theoretically.

Robert Mueller person for display?  
identity not museum, study space.

"prevent from becoming culture... keep it in the [...] state where it is still art with problems... keep it active... understand in their means of production"

Storage complex if things are shown, humidity Elite levels must be taken. that big creates sustainable space, same Darkness.

"something that tends to neutralise, but doesn't"

Reusing displays from previous shows investing in flexible materials - linen cloth, movable tables and walls. "neutral"

## **November 15th, guided tour, Martin's class**

RM speaks to FBD's Work with textile - woven aspects even in painting and drawing and Design

The Exhibition is not autobiographical. It starts towards the end of her life including cryptic Works, letters, the design of the room for the gallery Fresco's on the walls are preserved, the university Gallery can interfere in Wallace base so previously these tables were up against the walls now the display is flipped. the tables are walls,

If this is an Exhibition that is a catalogue intentionally the design to make this research only in german, shows network communication collaboration not showing her as a Care Worker. FDB has a retrospective in lens as well it might be more colourful,

The written texts associated to this Exhibition are not translated for budget reasons, catalogue proceeds the show. This causes the audience to be narrowed, accessibility, who is this Exhibition for, not non-german speakers, no doubt the writing is interesting and complex. This university accepts International students and teaches in english. Question of institutional funding, this is a university collection, this is the first time digitising and blowing up the negatives from the collage photographs used in the exhibition

The do-it-yourself display documented vertically is close to the original size. you would not know this information

without the guided tour. No text explaining, perhaps the pamphlet, but only in german.

Apparently these blown up photographs are a communist critique on a socialist way of introducing things to society that have not yet been solved. FDB's Work has an educational aspect to it, and again, lived experience in german. It is site specific I guess she did not need to produce this in english because her audience was german speaking. What is revealed by who tells the story of?

How do you engage with Work you can't understand?  
Text, typed, handwritten font design

Is it really a neutral presentation? How is this meant to be viewed without a tour? What am I getting from this without explanation, background: historical, social, political, Practice: sketches, plants, people, landscape - variety of mediums, fine Arts and applied Arts. Feels like Bauhaus (it is Bauhaus)

Atmosphere change, cosy chamber.

This artist did not have an Exhibition in her life - what that means in this context in regards to the atmosphere change, showing or revealing fragility. Curating a teacher portfolio, she has lots of teachers, studied lots of subjects, and drew "emotional skeletons". This is again based on the tour.

Draw what the thistle feels like, feel the sting, not contour

The mix of colour and shading form is not set, solid, but suggested.

In the 30s and 40s galleries were not white cubes, often used fabric on walls to hang Work, rubbing threads into space erased the presence of nails, and display mediates interaction with space.

These Works were not planned to be shown. All Works were restored before the show - a lot of Work you will not see, this was done one year ago according to the curator's tour.

This is an Exhibition that is a catalogue intentionally, so the curator says in the guided tour.

Not an immersive experience of her Artwork, but an immersive entanglement with her body of Work as seen through the Angewandte's collection.

What was my take away from The Exhibition? What did I learn? What ideas was she trying to get across?

The problem is that everything is in german and not everyone can read it, namely myself - so my notes are about the experience of the space. What I learned was from the two guided tours I attended.

## **Ex-situ reflection, March 16th, 2023**

This makes for an interesting case study. My viewing was under the framework of a class. I knew in doing it that I would mention it in this thesis. I remember being annoyed, but glad that the curator addressed The Exhibition as a catalogue. Here, The Exhibition really was a site for research - in a traditional sense. It is a collective, an archive of objects, a retrospective, a story of the Artist's Work as seen by the object's in the museum's collection. My only problem is with the lack of translation, frankly I think it is ridiculous, they could have easily given a student credits / ECTS for this Work. To me this demonstrates a lack of care - the information, required in this case, is only available for a certain audience. Luckily, any collection of one artist's body of Work reads well without text - you just miss the details and the stories that come with it. You can only see the evolution of a Practice over time. And without a tour, you would not know that some Work was never meant to be shown. This changes a lot of the context. However in this case the variety of display options speaks to that. Some pieces are framed, some evidently finished, others sketches, some displayed on tables, inviting you closer.

I appreciate their honesty. I appreciate the way they recycle their Exhibition devices. This specific viewing study calls your attention to the value of the curator's tour, of cultural mediation, accessibility, and the unseen Work behind Exhibition making. The website mentions that it was translated to english. I guess this happened after I saw it.

## **Poetic inquiry, March 17th 2023**

collection, story, archive, history -  
to have your life in an  
exhibition. Too young , long gone. Yet  
Little know. School portfolio,  
Everything. Value progress, community,  
care. Document at home. learn a new  
language. Make no outlines, only -  
no - no / traces. Smooth surface  
Rough interior. Secret backside  
no conclusion. Curtains light,  
Soft, see through. Ashes, chalk.  
arch ceiling. Tall. Sleepy

## **/Ways Of Freedom, Jackson Pollock To Maria Lassnig/ Albertina Modern Vienna.**

**Purpose for visit:** Leisure

**Type of space:** The Albertina Modern is a Museum of modern and contemporary Art funded by Bank of Austria and BMW, with the patronage of Hans Peter Haselsteiner. Exhibition created in partnership with the Museum Barberini, Potsdam, with support of the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Genève.

## **In-Situ, November 21st, 2022**

### **Notes copied from notes app**

I was thinking about where the interest in Exhibitions comes from for me and I think it's about learning about the

world, about individual perspectives in a nonlinear way that does not necessarily oppose, or contradicts, but differs from a western academic way of learning, through reading and studying for example.

But over the course of my studies, I've noticed a change in, maybe not a change, perhaps I've just tuned into Exhibitions with every piece of me I can give.

I've noticed that the idea of Exhibitions is idolised.....

I have a different set of expectations for museum collections than i do for galleries

Especially when i am not so familiar with the Work in question, and it is not a permanent collection of stolen artefacts lol

Rothko, colour field painting  
" realms of colour that release emotions"

As a synaesthetic person this is not doing much for me, i am thinking about social colour connotations but if i really try to read it is says Ryee. Or Ry11 (untitled, 1958, red, white, dusty pink).

But this is not the case for all. This other painting is doing it for me because it pleases my colour bias to yellow and blue. Though there are other colours there the use of primary colours, again social code, makes this Work feel primary. It reminds me of drawings I made as a kid with a

single blue line for the sky, green grass and the sun. It's framed, the sun is everywhere. Colour works. So well.

Rothko 1946/47 , untitled

Shades of purple, mostly lilac dusty pink blue, green - feels like synaesthesia to me, feels like the everyday with something different, with noise, complications

### **Ex-situ reflection, March 16th 2023**

I went to this Exhibition with the intent to lose myself in a Rothko. I remember being heavily disappointed. I bought a duo entry ticket for the Albertina and the Albertina Modern. The city was plastered with posters with Rothko's name on it. The walls were grey. There were like 3 Rothko's. Instead of using big names to attract public attention I believe these institutions should just call their Exhibitions what they are; Austrian abstract expressionism post World War II. Having the knowledge that The Exhibition centred on Austrian Artists beforehand would have allowed me to adjust my expectations (reminder, my expectation was to stare at Rothko's for a long time). I try not to read anything before going to Exhibitions, so that is my bad I guess. I want to focus on my own experience instead of what the institution suggests. Reading the statement now, it makes sense. I still do not understand why the walls were grey. In an Exhibition of colourful paintings, grey must make everything seem more dull. There was enough space between the Works for individual aesthetic contemplation, however other than being a collection of paintings with some wall text - nothing about The Exhibition design

embodied abstract expressionism. There were a few benches, but not in front of the paintings I wanted to linger in front of. I found myself passing back and forth, reading excerpts from the wall text to fill in the gaps between abstract paintings. Austrian abstract expressionism is riddled with anger - World War II. Makes sense. I did not want to feel it.

After watching the video recapping The Exhibition on the Albertina Modern website, their intent to make a European, Austrian connection to the American movement is clear. The director says that the point of the show is to highlight Maria Lassnig. I remember feeling taken by her work in the first rooms, then disappointed that there was not more of it, that almost every other painting in the rooms that followed belonged to men and the colours became duller and duller. Their critical intentions are not so clear in The Exhibition itself, other than a paragraph or so of wall text.

This Exhibition is an essay submitted to Art history 101, it has an introduction, three paragraphs and a conclusion. I remember the plot but I did not retain the details, I didn't feel the need to. The paintings illustrate a moment in history; these paragraphs state in less than three sentences, and can be contemplated individually or in juxtaposition to others. It is a conversation, but not between the painters. Between you and what the Albertina wants you to see. How much is this Exhibition showing me? What is it telling me? The Viewer is removed from this story, you are simply a viewer, a reader, a consumer - not a part of this story. To me, this seems to support the idea

that the institution is the holder of all knowledge. It puts Art on a pedestal, separates it from you and tells you that you cannot access it. But the director tells you, the visitor, that this is a great time of the year to visit the museum to see such a colourful Exhibition, since it is fall.

### **Poetic inquiry, March 17th 2023**

vast field of grey.

Static.

Pixels coton

a lign

aline

dark action

loss

what gain —

not.

all over

suggest

more      unrest.

dull

appreciation

careful tiptoe

give me more

pacing.

in-situ only

**La gravité organise les hasards : les pépins de cantaloup  
germent dans l'empreinte du ballon, mi-aile de papillon,  
mi-noirceur d'une pièce sans fenêtre, Maude Arès, Circa  
Art Actuel, Montréal.**

**Dates of visit:** February 25th 2023

**Purpose for visit:** Leisure, research

**Type of space:** Artist-run centre funded by the Art councils  
of Quebec and Montreal.

**Notes copied from notes app**

[Note: french title translated to /Gravity organises chance:  
cantaloupe seeds germinate in the footprint of the balloon,  
half butterfly wing, half darkness of a windowless room./]

Like low tide wade pools

Squelchy mud with stuff in it

Sand absorbing     drinking the water,

Excess expelled

Sensory bags, buckets

The purity of found objects, their honesty

Attention to detail,

Rounded our edges

The sound of water being poured

And a baby making gaggles (?)

Water passing through these intentional forms, thoughtful,  
intuitive constructions

The squeaks of the hard wood floor under boots and the  
snow falling outside

This stem, from a plant I do not know  
Turns slowly above me as I write

I want to play to but im afraid I'll mess it up  
It's hard to move, you become aware of how big you are in  
comparison to these little things

I feel like I am in maudes emporium  
The way a child makes potions in the bath  
Sandcastles with motes on the beach

The mobiles dance, their vessel stomachs full

I'm impressed how it can hold the ceramic jar of water, two  
threads, it has wings

I want to know why  
Read more poems  
Take something home with me

I'm not sure what I am learning from here outside of an  
awareness of every thing  
A reminder to play

I long for the summer and for moving water

Mud

Like watering flowers  
There is some for everyone

Seesaw satisfaction

Sounds things make  
And the satisfaction innate to them

She asks for curiosity  
Sharing her way of living, working, practising with us

A suggestion for becoming with?

She is activating it, without intervention the emporium is  
static, moves only with footsteps and fast moving air

ex-situ only

**NSPSLL!, Ludovic Boney, Pierre-François Ouellette Art  
contemporain, Montréal**

**Date of visit:** April 29th, 2021

**Purpose for visit:** Leisure

**Type of space:** Private contemporary Art gallery, with an emphasis on presenting multidisciplinary Artists.

**Ex situ reflection, February 28th, 2023**

I remember feeling so excited seeing the window front to this exhibition. Just a pile of wood, 2×4"s and colourful trinkets. I was taking a walk on my break, working from home for MOMENTA, maybe I was about to meet Joyce for a coffee, or maybe it was after. I don't remember. But I was excited. Opening the doors of the gallery off Rachel st. into a labyrinth, a madness of installation. Boney's construction felt like one of those physics / engineering games where you make elaborate obstacle courses for objects. With each step something activated. It was overwhelming, loud. Air screamed into your face from a vacuum cleaner hanging from the 2×4' wall frame. Mattresses on the floor (certainly inaccessible to any with mobility restrictions) hid buttons activating new sensations with each step. The labyrinth was narrow. And only allowed for one person to traverse at a time, single file one-way. I couldn't stay long. I was too overstimulated, but in a good way. I stayed long enough for this to resonate.

## **Poetic inquiry, March 17th, 2023**

interior construction  
mattress  
Chatter  
emporium, senses you  
gust of air  
Jingle of bells  
series of fortunate events  
Curtain of colour  
object passage  
Exit.

## **Photography as analytical practice, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Leopold Museum, Vienna.**

**Date of visit:** December 13th, 2021

**Purpose for visit:** Class

**Type of space:** Funded by the public funds raised by the Austrian Federal Chancellery, Vienna Insurance Group, the Siwacht group, the Austrian Postal service, Porr AG construction group and the Vienna Chamber of Labour, sponsored by the Austrian Mineral Oil Administration, in cooperation with Impulstanz, Dorotheum, Spark Art Fair, ImKinsky, Parallel Vienna and Ö1 media.

## Poetic Inquiry, March 17th, 2023

Basement tunnel

open field

Centre Stage

glass

ideas

images blur

Rooms continue

this way

and that

Lining the walls

black and white.

Small

blurred

death

self [ego] less

I

You

White Cube

(p)icture (B)Fook

journal

too many words,

I understand none

walkthrough

endless.

crowds

fresh air

**/Sound is Liquid/, Wolfgang Tillmans, Museum moderner  
Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (mumok), Vienna**

**Dates of visit:** February 20th, 2022 and July 10th 2022

**Purpose for visit:** Leisure

**Type of space:** Collection of modern and contemporary Art  
funded by sponsors and donations.

**Poetic Inquiry, March 17th, 2023**

Open blue  
    and again  
until more.  
perimeter  
material connection  
web  
    Dotting this way  
and that  
all over and again  
up close ,     far away  
Still—pouring cement  
    drops of water  
    lives.  
traces flow.  
portal glimpses.  
solar Return -

Room to breathe  
Space to think  
Pounding hearts  
    Breathe life  
memory palace.  
Association game.  
composition  
    never the same.  
There is no sound here.  
There is no liquid.  
    only stillness  
    human paused.  
and played.  
                    I look  
forward to seeing you  
again.

## **/Basquiat: The Retrospective/, Albertina, Vienna**

**Purpose for visit:** Leisure, research

**Date of visit:** October 26th, 2022

**Type of space:** Heritage site, historical palace, and Art collection from the renaissance to the present-day. The Albertina boasts seven principle collections and is funded by the Bank of Austria, BMW, the government of Austria and some donors.

## **/Seeing Sound: Basquiat and Music/, Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal.**

**Purpose for visit:** Leisure, research

**Date of visit:** February 19th, 2023

**Type of centre:** Largest and oldest museum in Canada, contains collections of applied Art, craft, archaeology, fine Art and contemporary Art. Non-profit organisation, funded by donation, member of the International Group of Organizers of Large-scale Exhibitions (Bizot Group) which enables travelling Exhibitions.

## **Poetic Inquiry, March 17th, 2023**

time line  
youtube video  
much too space  
Do they dread colour?  
looky here  
a sight to see  
money to spend  
Basquiat deserves better  
a score  
a dance  
a celebration  
Wooo  
materials  
grey's anatomy  
not idle contemplation

## **/Faking the Real/, The Art of Enticement, Kunsthaus Graz**

**Dates of visit:** December 3rd, 2022

**Purpose for visit:** Leisure, Tourism

**Type of space:** Regional-international contemporary Art centre.

The Exhibition was developed in collaboration with Creative Industries Styria, Graz Museum, Haus der Architektur, KULTUM - Kulturzentrum bei den Minoriten, Institute for Design and Communication of the FH Joanneum, WKO Steiermark - Section Advertising & Market Communication, Ankünder. Kunsthaus Graz is owned in equal parts by the

City of Graz and the Universalmuseum Joanneum GmbH, which is owned by the Province of Styria.

### **Ex-situ reflection, March 16th 2023**

This is the most violent Exhibition I have ever seen. And it is a book, it has chapters and the story develops as you wander through the space. But The Viewer did not need to follow this order, in fact no path was clear, though the titles of said chapters were written and numbered on the floor in corresponding areas. It provided guidance if The Viewer sought it.

This Exhibition, though requiring reading and sight, was an enactment of the ideas it suggested. It was loud, overstimulating, and demonstrated what it stood for, you did not have to go looking for it. In fact I think it could have used more obvious trigger warnings (there was a lot of Work that depicted blood, physical violence, and body modification among other things).

It did not really provide The Viewer with a safe space to process the information, although now that I think about it, perhaps that is the point of “the needle”, anyway it would have been useful to have a safe space. It was not really care-fully curated - yes, curated with intention, the intention to confront you. Being in Graz, a smaller city in Austria, I am probably not incorrect in assuming that the audience for this Exhibition is projected to be white, middle class and perhaps leaning to the more conservative side. No person who is not conservative needs to be confronted

with the horrors this exhibition contained - I would like to assume that we are aware of the world's horrors already and do not need to be terrorised by it any longer. No one should accidentally wander into a black box projecting graphic colour-photographs of war. The content warning was not very noticeable, only mentioned on a small paper at the entrance of The Exhibition and briefly in association to the Artist's name in The Exhibition text. I am privileged enough to only be incredibly disturbed, distraught and slightly scarred by what I saw - not re-traumatised from experiencing systemic violence. For any person coming from a war-torn country, this Exhibition was surely a no-no.

It does a good job though, I would imagine - at convincing right-wing believers to lean a little bit towards the left. The Exhibition seemed to be specifically for a white colonial gaze, which I suppose is okay and I hope no deeply rooted and sensitive people were subjected to it.

The space was noisy, literally, and visually crowded. It needed a debrief. I needed a debrief. I left shocked. Approximately 60 Artists were featured in the group Exhibition, their identities melting into each other and individual Practices coming second to the research team's thesis statement. More is more. I was grateful for small texts however, when I wanted to know more, I leaned in closer. When I didn't, it was easy to tune out the noise.

## Poetic inquiry, March 17th 2023

a ban(m)(g) of violence  
layers  
layers  
layers  
for (four) as the I can see  
cuts  
    blood  
draws        scream  
Burned buildings  
honest society.  
Political game.  
war  
    asunder.  
no place for solace  
any blunder  
human fabric  
Marks the spot  
Red circle    dot

(blur mask, plastic, body, crowds, stumbling)



## **acknowledgements**

I am so grateful for my friends, for my peers, for the support I have been given, for the surprising ways it has come about. I am the most grateful for the moments I did not expect, the strength that has blossomed from the community we have created, and for the lasting ties I hope to keep.

I would like to acknowledge certain exhibitions and Artist-run centres I have engaged with for organising / facilitating, mediation and writing:

Ada-X

Art Matters

Art Mur

Art Pop, POP Montreal

Biennale d'Art Contemporain Autochtone

Concordia Undergraduate Journal of Art History

Concordia University Centre for Creative Reuse

Esse Magazine

FOFA Gallery

Maisonneuve Magazine

Momenta Biennale, 2021

Root to branch

Sessions Aléatoires

The Concordian 2018-2021

VAV Gallery

Verticale artist run centre

Yiara Magazine

Artwork that has directly inspired me during the creation of my installation:

Ludovic Boney, NSPSLL!, Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, Montreal, Quebec, Canada (installation, solo Exhibition)

Karin Pauer, WE WERE NEVER ONE, Brut, Vienna, Austria (performance)

Nora Turato, ri-mEm-buhr THuh mUHn-ee, Secession, Vienna, Austria (installation, solo Exhibition)

Siggi Hofer, Still Life, Secession, Vienna, Austria (installation, solo Exhibition)

Dineo Seshee Bopape, Lerato le le golo (...la go hloka bo kante), Secession, Vienna, Austria (installation, solo Exhibition)

David Roth, A History of Painting, Spark Art Fair, Vienna Austria (installation)

THE NARROW GATE OF THE HERE-AND-NOW: SOCIAL FABRIC, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland (group Exhibition)

Bristhy Alam, MAAAACH!, Kunstraum Memphis, Linz, Austria (installation, solo Exhibition)

Rihab Essay, I dream of a Soft Oasis, Art Gallery of Guelph, Ontario, Canada (installation, solo Exhibition)

Stroke all the colours out of the sky, Asher O’Gorman, Brut, Vienna, Austria (performance)

## **in-text references by medium**

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## **Exhibitions**

Basquiat: The Retrospective (2022), Albertina, Vienna

Contemporary Immersive Virtual Art Festival: Embodied Structures (2022), Belvedere 21, Vienna

Faking the Real, The Art of Enticement (2022) Kunsthaus Graz

Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (2022) Universitätsgalerie im Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna.

From There Through Here (2022) Künstlerhaus Wien, Vienna

Ines Doujak (2021) Geistervölker, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna

Ludwig Wittgenstein: Photography as analytical practice (2021) Leopold Museum, Vienna

Nelson Henricks: Don't you like the green of a? (2023) Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Seeing Sound: Basquiat and Music (2023) Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal

Wolfgang Tillmans Sound is Liquid (2021) Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna

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bell hooks (2018) Teaching to Transgress, Post Hypnotic Press Audio

Carolyn Lazard (2019) Accessibility in the Arts: A Promise and a Practice, Recess New York

Sky Goodden (2023) Season 6, Episode 1, Momus: The Podcast

## **video**

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White Noise (2022) Noah Baumbach, Netflix

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# this is [kind of] a Book.

It begins with an essay on whiteness and positionality, proposing culturally responsive pedagogy and A/R/Tography as useful tools for Working and Practising. To further clarify the lens with which I look through, I invite Readers, Viewers and Listeners to engage with a selection of texts for accessible Exhibition making that have helped me define the mediums of The Exhibition and The Book. Then referring to excerpts of in and ex situ pieces of writing from viewing studies that are included in the annex to consider various 'objective' and 'subjective' methods of viewing, reading and writing about Exhibitions.

I cue you into my thought process. You follow my Art Practice, carrying the lens with which I look through and then, together, we confront the making an immersive installation of a drawing titled /remember you have a body, remember you live in a city/. It ends by outlining the importance of collaboration and the realities of confronting The Exhibition and The Book as mediums for personal practice within institutional frameworks.