

flux

flux | Anna Broms | Master of Fine Arts thesis project

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Anna Broms

ABSTRACT

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Spaces between the Spinal Bones | 2020

Noste – Buoyancy | 2020

Installations of numerous paintings, casts of concrete in various sizes with their spaces creating situations of variable sizes.

flux | 2021

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My Master of Fine Arts thesis project consists of the artistic part of two exhibitions: *Spaces between the Spinal Bones*, and *Noste – Buoyancy*, and of *flux*, the written part of the thesis.

The first part of the artistic thesis project can be likened to a situation, *Spaces Between the Spinal Bones* – installation. It consisted of paintings, natural rubber, iron wire and the Artillery Battery V with its weather conditions on the Kuninkaansaari- Island, King's Island, from 20th of August until 25th of September 2020. It took part to the Saari 2020, an event organized by the University of Arts Helsinki.

The second part was equally a situation, *Noste – Buoyancy*, an installation including paintings, casted elements, iron wire, led-lamps, an electric fan, and the ventilation pipes and structures in the ceiling of the premise. It took place at the Kuvan Kevät - group exhibition in the Exhibition Laboratory from 10th of October until 8th of November 2020.

The works exhibited are syntheses of observations, situations of the bodymind in space.

The written part *flux* consists of six parts intervening with each other. It starts at the Island of Seili and the King's Island with pondering on perspective and power. Questions for painting, material boundaries, and the artistic context is followed by a chapter of ontological experiences. The evolving choreography

in my praxis, and some aspects of Japanese culture are represented. I ponder on expression and placement of praxis, go to the qualities of the spaces in situ and return to the King's island and its effects.

The text can be likened to informal conversations leading to poetical wondering by posing daringly simple questions to inspirational feminist scholars, physicists, and experts in various fields.

Keywords: Islands, Disconnection, Centredness, Time, Space, Colour, Bodymind, Matter, Meaning

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INTRODUCTION

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The written part *flux* consists of six parts intervening with each other. It starts at the Island of Seili and King's Island with ponderings on perspectives. Questions for painting, material boundaries, and the artistic context is followed by a chapter of ontological experiences. The evolving choreography in my praxis and some aspects of Japanese culture are represented. I ponder on expression and placement of praxis, go to the qualities of the spaces in situ, and return to King's Island and its effects.

The text can be likened to informal conversations leading to poetical wondering by posing daringly simple questions to inspirational feminist scholars, physicists, and experts in various fields.

The cosmos, the instability, and constant change, rub me to work. They tickle and irritate me, and I channel them and seek to *touch the infinity through physical action*¹.

Keywords:

Islands, Disconnection, Centredness, Time, Space, Colour, Bodymind, Matter, Meaning

1 Ufan 2008, 22

April 2020, prior to exhibitions

On the other side of our yard there is an apartment building rising. The concrete elements are still to be seen and the building is covered by scaffolding and pine two by fours. The silhouette of the roof is rising from left to right. There are no window screens yet and in daytime I can see the scenery behind. There is something about Phyllida Barlow's airy and spacious sculpture *Cast* from the year 2011 in all this. The sky is vast, light grey and there is a red crane between me and the un-finished building.

An enormous green tarpaulin is torn, and it makes the noise of a plastic sail. The soundtrack of King's island. At night-time, the building is lit from the inside making the transparent plastic covers over the door frames glow in light green. They rise and descend as if the building were breathing. These are the colours and rhythm I am looking for. I do not want this building to be finished.

CONNECTING TO DISCONNECTION

Immediately after the sliding doors open, the warm air of the mall fogs my eyeglasses. Suddenly I am closed inside a bubble of my own breathing air coming from inside my mask. People inside the mall look amorphous. It is more than a year since the virus connected us all in the world. We must keep our distances because we all create a danger of transmitting the virus to one another. The negative space activates in my mind. I remember the islands.

28th of January 2021, Helsinki

Islands

Islands are but earth separated by water. Were the water to dry out, the connections would be visible, tells Deleuze². Areas disconnected from the rest of the world often create parochialism and inbreeding. Finland has its very own diseases due to the geographical isolation. Long distances within the area and between the outside world and the Finnish peninsula has created interesting opportunities for the research of genetic illnesses.

Being separated by water from the world can create safe havens. Separated islands, as is the case of Japan, created their very original culture.

Madagascar has its very own biota. King's Island has become a space for some accidentally imported plants, for rare butterflies, and for bats to thrive.

2 Deleuze 2004 (1953-1974), 13

King's Island - What is down in the soil?

King's Island is situated in the brackish waters of the Baltic Sea, but the air has still a scent of salt in it. The island is never silent; the waters hit the rocks and the wind whirls through its leafy trees. There are warning signs everywhere due to a fatal explosion in 1937; from down the soil pieces of artillery ammunition sometimes emerge to the surface.

The activity of the Santahamina garrison on the opposite shore, sounds of coastal artillery and helicopters hovering, creates a historically suitable background audio to the old military island which has only lately been opened to the public.

The island is a living entity reminding me of the Zone in Andrey Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*³. I am thinking about the soldiers who were stationed to King's Island and on that very Artillery Battery V, dating back to the Crimean War time, where I was to build my work on. During its time as a military zone there were families who lived there and were hurt by the 1937 explosion. Sorrows and joys of life lived there. I feel that there are playgrounds for children everywhere, skipping ropes, swings hanging from the trees etc., now lacking merely their material presence.

The history of the island and my feel of it become activated. The island is *an egg*⁴, which has become, now its history being activated in me, I join it in its constant becoming. The memories of my stay in Lebanon during the civil war in 1990 become vivid. And how my father, who had just recently passed away when the course started, participated

3 1979

4 Deleuze 2004 (1953-1974), 11

in the Finnish Continuation War. He took part in the air defence of the city of Mikkeli and witnessed his friends getting killed by an airstrike in a nearby gun emplacement. In his later years he told me that he had seen piles of frozen corpses during the Winter War, at the yard of the railway station where his family had been positioned. My father's memories may also be present in me, in some form. What kind of genetical memory traits will I be leaving to my children?

Island of Seili

There are spaces aware of their own gravity.
Spaces between the spinal bones.

The wind passes my sleeping bag from the east.
In pink.

The margin of a grid paper notebook in my body.
The buoyancy of the sea.

The Island of Seili in the Finnish Archipelago has a notorious history due to its past function as a secluded place for the sick or the so-called ill ones. *People showing symptoms of mental health issues have been historically alienated from normal life, from the midst of us*, says Professor Anna Keski-Rahkonen in an article in the Helsingin Sanomat dated 8.1.2021. *Even nowadays our manner of speech compartmentalizes people to normal and ab-normal, to us and them. This has given rise to places like the Island of Seili and the Nikkilä Mental Institution*⁵.

5 Keski-Rahkonen 2021, translation: author

As for Seili, in the 1980's a professor of virology at Turku University proposed locating people suffering with AIDS there⁶.

A Postdoctoral Researcher in Modern History Lisa Svanfeldt-Winter tells in her blog from 2013 that even romanticised ideas have emerged about the mentally ill which scholars like Edward Shorter have questioned. Shorter says that people considered mentally ill, have always been objects of ridicule and despise for the community. Simplistically said, according to him, up until the 19th century, families tried to keep their ill relatives in their homes, hidden, so that they would not bring shame on them⁷.

From 1620 until 1755 lepers and suspected lepers were secluded among other patients on a small separate Church Island next to the main one of Seili. The island was seen as an appropriate place for the purpose because of its sandy soil where the dead could easily be buried. At that time leprosy, was considered a divine punishment. No cure was available except for the religious services and alcohol⁸. While we were visiting the Archipelago Research Institute in Seili, the professor emeritus Ilppo Vuorinen told us that it is possible that the bacteria causing leprosy hibernates in the soil.

When leprosy started diminishing from the area, the Island of Seili served as an isolated mental institution for females suffering from mental health problems. It was also the destiny for many *deaf, blind, disabled*⁹, poor people and for criminals. *With clinical eyes of primitive psychiatry*¹⁰, the patients were analysed and subsequently othered from the world for the rest of their lives. Sometimes they were sent

6 Halonen 1985, translation: author

7 Svanfeldt-Winter, Seilin Museokirkko 2013, translation: author

8 Svanfeldt-Winter, Seilimuseokirkko 2013, translation: author

9 Metsähallitus, translation: author

10 Petronella 2020, translation: author

there with false pretences since there was little to be said by them about their very own lives having their legal guardians always male: fathers, husbands, or brothers.

The place where I am is beautiful in nature. But when it comes to the hospital, this is just a colony disguised behind the name of the hospital, where the forces of our patients, both soul and body, are being sought here to be destroyed hidden from the world. This is an institution without any humanity¹¹.

Antti Helin writes in his blog: *These are the words from a letter, which a young woman tried to send to her sister from Seili in 1945. The patient was said to have remained in development at the level of a 10-year-old, but the sophisticated wording of the letter says it all. The letter goes on to describe how patients are beaten and kicked brutally. The letter was never delivered¹².*

What was planted early in the soil of their lives? What had happened to these girls and women in their lives before that?
Maybe their symptoms were reactions to impossible situations.

I think therefore I am

The art historian Erwin Panofsky cited in Claire Bishop's *Installation Art, A Critical History* equated Renaissance perspective with the rational and self-reflexive Cartesian subject: *I think therefore I am¹³*. The renaissance perspective placed the viewer at the centre of the hypothetical 'world' depicted in the painting; the line of perspective,

11 Helin, translation: Ilkka Kilpeläinen

12 Helin, translation: Ilkka Kilpeläinen

13 Panofsky cited in Bishop 2005, 11

with its vanishing point on the horizon of the picture, was connected to the eyes of the viewer *who stood before it*¹⁴. The Renaissance perspective assumes that there is a centred subject and objective laws of representation exists. These assumptions lead to undermining the individuality of the viewer says Hito Steyerl¹⁵.

Asian art is often more interested in synthesis rather than analysis¹⁶, and on art that is experienced subjectively¹⁷. For example, the Japanese scroll paintings offer the viewer multiple viewpoints. Artist David Hockney studied perspective in his *Pearlblossom Highway* works¹⁸ in an interesting manner. He photographed approximately 800 bits of the scenery, all shot near to the object, and made collages of them. To me these works have multiple present moments in each collage, building layers of time. Later, in the chapter Searcher-Gatherer, I will pose three questions to clarify how in the past few years I have dealt with layers of time and with space in my praxis.

In the introduction of Bishop's book there are interesting notions about the emergence of installations and how they themselves question the hierarchy of the centred subject. Between the window of the picture created in the painting and the stagnant viewer, there is a distance¹⁹. The renaissance perspective is physically distancing and lacking from my way of being in the world. The art critics sympathetic to feminist and postcolonial theory see that *fantasies of 'centring' perpetuated by dominant ideology are masculinist, racist, and conservative ... There is no 'right' way of looking at the world, nor any*

14 Bishop 2005, 11

15 Steyerl 2011

16 Aesthetician Itoh Teiji quoted in Richie 2007, 11

17 Richie 2007, 24

18 Hockney 1986, Pearlblossom Hwy., 11 - 18th April 1986, No 1

19 Bishop 2005, 6

*privileged place from which such judgement can be made*²⁰.

The artist Lee Ufan writes that the modern ideals reject relationship with otherness, leading to discrimination and rejection of the outside world and people who are different. *Everything is contained in a clear, self-evident, and nihilistic atmosphere that is maintained in order to control identity*²¹. Stagnation of one's own viewpoint or identity enforces polarisation, othering and creates borders. Ufan writes that *if we accept the meaning of Monet's statement that the outside world exists in the context of relationship, we can move away from condition of closed egotism and stand in an open world where dialogue is possible*²².

We tend to think that being rational is much more important than being embodied- or being in, cultivating, a rice field. . . There are other species as well as other people, who know hell of a lot more than we do. Unlearning for me begins with opening the door. . . For instance, in the city, there are lots of different ecologies that we barely notice, and they are doing tons of work to keep us going, or take us down. Elaine Gan²³

Potential invested in I can, therefore I am²⁴

In the book *Mitä Simone Weil on minulle opettanut* (transl. What Simone Weil has taught me) about Simone Weil, Juha Varto tells that for Weil *the honour of the soul is first and foremost self-respect, where a person is not at the mercy of others, does not pity oneself or sell oneself. And that, every human being has far more potential than*

20 Bishop 2005, 13

21 Ufan 2008, 33

22 Ufan 2008, 93

23 Elaine Gan in Gustafsson&Haapoja: 2020, 153-154

24 *Je peux, donc je suis* is a quote from Simone Weil's *Leçons de philosophie*

can actually be realized. One should 'also respect what is still to be understood' in order to grow, and if we treat ourselves thinking that we know exactly what and why, we despise ourselves, Varto explains²⁵.

I agree with the poststructuralist notion of each person being intrinsically dislocated and divided, at odds with oneself²⁶. The ability 'to be more' than what is happening right now is the most important characteristic of person interprets Varto from Weil's thoughts²⁷.

Dominance, power, and its potential functionality

The lepers roamed around Europe in the Middle Ages without being able to stay anywhere warning people about their vicinity with bells and living on charity. There was no cure for leprosy. Even if it surely has been the case sometimes, the thought of the secluded institutions like Seili being safe havens for exteriorized individuals, still seems to me like a bit of a historical self-console to the anguish these historical events create, even today.

In 2006 Researcher Jutta Ahlbeck-Rehn made her doctoral dissertation about the Seili Mental Hospital referencing material from years 1889–1944. She says that there was very little medication available for mental illnesses until the middle of the 20th century the most important cure being work therapy. The patients worked in the farm and the more trustworthy the patient was, the further from the yard the patient could go²⁸. Juha Varto continues to ponder on the issue with Weil: *The only thing as compulsive as the manual factory*

25 Varto 2005, 139, translation: Ilkka Kilpeläinen

26 Bishop 2005, 13 e

27 Varto 2005, 139, translation: Ilkka Kilpeläinen

28 Palokangas 2011, translation: author

labour of the 1930's was the general violence people were subjected to. Obsession is always nightmarish, but what makes it especially dreadful is that 'people themselves build systems that have no real purpose other than to create compulsive pressure', work, war, violence, and institutions. Violence is a manifestation of the metaphysical nature of compulsion: Compulsion can be felt in one's own flesh, in pain and wear and tear, but violence targets both the individual and all of us on a full scale. In addition to pain, it gives rise to suffering and insignificance in addition to accident²⁹.

The aspect of dominance and power lie at the heart of Foucault's Discipline & Punish, The Birth of a Prison. According to him, the state uses power and enforces it by *its normalizing gaze*³⁰ to classify and objectify people and seclude them to institutions³¹. Foucault explains how there is also a capitalistic functionality to it; the labour force of the incarcerated and institutionalized people enabled growth³². Pain, suffering and insignificance.

Sleeping in Seili

I wake up at night.

It is autumn 2019 and we are visiting the island of Seili.

On the previous day I have played the harmonium of the Seili Church which is situated on that very island where the lepers used to live among themselves. When we are leaving the church, I feel a strong magnetism under my feet.

Now, beside my bed there is a strange force. I do not dare to take off my sleeping mask nor to switch the light on. It is a stubborn and

29 Varto 2005, 94

30 Foucault 1995 (1975), 184

31 Foucault 1995 (1975), 185-187

32 Foucault 1995 (1975), 25-26

confused presence, not willing to leave. I have never felt such field of energy before. I am terrified and a sense of guilt is rising; I should have entered here more respectfully.

Do not these sorrows create heavy places in the world?

Accesses to the other and cosmos

A clinical psychologist and painter Bracha L. Ettinger, the creator of the Matrixial theory introduces primary fascinace, primary compassion, and primary awe as affects which are primordial and create access to the Other and Cosmos³³.

In contrast with Lacan's *Fascinum*³⁴ Ettinger's *Fascinace*³⁵ is a transformational and creative gaze, happening only in borderlinking. As Griselda Pollock writes, it is not *purely scopic*, a mere vision ... *Fascinace might turn into fascinum when castration, separation, weaning, or splitting abruptly intervenes*³⁶.

The etymology of compassion derives from Latin and means co-suffering³⁷. *Compassion is the acknowledgment that not all pain can be 'fixed' or 'solved' but all suffering is made more approachable in a*

33 B. L. Ettinger, *Studies in the Maternal* 2009, 1

34 Jacques Lacan: *The evil eye is the fascinum, it is that which has the effect of arresting movement and, literally, of killing life. At the moment the subject stops, suspending his gesture, he is mortified. This anti-life, anti-movement function of the terminal point is the fascinum, and it is precisely one of the dimensions in which the power of the gaze is exercised directly.*

35 Ettinger in Pollock 2012. *Fascinace* could be seen as a transformational and creative gaze, *happening only in borderlinking within a real, traumatic or phantasmatic, compassionate hospitality is an aesthetic event that operates in the prolongation and delaying of the time of the encounter-event [in the making and in the viewing] and allows a working-through of Matrixial differentiating-in-jointness and co-poiesis.*

36 Ettinger in Pollock 2012

37 Definitions.net

*landscape of compassion*³⁸. Ettinger's com-passion is an outcome within the transsubjective, relatable, sphere.

Awe can be translated to the admiration of someone's sacredness, wonder that is inspired by the sacred or sublime³⁹.

All these three affects are *knowing aeriels and feel-thinking strings*. *They are primordial and affective in the same sense that anxiety is*. To be a subject without turning the other and the Cosmos into an object, that is the question in Ettinger's mind. *They can reach the ethical when they turn into respect, non-abandonment and copoiesis as values or points of view: acting-thinking values*⁴⁰.

Categorizing people is often made in the spirit of objectivity and the body and the will of the person rendered to an object, being seen from afar, from above. Professor of Feminist studies, Philosophy, and History of Consciousness Karen Barad points out that objectivity, is not about distancing oneself at all⁴¹.

According to Barad the past is always open, always open to change⁴². But it will not change as in some science fiction. The marks of the past remain in place. But what can change is the memory as she quotes her recent Ph.D. student Astrid Schrader saying that *memory is not a matter of the past but recreates the past each time it is invoked*⁴³. It is about re-doing. *Ethics is not about right responses to a radically*

38 Stanford Medicine

39 Merriam-Webster

40 B. L. Ettinger, *Studies in the Maternal* 2009, 1

41 Barad in Dolphjin ja van der Tuin 2009 answering to Question number 2, last chapter, quoting Donna Haraway

42 Barad, "Troubling Time/s, Undoing the Future." 2016

43 Barad in Dolphjin ja van der Tuin 2009 quoting Astrid Schrader in answering to Q4, last chapters

*exterior/ized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming, of which we are a part*⁴⁴. Such words of compassion.

I am thinking about gazes and communication. So little can be said with mere words, most of the communication happening and sensed holistically, in the bodymind.

Questions of ethics and of justice are always already threaded through the very fabric of the world, states Barad⁴⁵. I keep on wondering about in-between spaces, spaces between visible things, spaces between words, spaces between people.

What are these spaces filled with?

*Sensual perception and experience are as important as knowledge and will. They are not manifestations of the mind alone but elements of encounters that occur through contact with the outside world through the body*⁴⁶.

Lee Ufan

44 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 393

45 Barad in Dolphijn ja van der Tuin 2009 answering to Q5

46 Ufan 2008, 93





SEARCHER-GATHERER

Questions

There have been some questions appearing in my praxis in the past few years. Very simply put; how to represent the personal sensation of the layers of time and is it possible to enter a painting. What about the wall? Do I need or want the wall?

In 2015 the present moment, the middle of the board, was pushing itself out from the wall to the space. In 2019 the stripe paintings on linen were cut to pieces, turned inside out, becoming a sea reed-like structure.

In 2019 the painting board was cut to thin vertical pieces and connected by a horizontally running a rope through the slices. The gravity became an active functioning part of the work and it looked like a loose accordion. In canvas paintings, the surface was cut by leaving the below part of the stretchers without the batiste, opening a window to the space behind.

Also, in 2019 a plastic sculpture with a ratio of my cat's tail to the length of his intestines was made. It was a heated transparent, shrinking tube on a self-made iron spring with medical gelatine capsules added to it. It was installed from the ceiling. Later ephemeral sculpture-paintings with white batiste and gelatine were under construction.

I was leaving the wall. Though differently than Lucio Fontana, I was cutting the surface of the painting. I chose translucent materials, took gravity as an appearing function to my works, and took hold of the ceiling.

The Process with the Material

I search and use objects and material at hand and collect everything that arouses my interest. Discarded parts of furniture, cardboard cylinders, outdated gelatine etc. Basically, all material can be paint for me. According to Philipp Ball there might be *a cultural tendency in the West to separate inspiration from substance*⁴⁷ and he refers to art historian John Gage's words that *one of the least studied aspects of the history of art is art's tools*⁴⁸.

The properties of various materials and stretching their applicability inspire me. I try to work in a more healthy and environmentally sustainable manner than before. When I started the studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, I was in a process of leaving plastic-based materials and had been making tests with bee wax and casts of gelatine for some years and was thrilled by their ever-transforming qualities. Though inspired by Phyllida Barlow's works I tried polyurethane, the hilariously behaving foam, but found it ecologically problematic to create new things out of it. Eventually, the self-made shellack-ink replaced all the other binders. I mixed the shellac-ink with industrial and earth pigments minced from the stones such as Greenschists from Kainuu.

47 Ball 2001, 3

48 Gage in Ball 2001, 3

I have taken use of the Colour Index Numbers in my works. They give specific data about physiochemical properties of the pigment. They are accurate as opposed to the varying descriptive names given to pigments and paint. As an example, I was looking for translucency in a pigment instead of opacity. The so called Indian Yellow, Pigment Yellow 150, is an organic pigment, and like most of the organic colours, it is translucent. The pigments I used for my thesis works are the following ones: PY 184, PY 53, PY 150, PY 151, PY 108, PO 20 meaning orange, PR 101 meaning red, PB 29 meaning blue, PB 15:1, PB 66, PG 7 meaning green, PBr 8 meaning brown, PBr 24, PBk 11 meaning black, earth pigments such as greenschists from Kainuu (PG 23), PY 43, PR 102, PBr 7. These Colour Index Numbers add specificity to the working process.

The cotton batiste had qualities I needed in my works: fragile appearance, translucency, and reactivity. I worked the batiste with gelatine, and it created a graceful uplift, a slight tension to the material. The sound and voice of the material was born; it rustles like paper. For the island, pieces were painted on with whitened bee wax and for the Exhibition Laboratory the works received a layer of purified linseed oil. For spring and summer 2020, I tested the combination in quite harsh conditions, hanging them outside. It was not for the durability of the work itself, quite the opposite, but to reassure myself that the pigments would not leak to the ground.

With these rather limited materials I have chosen, I approach the subject matter, often first-hand, and personally experienced, somewhat asymmetrically; articles, books, conversations, moments of certainty and the necessary doubts gather around the process. It is a synthesis of system-creating, thinking with hands, detaching the works from all the unnecessary - like cleaning or leaving.

Lifecycle

In Jane Bennett's book *Vibrant Matter* Robert Sullivan describes garbage hills and the vitality persisting even in the trash.

The ... garbage hills are alive ... There had been rain the night before, so it wasn't long before I found a little leachate seep, a black ooze trickling down the slope of the hill, an espresso of refuse ... this little seep was pure pollution, a pristine stew of oil and grease, of cyanic and arsenic, of cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, nickel, silver, mercury, and zinc ... I touched this fluid - my fingertip was a bluish caramel colour - and it was warm and fresh ... Bennett writes that the narration by Sullivan reminds us that a vital materiality is something that *can never be really thrown "away"* because it keeps on acting even if unwanted⁴⁹.

This brings me back to our experience of once having to dump all our movables from our old house because of the mould-based toxins. No method to remove those toxins has yet been invented. We purposely ruined our things with a colourful liquid at the refuse dump to protect anyone from recycling them to their use and getting sick. All our quite carefully chosen things ended up having much too short a lifecycle. Even though we were not throwing things away *in ever- shorter cycles* to give space for new things which Bennett calls *antimateriality*⁵⁰, we were taking part in it due to the current culture in house building.

Followingly, I tend to be careful of what I acquire and use and have a naïve, pantheistic thinking about things. My relation to things might come from my need to touch and study things with my hands. Bennett writes generously about *Thing-Power* in her book⁵¹. It will be subject

49 Bennett 2010, 5-6

50 Bennett 2010, 5

51 Bennett 2010, 4-17

for further studying in the years to come. I like the thought of my works having a life cycle.

The installation, which was left on King's island for five weeks needed to be safe for the environment. I worried for animals; they were not to be trapped into my systems, nor get otherwise hurt by them - though one spider accidentally travelled in my bag and became a new spider citizen on the mainland. Given also the recently emerged pandemic, what if the works were to remain on the island, my fastenings would loosen, and the wind would take the works to the sea? I needed to be mindful about the potential sail-effect which could cause accidents. Would animals adapt to the pieces? Could they even use them as materials for their nests?

I found it very comforting that the spiders and bugs found shelter in the folds of the pieces. They were on *an infinite even piece of paper which is equally curved saddle shaped surface*, the description cosmologist Esko Valtaoja gives to space⁵².

Mono-Ha

In this very moment it is snowing. Very light snowflakes are slowly falling, floating, some even rising. They are filling the space with their presence in the air. They are like massive particles resisting and teasing the gravity. They are in between.

21st January 2021, Helsinki

In the 1960's and 1970's the group Mono-Ha, School of Things (first used as a pejorative name to the group by their detractors),

52 Valtaoja 2020, 23, translation: author

rebelled against the values of Western modern art overlapping in time with *Earthworks, Minimal-Art, Anti-form, Arte Povera, and Support-Surfaces in West*⁵³. They focused on the creation of the discrete art objects. In the making of these objects, the emphasis was on relationship created with the surrounding space and outdoor locations⁵⁴. They were making Activations and composing empty spaces⁵⁵. At that time, their works were forcefully antimodernist.

The Mono-Ha was a rather loose group, but they were united in criticizing the Western way of putting a lot of value on the individual and their uniqueness as creators of artwork⁵⁶. Ufan, one of the founders of the movement, wrote about it followingly: *the modern egocentric view of vision that belittles or ignores the vision of the body, leads inevitably to identity ...*⁵⁷ He also criticizes brain-centred thinking which despises the body and *cuts off all relationships with the outside world*⁵⁸.

Japanese philosopher and folk-craft pioneer Soetsu Yanagi saw a goal for perfection as something western. According to him it was *particularly noticeable in Greek sculpture*⁵⁹. Ufan feels that when *everything is clear and motto being a complete replication of data, he finds such works uninteresting, frightening and suffocating*⁶⁰. Here I think about mirroring. Karen Barad says that the world is always at distance in reflexion⁶¹. Ufan's previous thoughts about the complete

53 Ufan 2008, 147

54 Pantelić, Ksenija 2016

55 Ufan, Guggenheim exhibition 2011

56 Pantelić, Ksenija 2016

57 Ufan 2008, 93

58 Ufan 2008, 21

59 Yanagi 2018, 146

60 Ufan, The Art of Encounter 2008, 20-21

61 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 87)

replication of data, brain-centredness cutting off the outside world, ignoring the vision of the body, are somehow in conversation with Barad's.

Mono-Ha was criticized for a plainness of materials and for their avoidance of plastic form. Other artists undermined their works as *a breakdown in the historical and stylistic development of art*⁶². This is heavily beside the point, since Ufan is not referring to the acquirement of skills, but I do find that meticulously made studies i.e., drawing and painting from perception in space are important in exercising one's ability to see the tension, weight, relations, and the out-stretch. The act of drawing from real life perception I liken for myself as a bodily experience and exercise with a touch of mathematics in it. When I still painted directly from visual perception, my interest was mostly in the colourful field-like layers filling the negative spaces between visible elements, tensions and motion taking over the seemingly empty space. But I realized my interest in colours and spaces by studying drawing and painting from perception in space.

According to Yanagi *no other country has pursued the art of imperfection as eagerly as Japan and he calls this the art of odd numbers, the beauty of imperfection*⁶³. He is tempted to call the western desire for perfection to which he finds no analogous tendencies in the East, *the art of even numbers*⁶⁴. Concentrating on those spaces in-between, on pauses between visible elements, remains as an important aspect in my working though now I feel the colour more bodily than before. I feel that I am painting from within the body. Even having lived mostly in the West and having just notions

62 Ufan 2008, 147

63 Yanagi 2018, 146

64 Yanagi 2018, 146

of Japanese culture resonating in me, the inclination in my works seems to be more towards the *art of odd numbers*⁶⁵.

The works created by the Mono-Ha artist are often referred to as *responsive fields rather than object of cognition*⁶⁶. In my opinion there is a dire need to value and notice things that cannot be put into words and that was one of the aims of Mono-Ha: to *give attention to things that cannot be expressed in words, things that cannot be made ...*⁶⁷. One cannot even make a stone.

Ufan writes that the movement re-examines *the distance and interactions between organisms and inorganic matter, the body and space*⁶⁸ and that it discovered the body anew: *an awareness of the ambiguous, mediate existence and the role of the body, which belongs to me but is also connected to the outside world, gives art a position between internality and externality*⁶⁹.

Many of Ufan's writings are like declarations, there is a certainty which makes me want to question them. But his pioneering thoughts are valid, reassuring to my way of thinking in many ways, and I see that his writings, as well his powerful works, stand time well.

65 Yanagi 2018, 146

66 Ufan 2008, 149

67 Ufan 2008, 149

68 Ufan 2008, 148

69 Ufan 2008, 149

Other artists

Nina Roos' paintings create fields of existence outside the painting itself. I read in her paintings that something that has been, or is, something uniquely hers, is given to the world as a reminder. They remind me of the force of space and some kind of loud silence in the painting. I find some strange sameness in Roos' and Ufan's works.

Kathy Wilkes' exhibition at the British Pavilion in Venice in 2019, was bravely sensitive and mournful. In relation to her art, I would like to use the words by Thomas J. Harper: *aesthetic not of a celebrant but of a mourner*⁷⁰. Wilkes says that she *grieves for things over, and over again for a long, long time. The work is about repeatedly coming towards something, something you don't quite understand*⁷¹. She also questions all kind of borders. In her works I read genetic layers being present and now, later, think about Ettinger's *com-passion*⁷² and its etymology: co-suffering. I saw sustaining and nurturing force in them.

The Swiss-Argentinian artist Vivian Suter, about whom I learned from my colleague Verna Joki, lives at the base of a trio of volcanos near Lake Atitlán in the Guatemalan Highlands on an old coffee plantation. Elisabeth Wild, her artist mother who recently passed away, used to live and work there as well. In 2005 a mudslide from a hurricane flooded her studio and seemingly ruined her works. The catastrophe became a starting point for her new way of working. Now she leaves her paintings on the ground in her garden and lets the abundant nature work with her⁷³.

The silence of Agnes Martin's works points to another, meditative state

70 Thomas J. Harper in Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* 2001 (1933), 71

71 Higgins 2019

72 Ettinger, *Studies in the Maternal* 2009

73 Armitstead 2020

of being. In Eva Hesse's and Louise Bourgeois' works their inner world and trauma are openly and sophisticatedly present. In some of Hesse's works the lightness and the fragile appearance point to the unknown, past being openly present. Her material choices tickle me; her use of the natural rubber, underlines the brittleness of life. The natural rubber brittles with time.

Phyllida Barlow points to the importance of other senses beside seeing and the intellectual quality of the manual work in art. The creativity of her decisions, the rawness of her works and how she deals with the matter have been important for my working. She also generously shares her processes helping artists besides herself. I admire her openness about and the adaptability with her ways in keeping her praxis going on as a mother. For a long time, she was taking her works outside and making home-environment art-projects.

Sculpture can be anything,⁷⁴ says Nina Canell and opens questions about sculpture. She inspires me with her observations about materials and time. I enjoy how she finds special prestige in hidden matter behind our everyday life⁷⁵.

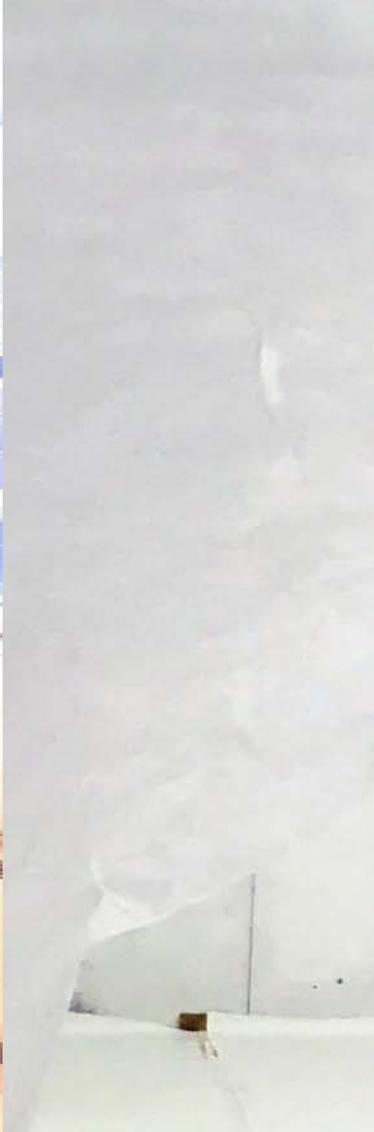
Pipilotti Rist's attitude and her thoughts about colour are beautiful. She refers to David Bachelor who says that written word and form are more valued than colour by the intellectuals. *Colour is dangerous, because it is like music, very seductive*. She sees her works as big, moving glass paintings⁷⁶.

74 Canell 2014, Mid-Sentence | Introduction

75 Canell 2014, Mid-Sentence | Introduction

76 Louisiana Channel 2011

A common denominator for many of these artists is that their works seem to imply something ambiguous, and I feel that there is a lot imbedded in the visual silence often seen in them. I am interested in what is behind those choices which a visitor seldom gets to know, but their works inspire me to a state of wonder: how did they come to this decision, what was behind that process?





PASSAGES

Hot-air Balloons

In my hands there is a shiny covered picture book, a fairy-tale.
On one opening there is a colourful hot-air balloon rising above a large meadow to a cobalt blue sky. The main characters, two puppies, are running towards it. The image spreads itself in my mind as an entity which gives me a feel of uplift. The colour of my favourite hot-air balloon must have been light cadmium red.

March 2019

I have stayed in the hospital with my father for three days.
Not able to halt the time.
We are moving fast forward.
Clocks and chronographs.
I am deeply surprised that the streetlights are still blinking.
*The quality that we call beauty, however, must always grow from the realities of life ...*⁷⁷

Dissonance of time.
*Im/possibilities of Non/existence*⁷⁸
My father has taken his hot-air balloon and escaped to another realm, probably to a light green.

I am cleaning the windows of our home for the universe to enter.
I will miss his accepting gaze.

77 Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* 2001 (1933), 29

78 Barad, *On Touching, The Alterity Within* 2018

On the Floor

Together with my father we tiled the kitchen floor when I was still a child. He involved me in such tasks, and I took them very seriously. In the summer 2019 all the possible colours were gathered over me and together they created darkness. Subtractive colours.

I painted on the floor as a flatbed a long linen painting that seemed to become a shroud with patches of livor mortis. In a direct sunlight on a summery studio space, I was feeling cold. Everything bows to gravity, but there is potentiality for buoyancy in it. ... *a pregnancy of tiny particles like fine ashes, each particle luminous as a rainbow*⁷⁹.
The absent skin, the stardust of loved ones beyond my reach. Where?

Energy is constant.

When someone leaves their space is left empty. It glows from within. It is an activated lack of physical presence. A tension in the space. Like a field. Above my head by my studio door number 437 there is a field of colour floating, nearest to a light Nickel Titanium Yellow, PY53.

I attach a thin cotton batiste only partly to the stretchers; I work it with gelatine. The batiste is lightly holding itself as if floating on the flat side of the stretchers leaving the borders of the cotton outside in the air.

I start collecting light. I want to be of the same density as the past ones. My paintings leave the stretchers.

79 Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* 2001 (1933), 52

Past as present

When camping with our Island of Relations-group on King's Island in the autumn 2019, it was windy, and it was raining. At night in the darkness of my tent, I heard a sound of the wind taking over the woods as a colour of light red in my mind. It came from the direction of the Santahamina Garrison.

Later my mother told me something that I found thrilling. She said that a week before she met my father, she had been a guest of a cadet in a ballroom dance at that very Santahamina Garrison. She had been wearing a dress made of cotton in a colour of salmon red.

Time does not proceed evenly, and *the future moments don't follow present ones like beads in a string*⁸⁰. *In a certain sense past is far more real, or at any rate more stable, more resilient than the present and that the present slips away and acquires material weight, only in its recollection*, says Andrey Tarkovsky⁸¹. Barad writes that the past, present and future are always entangled with one another⁸².

Maybe the hem of my mother's reddish dress was taking over King's island in 2019. I come to think whose experiences, culture, memories, childhood, losses am I actually painting about? I am left with that lovely confusion about time and the genetic layers and memories imprinted in me.

80 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 394

81 Tarkovsky 1986, 58

82 Barad in Dolphijn ja van der Tuin 2009 answering to Q4, last chapters

The “past” was never there to begin with, and the “future” is not what will unfold, but “past” and “future” are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world’s ongoing intra-activity.

Karen Barad⁸³

83 Barad in Dolphijn ja van der Tuin 2009 answering to Q4, last chapters



COLOUR

*As if in some mysterious way I felt myself to be colour*⁸⁴.

Anne Truitt

Paint is a concrete-like substance consisting of several ingredients: a binder (with additives), a pigment, and sometimes fillers.

*A colour is a sensation in the brain that is created by “stimulus” of electromagnetic radiation transmitted by nerve cells. The existence of the whole colour phenomenon requires, above all, a light source, an object to be illuminated and the viewer’s sensory system. You can feel the paint with your finger, not colour*⁸⁵.

Malla Tallgren

Being colour

I start from a silent place where a reflection of light is having a life of its own on a painted stone wall.

At night-time, the light peeks from between the curtains and I follow the slowly moving light stripes on the ceiling and walls.

My bodymind is of colour. I feel it flaming in red. I count to ten under the icy wintery sea. Thin lines by the sharpest and hardest pencil are carved around me. The colour surpasses them, but now as a lighter one.

The light is to pass through the paint. In Simone Weil’s words, the works are to *bath in the world*⁸⁶: to blend, the outside borders to dilute, even the cotton to unravel and to react to the space.

84 Truitt 1982, 81

85 E-mail 27/04/2021 from Malla Tallgren, the Lecturer in Material Studies, Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki. Translation: Ilkka Kilpeläinen

86 Weil 1997 (1952), 196

The mother of the artist Meghan Rooney made their life together pink by painting their house with pink paint. *She grew up in a pink house in a sea of beige ... she painted pink and handed it to her daughter who redefined pink in turn.* Le Barge writes that colour passes along matrilinear lines⁸⁷. Would Ettinger agree?

I think about the overall orange glow in my parent's house created by sheer curtains, furniture of burnt orange and the warm coloured wooden floor. And at the summer cottage, the cotton curtains being of yellow and orange, creating indoors quite continuous, warming sunshine. These colours have kept on emerging in my works. I was told that for the living room the colour green would have been their next preference for a colour. I guess I would be different now had they chosen the green.

Rooney, as well as Georgia O'Keefe, knows the danger of using pink. It is seen as sentimentalized and overdetermined depending on whether we are *committed to our very own idiosyncratic memories or not. Pink, peachy, soft, pastel, girly, female, feminine, woman*⁸⁸. O'Keefe wrote how her flower paintings were often criticized, mainly by male critics: *I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower you hung all your associations with flowers on my flower as if I think and see what you see—and I don't*⁸⁹.

The God-Trick. Giving judgements with *a conquering gaze from nowhere*⁹⁰.

87 Rooney, Seiser and Jansen 2019, 41

88 LaBarge in Rooney, Seiser and Jansen 2019, 41

89 LaBarge in Rooney, Seiser and Jansen 2019, 41

90 Donna Haraway in Rogovska-Stranget 2018

I cannot help but think about Professor Emerita Donna Haraway's *Situated Knowledges* - new kind of knowledge-making, and how *vision is always a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted?*⁹¹

Like Rist said, colour is dangerous⁹².

With the Colours

On my way to my studio, I am training my eyesight on the colours. The colour of the asphalt on my motorway lane is lilac and greenish on the other. If there was rain, the colours would be denser. On a sunny day like this, the colours are milder. The paint has dried. I enter the studio with a mindful and sensitized gaze. Rooney writes to LaBarge in *All Images Disappear: Lately I've been walking around the studio very late at night threatening my paintings with colour*⁹³.

After settling myself to the studio I take time.
How was our yesterday here?
Good.

In the evening, the previous layer has been rescued from being overworked. Layers of hardly visible dilution of paint keep on building relations to the previous, a layer made with a different pigment dilution.

91 Haraway in Rogovska-Stranget 2018
92 Louisiana Channel 2011
93 Rooney, Seiser and Jansen 2019, 40

All the immateriality

I had decided to represent the colours in my mind on a somewhat ephemeral and vulnerable seeming element. *Like our atmosphere is dense enough to support water droplets, and to form clouds*⁹⁴, the thin cotton batiste became the field of contact for the pigments.

*The water load of the earth's atmosphere balances in a subtle way between the visible and invisible letting a cloud pass some light and seal some out*⁹⁵. Equally some of my paintings become translucent and others like covering veils.

The form of each piece is neutral to give room and voice for the existence of light nuances of paint. They are similarly looking for anonymity like the sculptures by Anne Truitt. Most of my paintings are vertical like many of Truitt's sculptures.

In the context of Louise Bourgeois' works verticality has been seen by Christiane Meyer-Thoss as *affirmation, an attempt at a peaceful compromise and desire for acceptance*⁹⁶.

At one stage of her career Truitt realized that her sculptures represented *paintings taken off the wall, to set colour free in three dimensions for its own sake*⁹⁷. For her colour is the *least material of matter. Vibration as light. A touch*⁹⁸. I find similarities with her thinking in my on-going process.

94 S.D. Gedzelman in Arnkil 2011, 176, translation: author

95 S.D. Gedzelman in Arnkil 2011, 176, translation: author

96 Meyer-Thoss in Küster 2013, 76

97 Truitt 1982, 81

98 Truitt 1982, 178

The colour of water in a white bucket

After camping on King's Island, I took notice of the colour of the water in a white bucket: reflections of light blues, yellows making an ephemeral light green. There was the island again for me.

In that colour. The holistic and bodily experiences on the island were now seen in these reflections of colours in the electric light. They were to be presented in the pale settings of the Exhibition Laboratory.

In the island I did not want the pieces to stand out from the rugged stone walls and late summer bloom. I saw Andrey Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* where the daughter, Martyshka, wears a scarf around her head and neck. In my mind it was nearest to Indian Yellow, Pigment Yellow 150.

Searching for a very specific colour based on physical experiences and looking for a colour from a film previously seen was interesting - colours were amazingly precise in my mind. ... *one of the things that colour really can be, it's the most eidetic incarnation (some will argue with me, but here, I am saying it anyway) is paint*⁹⁹, states Emily LaBarge.

99 Rooney, Seiser and Jansen 2019, 39

Excerpts from studio life and conversations

I am looking at something from very, very nearby.

Blurring. Reshuffling.

Does the pleasant memory of switching on the old kitchen hood have any significance to those couplings which combine chemical elements?

What difference do my inner movements have to the universe?

I am creating irresponsible parallels between nearby and furthest events imaginable.

Choreography with Cambric

Having had Eva Hesse's cheese cloth and the fabric on Kathy Wilke's tomblike structure in my mind, the lightest possible cotton I could find and still paint on, was cotton batiste. Batiste is the French name for cambric. *This specialty item was preferred for ecclesiastical wear, fine shirts, underwear, shirt frills, cravats, collars and cuffs, handkerchiefs, and infant wear*¹⁰⁰. Today the material also gives references in my mind to very thin cotton or making of fine clothes, a cloth used for light under garments, something that can be put directly on the skin, reminding me of wounded people and soldiers. I let my hands study the batiste on the wall.

Barad's thought; *radical openness of the matter*¹⁰¹.

When painting on hard surfaces, even a very delicate gesture becomes visible. Jackson Pollock painted on a flatbed on the floor and his choreography outside the surface became visible on his paintings.

100 Encyclopedia 2019

101 Barad, *On Touching, The Alterity Within* 2018

Mine are now created by my studio choreography taking place outside, with and within the surface.

Painting on the wall

In my notebook I have written:

Painting a line is an interplay of discipline and chaos.

A fraction of a precise moment that expands - a contradiction in itself.

I attach the canvas straight to the wall.

What is the smallest possible instant?

There is a very tiny mathematical point, *the minimal interval of time, Plank's time which is equal to 10^{-44} . Below this the notion of time does not exist-even in its most basic meaning*, tells Rovelli¹⁰².

Does Deleuze's virtuality have anything to do with this, I still wonder.

But the experience of that thinnest slice of time is different. It feels longer, wider, and larger than it really is¹⁰³.

Barad: - *Just like position, momentum, wave and particle, time itself only makes sense in the context of particular phenomena*¹⁰⁴.

Me: - I will now paint these fractions one after another and draw a line. This is my personal experience of the present moment and the marks of the touch. Yes, I know: You will ask now where the touch is?

I walk in now, and I walk in then. I wonder about the variety of routes I could take. There are infinite possibilities and potentialities. *All*

102 Rovelli 2019, 74-75

103 The Institute of Art and Ideas 2019

104 Barad in Dolphijn ja van der Tuin 2009 answering to Q4, in the last chapters

*possibilities happening*¹⁰⁵. I draw multi-layered networks of strings in my mind. Strings leaking outwards. There is at least a three-dimensional map expanding without borders. Anyway, I doubt the existence of borders. They are created merely by the light and lack of it.

... Hmmm ...

*In quantum mechanics, in a small scale of the atomic and subatomic world, particles behave in a way that contradicts common sense. They can be in a so-called superposition meaning that they are in various states simultaneously i.e., up, and down, quick, or slow, existent, and non-existing ... The quantum entanglement is one of the most peculiar phenomena in the quantum world ... a potential ghostly interaction like an invisible bond. Thus the state of a particle depends on the state of another particle, even when far apart*¹⁰⁶.

*Being inderterminately herethere*¹⁰⁷.

All is vibrant and moving.

Choreography of buoyancy

The choreography has changed from the time I painted on hard surfaces and on the wall. The loss of control, when painting on the air, gives more freedom to the liquid to take its course. The information floods constantly; I put my weight on my left foot and my awareness to the back of my body; my skull, neck, and my back, and I feel the upthrust. I rely on my whole body and its balance, to where my weight point is, to the slowing rhythm of my breath. Followed by my right arm

105 Barad, "Troubling Time/s, Undoing the Future." 2016

106 HS Viljanen Miina 2021

The researchers of the Aalto University, concurrently with American researchers, certified for the first time that the peculiar phenomena of quantum entanglement appears also in larger particles. Translation: author

107 Barad, Troubling Time/s and Ecologies of Nothingness. 2017

I stretch myself over the floating canvas. Zuihutsu¹⁰⁸. I follow the brush. Each stripe is like a wave, always different. By every repetition, some newness occurs¹⁰⁹. With three slow in-breaths and out-breaths I let the brush guide the watery paint to the end of the batiste. The stripe expands. It goes through the surface and the colour can be seen on both sides.

There is a slight tension created in the batiste by gelatine, but once it is wet, the tension is lost. The gelatine as a primer seems ever resilient in this context: *Matter feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns, and remembers*¹¹⁰. When it dries it reacquires the same upholding quality.

*Meaning is made possible through specific material practices*¹¹¹.

Are these the entanglements Barad talks about?

Matter with meaning¹¹².

But surely *the matter is never a settled matter*¹¹³.

Scrolling

I scroll the painting around a narrow and long cardboard cylinder:

A 360-degree turn. Halt. I even the batiste with my hands from the centre to both sides and tighten it. Another 360 - degree cycle.

I repeat this procedure so many times that the painting of four metres is rolled up. My painting is scrolled now. Kimonos of the Heian period.

Twelve upon one another.

108 Sei Shōnagon created a Japanese genre of writing, Zuihutsu, which means literally following the brush.

109 Deleuze 2004 (1953-1974)

110 Barad in Dolphijn ja van der Tuin 2009 answering to Q4, 1st chapter

111 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 148

112 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 148

113 Barad, On Touching, The Alterity Within 2018

Tens of meters of batiste.

*In an important sense, in a breathtakingly intimate sense: touching, sensing is what matter does or rather what matter is*¹¹⁴. The soles of my wool socks collect the yellows and blues from the floor.

Digging the Void with the Shovel

Italian physicist and mathematician Evangelista Torricelli tried to create a vacuum inside a bottle but soon it became clear that *electric and magnetic fields, and a constant swarming of quantum particles remained*¹¹⁵.

A long cardboard cylinder is made of cardboard tape. It runs diagonally through the whole inside layer of the tube and leaves a carving, a negative space, between the tapes.

With sculpture technicians Vesa Rahikainen and Tuomas Peltokangas I attach the cylinder vertically to a crane. I let the wet concrete drop in small lumps from the height of three meters down to the floor level. A pause and *blob*.

Once the cast is dry my colleague Siiri Korhonen films me peeling the cardboard from around the cast. I am back to being the head strong me: Digging with a shovel my way through the earth.

To China, as I thought.

The concrete has entered the carvings creating a thin, ribbon-like positive element. *Matter is not to be understood as a property of things but, like discursive practices, must be understood in more dynamic and productive terms - in terms of intra-activity*¹¹⁶.

114 Barad, On Touching, The Alterity Within 2018

115 Rovelli 2019, 64

116 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 150

My old gelatine casts keep on mummifying. Nina Canell's pink rubber slowly moves outside of its wooden box and takes more space¹¹⁷.

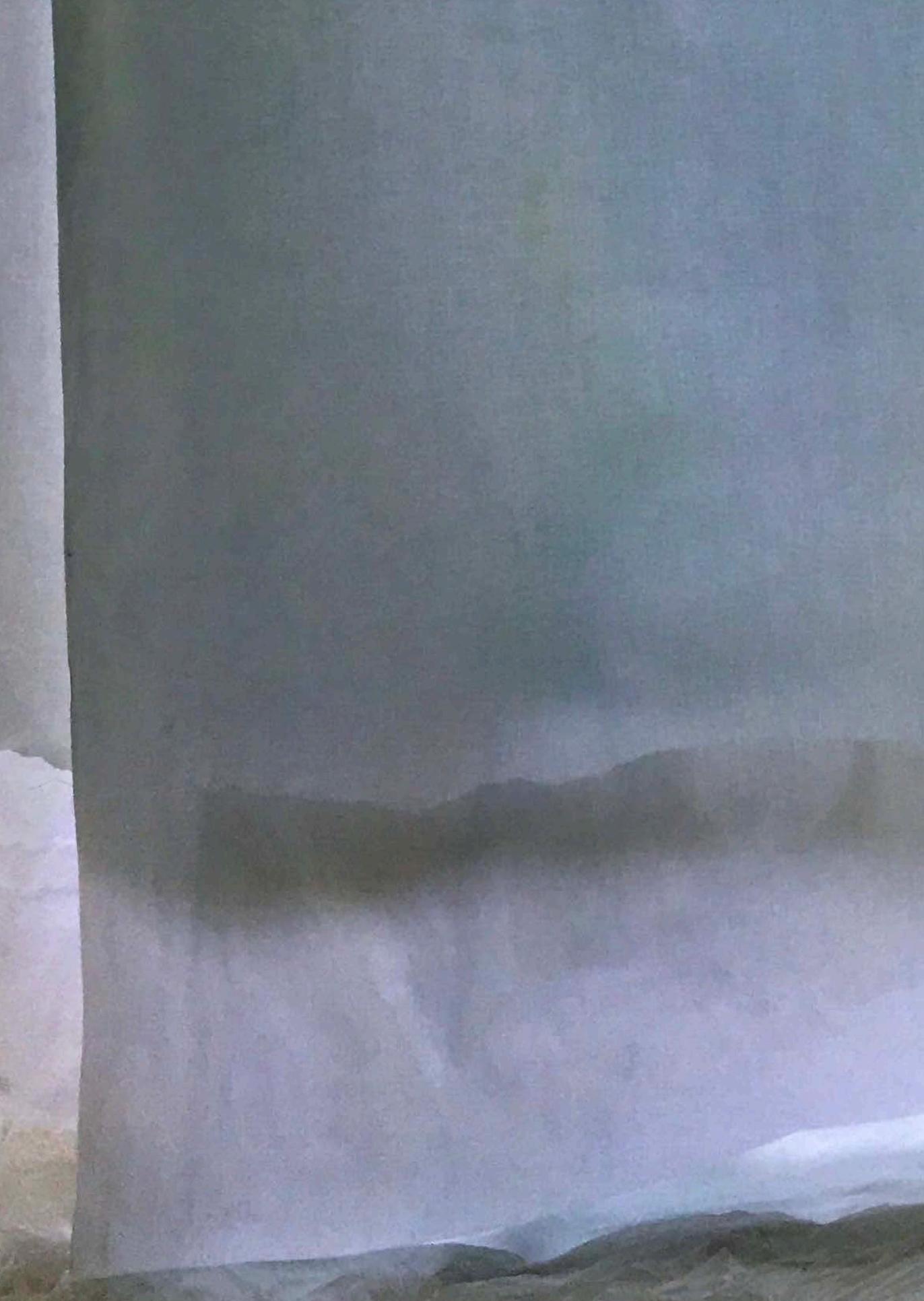
My rubber casts used as weights on the hem of the paintings are bouncing in the wind from the wall, as the paintings flutter. But *events and things do not occupy particular positions in space and time; rather space, time, and matter are iteratively produced and performed*¹¹⁸.

The cylinder has porous qualities of the stonewall of the Artillery Battery V. I lay it down on the floor of the Exhibition Laboratory. *Trillions of neutrinos pass through our heads every second*¹¹⁹.

117 Canell 2014, Mid-Sentence | Introduction, Moderna Museet

118 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 393

119 Valtaoja 2020, 24, translation: author









SPACES BETWEEN THE SPINAL BONES NOSTE-BUOYANCY

*The brushwood we gather—stack it together, it makes a hut; pull it apart, a field once more*¹²⁰.

An old Japanese song

Collection of Events

In his book *The Order of Time* theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli writes that *the world is not a collection of things, it is a collection of events*¹²¹. The sentence stayed with me. Barad writes that *independent objects are abstract notions*¹²² and tells that nothing is inherently separate.

Another thought I had was about the old age of the island, showing respect to a place where nothing is made overly sensible, practical, nor reasonable, except for the numerous warning signs. I mourn that there seems to be little space for qualities like asymmetry. I think that something precious is lost. These aspects can be found in eastern literature though.

I value this thinking about decomposition and conversion being seen as a part of nature; even celebrated as such, and immortality is *found through nature's way*¹²³. Donald Richie writes tellingly about the Shinto shrine of Ise. *It is made of common wood, razed every twenty years and at the same time identically rebuilt on a neighbouring plot*¹²⁴. Ufan finds great beauty *in the fierce conflict between the forces that try to bring things to existence and forces that try to nullify them and writes*

120 Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* 2001 (1933), 46

121 Rovelli 2019, 87

122 Barad in Dolphijn ja van der Tuin 2009 answering to Q4

123 Richie 2007, 38

124 Richie 2007, 38

*poetically: nature always and everywhere tries to bring the works of man back to earth.*¹²⁵ Somehow this seems to converse also with Haraway's attitude: *Immortality and omnipotence are not our goals*¹²⁶.

In the book *Sculpting in Time* film director Andrey Tarkovsky quotes Soviet journalist Ovchinnikov about the relation of Japanese culture to time as a matter of art: *It is considered that time, per se, helps to make known the essence of things. And that the Japanese see a particular charm in the evidence of old age. They are attracted to the darkened tone of an old tree, the ruggedness of a stone...*¹²⁷ and Tarkovsky goes on: *in a sense Japanese could be said to be trying to master time as a stuff of art*¹²⁸.

Ufan writes also about the elements of nature i.e., waves and mountains and their effects on us: before we structure and interpret, we are *moved by resounding effects on the body*. He says that *this does not mean that beauty and sublimity reside in the objects themselves or that they would be internal products of human imagination*. He sees that *they are categories produced by encounter with the outside world, events that emerge from phenomenological relationships*¹²⁹.

There is no need to add anything to nature. But there is a need to notice things that cannot be put into words and *things that cannot be made*¹³⁰.

125 Ufan, *The Art of Encounter* 2008, 26

126 Haraway in Yadav 2018, 375

127 Ovchinnikov in Tarkovsky 1986, 59

128 Tarkovsky 1986, 59

129 Ufan 2008, 96

130 Ufan 2008, 149

In the mood of the viewer

I express in low key and create fields of colour. I paint hardly visible variations in nuances of colour altering in *a degree of difference in colour as in shade, a difference that will seem to exist only in the mood of the viewer*¹³¹.

The colour has a living kind of reality, a mind of its own to be gazed at with kindness, to be sensed with. Leaving space for it, not proceeding, creates a layer – it is a very conscious decision to take. Each new layer of paint meets the previous one and its qualities. There are dozens of layers of various tones, of repetitions ... the sameness in them pointing to the other one's difference in nuance, relating to it. Vibrating.

The *islandstudio* in me.

Maybe they are of the most silent sounds of expression.

Expressing the in-betweens.

There was a ripple in time just after the tree fell.

Now there is tension between presence and absence.

Limitless existence pointing nowhere and everywhere.

The intangible matter – an oxymoron.

Space is not a void, repetition not sameness.

All is possible, there is a field of infinite potentiality.

Situation

The studio had been filled with the pieces from floor to ceiling.

The instantly happening correction of posture, opening the chest.

Moving in the constellation. In the woods. Getting lost.

131 Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* 2001 (1933), 30

Are they interventions between the visible and invisible elements – but since *there is not inside nor outside*¹³²? The works are like situations inside a painting. An installed painting in many places and positions. But Barad just wrote earlier: ... *it is rather that space, time, and matter are iteratively produced and performed*¹³³.

My work is about moving, changing position; a narrow corridor quickens the steps, height creates space. Floating once the balance is right. Climb up the ladders. Take the crane - a view from treetop. There is sameness in painting and installing at its very best. Is not the studio then everywhere?

From scratch.

I am closing my eyes to see.

There must be more than 360 degrees in a circle.

Some body in motion?

In Situ: Artillery Battery V, King's Island Spaces Between the Spinal Bones

The works were both to adjust and to point out the characters of the space: the light versus the heavy ones, the smooth versus the coarse ones. The prerequisite given by the Finnish Agency of Forestry, Metsähallitus, was that walls were to remain intact. Long ago there used to be a coast defence mortar which the Russian soldiers used for firing west over the battery walls in 45 degrees angle. Now in the middle of the oval shaped space there is a massive negative space. In front of the whole battery space there was a long pit. The Battery has a

132 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 396

133 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 393

new name - I call it *the Green Oval*.

I wanted to involve the visitor's *bodymind*; the uplift of one's position and opening the chest brings air to lungs and mind. The moving may change the state, the feel in being.

The rectangular, clearly human made forms, had their focus on the upper parts. Two of them, one with amorphous dots and another with rigorously painted stripes, had arms which wavered in the wind in different rhythm from the centre body. All the pieces were hung from the mooring over the vegetated walls loosely from the upper parts to let them move as they did: inwards in and upwards from the oval.

There were, simply put, three distinguishable traits of the wind: the first wind, mainly a horizontal one, coming from the right side opening and making a grand noise with the pieces (that wind which pushed the work on the opposite wall towards the opening on the left side of the wall). The second wind came from the front of the oval fluttering the long blue piece and revealing the narrow yellow one hidden under it. That wind threw the works up to the mooring. The third wind gathered to the pit and then blew almost vertically shaking the tiny red painting in the pit, at the root of old mortar-base.

These, just recently painted pieces reacted to everything: to the life of microbes, humidity or dryness, the gravity and uplift and to the combined changes in rhythm. The temperature, humidity, wind, rain and even once a storm, was a lively entity in it.































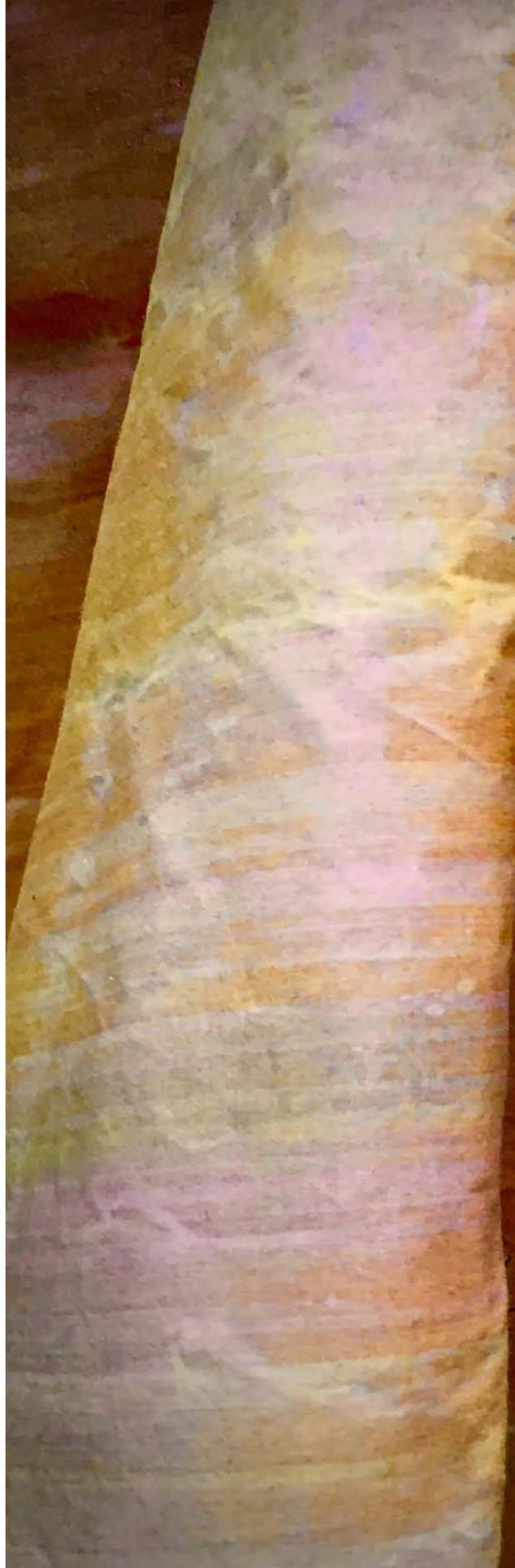








photo on the previous opening: Aino Aksenja

In Situ: Exhibition Laboratory

Noste - Buoyancy

The Exhibition Laboratory is a sort of white cube with robust industrial features. Because my works imply something intimate and breakable, it made the huge ventilation systems even more visible. The paintings rolled around the concrete casts from the floor up to structures in the ceiling.

I had the Fibonacci's ratio and breaking of it as a primal floorplan. It started from behind the painting on the wall, from the hallway outside the space behind the yellow painting. From the heart of the spiral the paintings opened to the space and filled it horizontally. Relations were built; one by one horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and strong contrasts to nearby works.

The time was scarce for the installing and the pandemic caused various changes in plans. There needed to be enough space in-between the pieces for the visitors to enter the installation and the planned spreading of the pieces towards the door area was not to be made.

After the exhibition had begun, I bought lights and added them in the back of the floor composition of concrete cylinders in a *just as they become*, in a relaxed manner, near the window to have the translucency which was one of the focal points in the work. Since the window could not be kept open as planned, I added an electric fan. In the latter part of the exhibition the work became more like I had planned it, to be about the translucency.

The roughness of the walls, the feel of the chalk-like paint on the ventilation systems left memory traces. I became attached to both of the spaces; to nettles, spiders, to birds, to squirrels, and to an enormous tube on the ceiling of the Exhibition Laboratory. I was weaving my net in spaces often unnoticed. Like a spider. Inside the spaces new spaces emerged.







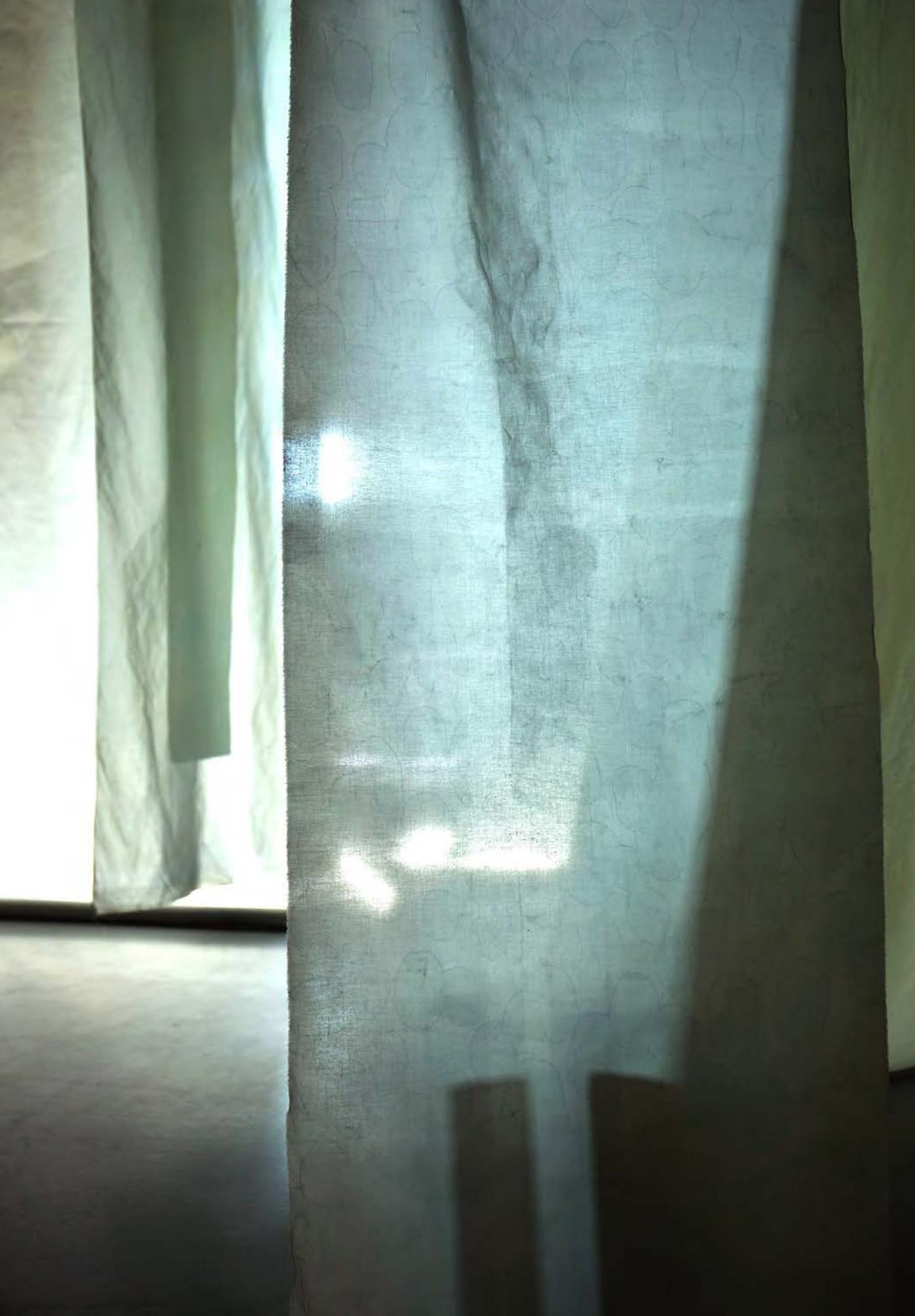














SKIN-LIKE PROPERTIES

After the exhibitions I read Anne Truitt's Diary where she writes about her possible plans to take her sculptures outdoors:

*... They will disintegrate in time at something comparable to the rate at which we human beings disintegrate, and with the same obvious subjection to its effects ...*¹³⁴.

The very function of these works made on such seemingly delicate materials was to let the island make its marks on them. In the early weeks of the exhibition, the warm humidity made the works heavy and then they hardly moved. There was sunshine, heat, and humidity. Later there was wind, rain, and even the Aino-storm. The balance of power was shifted *into the hands of time*¹³⁵.

Mud built up on the folds of the works over, and over again to be repeatedly washed away by the rain leaving lovely, permanent marks on them, marks of washing. The coarse walls made small holes and vegetation overran them. Some works got tiny flecks of mould in them. The unsewn borders of the works started disintegrating. All these marks became the indexes of time.

The pieces demonstrated signs of resilience and recovering; they straightened in the rain. Even after being very tightly entangled to some branches, they seemed to heal themselves. On the morning after the storm, they all had jumped on the mooring except for the horizontal piece.

134 Truitt 1982, 51-52

135 Truitt 1982, 51-52

I was astonished about the properties they gained on the island. From a dry, paper-like existence they softened. The materials seemed to merge more profoundly to one another. The matter seemed to bind better together. They endured the conditions by merging as if there was some kind of stronger magnetism than before. With the environment working in them they gained skin-like properties of adjusting, enduring, and healing. They transformed to a living skin. And they still are different from the works made with the same technique which have never been tried outside. They have acquired softness and resilience with the island.

Connecting to matter

Even when physically on the mainland, across the waters, I started to react to the island ... I started to become aware of the humidity and the direction of the wind. Matter affected me from afar. The air and space started living in me. When it rained I knew the works would straighten. I was connecting to the power of the matter like some kind of matter affect in me.

The work was at its best at the very end of the exhibition. Five weeks was only too short a period but still a proper start. Some of the pieces have been outdoors ever since and new tests are out for my next outdoors project.

On King's Island

The installing needs to be done from up in the mooring, a grassy roof where we camp during the days and keep our tools and my scale model. We, my partner and I, work by laying on our stomachs reaching far in the air with our upper bodies. The weight of the body needs to stay deep far enough on the side of the camping site. Pretty soon we will get accustomed to stings of nettles.

The concrete surface of the stone walls is fragile, and some layer breaks away and falls to the ground. Interesting system creating happens again since no digging is to be done on this island.

I need to get to the rhythm of the sudden breezes of wind. Listening and watching. Like fishing in the wind. A right kind of pause in the breeze - and the light piece descends the wall.

This is not the right place for the yellow striped painting. I take hold of its upper corners. It catches the wind and the rest of it follows as I walk with it. Like a veil. Like a signal flag. At this point I feel that my legs are doing the work. I just know ... from its previous site to its permanent place to be. There is something quite ceremonious about it.

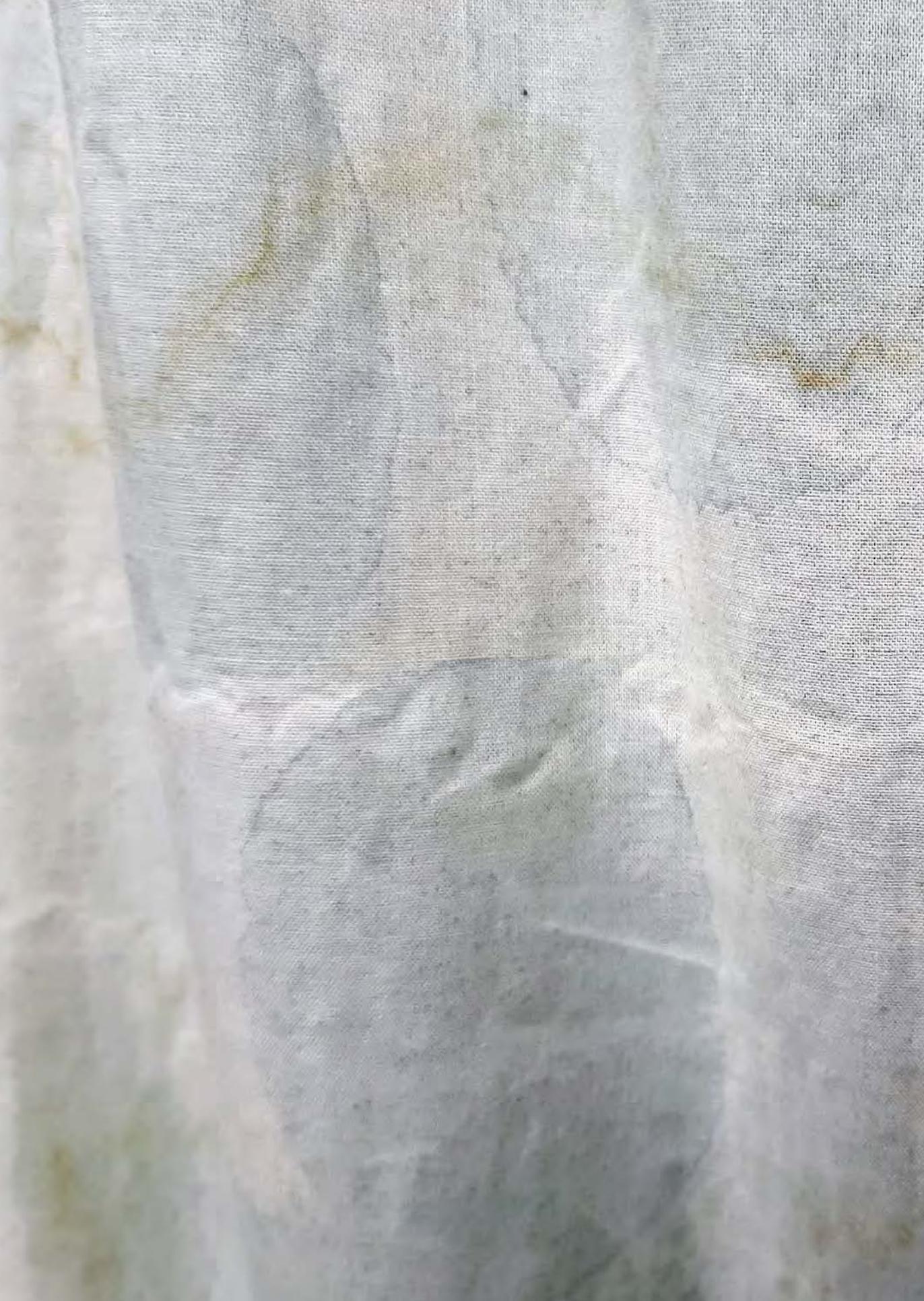


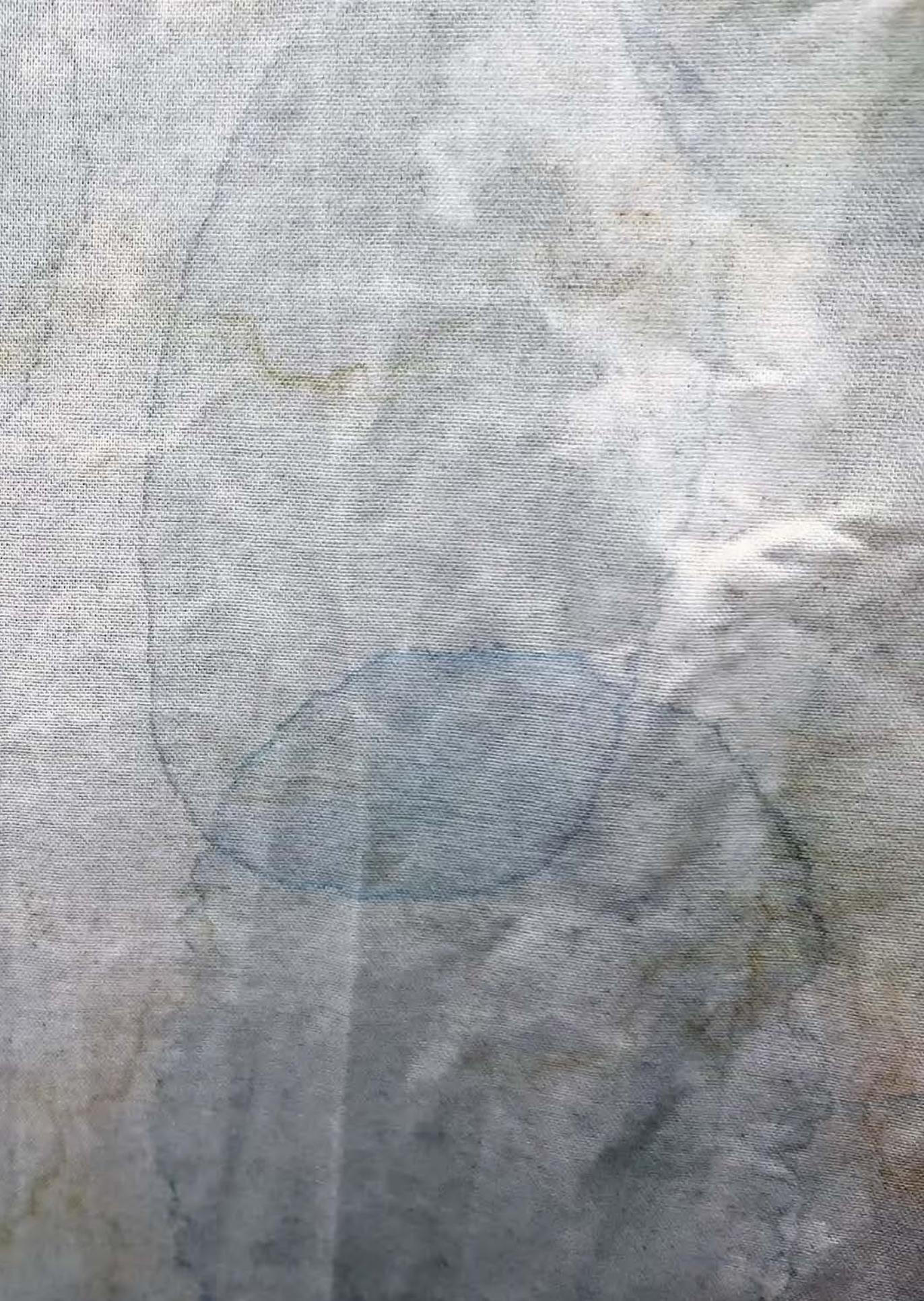












April 2021

The building on the other side of our yard is finished now. In those a year ago still empty spaces, homes are being created. Situations are seen from here, and colour choices made on the other side are affecting us. On a raw sienna coloured balcony someone just added a red chair. Maybe iron oxide red? The sun looks New Mexican today.

EPILOGUE

I have gone far back to centredness as a force and have pointed to the gazes, to the porousness of matter and found solid ground in the writings of artist-thinkers and feminist scholars. The questions posed about physics within my process have been questions to the universe in function. The thought of a Shinto shrine being rebuilt, re-done, comforts me and gives me joy even from afar.

The potential visitors were in my mind a lot during the process, also safety wise. As for connecting to my works, to these situations, I was hoping for an uplifting feeling, for physical moving and partaking: lifting of one's head, opening of one's posture, and the state of one's bodymind in motion. Letting the visitor think about life itself: about being *of the universe*¹³⁶, an on-going discovery happening in oneself within it all.

There was, or there is, no need to add anything to nature. It did not need my works, nor me. The island instead unravelled borders; by co-working and co-existing with these islands, I connected to the power of matter even when physically and timewise far away.

By becoming more of the island, by setting up my work as a gesture of respect, I wanted to point at and to signal to all the times and all the matter in the universe. To the future that was already made somewhere there, and to the past which became here. And to the present moment, unresolved about its whereabouts. And to *the thickness of the now including all times in it*¹³⁷.

136 Barad, Meeting The Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning 2007, 396

137 Barad, "Troubling Time/s, Undoing the Future." 2016

Maybe it is about making and being of the present, being with it.
About being of the others and with the others. The concept of time is
entangled to the matter and to the act of marking, making time¹³⁸.

I have been digging, having hands in the mud, through the
wormholes in time. The on-going recreating - the un-doing of oneself
offering me possibility to all structures¹³⁹.

An identity in flux. An earthy buoyancy.

In farewells we are in the same field, in the core of mattering.

The island is connected. It has always been.

138 Barad in Dolphijn ja van der Tuin 2009 answering to Q4, last chapters

139 Barad, On Touching, The Alterity Within 2018

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