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5.4.2022



## Mediation in translation / Summary

*Mediation in translation* started with two works. First in May 2021, Kuvan Kevät: *Shelving Data*. Secondly in November 2021, Project Room: *Transmission*. Followed by this written document as the conclusion of my MFA thesis. Afterwards I will continue *Mediation in translation* with an art project working with the concept of proximity between peoples using radar.

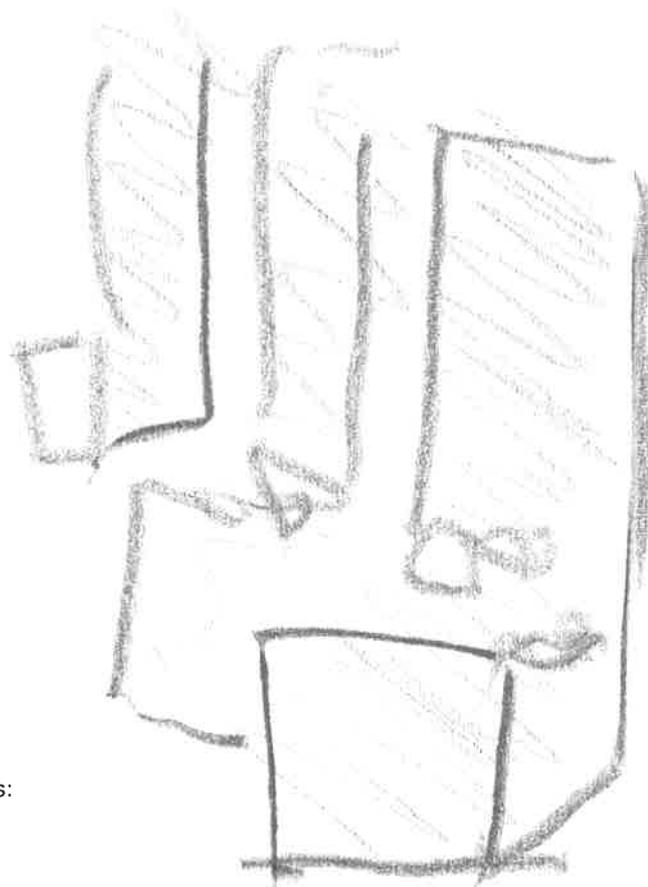
I see my work as a pedagogic tool, something for the viewer to transpose or emulate into their daily practice. Not so much by building electronics or sound installations but by looking at situations and objects in another way. Trying to find cracks in logic and wiggle it until it comes loose, not to break it but to make the choice to rebuild it stronger or maybe even do away with it when it doesn't make sense. The educational goals of my work need to be seen as a passive attempt. I see it as counterproductive to lecture an audience. There are distinct differences between reading a passage as gospel and finding out what the works means from one's own context. Therefore, I believe the work should have multiple entrance points. Conceptual, relational or even art historic.

My main art practice is in audio installation that finds connections with the audience through interaction in movement or vocal communication. What I try to do in this thesis is to create a connection between things that has not been there before. To use the manual or working language of one system as a script to use an another, showing how strange and self-serving both of them are. I do not attempt to fully integrate one system into the other. I see that as impossible and as something that we should not want to have happen. The end goal of the negotiation between the two is less interesting to me than the shards on the floor that have broken off during the process of becoming one. Transposing one problem into another and watching what happens when they together make something new.

I think my work should have a conversation with the viewer. The artwork for me is in this space between the concept viewer and work, where they overlap and touch. Where there is something piercing, finding the older connections in a revised way.

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#### Work details

The thesis consists of a written part and two exhibited artworks:

#### Shelving data

Kuvan Kevät 2021, 12.5-6.6.2021

Materials: birch multiplex, 2 IKEA Bror shelving systems, Shure sm57, A2WS hood, 8 hand build and designed electronic systems (PT2399 chips, amplifiers, piezo microphones, contact speakers, small electronics, blank circuit boards)

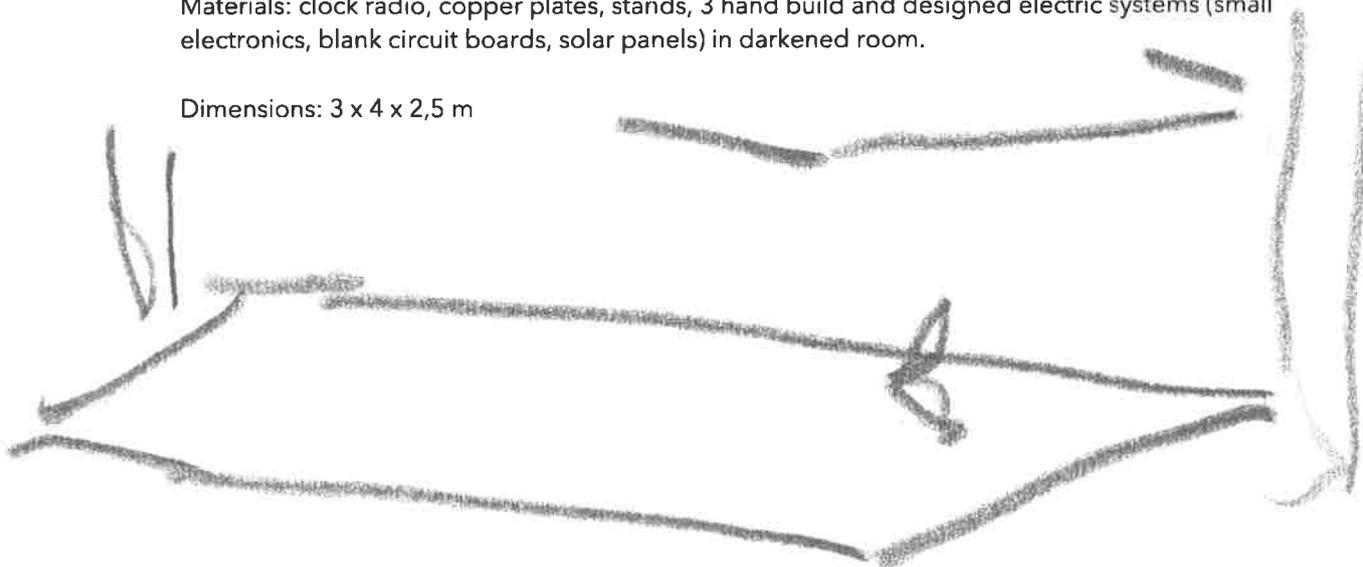
Dimensions: 2 shelves of: 85 x 55 x 190 cm

#### Transmission

Project room, 29.10-14.11.2021

Materials: clock radio, copper plates, stands, 3 hand build and designed electric systems (small electronics, blank circuit boards, solar panels) in darkened room.

Dimensions: 3 x 4 x 2,5 m



## Introduction

We know exactly what we think, it is harder to know what the other thinks. The information that one voices, comes to us with a mediation or code switch. Even if we speak the same language there are still differences between the meaning given, and what we hear. Based on who the sender is and how we value them, or their viewpoints. The use of means of communication shows the original purpose of the mediums. In my thesis, I take them out of their original context and give them a function that is close to the one they were originally developed for. Retaining at least some of their original personality and history. In the same way that people become part of a society. Not by just changing themselves but by the whole system evolving.

All visual elements need to have a function. The ways for the audience to interact with the object need to be clear in their communication. A simple interaction, letting the audience discover and form their meaning themselves. The audience should not be told too much what to think. I hope to give them enough trust that they can wonder and figure things out for themselves. In my thesis I produced two works that have a focus on intermedia communication methods in a broad sense. Where I use the interaction of nonhuman objects to show the details of communication and how it works when one party is not involved in its running's.

## Transmission

The second part of my thesis is an installation where I use convoluting FM broadcasting signals that the viewer interacts with by moving through the space. *Transmission* is exploring the claiming and regaining ownership of space in a discourse that is designed to be single direction. Using the characteristics of FM transmission to show disparity in communication between sender, receiver and medium. How discourse is set up to favour the one owning the means of communication.

The three radio transmitters are set to the same frequency and transmit their own sound-signal with a build-in tone generator. The tones are different from each other and thus strike a kind of a chord together. Workings of the transmitters are solar powered and need a big stage light pointed at the solar panel to keep operating.

You influence the flow of information and the light to the solar panels. Changing the sound from a chord to a convoluted sound that changes as you navigate the space. With one's presence in the room the radio waves are warped and distorted. Also, the transmitters are easily starved of energy by a body blocking the stream of light to the solar panels.

## Shelving Data

The first part of my thesis is *Shelving data*. In this object I try to show the hierarchal power systems of communication and archiving. The object operates like this: A bit of information gets spoken into a microphone and played with a speaker on a wooden shelf, this gets recorded and played on the next shelf, and the next, and the next.

The information changes slightly with each shelf. Gradually changing its nature until the characteristics of the wooden shelves and recording system have completely taken over. The original information has almost fully been consumed by the system that was saving it. Everything sounds like the archiving system in the end. Because the saving structure has as many objectives with the information as the original storyteller. What I aim to do in my work is to find connections in differences and point towards the beauty in the way these different languages work together.

## Manual for reading

Hei,

thank you for picking up this stack of paper. It is a stack like others. Text on one side, blank on the other. The order doesn't really matter. Some information that I give to you is something you will want to hear others might make me feel bothersome to you. Those bits of text have been scratched out, to protect my person and to keep with the readers sensibilities.

As the order of the pages is not that relevant, the table of content will be split out in the grams of weight that the sheets of paper have. The thesis is printed on standard 80 gram per square meter a4 paper, that weighs 5 grams per page.<sup>1</sup> The weight of the page is most likely different from example to example but because the source tells me they are 5 grams, we will not remeasure.

Every footnote and reference can be found on the bottom of the page, since it I the goal to have each page be usable as a standalone set of information. There will also be a bibliography in the final pages.

In this writing I go a bit against the nature of my practice and spell it all out to the reader. Although the way meanings of the text react to other can still give a deeper insight in to me, the work and my practice on a whole than the text on its own.

For accessibility I made it possible to use text to speech functions. Go to the last white page. All the text blocks will be there, in order. A tiny white coloured font against a white page. You should select and use whatever way you play text to speech.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammage>

## Archiving

For Kuvan Kevät I made the reactive audio installation *Shelving data*. In this object I try to show the hierarchal power systems of communication and archiving. The object operates like this: Information gets spoken into a microphone and played with a speaker on a wooden shelf, this gets recorded and played on the next shelf, and the next, and the next. Morphing into an indistinct rumble or loud feedback.

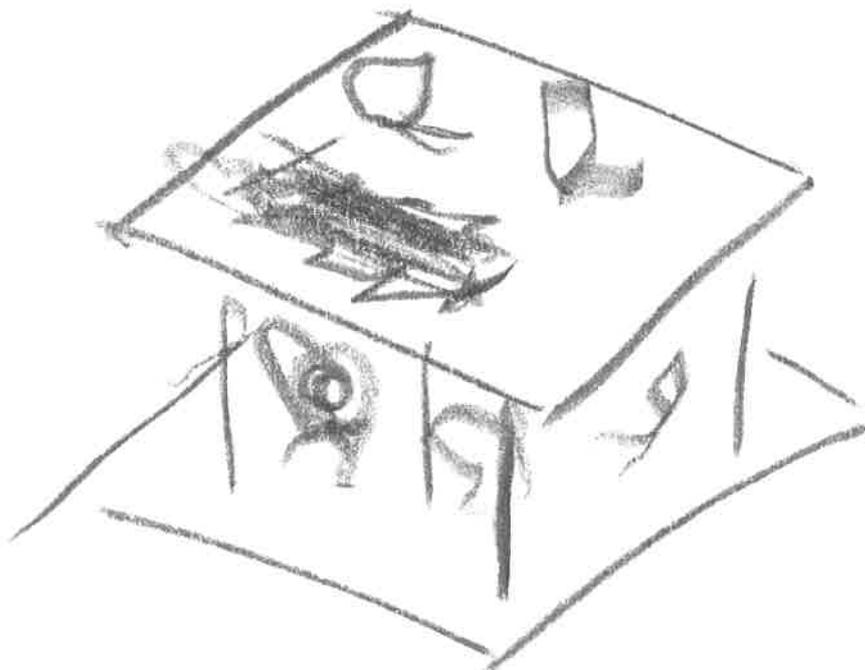
It is my goal to show the transformation of information as it travels through a hierarchy, political system or other kind of organisation. The way a story changes as it is told over generations. Stories are not just told with entertainment in mind, there is always a secondary reason. It can be as simple as laying one's child to sleep but even those stories have moralistic undertones. It can be the founding myth of a country or the information that someone needs to be checked out for illegitimate reasons.



## Connections

Systems are often built up over time and have archaeological information about itself imbedded in their workings. Things are done the way they are done because that is what we do. There are vectors in the form of old goals and directionality hidden in the way these systems run. What I aim to do in my work is to find connections between systems in two different domains. Transpose one to the other and mediate the problems that this gives. Using the one system to explain the other. Two systems alongside each other, lifting a way of working from one into the other. Breaking the workable version of the system but unveiling where it comes from.

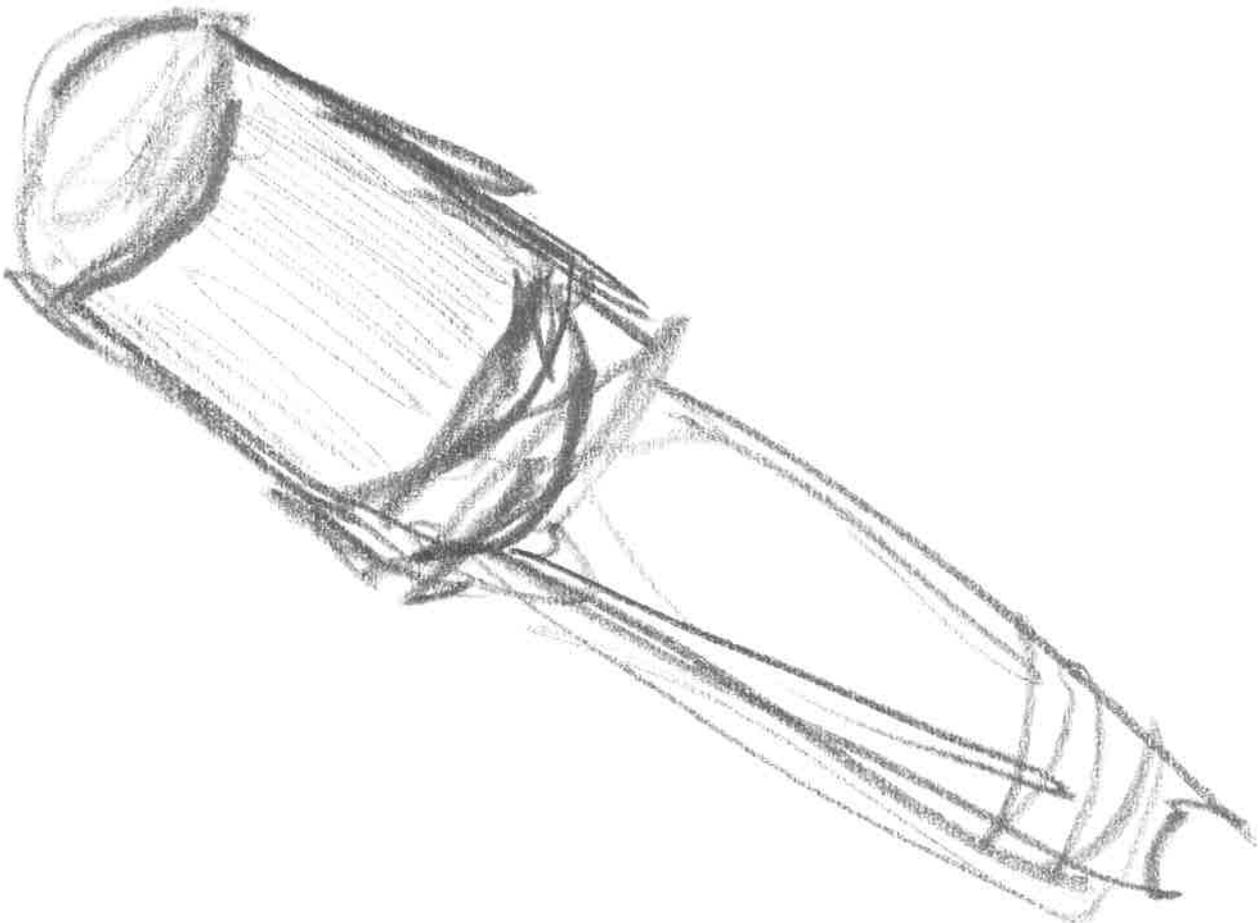
In *Shelving data*, I create an archiving system in a string of delayed shelves, making it that the information is in fact stored on the shelves but only for the time that it takes for them to play and travel to the next shelf. The actual storing of information falls apart in its mechanics of archiving. Even more, the archiving colours the information so much that it very quickly loses most of its original voice. Replacing it with the voice of the archiving system. Forming my claim that all storage of information is done for a reason beyond the keeping of the original voice itself.



## Conditions

I am writing this text in a state of fright, the pandemic and the instructions of how to handle them has left me to work in the way that I am originally used to – I do my own material research and come to a work by making a reaction of the goings-on around me – pretty much kept my self-created practise of self-isolation. I hoped to break with this system, but it could not be. I do not say that I stagnated in these two years, I am a much more formed artist than I ever was. And except for the funding, I am acting as a professional artist. I am still very unconnected to 'the scene'. Artistically it is a good place to be as it gives me pretty unique work but monetary is puts me outside the carousel of jobs that would keep my practice alive.

The way of working is based on the way I have been able to work in the past. It had more than once happened that I had to scale my working methods down because outside help evaporated. This time it was due to a global pandemic, last time it was because my communication skills where not as good as others are. And there will come new ones later. Building need safety. Thinking needs safety.



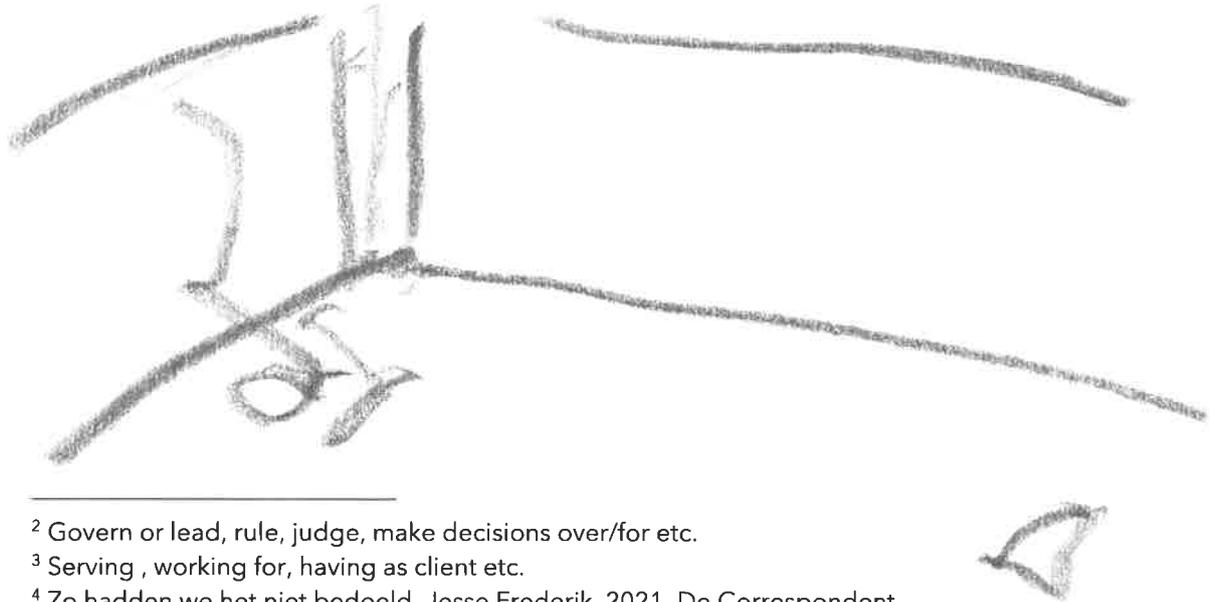
## Openness

*Shelving data* is in part based on how I experienced institutional systems and how responsibility dissolves in an upward motion. In connection to the finding of blame outside of one's field of view, and how those ways of viewing fold into each other.

The way the reader thinks about the meaning of the previous sentence could reveal their hierarchal power. If their view centres around the systems closing themselves off to the outside to push out the group they govern<sup>2</sup>, they are viewing it from the lower tiers. If they see the group getting served<sup>3</sup> as banding together purposefully not seeing the human part of the organization failing to see the complexity of the job (and easily group them as a functionary of evil) they are looking at it from a higher tier of the ladder, whilst probably having similar feelings for the people one or two tiers above. One way of viewing happens more often than the other, but the first has more power and impact behind it. Where they stand on the scale of progressive and conservative will decide what that is to them. As an example, I refer to the handling of a scandal by the Dutch tax agency. During the late production of *Shelving Data*, I read the book: *'that's not how we meant it to be'* By Jesse Frederik.<sup>4</sup> In the book he attempts to put light on what happened, to discover that it is never as simple as saints of parents and demons of tax collectors.

In the Netherlands parents get money back after paying for child day-care. The Chr. Dem. Party thought this was unfair because their demographic had more women staying home for childcare. A system was made to make it possible for families to also get this day-care funding. At the same time regressive government was the leading ideology. The tax agency –who oversees giving out this kind of funding– was also shuck up by a little scandal of foreign people undeservedly receiving this (and other) kinds of government cashbacks. This could not stand, and the tax agency was instructed to be ruthless to any kind of fraud.

What happened was the thing that always happens when the law leaves an opening. Malafide companies were scouting for parents that took care of their children in more self-organised ways, to mediate cashbacks for them. The tax agency struck down with draconian measures on parents collecting cashbacks outside their norms, and people had to pay back years of day-care cash-back fees. The problem was that legally not everyone had done something wrong. People where racially and politically profiled and hunted by the government.



<sup>2</sup> Govern or lead, rule, judge, make decisions over/for etc.

<sup>3</sup> Serving , working for, having as client etc.

<sup>4</sup> Zo hadden we het niet bedoeld, Jesse Frederik, 2021, De Correspondent

## Execution

The way the tax agency handled this malpractice of the social system is of course a tragedy, a malpractice of sociality and hard to get one's mind around the idea of how something like this could come to be.

The answer is simple if you want epics:

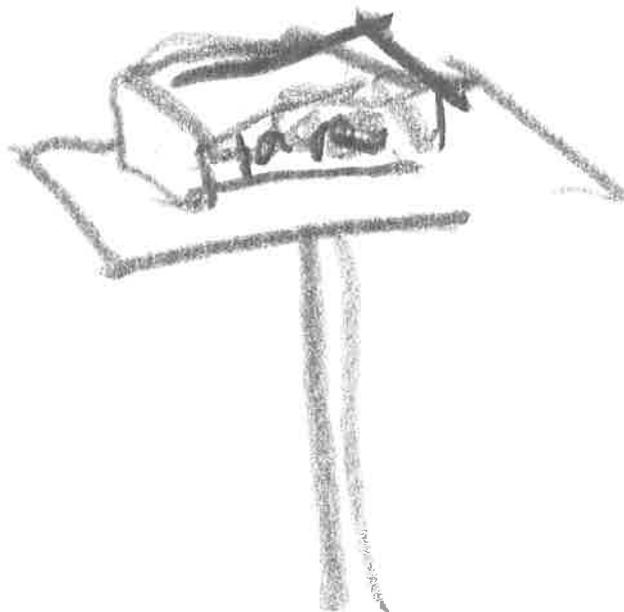
It happened gradually, through chains of command and in a regressing organisation by people who feel love for others and have pride in their jobs.

The answer conflicted if you want to see grey tones:

There were many complaints upward that did not make it up through the ranks and politicians were building their career on cracking down on criminal cheaters and it just sort of happened.

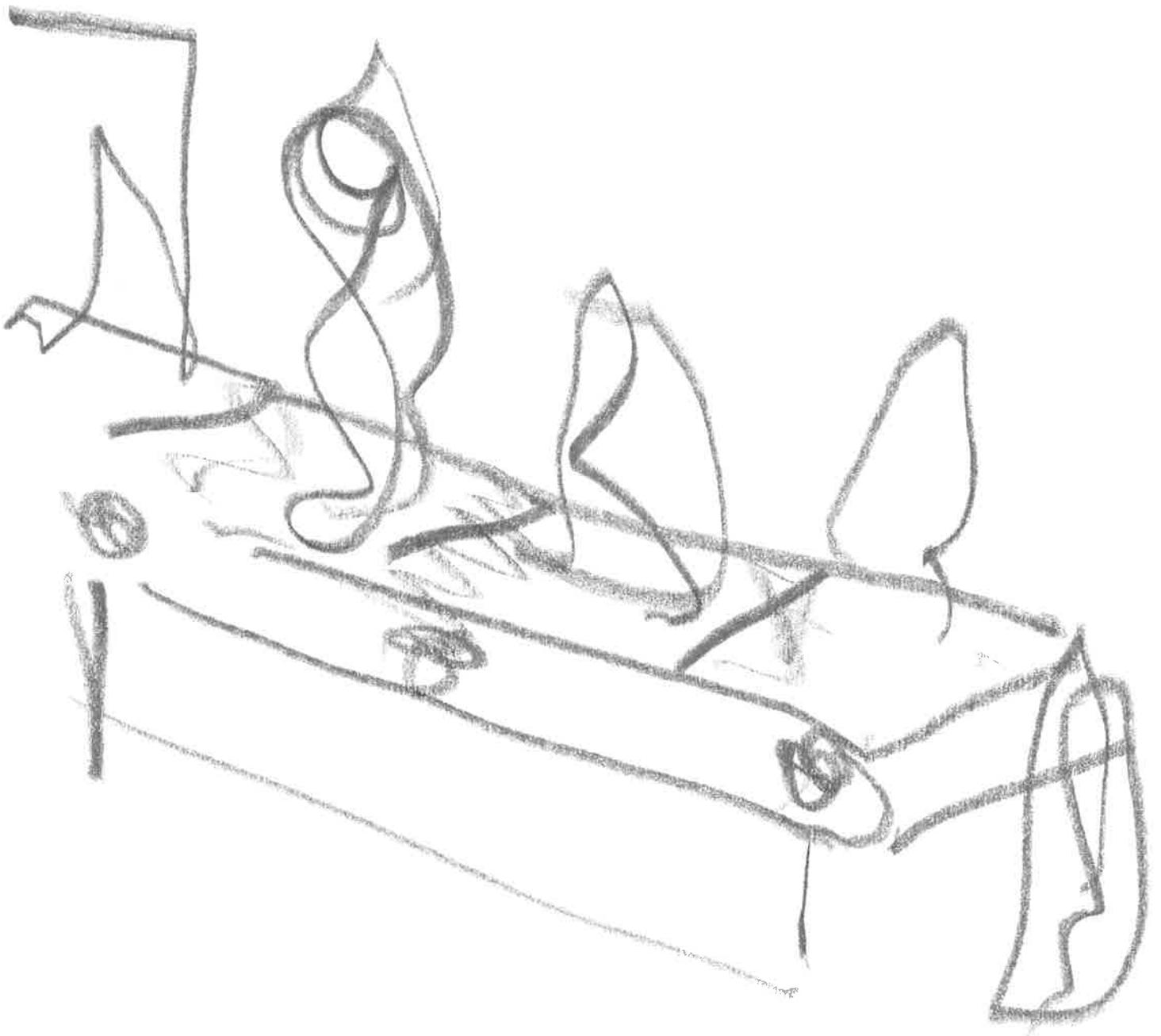
During all this the tax agency had a big drain of old knowledge due to a too loose –and illegal by labour law– early-pension-program. A lot of older employees left the organization before they had time to pass knowledge of the highly antiquated computer systems down to the younger colleagues. The organisation was a mess, and it was just hard to do a good job in those working conditions.

What is a bit painful is that, this only became a big story because it translates very well in the media. You can already think of the journalistic choices that are made to make the story land. A mother alone on a black leatherette couch, kid crying in the background. Destitute by an evil tax collector, not caring for any nuance nor having any feelings of compassion. And a truth is made.



## Ease

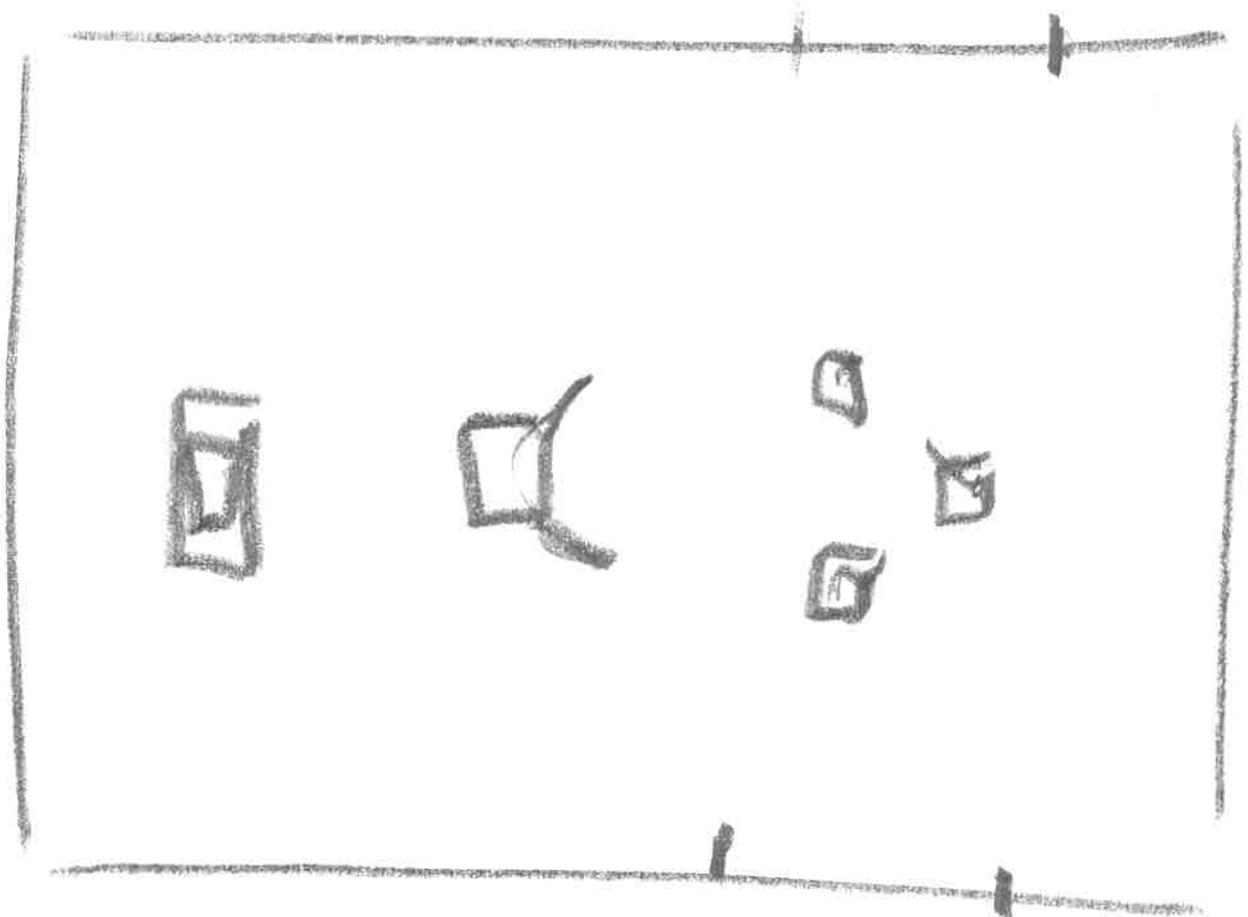
As a general rule, systems are made with purpose, changed with a purpose and kept up to specifications with a purpose. The whole idea of a 'system' comes from a culture of measurement. Making something fit in a way of operating, thinking or making it fit as another. Made to posture a way of seeing things. There is a power in the wording and the systemisation. Systems also evolve and grow but they never really lose the characteristics of its original form. The vector of the intended pull and directionality will come back in the way a system handles itself, how the propellers of these systems hold themselves up. This makes it possible to use versions of archaeology to find out what the initial reasoning's are behind the systems.



## Direction

*Transmission* plays with the direction of communication and the power structure behind information. And the hierarchy of information streams. I use the body of the audience to interrupt with the way information flows in its stable form. Without the audience being present with the work there is a stable flow of information from the senders to the clock radio. Only when the viewer observes and interacts with the installation is it that the sound changes.

The work is a bit utopic since it gives the viewer a chance for changing the working of the system. There is a problem with giving the audience a hope like that to play with since I have never seen something play out in the real world like that. It explores the audience itself as a force of change, influencing the message and actually changing the way the work communicates with the standard clock radio in the other end of the dark space.



## Broadcast

*Transmission* breaks into the FM frequencies. Less than a kilometre from the old YLE building where the first Finnish radio was broadcast,<sup>5</sup> I claim a tiny bit of communication space. A transmitter that sends a few meters of noise of a frequency between the official stations. Everyone feels unheard sometimes. I don't think it is a very alien feeling to hear speech spoken to you that you are meant to hear and process but are not meant to understand. FM is a system originally designed as a two way-system for long distance communications. How can one claim a frequency range of vibrations in the air?

~~An active system to keep actors out the are not to be trusted with the power of communication. This is fine as long as you can trust the system. And know that you don't need to interfere with it for ever.~~



<sup>5</sup> [https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yleisradio#Yleisradion\\_alkutaival](https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yleisradio#Yleisradion_alkutaival)

## Source

By using the characteristics of the way radio is transmitted to show disparity in communication between sender, receiver and medium, you influence the flow of information and the light to the power source. The radio signals warp and get absorbed by the body of the audience and the light hitting the solar panel is used to keep the transmission powered.

The panels are used with oversized stage lights to electrify them. This gives a power to the viewer to stop the broadcast totally, but they must physically stand in front of the transmitters and shield the light from coming to the solar panels. It feels bad to have a constant 1000-Watt light shining light on three tiny solar panels that could have worked with a 3-volt adapter. And it should feel bad, even if a projected film would use as much energy. To me it is telling that a system works with 1000 Watt is in a secluded black room while that could have worked without any powered lighting by being out in the elements.



## His masters voice

Radio is interesting as a medium in how fleeting the information it gives is. At first very much there and then it disappears. There is no pausing it, no rewinding. It is a single source that gets given trust by the listener dialling in on the station. But the power dynamic is clear, there is a giver and receiver of information.

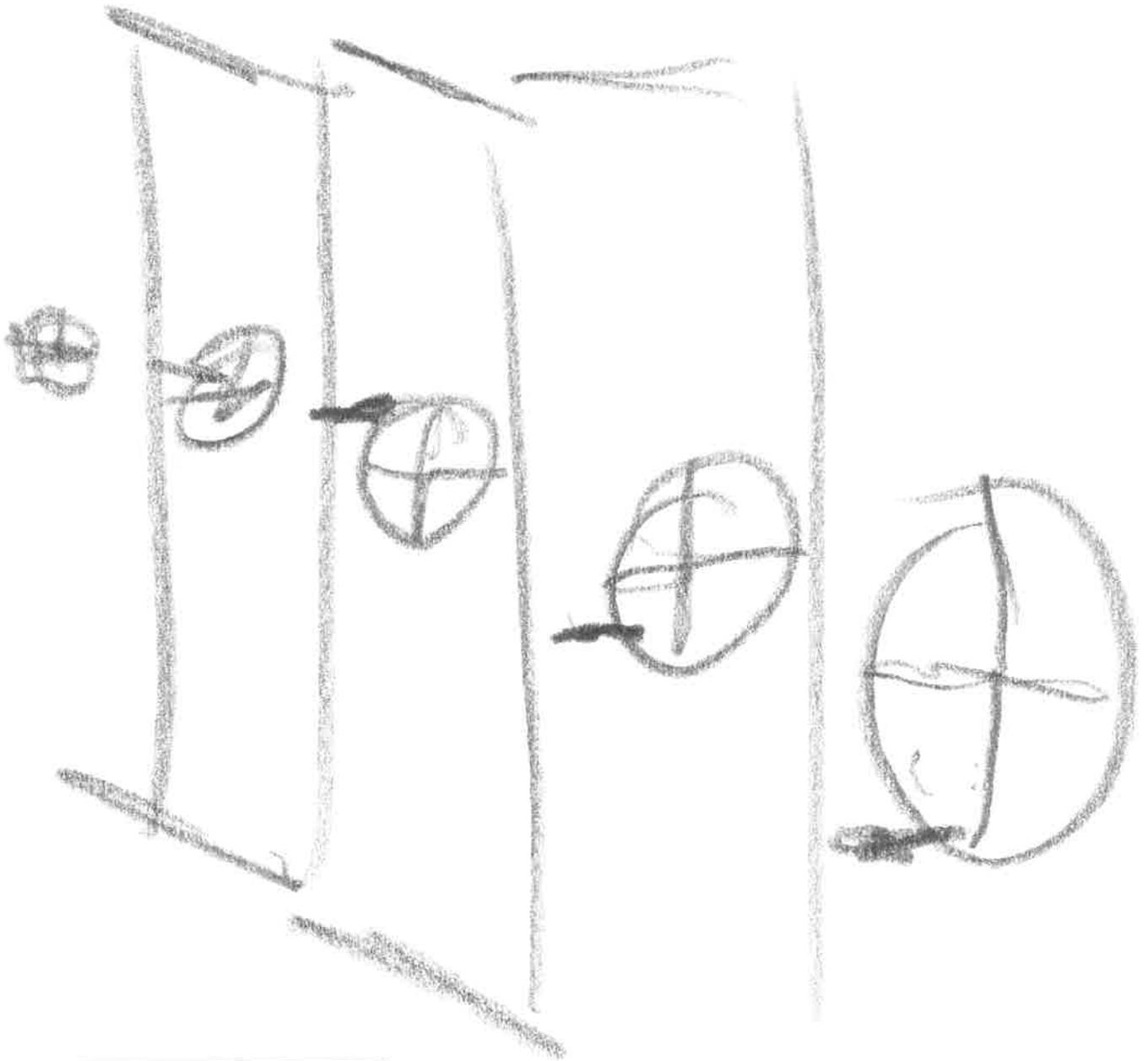
This hierarchy calls for interference, pirate radio, the best way to be able to listen to schlager music in the 10 km range around that –not at all suspicious– antenna next to the shed. Pirate radio is also what helped squatters organise in the big riots in 1980's Amsterdam. I love how those two uses are in different worlds from each other. In that sense radio rises over class but that is only in the receiving capacity. In the sending there is a huge set of rules and/or fines connected to it that can only be carried by groups, and only by groups with the hierarchal placing or monetary means.



## Archival impulse<sup>6</sup>

As I've been so well instructed by present day artistic practise, I build up my works from bits that all have their contextual significance. I use an Ikea shelving system to hold up the planks that vibrate the information, referencing the flat pack, DIY, standardised holders of content. I use a Shure sm57 with a A2WS hood, the microphone used by American presidents at their press conferences. I use Finnish birch multiplex, the PT2399 delay chip that are also used to give karaoke machines their echo. It must be addressed, it is important to me, but it is barely significant for the work or for the sensation of the viewer should have with the work.

Talking about these building blocks muddies the water when we speak about the work in a classroom setting. Because it is an easy thing to focus on. I don't tend to talk about these elements because they can be talked about, given meaning and distract from bigger picture directional issues.



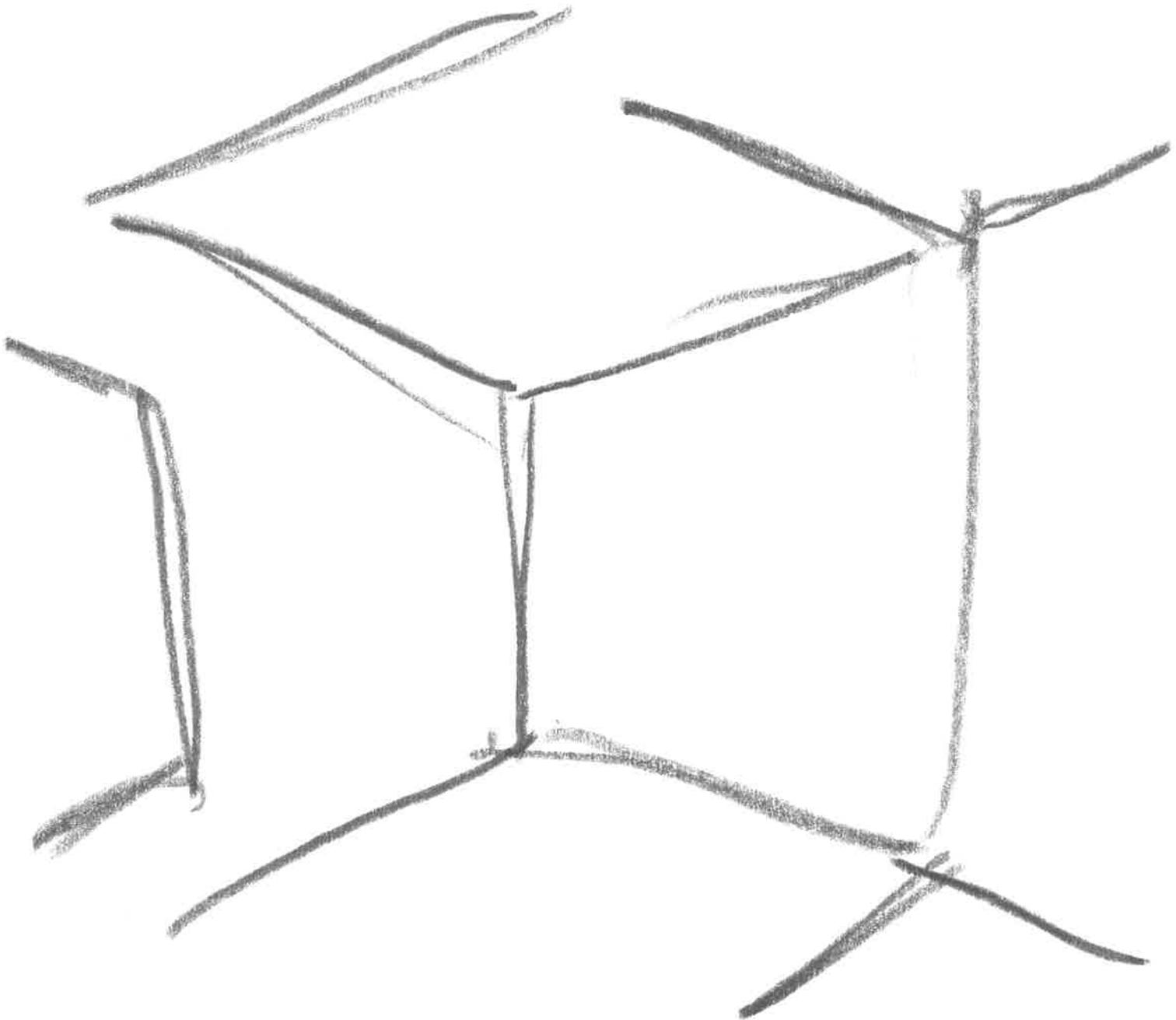
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<sup>6</sup> Archival Impuls, Hall Foster, 2004, MIT

## Intended use

Both the parts and media that I use have a set significance in culture. A way that they are set to be seen and what they are supposed to be doing. Their use does communicate something to the audience. A shelving system displayed in a gallery space won't be used by the audience to put away their empty cup of coffee, but it is still a place where things can 'be put'. The same goes for the spaces we view art in. We are all consumers when we enter someone's art space. And the way we move is something we have often learned from a young age. You need to be quiet; you are not allowed to run, and art is a serious thing so laughing is very disrespectful.

The aura of intended use around an object or situation is not easily taken away, and it is the question if one should want to take it away. I don't believe in the spiritedness of things. This significance is given by the way we have interacted with similar things or situations before. Intuition is a real thing, but I see it more as a learned behaviour. Learned, so changeable.



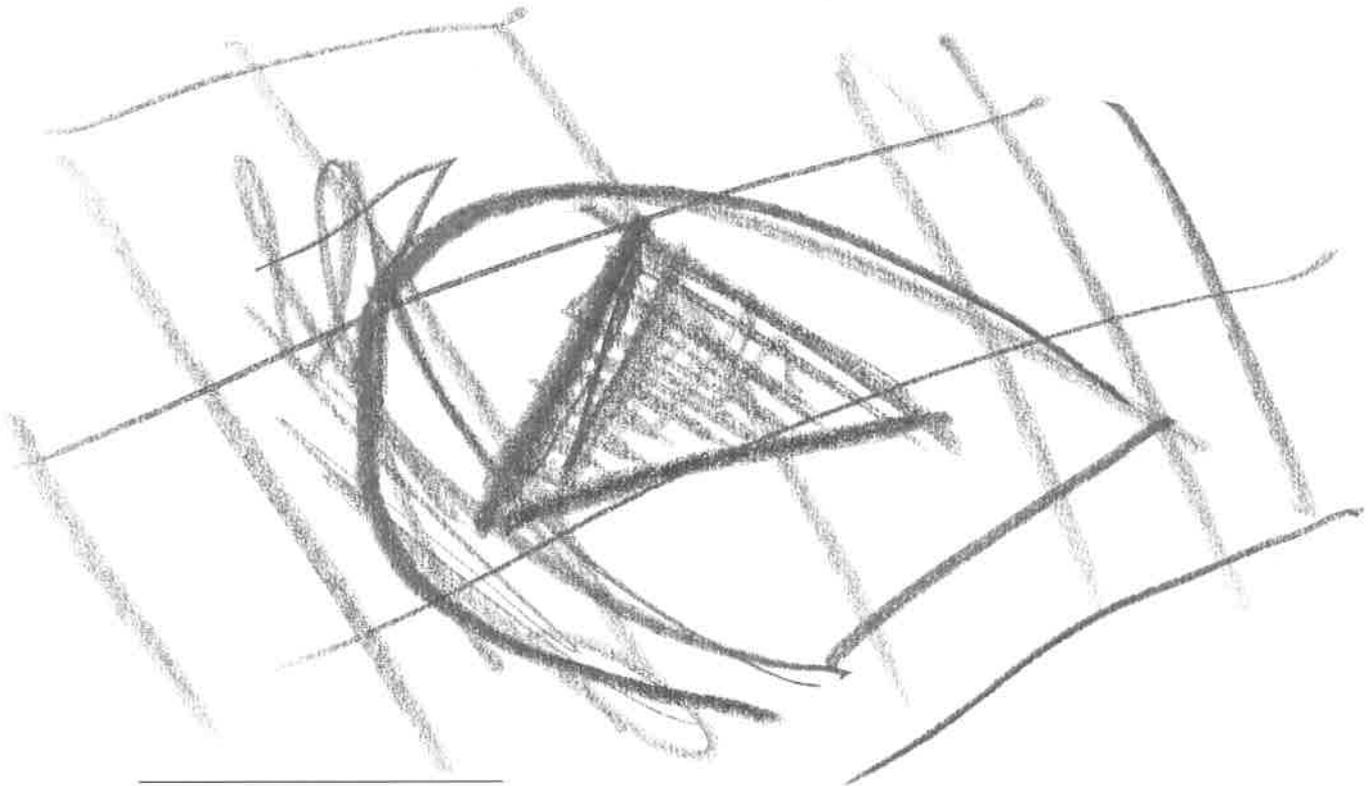
## Colour theory / Gamut<sup>7</sup>

*In color reproduction, including computer graphics and photography, the gamut, or color gamut (...) is a certain complete subset of colors. The most common usage refers to the subset of colors which can be accurately represented in a given circumstance, such as within a given colour space or by a certain output device. Another sense, less frequently used but still correct, refers to the complete set of colors found within an image at a given time. In this context, digitizing a photograph, converting a digitized image to a different color space, or outputting it to a given medium using a certain output device generally alters its gamut, in the sense that some of the colors in the original are lost in the process.*

– Taken from Wikipedia 15.03.22

I studied photography for over four years before getting into the art academy. It moulded my way of thinking. A simple example is how I use my knowledge of photoshop and printing to visualise sound to myself and place sound on the spectrum of colours and visible light. It is how I started to see the interconnectedness of things and how that presumed connection fails often depending on how far one is willing to zoom in. In 3.08 I drew a connection between sound and light claiming the two where interchangeable of one and another, following the idea that sound and light are extreme ends of the same spectrum.<sup>8</sup> Taking the far extremes of the medium and setting 0 to 100% of the information on the places where the most and least amount of information can be.

In printing gamuts are used to bridge and signify differences between the colour ranges of printers and files or printers amongst each other. Difference in gamuts between receivers, carriers and mediums is interesting to me as a conceptual way of implementing distance, so defined and rigid yet so flexible to fill all information from the beginning to the end of a given spectrum. The gamut theory as I see it also means to me that there is no such thing as I or O, only the definitions of them.



<sup>7</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamut>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTqKlzSwasc>

## People

In vocational school I studied photography and after finishing that I continued in documentary photography at the HKU art academy in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The studies was very set on a specific kind of documentary photography that was en vogue in the mid 2000s. Mamiya 6 with a 80mm lens, in colour with slightly desolate landscape like photo series with bright portraits 'that really catch the person'. frames always wide, strong compositional lines and always big expensive glossy prints. The best complement you could get was: 'You can see in the pictures that you really love people'. I don't love people, they freak me out. I mean, I'm fine with them and I really like persons. But that is definitely not the same.

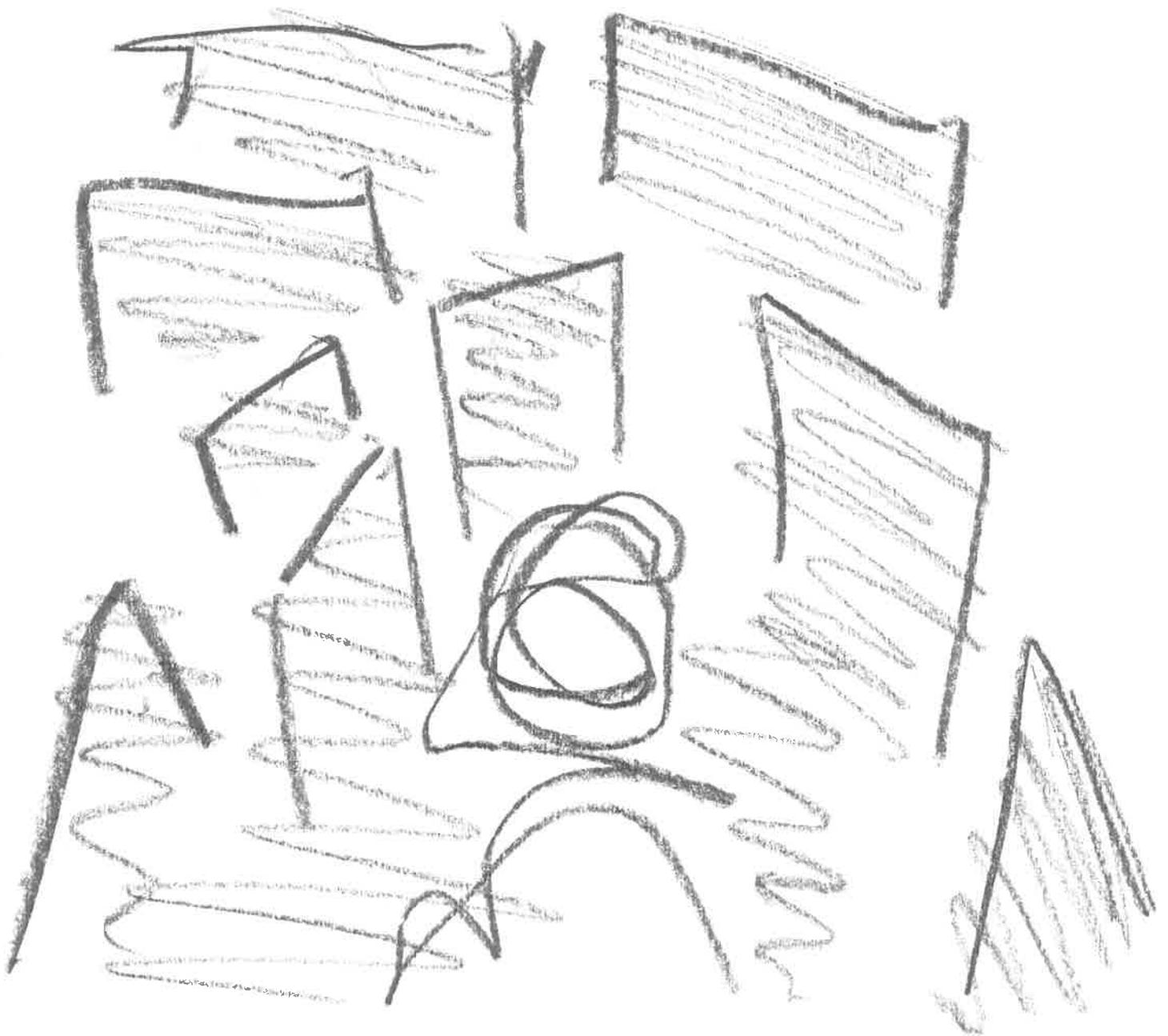
I now know better how to react and the world is a different place. I could never see it happen in these days that someone gets kicked out of a school with a 'the bachelorette' style rose ceremony. My time a the HKU was mostly spend in the studios and darkroom trying to make a perfect practice of analog technique. Failing to see that it's not about the big glossy prints but the message that the works convey. I think that is what I took from my time there and mainly the time in between.



## Interaction

The idea of the white cube comes with an ideology that the viewer has no needs in terms of context. The way it is set up is that other than 'the stick with eyes' there are blobs of context knowledge flowing through the space. All with the same set of preconditions, backgrounds and viewpoints. This is of course not the case, and we need to give a certain amount of mediation to the art works. I don't want to tell my audience how to interact with the work directly. It feels like a demeaning position to take. But on the other hand, there also doesn't seem to be a real version of, non-mediation. The life experience the viewer had before interacting with my work is a mediation in itself. Some will know electronics enough to understand what I'm doing with my circuit boards but that will be a minority at best. Others will understand the internal interactions much better than me.

There is a Dutch term 'hufter proof' that translates too: 'made with use by vandals in mind'. I like to use a version of that in my production. It is not just that things need to be built to last, they also need to interact in a way that is non-confrontational yet intriguing. Trying to find a way to make them figure it out for themselves, by their own choice. I believe that the interaction of the work will be owned more by the audience if they are not made to interact with a work in a specific way. It becomes less of a rehearsed dance and more of a conversation.



## Language

I will consistently choose lingua franca over the precision of a single language.<sup>9</sup> It is easy for me to say as I am in a country where I still have a lot of problems with speaking the dominant language. But I think it is always important that a broad group will be able to understand something a little bit, over the majority understanding it flawlessly. Not only does it create conversation and investigation. It also shows that another language is present and might or might not have a right to be there in the space, depending on your political leaning. Every object has its own language, and everyone needs to in some extent learn the language of those objects to be able to interact with them. A lot of them will be familiar from other objects or situations but there will always be a learning curve.

Language has a big danger to give hierarchal power to the one who is most fluent in it. I think this should be actively avoided. The word language should of course be taken for all kinds of discourse and not just words.

~~When my Finnish lessons were supposed to start there was also corona and all the lessons were moved to teams and zoom, because the animo for the intensive course was too small I was moved to the less intensive course. There was too much animo for that course so the twice a week lessons were split up in two groups of once a week. And in the end the lessons were dominated by the students that had done them earlier away from keyboard. I will try to take the lessons again after my graduation in the open university. If I cannot, I will start Swedish over Finnish courses since that is the language of my partner.~~

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<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lingua\\_franca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lingua_franca)

Mathematics / sturdiness

A streamlined, perfect and tight system works efficiently but snaps irreparably when it malfunctions. While a system that is made more haphazardly works but needs constant maintenance. There is not a better one between the two. I usually choose for the version where I need to nurture whatever I am doing. There are financial reasons for that. While maintaining is usually more labour intensive where the tight system has the risk to break expensive parts. I think there is some past trauma to be read in my reasoning but taking care of one's going on in a continues manner also sounds very mindful.

But opposed to the mindfulness practice of letting things float away, to me it is the building while thinking is what works in my process. It is probably not healthy, but it gets shit done.



Distance

*Transmission* is a direct reaction to *Shelving Data* and to the problems I had during the exhibition and the lead-up to it. I based *Transmission* on the feeling of disconnect to a system, how a system acts for its own self-preservation and longevity over what it is made up out of.

In both the thesis works I am following my version of Karen Barad's theory where measuring information imposes it with meaning.<sup>10</sup> This giving of meaning before the measuring being over will influence the way one measures and thereby the outcome.

*Measurements, including practices such as zooming in or examining something with a probe, don't just happen (in the abstract) they require specific measurement apparatuses. Measurements are agential practices, which are not simply revelatory but performative: they help constitute and are a constitutive part of what is being measured. 3 In other words, measurements are intra-actions (not interactions): the agencies of observation are inseparable from that which is observed. Measurements are world-making: matter and meaning do not pre-exist, but rather are co-constituted via measurement intra-actions.*  
- Karen Barad in *What is the measure of nothingness*, p6.<sup>11</sup>

Distance is the main reason for exclusion. Without the other there is no self, might be true but I would like to say it as: without othering someone you cannot be a group. Othering is very important for a group to gain identity.

~~As I am writing this, the Russian the military is bombing and shelling Ukrainian civilians with a vague claim of historical ownership.~~

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBnOJioYNHU>

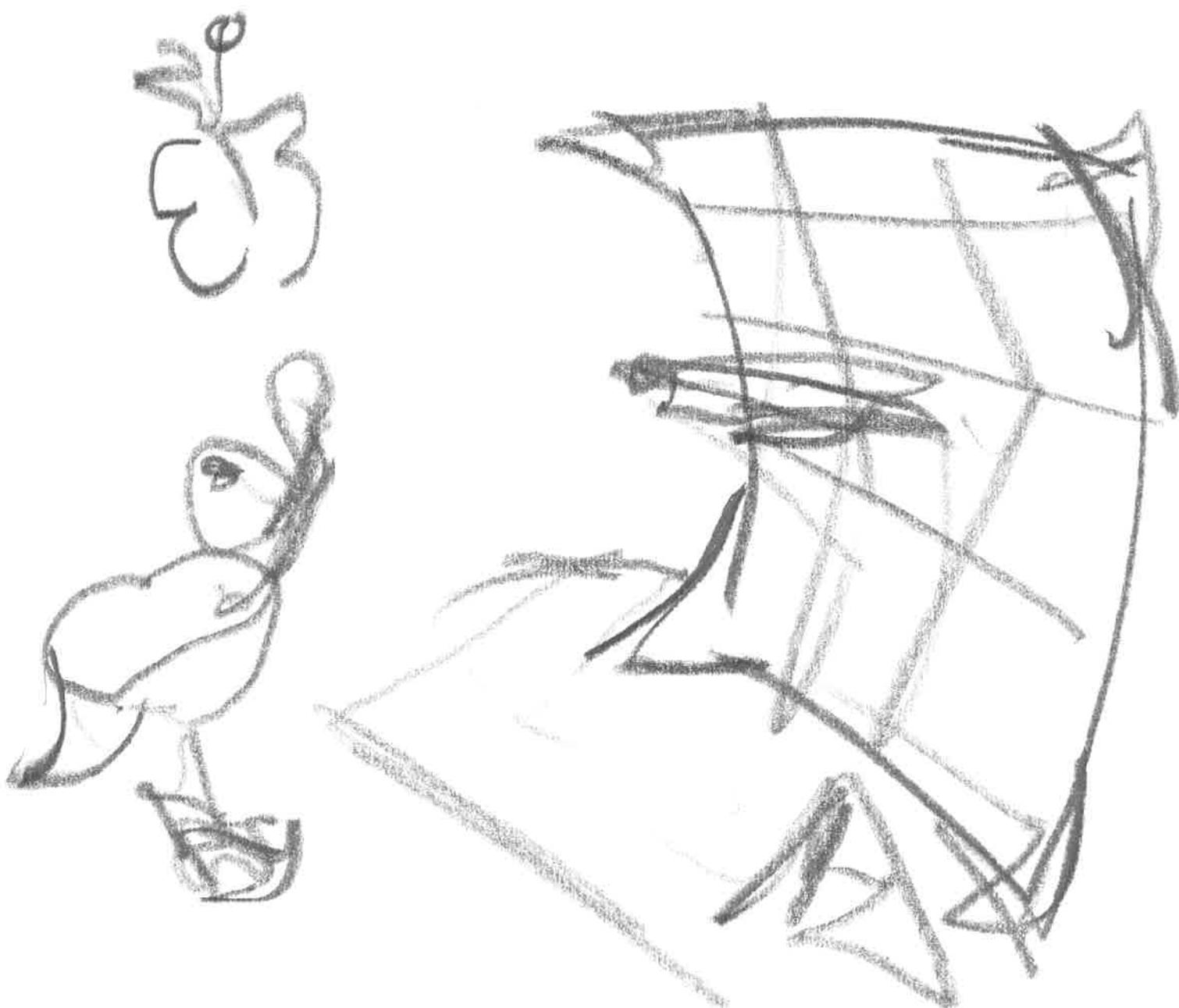
<sup>11</sup> Karen Barad in *What is the measure of nothingness*, 2012, Hatja Cantz

Reija & Freya

The loneliness and disconnect I felt during the build-up of Kuvan Kevät is the biggest I have ever had. It really made me feel like a product of the institute. It is not easy to build an exhibition during a global pandemic and the stress that any sign of illness will mean immediate cancellation from the show makes having a clear mind impossible. Coming out of Kuvan Kevät I had a week of project on Kuninkaansaari, it was pretty much a week of sitting with my head in my hands, —instead of connecting with my fellow students— while a firestorm is bursting through my brain. Floating up and down the beautiful wavy paths. The army training with gunfire of the next island.

On the island of Kuninkaansaari is a placard in remembrance of the radar system that was positioned on the island and at the Malmi airport. Army systems placed by a disputable foreign power to fight an eastern attacker sound a lot less exotic than 6 weeks ago.

A radar system is technically neutral in the sense that it only sees and that it does not take down the airplanes that it sees. Measuring is not neutral; it is done by someone for a reason. That reason will always influence the method and means of measurement. For the one who ordered the measurement to act accordingly.



## National Identity

To get to know Finland I bought a Dutch translation of Kalevala before I emigrated here. I think every country had a version of this, a piece of culture that positions a culture as unique and self-founded. Choosing the far border –or disputed land outside one's territory– to give a validation of nation-state, based in archived history, thus the truth.

This year, the Dutch government bought a Rembrandt painting for over €150.000.000. He is part of our national identity. 'Only a century after his death his art became appreciated.'<sup>12</sup> He was at the right place in the right time. The Netherlands needed someone Dutch to be a national hero, they needed a national story to build a national identity after breaking away from the Spanish. To protect and create validity for the borders by having a self. The painting is called The Standard Bearer, it's a portrait of a fat white dude hugging a flag.<sup>13</sup>

The translation of Kalevala I own was by Jan H. Eekhout. With beautiful woodcut prints from Nico Bulder, who graduated from the same academy as I did. Eekhout was a member on the NSB and convicted to a 2-year sentence for being a Nazi-collaborator after the 2nd world war.<sup>14</sup> It is hard to find those sympathies back in the writing if I am not looking for them. But I can find the same proto-fascist mannerisms in the Oxford English translation of Kalevala.



<sup>12</sup> <https://npokennis.nl/longread/7622/waarom-is-rembrandt-onze-grootste-schilder>

<sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Standard\\_Bearer\\_\(Rembrandt,\\_1636\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Standard_Bearer_(Rembrandt,_1636))

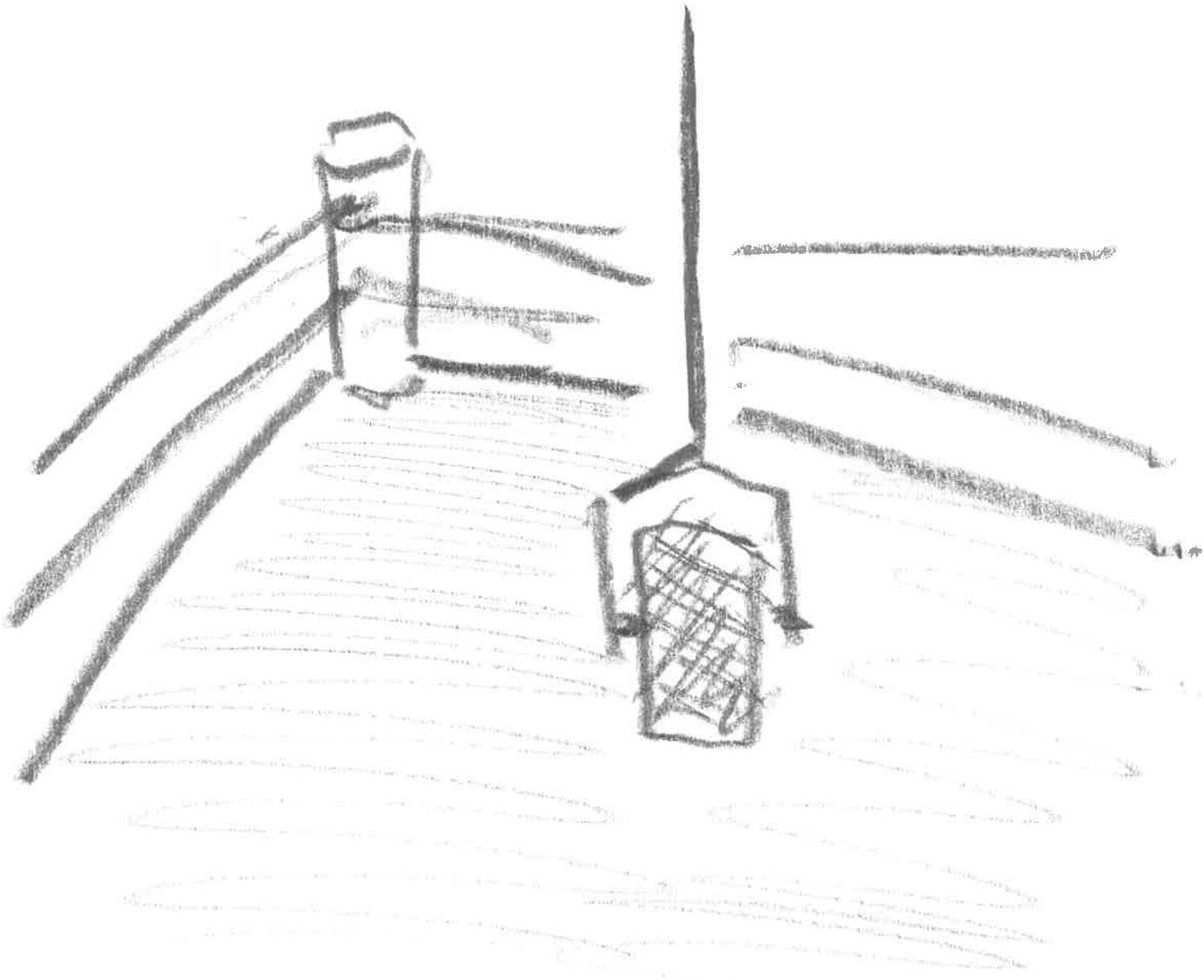
<sup>14</sup> [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan\\_Eekhout\\_\(schrijver\)](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Eekhout_(schrijver))

## Forcefulness and Softness

One of the biggest challenges in *Shelving Data* was the microphone. Or better, the act of asking people to talk into the microphone. It is a small violence to force someone to speak into something without them knowing what is going to happen, how loud it is going to be and if it is going to be recorded. I still can't think of another way to go about it without losing part of the concept.

The problem that I saw that as is why in *Transmission* I choose to use the body of the audience as the interactive 'medium' rather than a voice. The flesh absorbs and bounces off the radio waves that the three transmitters send out. The engagement curve is more natural this way. There is not the threshold that speaking into a microphone poses.

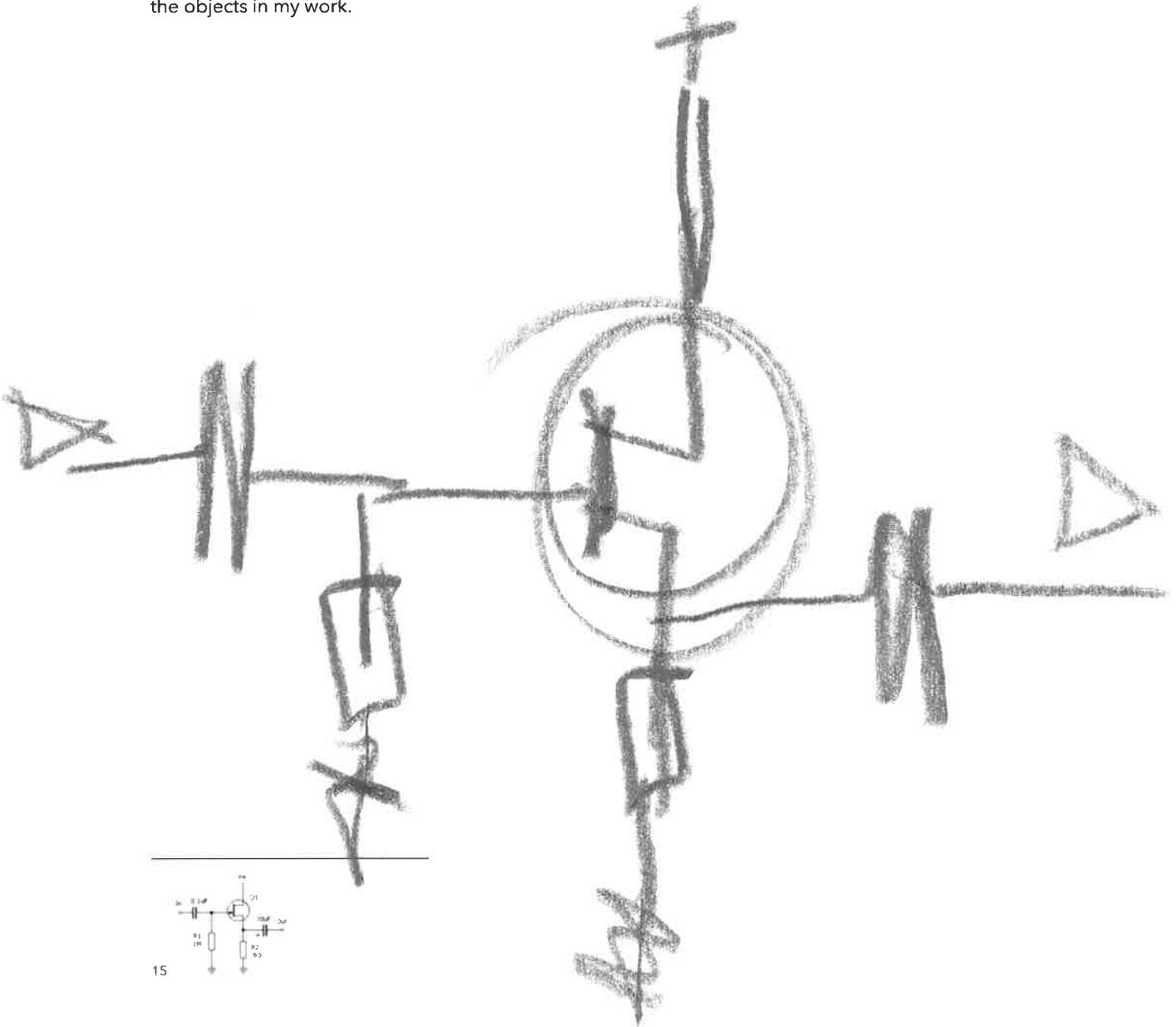
Interactivity is an overused term and I see my work mostly as reactive. Discourse has had other meanings about that and anything that reacts is deemed to be interactive. I think that for anything to be interactive there need to be some kind of conversation happening between the audience and the work. My definition of a conversation het starting at: 1: something is acted by A, 2: that something is received and mediated into an answer by B, 3: this answer is received and acknowledged by A.



## Buffer<sup>15</sup>

When I started switching to audio installation work my practice was mostly performance based. The elements were too temperamental to work on their own and I needed to be there as a buffer between them and the work. Slowly a need arose to have work that could stand on its own without breaking down.

I now build my own systems around the concepts and slowly strengthen them to not fall apart when it is on its own. In this way I am working from the build concept rather than browsing available systems to procure and use. It allows me to work on the conceptual parts of the systems longer and stay closer to the translations between them and how the implementations can build on the work and concept. I have always seen the 255 gradients of precision that an Arduino gives as not enough. They need computers attached to them that take away the directness of the communication between the objects in my work.



## Vectoral practice

Instead of kicking against practices like sensory ethnography, I thought to make a new one that rests on others. This seems like a better way of keeping me sane-ish.

When I look at the workings of progressive compression, the way jpegs get stored in tiny files.<sup>16</sup> I see a parallel with my way of working. There is a certain directionality that is certainly not lossless. In the jpeg compression system clusters of pixels get tones sharpness and colours not so much by their autonomous tones but by the difference they have to the clusters around it. This means that not every pixel needs to be thought of but only the change between them.

Combining that with the idea both the gamut as a conceptual way of seeing things.

A vector has a direction, pull and their sum. This makes rounded shapes possible without it having to be drawn out. Because it is not bound to the size that it is made in, it is possible to scale them to different size and put them in different contexts. I see it as my version of relational practise. Vectoral practice uses gestural discourse rather than number or word-based ones. Rather distilling those number and word interactions into a version of themselves. A version that I can take out of that context and paste into a new one, whilst taking care that I keep the original discursive elements of it intact and hopefully even readable.



<sup>16</sup> <https://bitmiracle.github.io/libjpeg.net/help/articles/KB/progressive-jpeg.html>

## Followup

I hope I can find some stability the coming months despite the way the institute is shutting down everything I stop touching as if this is a school ground game of land grab. Having to spend my time holding my hands and feet in place to prove my value and personal rights. It is interesting how the school shuts down the possibilities for a student with study rights in these days where leniency is more expected.

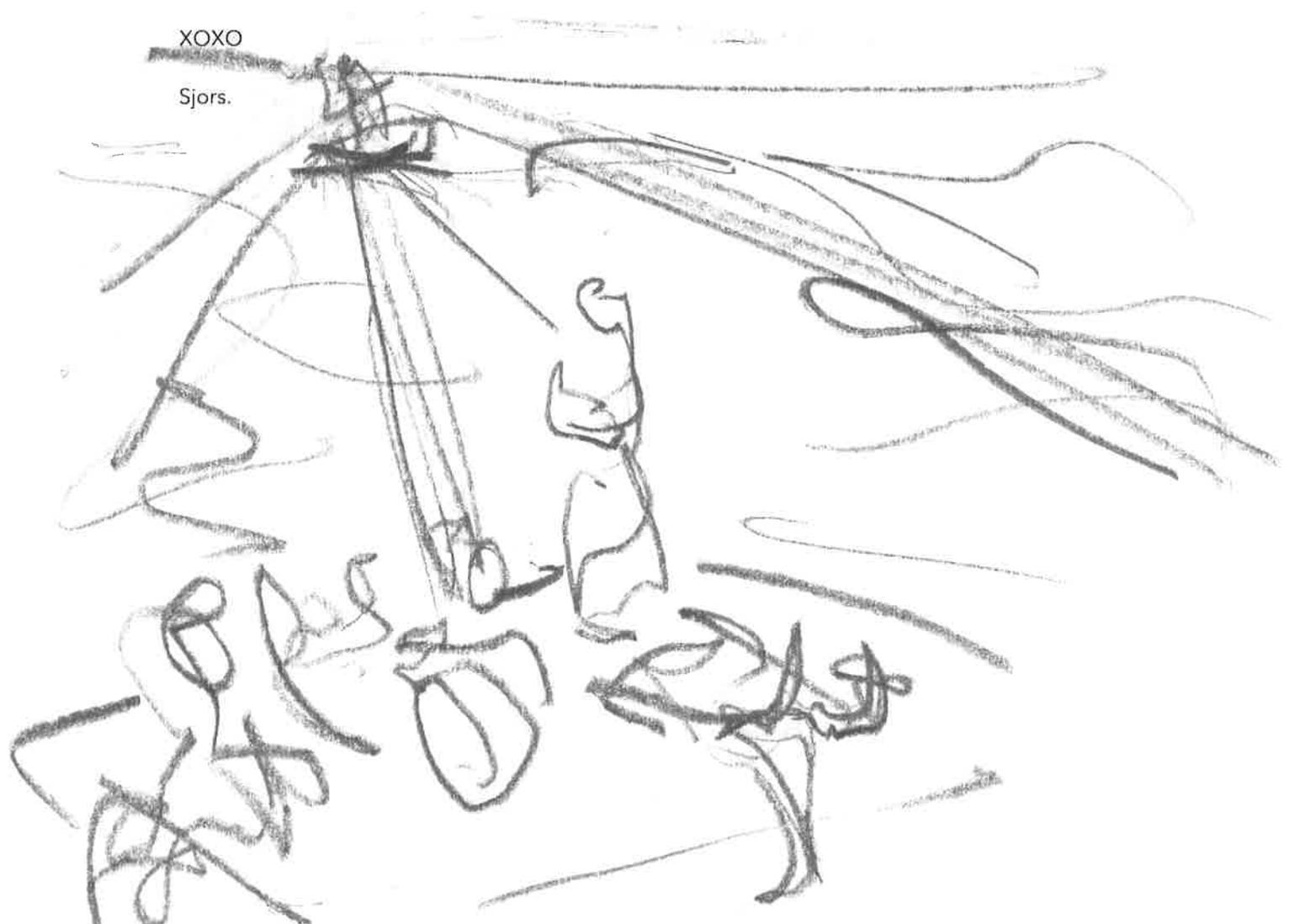
The investigation into proximity is still ongoing and will turn into a work that will follow the idea of *Mediation in translation*. The work will include research, but I see that as something I don't need to mention. There is always a big research phase in my practice. What I wanted to show in this writing is that my practice is always in rotation. There is a carrousel of subjects, times, mediums, contexts turning and finding new places when they stop.

I was fun to write out the theories that normally populate my head and it is important to communicate about them. To find and build a place where discourse is possible.

The questions of otherness and the right for a place are both why I look to maybe continue with a doctoral procedure and why I need to have a little bit of a rest from this academic structure for a while. In the end the system needs much more infiltration by artists rather than administrators and art historians. We as an artistic community will need to own our place in academia or do away with it. Whiteout giving in and making academia into an artistic practise we need to change what an academic practice is allowed be.

XOXO

Sjors.



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## Attachments

All photographic and video material curtsy of artist.

*Video of shelving data:*

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Cwjlk4CUKKw>

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/EuOvAAg879M>

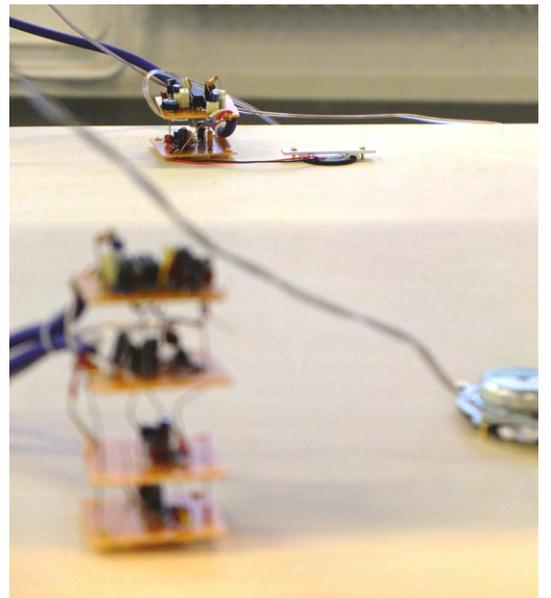
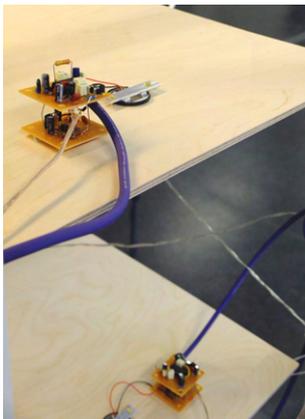
*Video of Transmission:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2DkzxYwkoU&t>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvJJTFfpJaU&t>

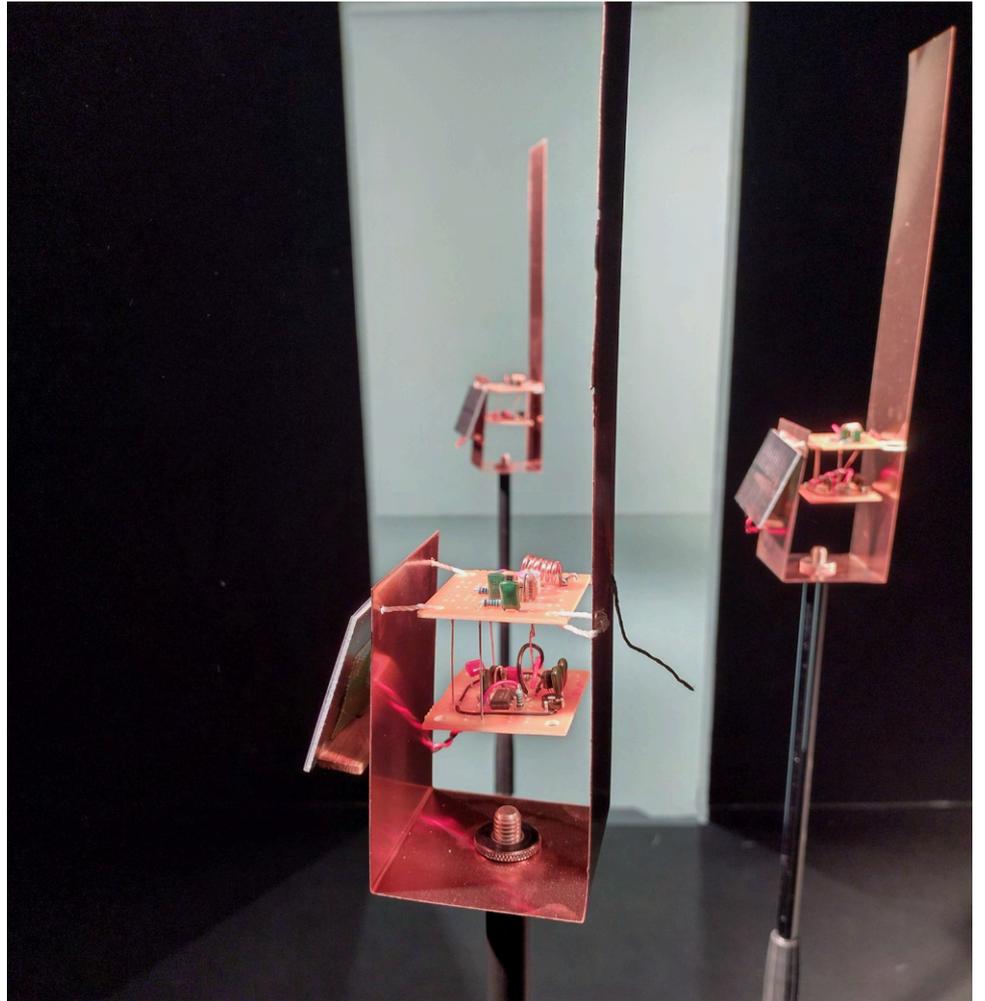
Shelving data (2021)

*Materials: Microphone,  
hand designed  
electronics, birch triplex,  
Ikea shelving system.*



Transmission (2021)

*Materials: stage lights, copper, hand designed electronics, clock radio, stands.*



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