

Elsewhere, I have done a presentation on "Models of Practice"

Looking at some different ways in which cultural and artistic practices – writing, image-making, filmmaking – are given purpose and direction according to a grounding rationale or model of how artistic production *operates*

- expression
- formal play
- experiment
- unfolding
- collective memory work
- enquiry

# Why I Write

By JOAN DIDION

Of course I stole the title for this talk, from George Orwell. One reason I stole it was that I like the sound of the words: *Why I Write*. There you have three short unambiguous words that share a sound, and the sound they share is this:

I  
I  
I

In many ways writing is the act of saying *I*, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying *listen to me*, see it my way, *change your mind*. It's an aggressive, even a hostile act. You

Joan Didion is the author of two novels, "Run River" and "Play It as It Lays," and a book of essays, "Slouching Towards Bethlehem." Her new novel, "A Book of Common Prayer," will be published in March.

This is adapted from a Regents' Lecture delivered by the author at the University of California at Berkeley.



can disguise its aggressiveness all you want with veils of subordinate clauses and qualifiers and tentative subjunctives, with ellipses and evasions—with the whole manner of intimating rather than claiming, of alluding rather than stating—but there's no getting around the fact that setting words on paper is the tactic of a secret bully, an invasion, an imposition of the writer's sensibility on the reader's most private space.

I stole the title not only because the words sounded right but because they seemed to sum up, in a non-sense way, all I have to tell you. Like many writers I have only this one "subject," this one "area": the act of writing. I can bring you no reports from any other front. I may have other interests: I am "interested," for example, in marine biology, but I don't flatter myself that you would come out to hear me talk about it. I am not a scholar. I am not in the least an intellectual, which is not to say that when I hear the word "intellectual" I reach for my gun, but only to say that I do not think in abstracts. During

the years when I was an undergraduate at Berkeley I tried, with a kind of hopeless late-adolescent energy, to buy some temporary visa into the world of ideas, to forge for myself a mind that could deal with the abstract.

In short I tried to think. I failed. My attention veered inexorably back to the specific, to the tangible, to what was generally considered, by everyone I knew then and for that matter have known since, the peripheral. I would try to contemplate the Hegelian dialectic and would find myself concentrating instead on a flowering pear tree outside my window and the particular way the petals fell on my floor. I would try to read linguistic theory and would find myself wondering instead if the lights were on in the bevatron up the hill. When I say that I was wondering if the lights were on in the bevatron you might immediately suspect, if you deal in ideas at all, that I was registering the bevatron as a political symbol, thinking in shorthand about the military-industrial complex and its role in the university community, but you would be wrong. I was only wondering if the lights were on in the bevatron, and how they looked. A physical fact.

I had trouble graduating from Berkeley, not because of this inability to deal with ideas—I was majoring in English, and I could locate the house-and-garden imagery in "The Portrait of a Lady" as well as the next person, "imagery" being by definition the kind of specific that got my attention—but simply because I had neglected to take a course in Milton. For reasons which now sound baroque I needed a degree by the end of that summer, and the English department finally agreed, if I would come down from Sacramento every Friday and talk about the cosmology of "Paradise Lost," to certify me proficient in Milton. I did this. Some Fridays I took the Greyhound bus, other Fridays I caught the Southern Pacific's City of San Francisco on the last leg of its transcontinental trip. I can no longer tell you whether Milton put the sun or the earth at the center of his universe in "Paradise Lost," the central question of at least one century and a topic about which I wrote 10,000 words that summer, but I can still recall the exact rancidity of the butter in the City of San Francisco's dining car, and the way the tinted windows on the Greyhound bus cast the oil refineries around Carquinez Straits into a grayed and obscurely sinister light. In short my attention was always on the periphery, on what I could see and taste and touch, on the butter, and the Greyhound bus. During those years I was traveling on what I knew to be a very shaky passport, forged papers: I knew that I was no legitimate resident in any world of

ideas. I knew I couldn't think. All I knew then was what I couldn't do. All I knew then was what I wasn't, and it took me some years to discover what I was.

Which was a writer.

By which I mean not a "good" writer or a "bad" writer but simply a writer, a person whose most absorbed and passionate hours are spent arranging words on pieces of paper. Had my credentials been in order I would never have become a writer. Had I been blessed with even limited access to my own mind there would have been no reason to write. I write entirely to find out what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear. Why did the oil refineries around Carquinez Straits seem sinister to me in the summer of 1956? Why have the night lights in the bevatron burned in my mind for twenty years? *What is going on in these pictures in my mind?*

When I talk about pictures in my mind I am talking, quite specifically, about images that shimmer around the edges. There used to be an illustration in every elementary psychology book showing a cat drawn by a patient in varying stages of schizophrenia. This cat had a shimmer around it. You could see the molecular structure breaking down at the very edges of the cat: the cat became the background and the background the cat, everything interacting, exchanging ions. People on hallucinogens describe the same perception of objects. I'm not a schizophrenic, nor do I take hallucinogens, but certain images do shimmer for me. Look hard enough, and you can't miss the shimmer. It's there. You can't think too much about these pictures that shimmer. You just lie low and let them develop. You stay quiet. You don't talk to many people and you keep your nervous system from shorting out and you try to locate the cat in the shimmer, the grammar in the picture.

Just as I meant "shimmer" literally I mean "grammar" literally. Grammar is a piano I play by ear, since I seem to have been out of school the year the rules were mentioned. All I know about grammar is its infinite power. To shift the structure of a sentence alters the meaning of that sentence, as definitely and inflexibly as the position of a camera alters the meaning of the object photographed. Many people know about camera angles now, but not so many know about sentences. The arrangement of the words matters, and the arrangement you want can be found in the picture in your mind. The picture dictates the arrangement. The picture dictates whether this will

Continued on Page 98

## artistic practice as an operation of "unfolding" and "discovery"

### Joan Didion "Why I Write" (1976)



The Simpsons (1999)  
S.10 E.19  
"Mom and Pop Art"



Astrid Weller (Art gallerist)  
"Art isn't just pretty pictures.  
It's an expression  
of raw human emotions...."

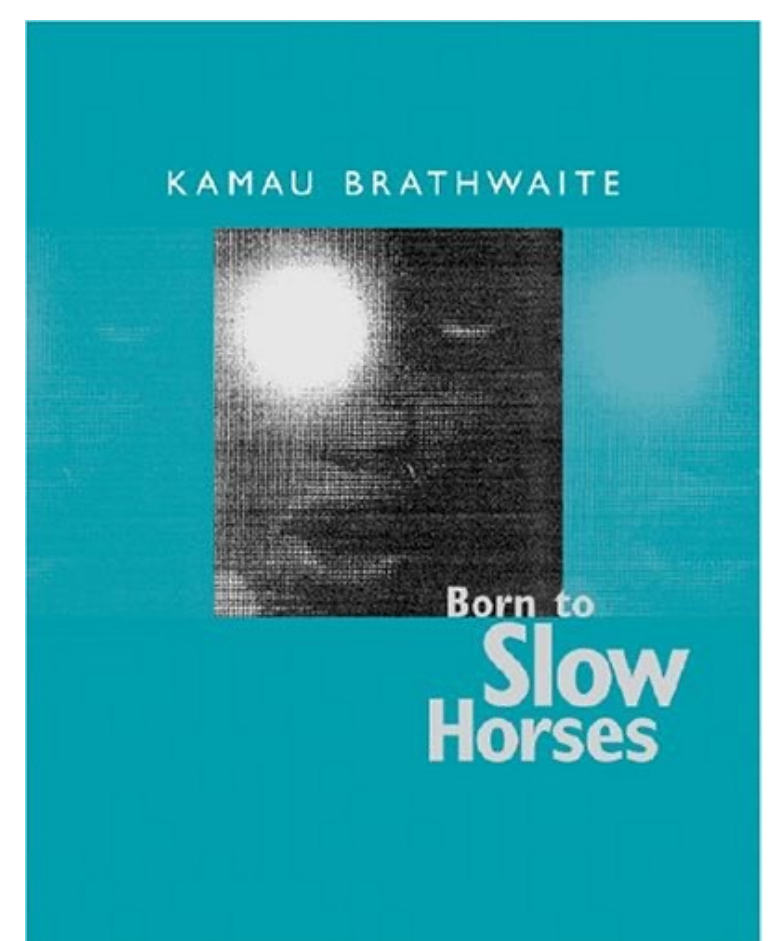
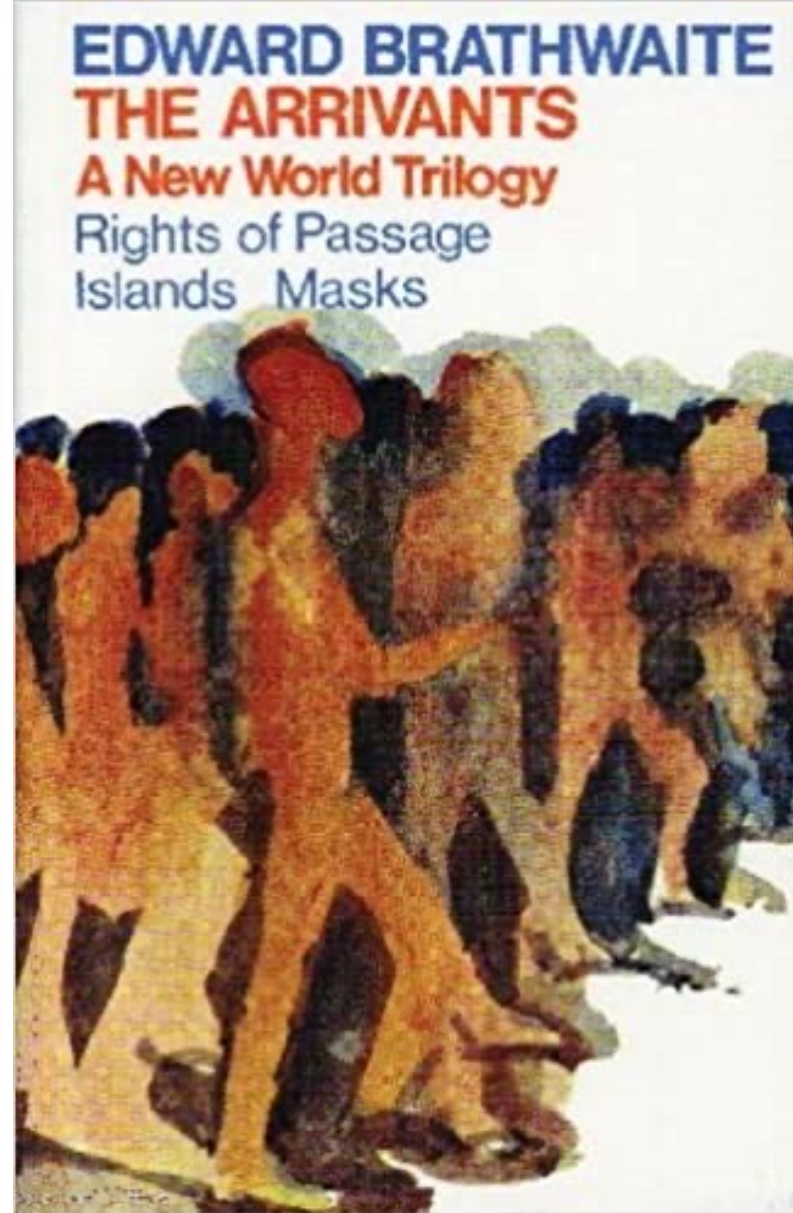
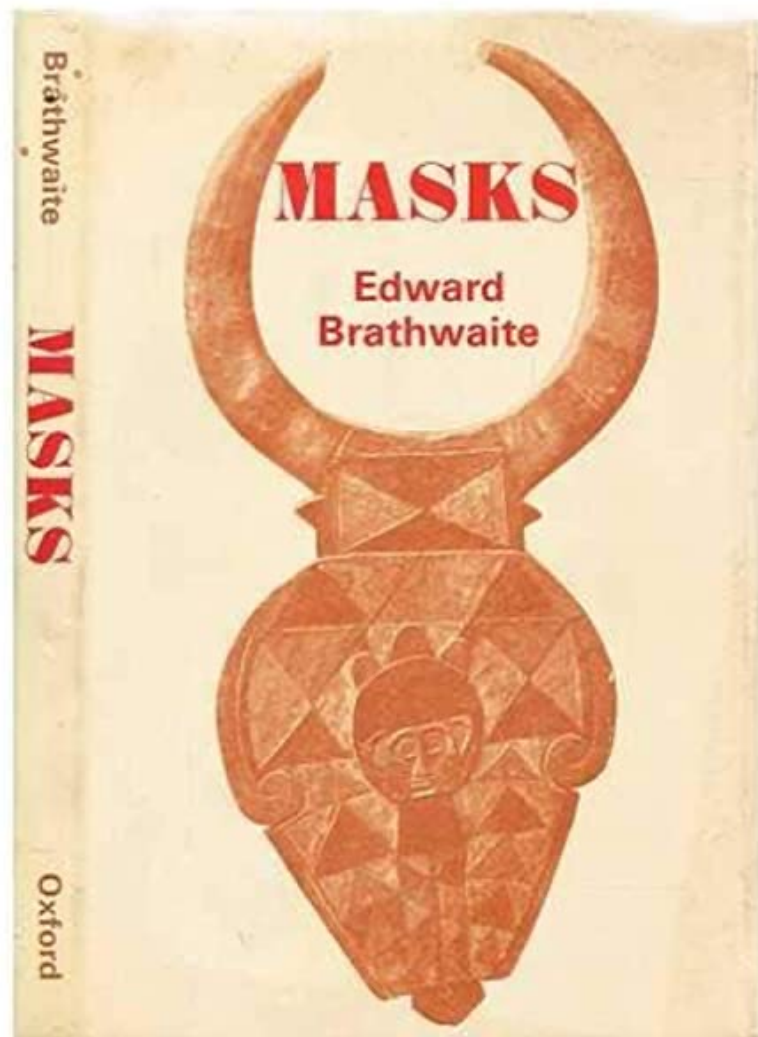


**artistic practice as experiment and pushing against the boundaries of genre/form**

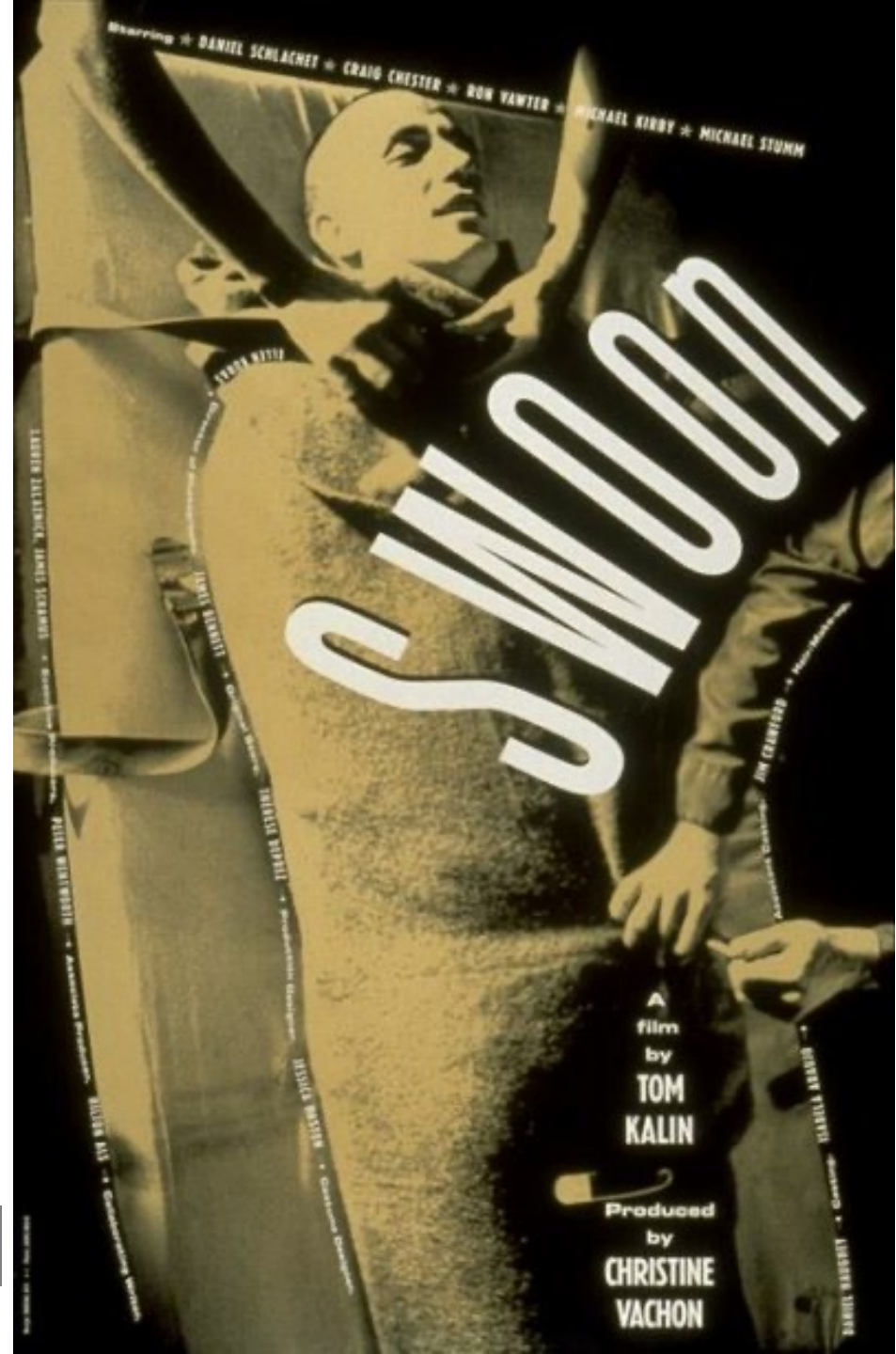
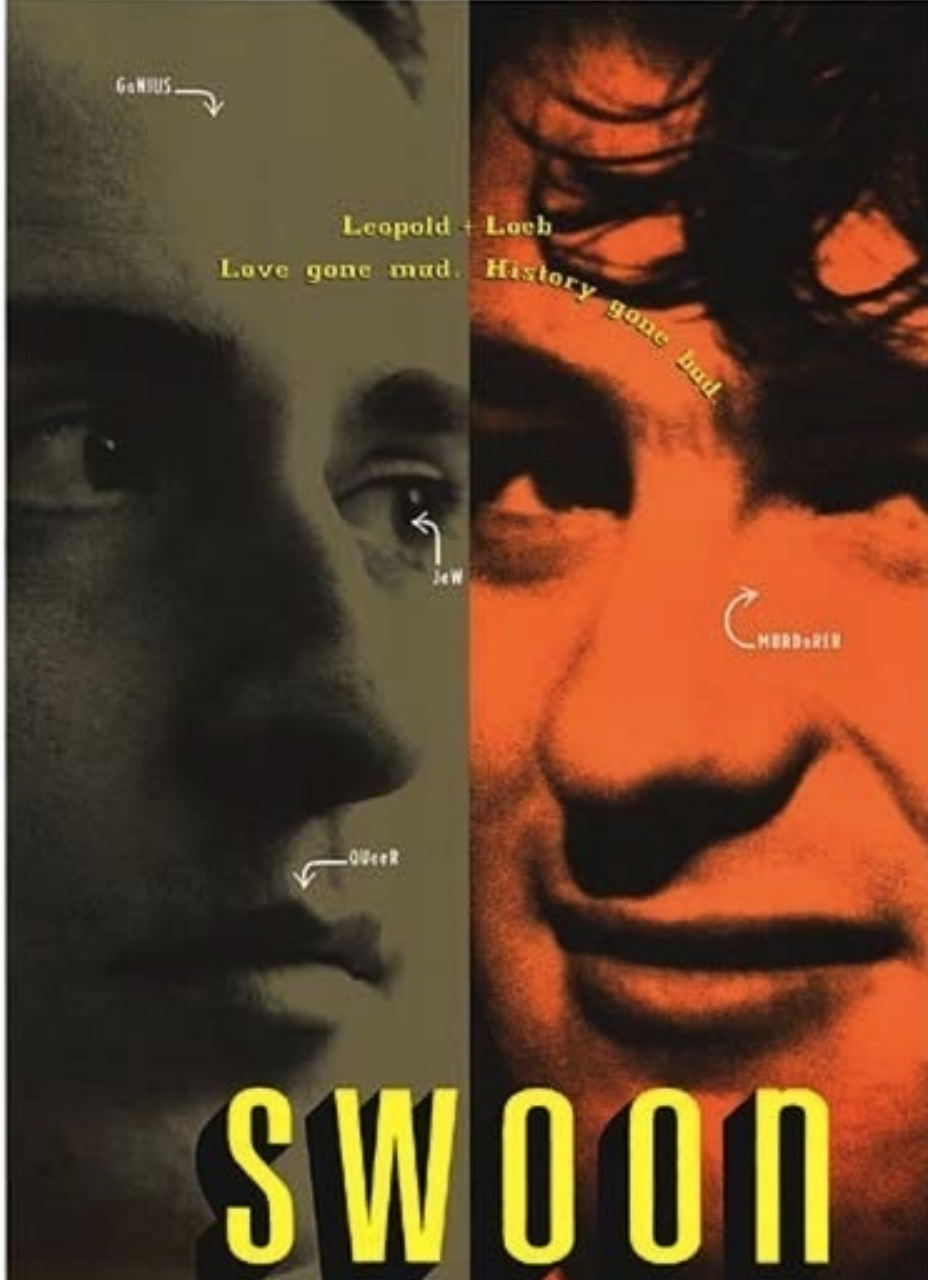
**Hannah Gadsby, Nanette (2017)**



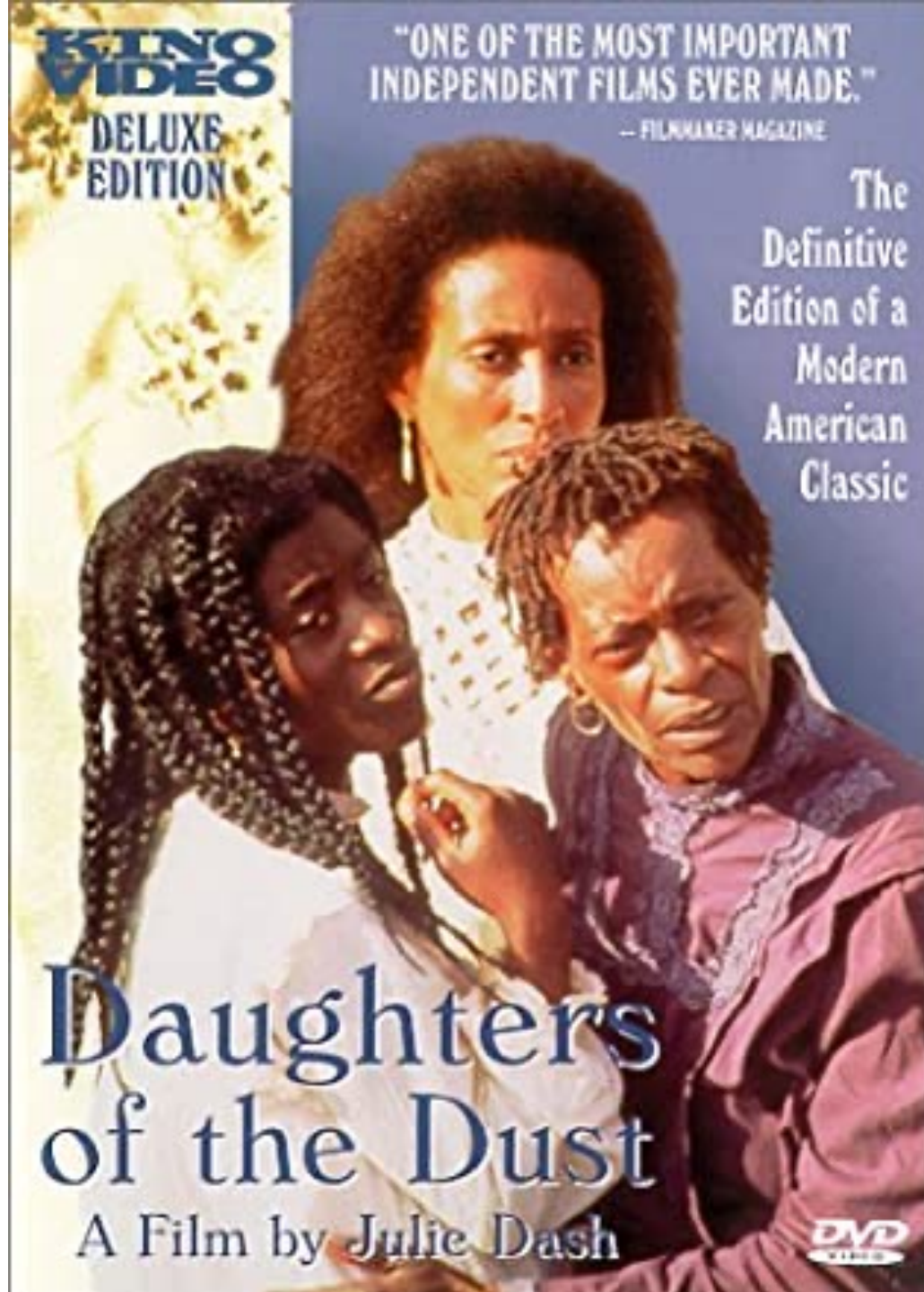
**NETFLIX**



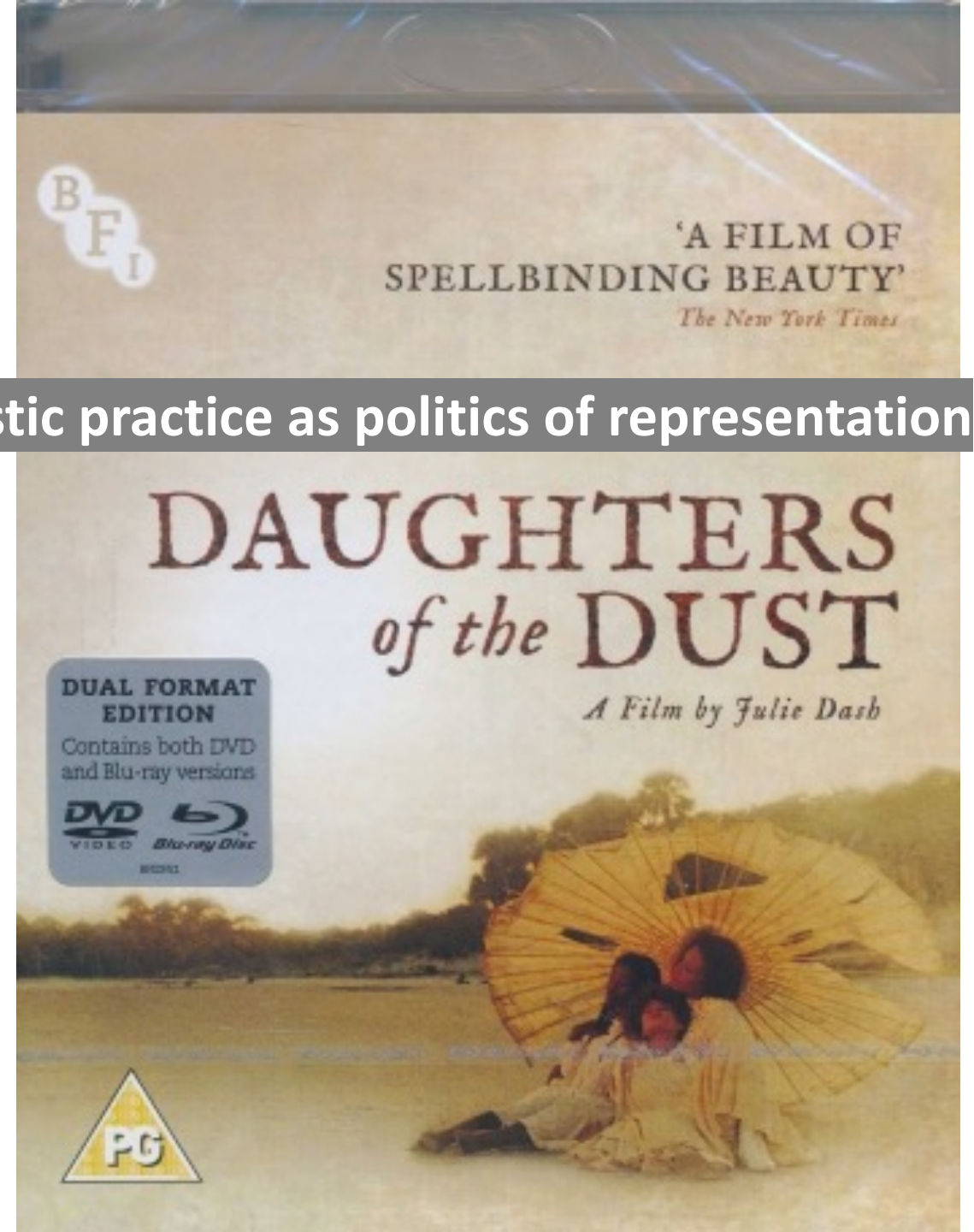
artistic practice as reconstruction of memory and production of social relation

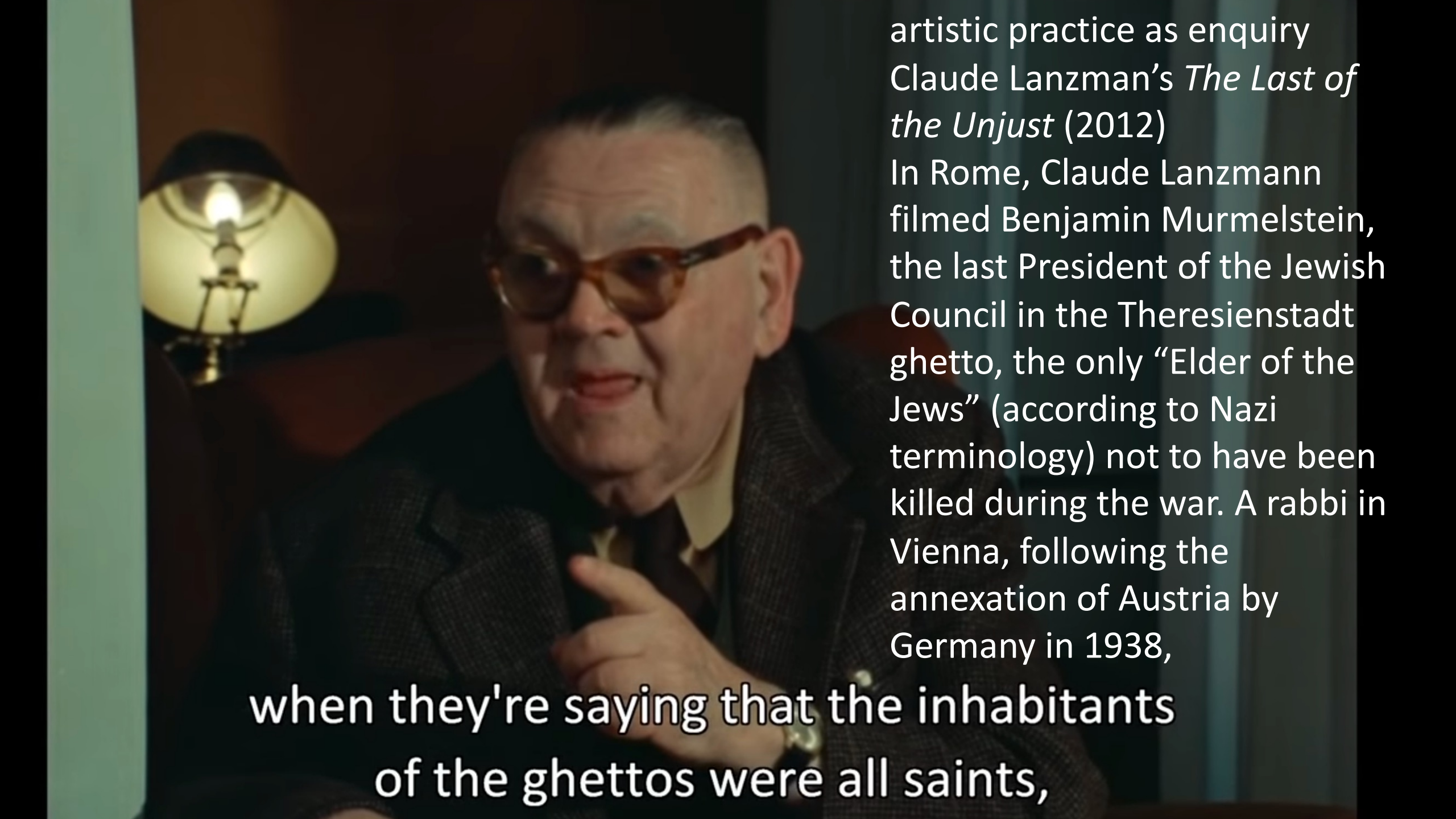


artistic practice as politics of representation



artistic practice as politics of representation



A still from the film 'The Last of the Unjust' showing Claude Lanzmann. He is an older man with short grey hair, wearing brown-rimmed glasses, a dark patterned suit jacket, a light-colored shirt, and a dark tie. He is gesturing with his right hand, pointing his index finger. The background is dark, with a lamp visible on the left side of the frame.

artistic practice as enquiry  
Claude Lanzmann's *The Last of  
the Unjust* (2012)

In Rome, Claude Lanzmann  
filmed Benjamin Murmelstein,  
the last President of the Jewish  
Council in the Theresienstadt  
ghetto, the only “Elder of the  
Jews” (according to Nazi  
terminology) not to have been  
killed during the war. A rabbi in  
Vienna, following the  
annexation of Austria by  
Germany in 1938,

when they're saying that the inhabitants  
of the ghettos were all saints,

very important to say that "enquiry" / "research"  
is just ONE model  
and not the only  
or the best model,  
just one among many...

... but also to add that as a learning strategy,  
"enquiry" / "research"  
can be a very powerful way  
to develop knowledge and insight

Other ways of talking about what we are doing ....

As well as talking about a work in terms of the underlying model of practice, that informs or shapes its production, there are other ways of talking about a work.

- Its time of production and distribution
- Its authorship
- Its context of production and / or reception
- Its possible meanings
- Its ways of operating - what it *does* (*represents, expresses, explores, shows, draws the viewer into...*)
- Its medium or material means (a photograph, a slideshow, a film, a drawing, a text...)
- Its genre or tradition or cultural frames of reference (still life, dramatic narrative, magical realism...)
- Even to see something as a "work" or a "work of art" or a "design project" is already to *describe* it in some way and place it in some category / position it in relation to a set of concepts

Such descriptions and ways of talking about works are not necessarily "external" or "after-the-fact"

In some sense they are already inscribed or spoken within the work's emergence and unfolding

Images made within ways of talking about, and ways of finding value in images

There are **not** two universes: one universe where work gets made and found worthy of making; and another universe where a work gets spoken about after it is finished and completed, a self-sufficient thing.

Ways of talking are already integral to ways of doing and making...

We might even see that the switch in emphasis from generally talking about **the "work"** of art or design to generally talking about **the "practice"** as part of a change in the ways of understanding what the arts and design are about, what it does, and how it exists in the world.

One way of talking about the process of making art is to analyse it in terms of different aspects or moments separated out from each other.

This can be for example, be to break it down in terms of:

- What?
- Why?
- How?
- For whom?
- When?
- Where?

WHW - **What, How and for Whom** – curatorial collective from Zagreb, Croatia.

<https://www.spikeartmagazine.com/articles/interview-collective-whw-their-appointment-directors-kunsthalle-wien>

One way of talking about the process of making art is to analyse it in terms of different aspects or moments

- What is being made?
- Why is it being made?
- How is it being made?
- For whom is it being made? Who is imagined as its public? Its owner? Its caretaker?
- When does the work happen? Is it time bound in any ways?
- Where does the work locate? Does it have clear edges or boundaries?

One way of talking about the process of making art  
is to analyse it in terms of different aspects or moments

What is being made?

Why is it being made?

**How** is it being made?

For whom is it being made? Who is imagined as its public? Its owner? Its caretaker?

When does the work happen? Is it time bound in any ways?

Where does the work locate? Does it have clear edges or boundaries?

A word for naming how something is done, is "**method**"

*met-hodos*

– after a path ... down a road... along a pathway ...following along a way...

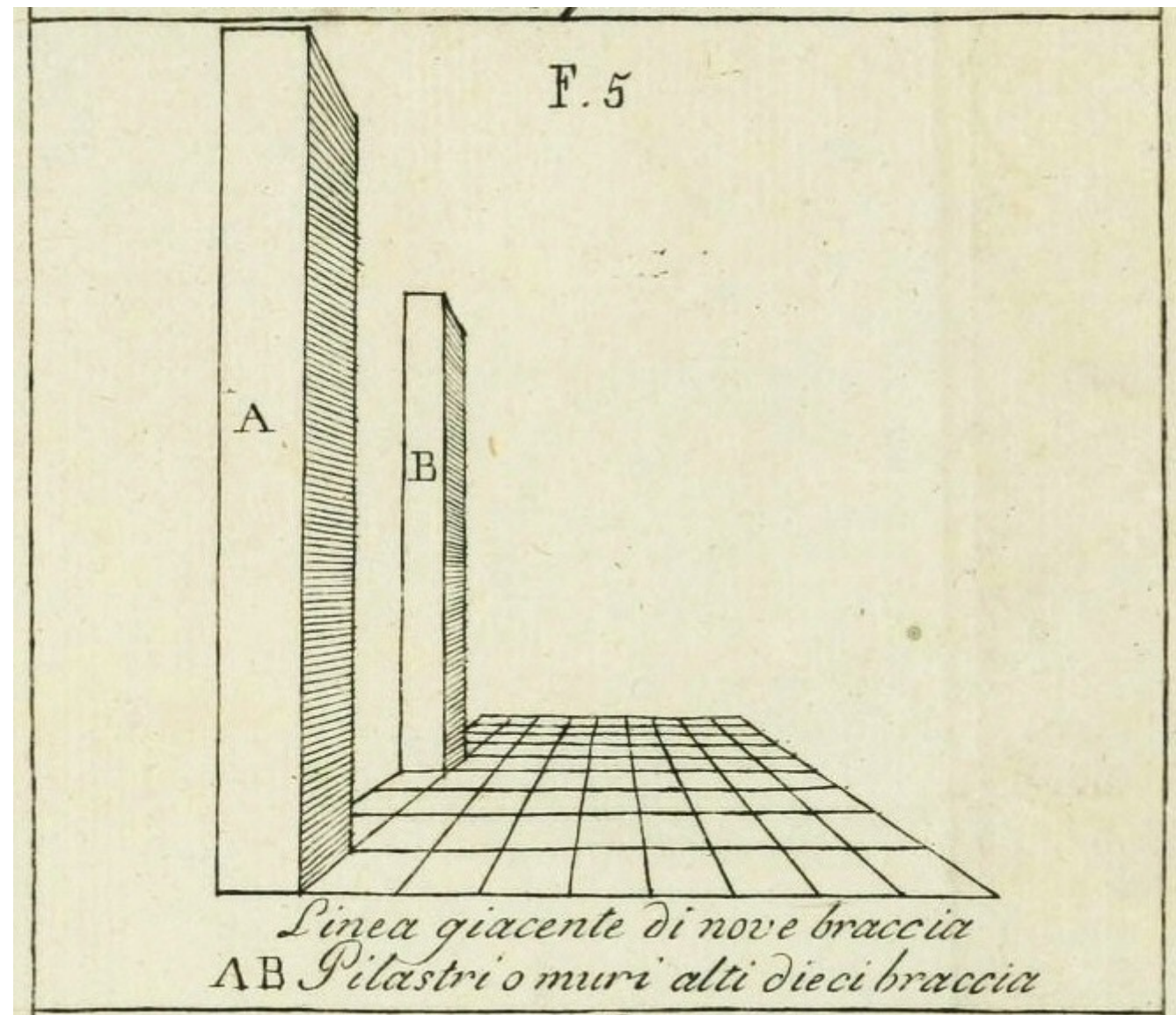
When we talk about the ways of doing something we are talking about *method*

Method + ology = way of doing something + talking about

**Methodology** is a general term for talk of how something is done

**A methodology** is often also the way to name a considered and formulated way of working

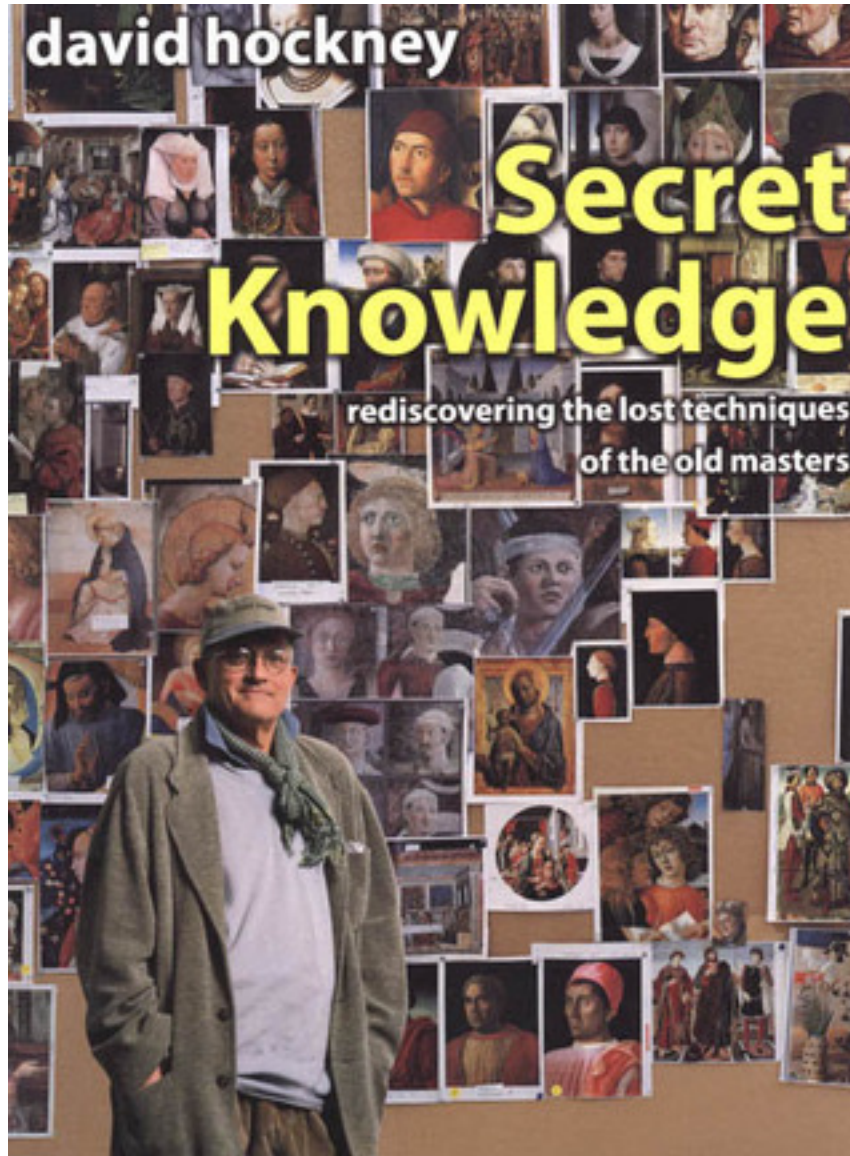
Talking about ways of working in making art, is not a new thing



Above, from *De pictura* ("On Painting") by the Italian humanist and artist Leon Battista Alberti, composed in Latin in 1435, published 1450.

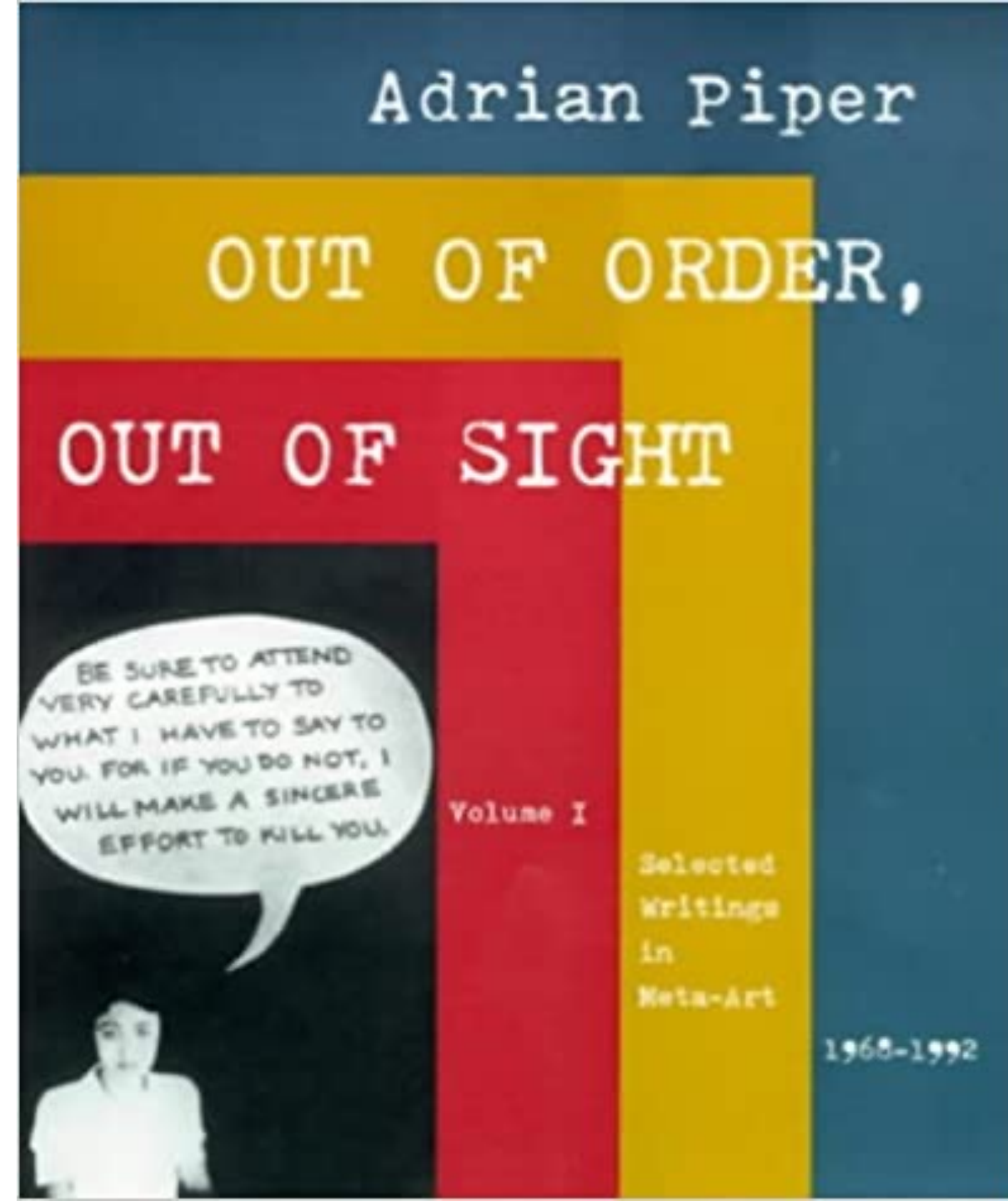
Left, Da Vinci's *On Painting* – from his notebooks.

Talking about ways of working in making art, is not a new thing



Right, Adrian Piper's collected writings.

Left, David Hockney on ways of making images from the tradition



[Print Issue \(A4\)](#)[Print Issue \(US Letter\)](#)[Buy on demand](#)

Paul O'Neill

# Co-productive Exhibition-Making and Three Principal Categories of Organisation: the Background, the Middle-ground and the Foreground

Paul\_O'Neill

## The Group Exhibition-form as a Continually Evolving Structure

Since the 1960s, the group exhibition has opened up a range of curatorial approaches to demystify the role of mediation, and as such, has also enabled divergent artistic practices to be exhibited together under a single rubric.[1] The term 'demystification' became a recurring

[https://www.on-curating.org/issue-22-43/co-productive-exhibition-making-and-three-principal-categories-of-organisation-the-background-the-middle-ground-and-the-foreground.html#.Y0BKcYo\\_BI](https://www.on-curating.org/issue-22-43/co-productive-exhibition-making-and-three-principal-categories-of-organisation-the-background-the-middle-ground-and-the-foreground.html#.Y0BKcYo_BI)

P

W R

S E



Issue 13.3

—Autumn 2021

On the Question of Exhibition Part 3

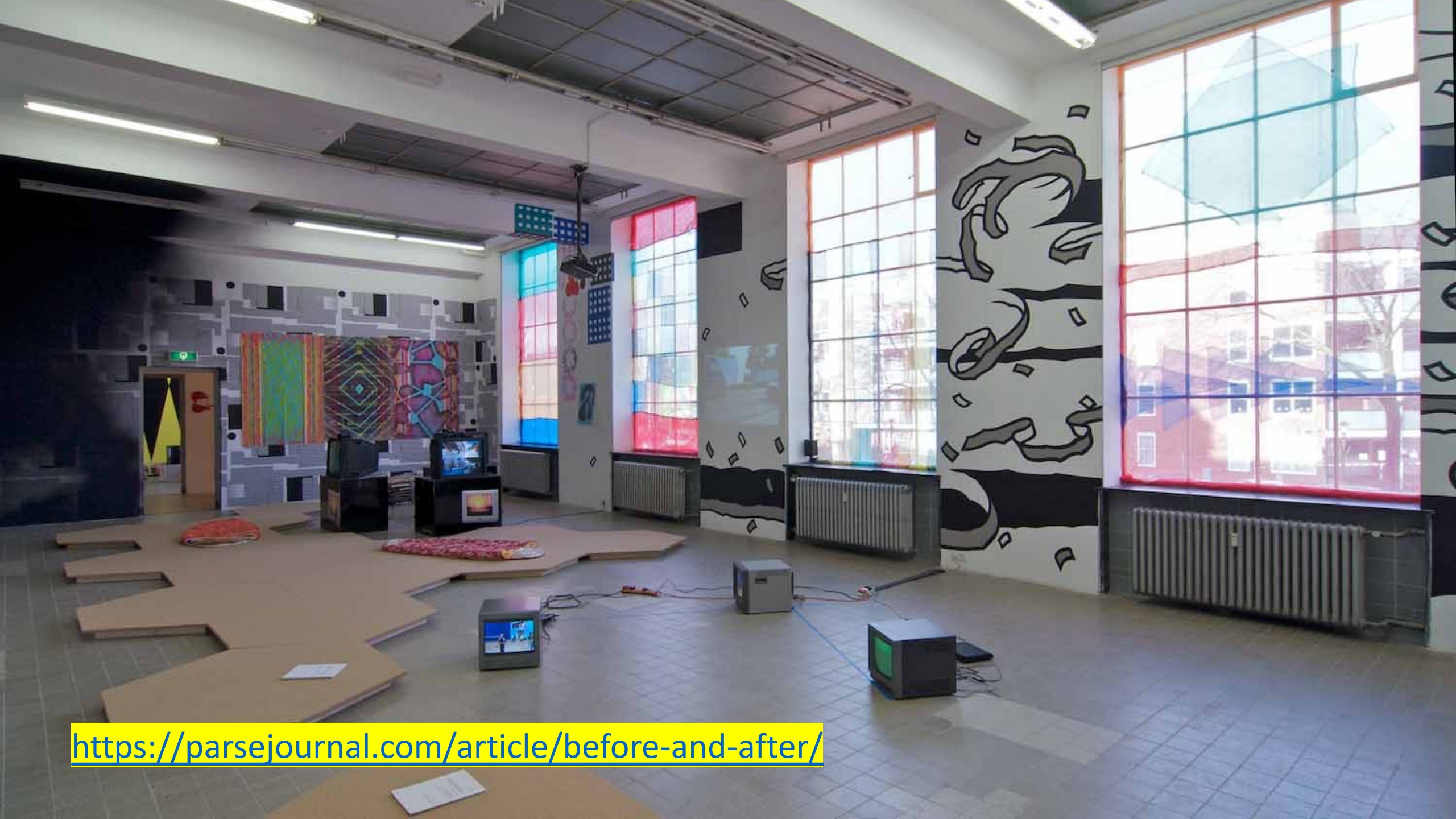
# Exhibition Pictures: Before and After

Paul O'Neill



Abstract +

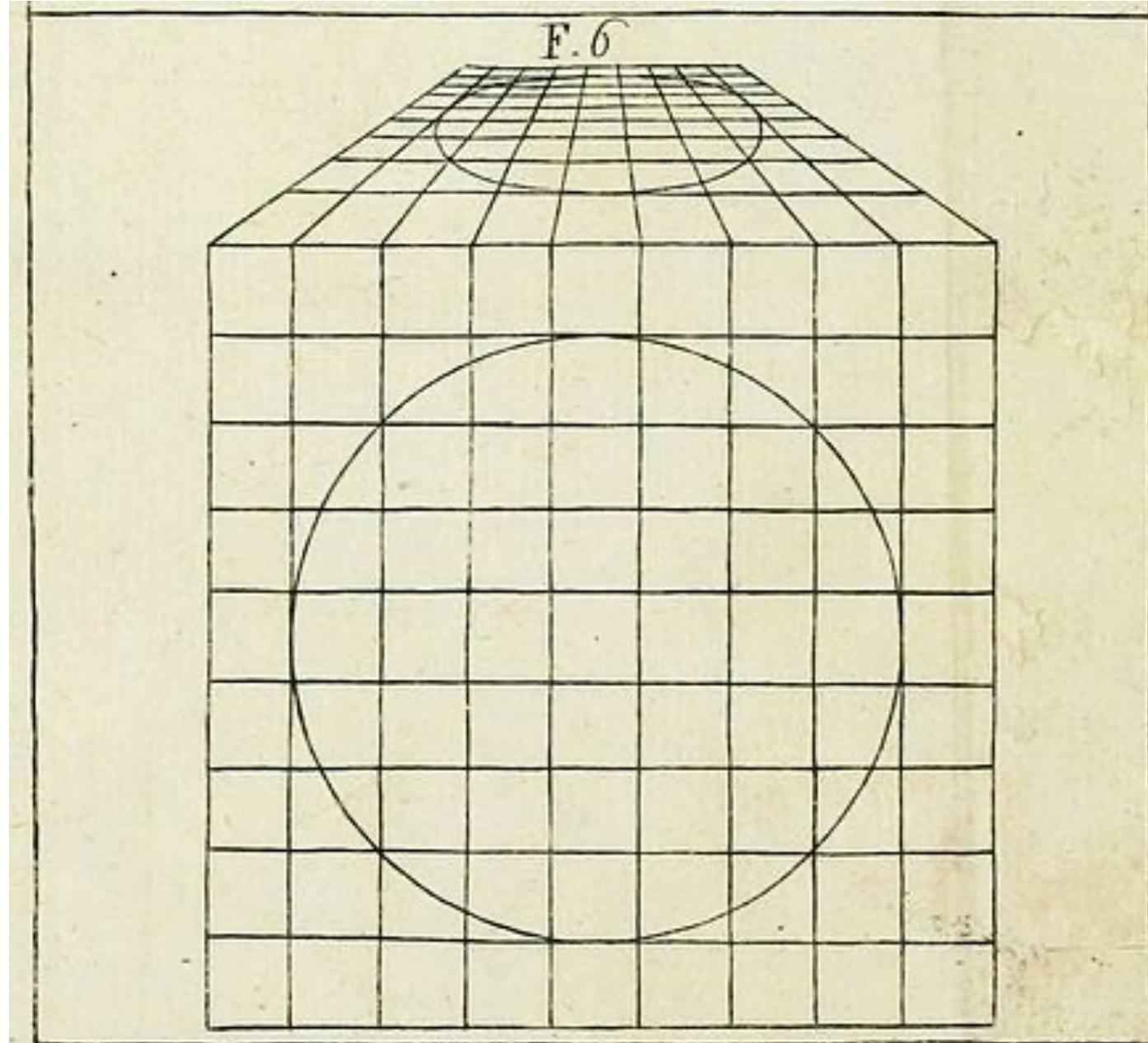




<https://parsejournal.com/article/before-and-after/>

As well as talking about ways of working - of methods – in making art

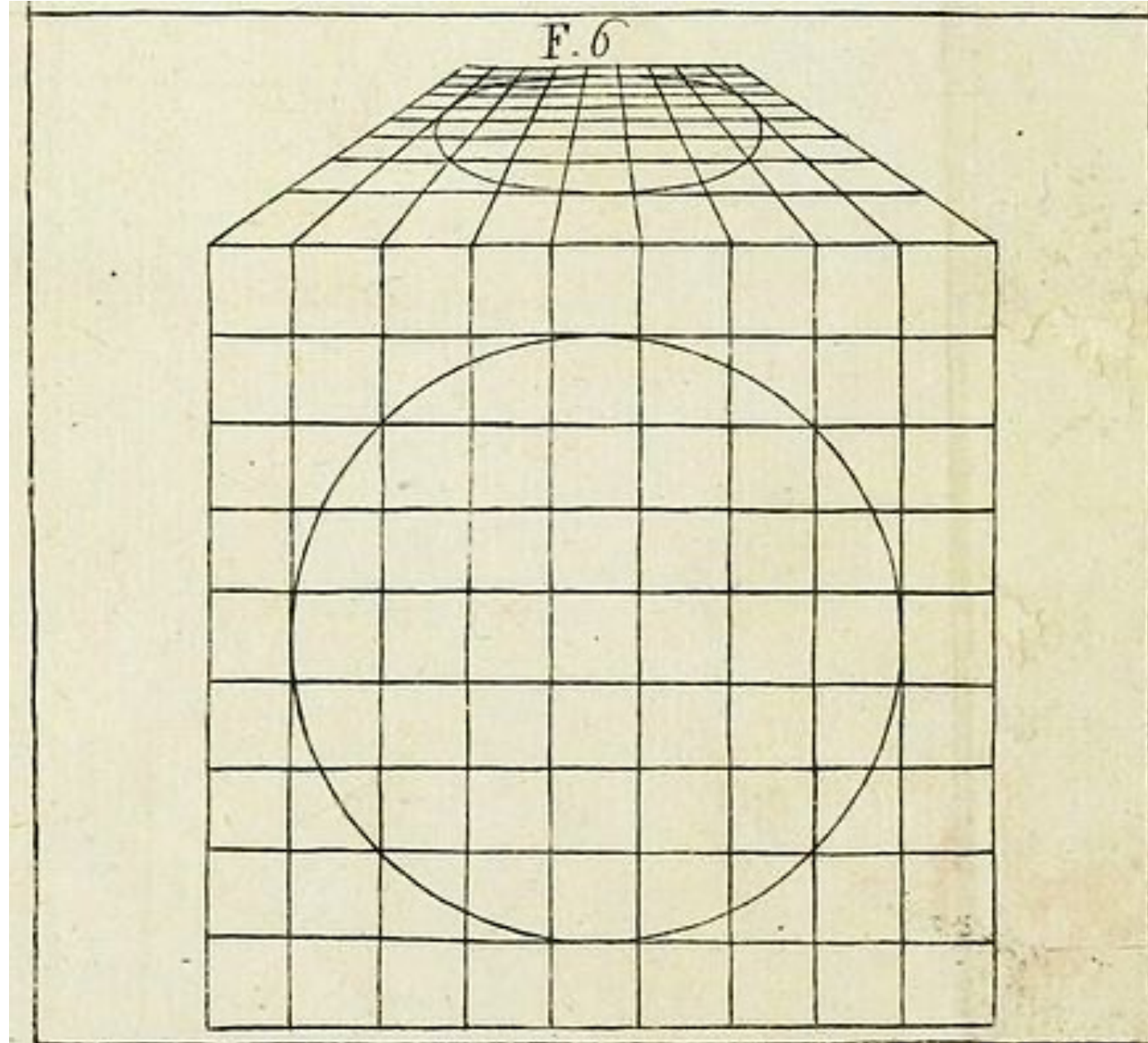
We also have another – overlapping –  
tradition of talking about ways of doing  
an enquiry or investigation  
"**research method**"



As well as talking about ways of working - of methods – in making art

We also have another – overlapping –  
tradition of talking about ways of doing  
an enquiry or investigation  
"**research method**"

We also have the idea that one of  
the ways in which you can conduct an  
enquiry is through art practice,  
through art making.

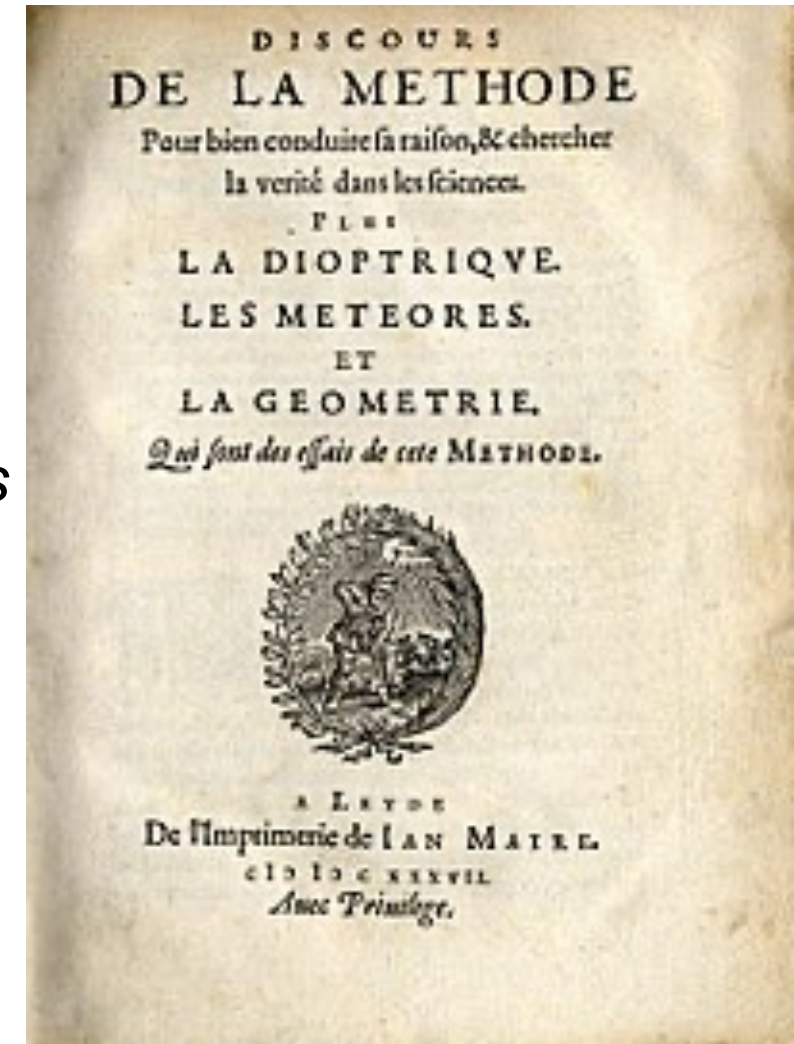


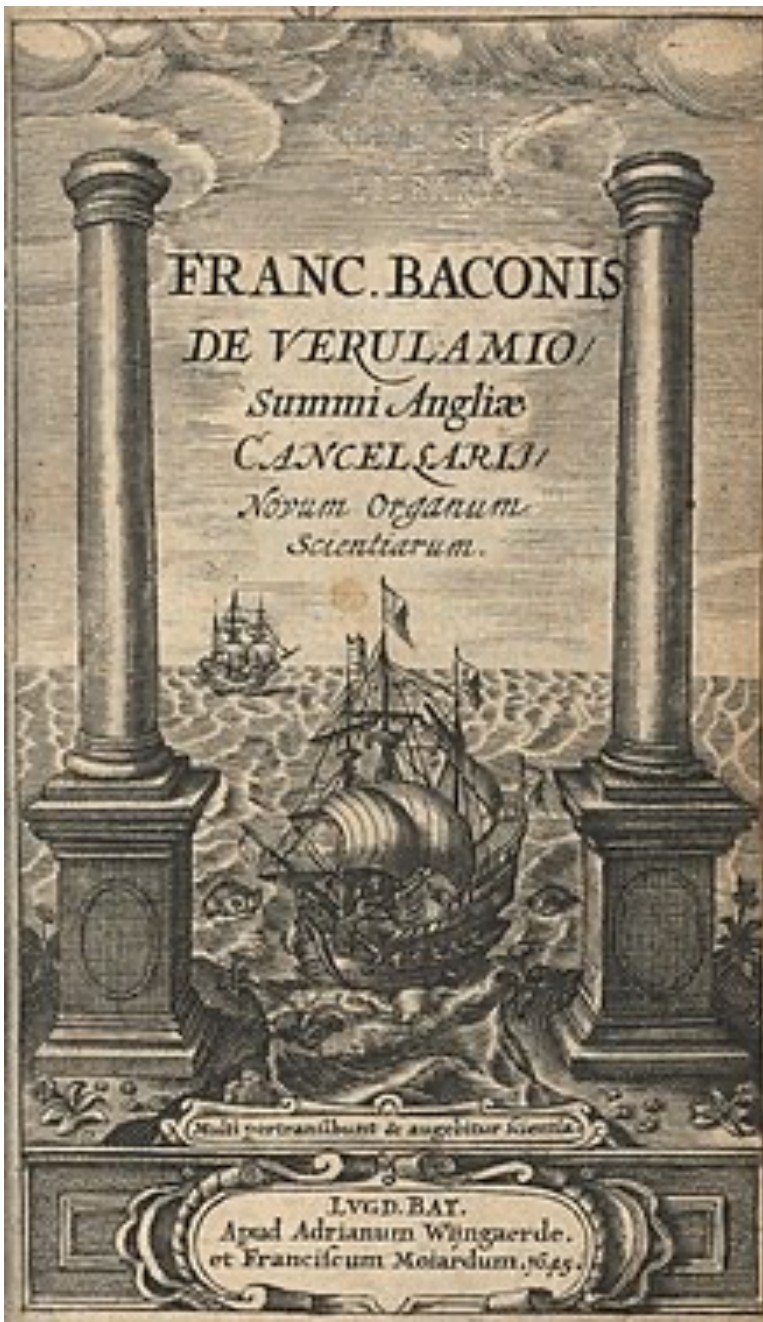
Some notes on "research method"

## The *Novum Organum*

(*Novum Organum*, sive *Indicia Vera de Interpretatione Naturae* translated to English as "*New organon, or true directions concerning the interpretation of nature*") published in 1620.

Descartes *Discours de la Méthode Pour bien conduire sa raison, et chercher la vérité dans les sciences* published in 1637.

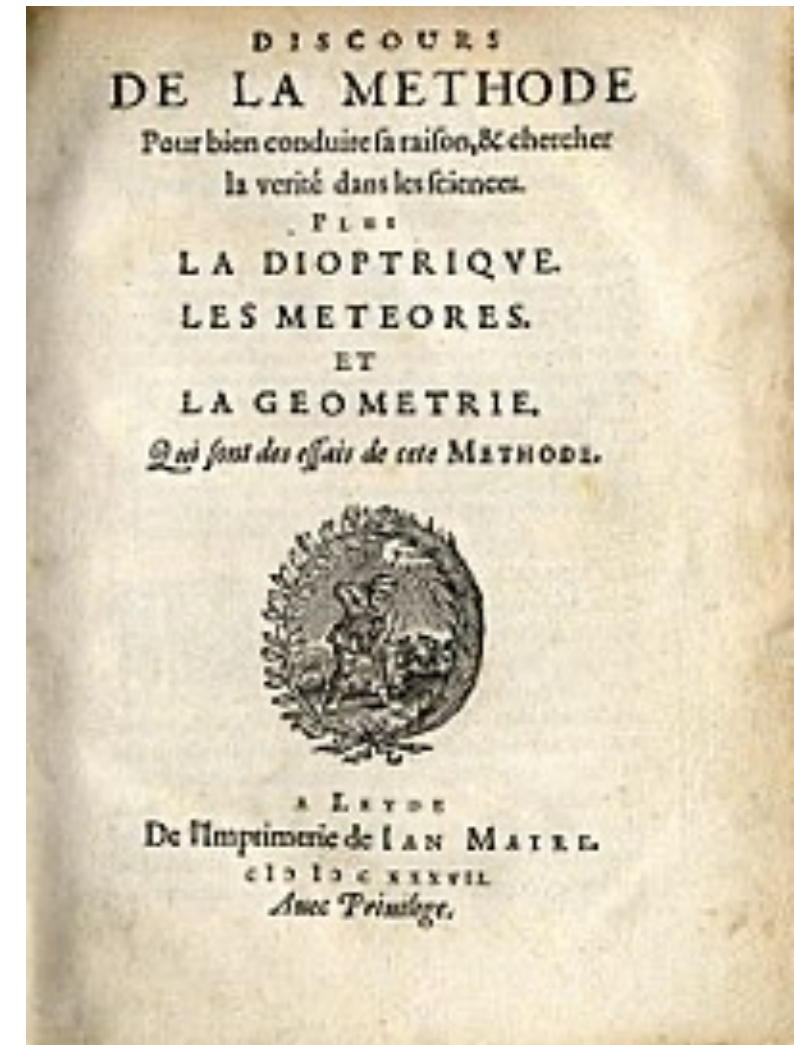




Walter J. Ong remarked, sixteenth-century scholars had shown a “frantic interest in the whole question of method which marks the two generations and more preceding Descartes”. The constant references to the concept even left some scholars fatigued, as expressed by the classical philologist Adrien Turnèbe in 1600:

“Method—no word is more popular in our lectures these days, none more often heard, none gives off a more delightful ring than that term. Everything else, if you use it often enough, will end by nauseating your readers. This is the only thing that never makes them sick. If you leave it out, they think the feast you set before them is disgustingly seasoned and poorly prepared. If you use it often, they will believe that anything you give them is the ambrosial and nectared food of the gods.”

<http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:410145/FULLTEXT01.pdf>



way of doing something – a method

reasoning about why a way of working will be effective – a methodology

way of finding something out or enquiring into something – a research method

reasoning about why a way of enquiring will be effective – a research methodology

Why bother talking about ways of working at all...?

Why bother talking about ways of working at all...?

Method guaranteeism

because I can describe my way of working  
I am making more robust knowledge claims...

...the reliable method guarantees the reliability of my claims

Why bother talking about ways of working at all...?

~~Method guaranteeism~~ is not really of interest here ... but rather

Talking about a way of working (method) as a means to enhance or adapt ways of working to different circumstances

Talking about a way of working (method) as a means to develop a general skill or craft for doing work (research work) that is not limited to this one particular piece of (research) work that I am currently doing

Talking about a way of working (method) as a means to interrogate the limitations or to problematize the thinking and values embedded in a way of working

...

Problems of cliché in debate on creative practices, institutions and power.

‘Creativity is personal’

‘Institutions are about power’

‘People see things differently because they have different experiences’

‘That’s the difference between art and science...’

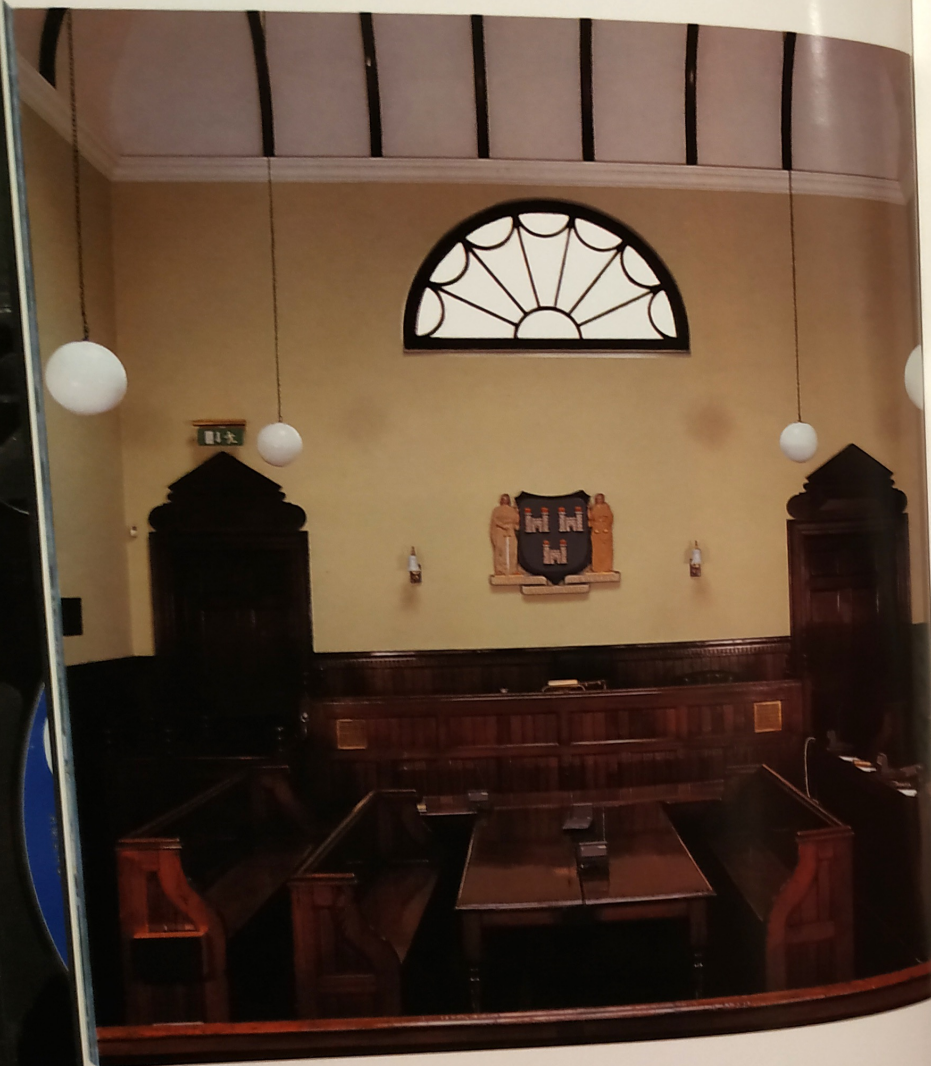
‘It’s not really possible to express it in words...’

‘I don’t want to say what I am trying to do, in case that spoils it.’

Note: "Cliché" is used to mean a ready-made and often-repeated phrase that in some way reduces the need to think by simply re-using a standard piece of ready-made (un-thinking) thought.

Some examples of practice as enquiry





Coroner's Court, DUBLIN  
3 April 1998 – 24 July 1998

#### THE COURT

Most of the public benches were full, perhaps 50 people. The room was furnished with solid, dark brown, wooden pews. The arrangement of the furnishings was symmetrical and six white globe shades hung about ten feet down from the ceiling, which had a partial glass roof. People coming and going from the seats reminded me of parishioners in a church, especially with the dark brown panelling that lined the walls.

#### HOSTEL

The first case was of a 45-year-old married man, found fully clothed on the floor of his hostel room, with his head propped against the bedside locker. There was no vomit around him. The hostel worker who found him had brought the deceased there the night before, and said the man had drunk a lot that evening. The bed had not been slept in. The hostel worker called the man's doctor who pronounced him dead. Reports showed alcohol and prescription drugs in his system. Gardai say there were no suspicious circumstances; no indication of suicide. He died by aspirating vomit into his lungs. The verdict was death by misadventure. His wife was in the court.

#### SILK-SCARF

The group sitting beside, and in front of me, talked intermittently with their two solicitors. The younger girls showed each other holiday snapshots. They seemed at ease, and I thought perhaps 'their' death was less unexpected than the others. The mother took the stand, and swore the usual statement about telling the truth, with her hand on a small palm-sized, worn, black bible that had sellotape on the cover. Her deposition was short. Her daughter had gone out at seven-thirty one evening and had not returned. The next

CITY MORGUE

NO PARKING  
DAY OR NIGHT

11/13/03

2001/12/12



*Coroner Regrets* has manifest in different exhibitions formats between 1999 and 2011; as a solo exhibition in the form of a video, sound and object installation in Temple Bar Gallery in 1999, a solo exhibition in the form of a three-room video, sound and object installation at the Orchard Gallery in 2000, as a solo exhibition of photographs and sound in the Irish Arts Center, NY in 2002 and as printed leaves of paper on the floor of the group exhibition [re: public](#) in Temple Bar Gallery in 2011.

The work further exists as a 47 page hardback book that includes a photographic essay, a text of the artist recollection of inquests at Dublin City Coroner's Court and two audio CD's containing readings of the text by actors Ronan Wilmot and Ena May.



Shane Cullen

FRAGMENS  
SUR LES INSTITUTIONS  
RÉPUBLICAINES  
IV

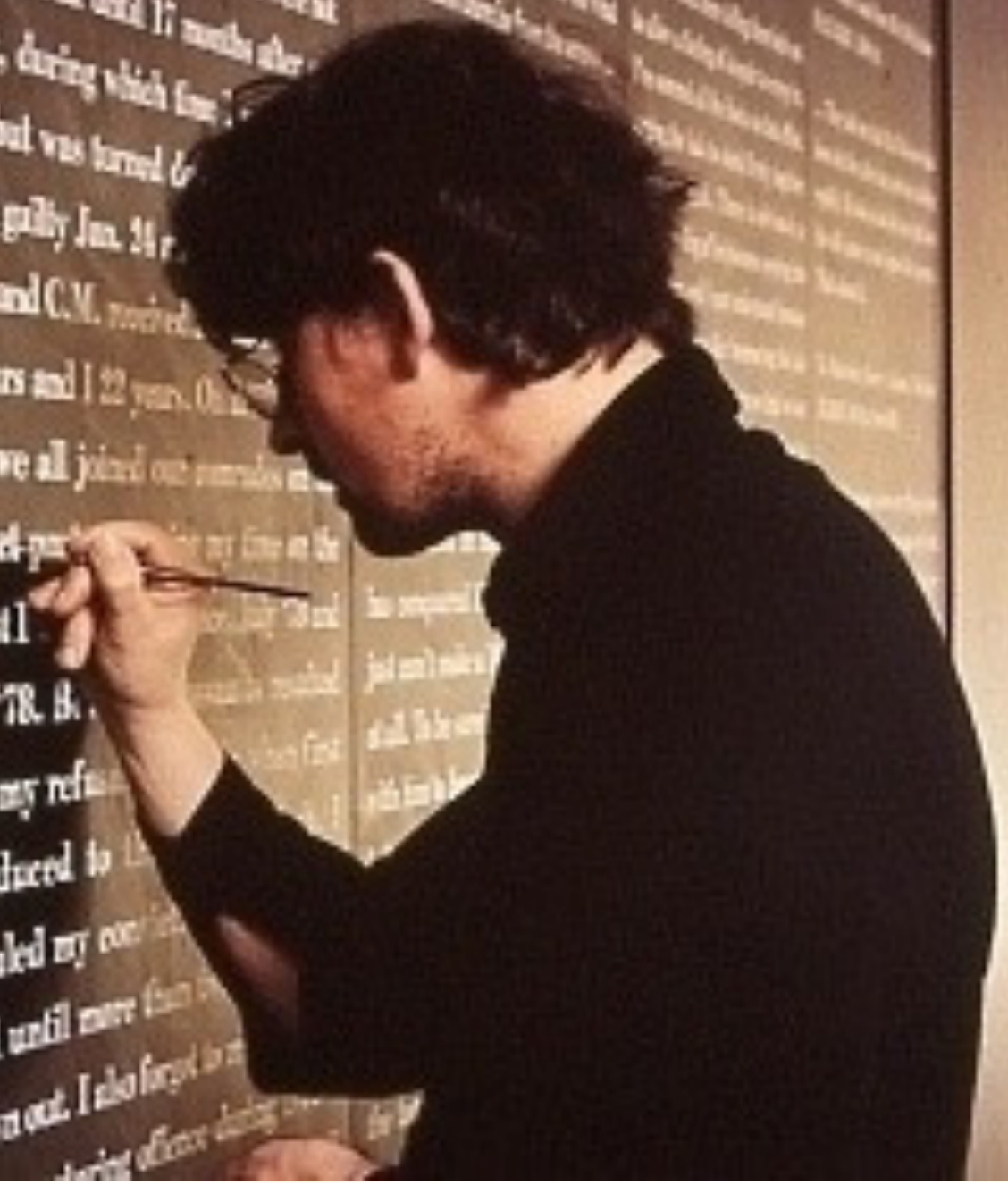
EDITED BY DR LIAM KELLY

Orchard Gallery  
Centre d'art contemporain de Vassivière en Limousin

... being made redundant  
it - early 1972. I laboured for M  
aghers ... for a few months then I  
an apprenticeship as a tiler  
ver) for J.P. Corrys, Corporation  
ked there until my arrest in 1973  
5th). During the time I was  
I wasn't associated with any  
ion.

the Republican Movement as a  
of Na Fianna Éireann (youth  
IRA) in Oct. 71. I spent

... evidence against me. We were at  
sent for trial until 17 months after  
arrest, during which time I  
bail, but was turned to  
found guilty Jan. 24 r.  
T.K., and C.M. received  
18 years and 12 years. On  
Kesh we all joined our comrades in  
blanket-protest my time on the  
protest I  
Oct. '78. B.  
from my refusal  
introduced to the  
appealed my conviction  
heard until more than  
Thrown out. I also forgot to  
... office during



Expand

DAVID BERESFORD

# TEN MEN DEAD



THE STORY OF THE 1981

# IRISH HUNGER STRIKE

# TEN MEN DEAD

In 1981 ten Irish republicans, following a three year 'blanket protest' for political status, starved themselves to death in Long Kesh prison (The Maze) as the culmination of their long struggle for recognition as prisoners of war.

During a bitter conflict in which one of them - Bobby Sands - was elected to Parliament, Margaret Thatcher's 'Iron Lady' style, later honed in the Falklands War of 1982 and the Miners' Strike of 1984, was first put to the test.

Drawing extensively on secret IRA documents and letters smuggled out of the prison at the time, *Ten Men Dead* tells the intensely human story of how ten very ordinary men, amongst them a draper's assistant, a mechanic, an upholsterer and a milkman, were prepared to starve themselves to death for their cause.

Cover photograph  
© Press Association

NON-FICTION

UNITED KINGDOM £3.95  
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Marcella [Sands] has no lights so this is forced upon me. Here goes, Sunshine. Marcella saw 'Rat' [Governor Hilditch] this afternoon for a five minute yarn - it was friendly, though cautious. 'Rat' said that more time was needed for him to think on the next step (i.e. simultaneous issue of clothing) because, quote, 'the consequences and implications of this are great, serious and far-reaching' - he said we should therefore approach this aspect carefully and slowly and asked for one week of a break in any moves to consider the situation. He also said he would stop further wing shifts to furnished cells just to freeze things for this one week. Marcella told him we were considering washing and informed him that as an indication of our good will and willingness and sincerity we had decided that either tomorrow or Saturday ten men from here and ten from H5 would wash, shave etc. This will now be held back till next Tuesday in keeping with AC [Army Council] directive to ask a principled settlement. The Brits may be stalling. We believe they wish to compromise us on the principle of clothes and, by a week's respite, they may gain some ground. However we feel that we could use the time to examine our position thoroughly, unless of course there are dangers which would dictate that we shouldn't stall and perhaps we don't see those yet. You can let us know your attitude on this. Marcella will come you tomorrow in detail on today's developments. 'Rat' also said to Marcella that 'prison regime was not static and was indeed developing'. There ye are now! We feel that the best thing to do is to pause till next Thursday (we just decided this minute on Thursday as opposed to Tuesday. Sorry!) We should release a statement that morning as to what the crack is. Now if families of twenty men could be quietly informed on Wednesday evening to get clothes ready for Friday morning to be left in, that would be sound. Incidentally, Marcella told the 'Rat' that in the light of what he was saying we would give him a week's grace. Index [Fr Turner, the prison

chaplain] was in and also said we should go slowly and carefully on this and even suggested that maybe some men wearing prison sweaters wouldn't be too bad. HAI HAI! Marcella will see Poppins [Danny Morrison] on special visit tomorrow and give him the heep. We will come other blocks on situation, but if you feel that another AC job is necessary hang on in. Marcella is hoping to see the Block O/Gs tomorrow and will explain things then. I think that's all. So take yourself off, you harver picture. See you around. Take care and God Bless. - Bk.

19.1.81 To Liam Óg [a Sinn Féin official] from Bk.

Comrade, enclosed a short note to Bernie. Hope to God she recovers. Stick a few cards along with the note from all of us...

21.1.81 From Marcella [Sands]

Comrade, got the Big Efforts comm today and I also saw Angel briefly... bed's breaking my back, we've not used to such comforts... writing on a table is strange, sitting on a chair. Men saw themselves in the mirror last week for the first time in almost three years. It was frightening, especially for Raquin, or I mean Bk...

From Séamus [Officer Commanding] H5 28.1.81

...At about 9 o'clock the lads gave the furniture the message. About 9.30 - 10.00 the screws moved the lads from their own wing into a wing that was in the process of being cleaned. Shine all over walls, water over floors. They didn't allow them to walk over. Instead they grabbed them by the hair and ran them over, kicking and punching the whole time. Sean McPrake from Billaghy has a wooden leg. They tried to make him run, dragging by the hair and hosing etc. So Sean sat down on the floor and refused to get up. They got around him and gave him a rough kicking. The PO [principal officer] was the main man in hosing him. They eventually had to drag him over. Raymond Digney, Andersonstown, was tripped while

running. He saw medic who told him he had fractured arm. Eddie Murphy took a heart attack and was given tablets. The lads were kept lying in a dirty, empty wing with no bedding or blankets. Just a shabby towel round the waist until 11.30 this morning when the whole wing was moved to H6...

From Marcella 28.1.81

Comrade, Firstly you may have been shocked by last night's events. Sorry if you're shattered, but comrade for once we got into mix-up in communication... Now here is the full crack; by the way I'm in [the dark] to write this and I'm leaning on a pee [chamber pot]!! We moved at 9 p.m. wrecked the place, right, our reasons petty harassment and humiliation of men - similar to that which helped prompt the no wash protest three years ago. At ten p.m. the screws arrived. We hated and we were moved in two from B wing to C wing. Now comrade, C wing has just been vacated by the wing that remains on no wash, the cells are logging over in excreta, also puddles of water on floors where the cleaners had begun. Six men, T. London Unity Flats, Devlin Ardmore, Kieran McKenna, Darryl, B. Foran New Lodge, K. I and Liam McCloskey Dangan, the were fired over a table and the other their behinds torn apart by the screws. Comrade, this is several screws. The filthy cells in which we were left were in darkness and there was no water, drink, no beds, blankets, not even a bloody blanket. All we had was a towel. Comrade, there were GPs and POs in the block, but no one would come when we rang bells. Now we sat all night naked until five minutes ago, before the bastards found it in themselves to give us blank and mattresses. Now we didn't sleep, were frozen etc. Big Gerry McNally to sink twice in the middle of the night. 47 of us stick our names down for today, firstly six men went to doctors, said, we've no water, we've no clothes, we've been fired into dirt which we did not move, what are they

to do about it. He said he'd see but it was not a medical matter. We got the hold of a PO at 10 A.M. this morning and he issued us with 'half a fucking blanket each'. Bk told him they were torturing us for furniture being locked. We also at 10 A.M. got water. We saw Gov. at 11 A.M. every man asked for heard form [complaint form] to get signer [lawyer] to see governor and Northern Ireland Office for breach of prison rules. We may have chance of a signer. Play this up, of court case over torture. To rub it in they put our dinner out, left it sitting for half an hour, then gave us it freezing cold. The boys are - - - - - , the wing's like a morgue. - - - - - reports coming in from H5. - - - - - trouble here. - - - - - point: they put us back on - - - - - again by putting us in filthy cells - - - - - and sicken us. Only we [If we had a court issue we'd - - - - - considered till - - - - - with - - - - - at the - - - - - one if - - - - - two - - - - - for - - - - - up. - - - - - stated - - - - - ally to - - - - - and - - - - - was wrote, - - - - - we do not - - - - - or extreme - - - - - distressing it - - - - - decision to - - - - - same and we - - - - - with the same - - - - - We fully accept - - - - - f what it 'may' - - - - - army to carry on - - - - - pursuance of the - - - - - without handicap - - - - - accept the tragic - - - - - it certainly await us - - - - - ing fact that death - - - - - accepted settlement. So - - - - - sets we recognise and

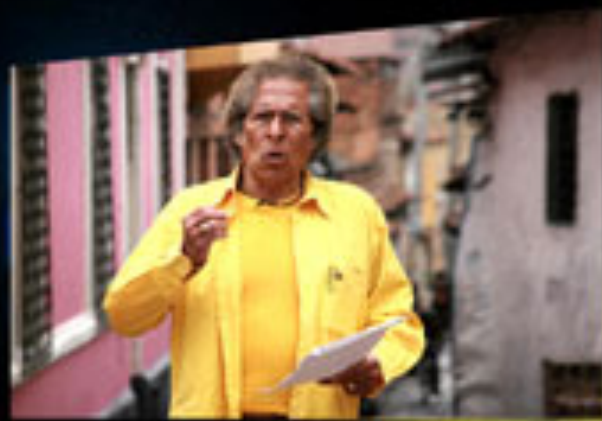


# SIX ACTS: AN EXPERIMENT IN NARRATIVE JUSTICE (2010)

6-channel video installation



Video still from ACT IV (Carlos Pizarro), performed by Lisandro López





## Carlos Motta *Six Acts: An Experiment in Narrative Justice* (2010)

**Carlos Motta:** *Six Acts: An Experiment in Narrative Justice* proposes an alternative approach to the concept of justice based on an aesthetic experience rather than a normative judicial process. To this aim, I understand the concept of aesthetics to be an unofficial, artistic, transitory and historical public sphere where narration, speech acts and representation-as-fiction encourage communication amongst citizens. Based on this definition, I consider an aesthetic experience to be a useful way to “construct” justice, which in a country at war like Colombia I deem far from idealistic: it is a necessity. Even though there are several official and cultural initiatives and projects that seek to fight for reparative justice, Colombia tends to be an unjust country that chooses to forget its victims and hence it is largely indebted with them. On the one hand, my intention was to bring awareness to what I think is an ongoing “crisis of the left.” I chose to commission actors to re-read in public squares throughout Bogotá, six important peace speeches originally delivered by left-leaning presidential candidates that were assassinated because of their ideology.

## Carlos Motta *Six Acts: An Experiment in Narrative Justice*

**Carlos Motta:** .....These political leaders represented socially progressive ideas that irrefutably threatened hegemonic power. I decided to stage these “acts” during the recent presidential campaign because I thought it provided a perfect framework to revisit these punished ideas, most of which were notably absent from this year’s electoral campaigns. In this sense, my project wished to act as a critical document of our country’s history, making emphasis on the need to remember and activate a work of collective memory as a potential way to engage with the legacy of violence that continuously haunts us.

# Carlos Motta

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwFT6WLPcZY>

<https://carlosmotta.com/project/six-acts-an-experiment-in-narrative-justice-2010/>

"Whether you're a mom, know a mom, or ever had a mom, you are going to want to read this surprising book." —SY MONTGOMERY,  
New York Times bestselling author of *The Soul of an Octopus*

# MOM GENES

Inside *the* New Science  
of Our Ancient Maternal Instinct



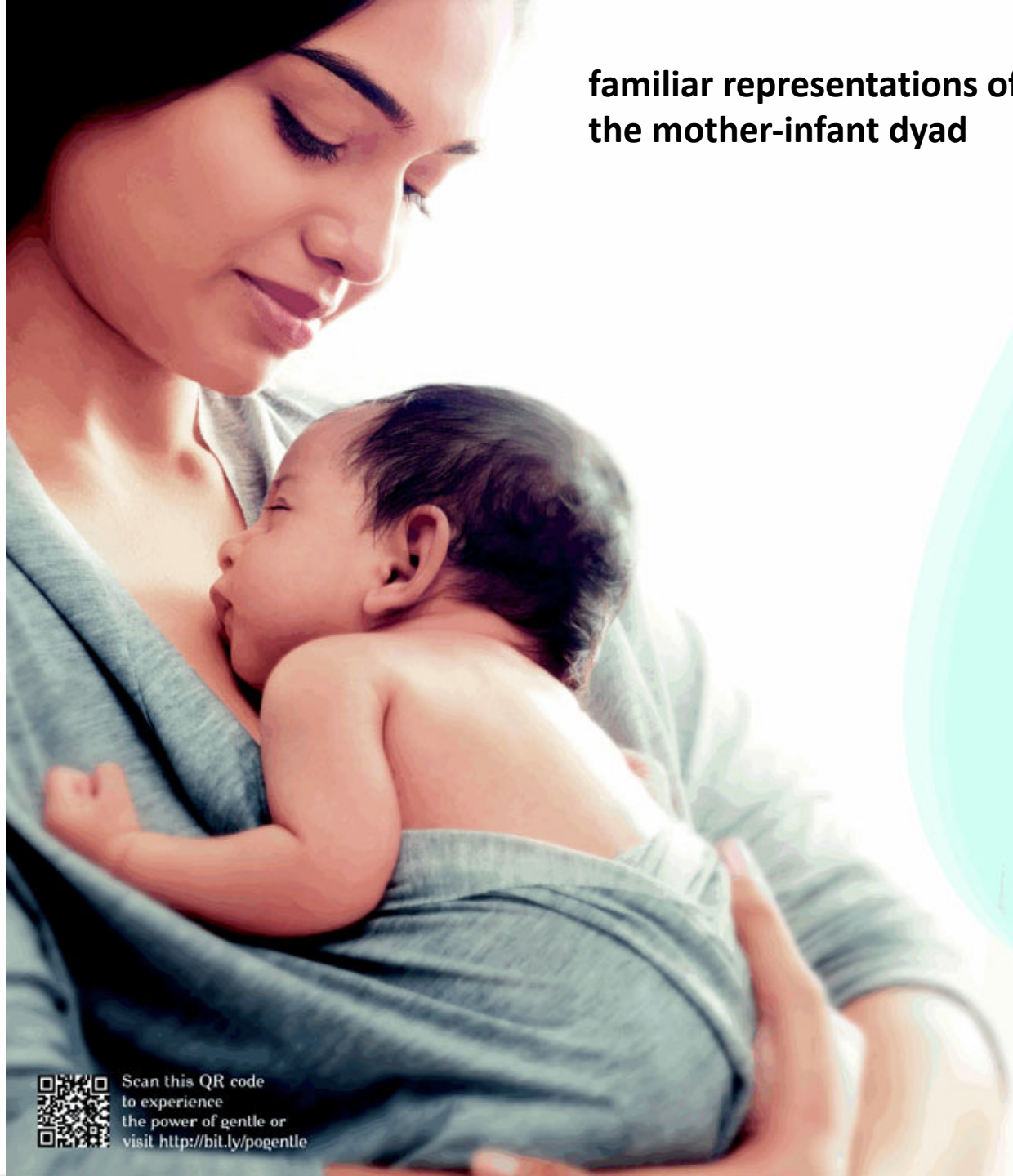
Abigail Tucker

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF  
*THE LION IN THE LIVING ROOM*



Scan this QR code  
to experience  
the power of gentle or  
visit <http://bit.ly/pogentle>

familiar representations of maternal femininity  
the mother-infant dyad



Remember this smell?  
The smell of your little one  
when she was a little one.  
The smell of her oh-so-soft skin.  
The smell of innocence.  
The smell of sloppy wet kisses,  
cuddles, and long gazes.  
The smell that made you fall in love.  
The smell that made you a mother.

The smell of every baby.  
The smell of Johnson's baby.

Because only a smell so gentle  
can bring back  
memories that powerful.

Johnson's baby

# -After the Tate's bricks



NAPPY LINE-UP at the ICA Gallery—there are 22 framed exhibits captioned with relative details.

# On show at ICA ...dirty nappies!

Mary Kelly  
Post-partum Document  
1973-9

Contrary to conventional  
representations of  
motherhood and “maternal  
subjectivity.”

Exhibition project within  
wider context of the  
feminist critique of “labour”  
– paid and unpaid work,  
and of reproductive labour.

JANUARY 5, 1974

09.00 HRS.	7 OZS. SMA
13.00 HRS.	4 OZS. SMA
17.00 HRS.	4 OZS. SMA
19.00 HRS.	3 OZS. ORANGE, 2 TSPS. CEREAL, 2 TSPS. APPLE
21.30 HRS.	6½ OZS. SMA
TOTAL:	26½ OZS. LIQUIDS 4 TSPS. SOLIDS

/GAH/

KITTY IS 'GONE'

NON-EXISTENCE

FEB 6 1975

UTTERANCE

GLOSS

FUNCTION

AGE 17.11

UTTERANCE

GLOSS

FUNCTION

AGE 17.11

/GAH/

KITTY IS 'GONE'

NON-EXISTENCE

FEB 6 1975

FUNCTION

NON-EXISTENCE

AGE 17.11

FEB 6 1975

T2 6.2.75

CONTEXT: M(mother) putting K(son) to bed.

13.00 HRS.

SPEECH EVENT(S)

/gah/R5

5.1 K. /dit-dy/ dit-dy/ e dit-dy/ (seeing kitty out the window)  
/gah/ dit-dy gah/ (kitty disappears under a car)

M. Oh! (seeing it come out again)

K. /dere/ dere/ e dere/ e dere/ (excitedly)

MOST FREQUENT UTTERANCES: /dere/ e dere/ gah/ dit-dy/ ah-gah/

MEAN LENGTH OF UTTERANCE: 1.78

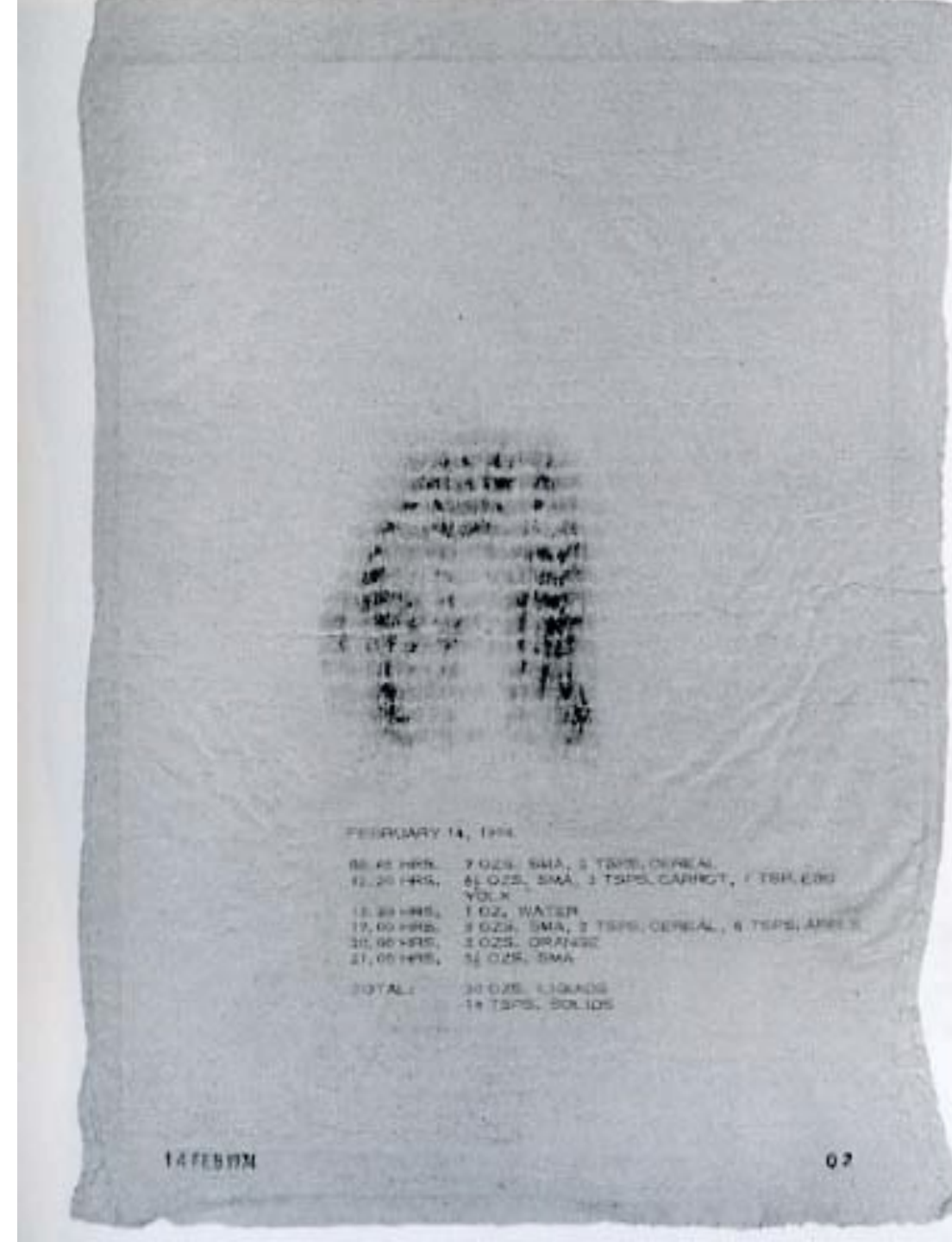
17 months, 11 days

I didn't see K much  
this week because of  
the Brighton show.  
Now I've noticed he's  
started stuttering.  
Dr. Spock says it's  
due to 'mother's  
tenseness or father's  
discipline'. My work  
has been undermined  
by the appearance of  
this 'symptom' be-  
cause I realise it  
depends on belief in  
what I'm doing as a  
mother..... as well  
as an artist. I feel  
I can't carry on  
with it.

## Six-year exploration of the mother-child relationship

Each of the six-part series concentrates on a formative moment in the artist's son's mastery of language and her own sense of loss, moving between the voices of the mother, child and analytic observer.

Informed by feminism, psychoanalysis, and film-making the work has had a profound influence on the development and critique of conceptual art, and on feminist psychoanalytical theory.







# Nightcleaners Part 1

*Nightcleaners Part 1* was filmed in 1972–5 by the Berwick Street Collective. Mary Kelly was a prominent member of this collective.

## **Berwick Street Film Collective**

The collective was active from 1970–78. It was co-founded by Marc Karlin and James Scott; others associated with the group include Mary Kelly, Richard Mordaunt, Jon Saunders and Humphrey Trevelyan. The collective directed three films released between 1974 and 1978, the most well known of which is *Nightcleaners Part I*. This film was originally conceived as a campaign film to raise awareness of the situation of women cleaning offices overnight for very low pay. However, it became more of an avant-garde representation of women and work, and is a landmark of collective and feminist film-making. The film documents the daily routine of several women who cleaned offices in London at night, their low pay and the bad conditions within which they had to work. It also discusses and shows their fight to gain union recognition and therefore protection. In these clips you can see two women talking about their daily lives, as well as a protest rally to gain support for the cleaners' cause.

in night

THE NIGHT:  
CLEANERS



**7.30PM DOORS OPEN 7:15PM**

## **'The hidden story of the strike which defined an era'**

*Producer Humphrey Trevelyan will introduce this film made by members of the Berwick Street Collective during 1970-1972.*

A documentary about the campaign to unionise the women who cleaned office blocks at night and who were being victimised and underpaid by their employers. It is increasingly considered a landmark of British political cinema, and recognised as a key work of the 1970s.

From 1970, women who cleaned office blocks at night in London were encouraged by ex-cleaner May Hobbs - assisted by members of the Women's Liberation Movement - to unionise and fight for better pay and working conditions. It shows their isolation; vacuuming, polishing, dusting, wiping desks in large City towers; obscured as unregulated workers - and unseen by their nocturnal work.

It stretches beyond the workplace and takes us into lives and communities where they are caring for their families and looking after their homes.

Their struggle was a resistance against the odds, a symbol of hope from a vulnerable group of workers. It gives food for thought about working conditions of many workers today.

**TICKETS ARE FREE!**

**Available online from:** <http://thenightcleaners.eventbrite.co.uk>

**OR: from the Library.**

**DONATIONS WELCOME FOR PRESTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY & HUB**



Preston Community Library

FILM EQUIPMENT FUNDED BY





Igor Grubić

**“Eastside Story” (2006-8)**

<https://vimeo.com/64892049>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/grubic-east-side-story-t13651/text-summary>

*East Side Story* 2006–8 is a two-channel video installation that juxtaposes documentary footage with a re-enactment of that footage through the medium of dance. The documentary film combines television footage taken from two separate gay pride events that took place in Grubić's native Croatia, one in Belgrade in 2001 and one in Zagreb in 2002. At both these parades the participants became subjected to verbal and physical abuse, as well as organised violence coordinated by groups of neo-Nazi supporters. Passers-by who happened to be at the scene also became involved, joining in the acts of violence, resulting in footage that is both disturbing and uncomfortable to watch. Grubić alternates scenes from the two events on one screen. On the second screen (placed on an adjacent wall to the first) is a re-enactment of these events by a group of dancers based in Zagreb. There are four dancers who each make their own interpretation of events by mimicking certain movements and postures witnessed in the television footage. The dancers perform both as individuals and in a group, in the same locations where the original film footage was shot. The work was exhibited at the eleventh Istanbul Biennial *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* in September 2009, as well as in Grubić's solo exhibition at MMC Luka, Pula, Croatia in 2008.

## some examples of very different art practices that involve some kind of process of enquiry

- *Coroner Regrets* Amanda Ralph
- *Fragmens sur les institutions...* Shane Cullen
- *Six Acts: An Experiment in Narrative Justice* Carlos Motta
- *Post Partum Document* Mary Kelly
- *Eastside Story* Igor Grubić

**some examples of phd**

## **some caveats about the examples**

- Short intro, not my work – mostly not my PhD researchers' work
- Based on what I have learned through attending various presentations conferences etc. I am not an authority in these projects, just using what is in public domain.
- I may misconstrue parts of them, especially the ones that are still ongoing.
- I am just showing them to suggest the variety of work underway
- If interested, please invite the actual researchers themselves  
– as it is their work and they know more

# REWINDING INTERNATIONALISM - SCENES FROM THE 90S, TODAY



Read out



susan pui san lok, 'Rewind / Replay' (2022), Courtesy the artist and Netwerk Aalst.

# REWINDING INTERNATIONALISM

## Scenes from the 90s, today

19/11/2022 - 30/04/2023



The exhibition *Rewinding International* explores developments, ideas and stories from the 1990s and how they resonate in the world today. The end of the Cold War, the AIDS pandemic and increasing globalisation brought about dramatic changes, also in the art world. What became of the questions and experiences of those days?

### COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH EXHIBITION

*Rewinding International* features visual and audio material from the past and present, archive materials and recently created work. The curators, collectives and artists who have curated the exhibition invite you to 'rewind' to moments from the 1990s and reflect on them from the perspective of today. Five new artworks have been created for the exhibition including works by Lubaina Himid and Magda Stawarska, Didem Pekün and susan pui san lok / lok pui san. *Rewinding Internationalism* is partly the result of a collaboration within the **L'Internationale** museum confederation, of which the Van Abbemuseum is a member.

### UNIQUE EXHIBITION DESIGN

The distinct design of the exhibition emphasises the fact that history is not linear. Instead of walking through a continuous story, visitors are occasionally made to turn around and go back to where they started. In the process, they

### FEATURING WORKS FROM

Christine Baeumler, Act Up Barcelona, Belkis Ayón Manso, Nadiah Bamadhaj, Cecilia Barriga, Miguel Benlloch, CADA, Tony Cokes, Betsy Damon, Eugenio Dittborn, Les Diables Bleus, Diamela Eltit, Gorgona Group, Beth Grossman, Dai Guangyu, Félix Guattari, Lubaina Himid en Magda Stawarska, Julije Knifer, Ivan Kožarić, Li Jixiang, Chengying Liu, susan pui san lok / lok pui san, Miguel D. Norambuena, Miguel Parra Urrutia, Olu Oguibe, Didem Pekün, Pejvak, Wang Peng, Nelly Richard, Christian Rodriguez / CEPSS, Sandra Rylvin Rinaudo, Lotty Rosenfeld, Allan Sekula, Semsar Siahaan, Lamnu Suri, Norbert van Onna, Yin Xiuzhen, Zeng Xun.

### RESEARCH PROJECTS

*AIDS Anarchive* developed with Equipo re (Aimar Arriola, Nancy Garin and Linda Valdés), *Revista de Crítica Cultural*, *The Three Ecologies* and *Internationalist Feminisms* developed with Paulina E. Varas; *Keepers of the Waters* (Chengdu and Lhasa, China, 1995-1996) developed with Sebastian Cichocki; *Contemporary Art of the Non-Aligned Countries*. *Unity in Diversity in International Art* (Jakarta, 1995), developed with Bojana Piškur, Grace Samboh and Rachel Surijata; *ADN* (Association pour la Démocratie à Nice), with Carnivals Independents and Les Diables Bleus (1991-2004).

# Rewinding Internationalism:

An Exhibitionary Enquiry on the Political Imaginary  
artistic PhD research  
currently being conducted  
at HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg  
by Nick Aikens

“Rewinding Internationalism is a research and exhibition project that explores the construct of internationalism through different histories, figures, art works and exhibition histories. Developed within a wider collaborative research context (of the museum confederation L’Internationale and their current programme *Our Many Europes*) the exhibition includes five new commissions, a number of joint research projects developed with external curators alongside loans from private and public collections. The project takes the 1990s as a departure point, a decade when political internationalism – as construct, practice or imaginary itself – went through a fundamental shift with the end of the Cold War and the ascendancy of globalization. “

**MIGMA**FILM  
presenterar

# BLOD

ett filmprojekt av och med  
Annika Boholm & Kersti G. Brennan

Beyond the Cut and Join:  
Expanding the creative role of film editing  
artistic PhD research  
currently being conducted  
at University of the Arts Stockholm  
by Kersti Grunditz Brennan


A key part of this research has been the collaborative realisation of a major expanded film by Kersti Grunditz Brennan working with her collaborator Annika Boholm.

<https://vimeo.com/394963921>


Their article on “The Blod Method: Case Study of an Artistic Research Project in Film” in *Transversal Entanglement - Artistic Research in Film International Journal of Film and Media Arts*, Vol. 7 No. 1 (2022)

<https://revistas.ulusofona.pt/index.php/ijfma/article/view/7992>



A person is swimming underwater in a pool, viewed from below. The swimmer is in the middle of a stroke, with their head and arms visible. The pool has lane lines on the bottom and several bright lights on the wall. The water is clear, and the overall tone is blue. A floating lane line is visible in the foreground.

We want to remove your uterus.

A photograph of two women sitting on a wooden bench in a room with white walls. The woman on the left is wearing a white sports bra and white high-waisted shorts, while the woman on the right is wearing a black sports bra and black high-waisted shorts. Both are wearing glasses and holding up patterned socks. Large, dark shadows of their bodies are cast onto the wall behind them, making them appear to have multiple arms. In the foreground, there are wooden chairs with patterned cloths draped over them. To the right, a small white table with a blue star sticker is visible.

-What if my therapists see this?  
-How does that feel?



-Do you empty your bladder when you pee?  
-I think so.



Simplified summary of research questions:

How to design a process for exploring what editing does to invite and enhance layered experiences of characters in cinematic storytelling?

Focusing on people and their relationships (in documentary, drama, and experimental film) what can editing do to enhance the experience of character?

What expanded description of film editing can be articulated?

# **Subaltern Imaginations of the Bengal Famine of 1943 in and through Film Practices**



# Subaltern Imaginations of the Bengal Famine of 1943

in and through a film practice  
practice-based PhD research  
currently being conducted

HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg  
by Ram Krishnan Ranjan

“The Bengal Famine of 1943-44, which resulted in nearly five million deaths, is considered one of the most catastrophic and murderous instances of British colonial rule in India.<sup>1</sup> The colonial government’s policy of diverting agricultural land from food crop to cash crops and prioritising food supplies to its troops at the expense of the general public, contributed significantly to the making of this crisis. Fearing a Japanese invasion of Bengal through Burma, the government further exacerbated the matter by removing surplus stocks of paddy and curtailing boat transport lines in eastern and coastal Bengal. The general scarcity and panic also induced private hoarding and profiteering by some Bengali elites. Even at the height of the famine, the Churchill government continued to prevent food imports. The net result was mass starvation, displacement, death, and chronic disease.”

“analysis and artistic (re)presentation of the famine can’t stem only from colonial critique; a shift towards situating the famine in terms of subalternity (caste, class, gender, rural-urban divide etc.) must occur. Against this backdrop, this PhD in artistic research mobilizes the film practice to further and experiment with subaltern imaginations (epistemologies and ontologies of expressions that emerge from the space of subalternity) of the Bengal Famine of 1943. “




## *Chaturth Duniya: Fourth World and The Bengal Famine*

Running time: 75 mins.

Status: Work-in-progress

This film has emerged from the fieldwork conducted in two Dalit villages in Midnapore, Bengal in 2019. The fieldwork centered creative-collaborative practice as a method to engage with Dalits' experiences of the famine. Two local practitioners of Patchitra tradition (scroll paintings accompanied with songs), Manu Chitrakar and Sonali Chitrakar, were creative- collaborators during the fieldwork.

The film *Fourth World* weaves together fieldwork footage, poetry and essayistic writing. While the film attempts to foreground subaltern experiences of the famine, but it concomitantly also proposes that there is a need to shift away from 'recovery' and 'representation' of subalterns' 'authentic' experiences of the famine and towards 'negotiated imagination'.

A group of people, including men and children, are seen from behind, sitting and watching a video on a large screen. The screen displays a close-up of a person's face, possibly a woman, with a red and white patterned background. The text "क्या हमारा पेट भी कब्रस्तान" is visible at the bottom of the screen. The setting appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor area with a wooden structure and colorful curtains in the background.

क्या हमारा पेट भी कब्रस्तान





**I will have difficulty in subtitling it.  
It's too fast.**

*Where we rats lurk*, a 11-minute film

Intervention into Mrinal Sen's *Akaler Sandhaney* (1981).

*Where we rats lurk* – both the text as well the video work, cast a critical subaltern eye on Sen's film. This paper focuses on exploring the limits of self-reflexivity and auto-critique in Mrinal Sen's *Akaler Sandhaney* ('*In Search of Famine*') and asks if they can be unsettled without undermining their critical potential in filmmaking practices.

HD FULL MOVIE



Full HD  
1080

A National Award Winning Film  
By Mrinal Sen

Digitally  
Restored

আকালের  
সন্ধান

AAKALER SANDHANE  
(In Search of Famine)



ENGLISH SUBTITLED



For a 43 famine film  
you need documentation



*You deny my living and I defy my death*

Running time: 35 mins

Status: Work-in-progress

Summary: This film is a meditation on the (im)possibility of foregrounding Dalits' experiences of the Bengal Famine through an 'anti-caste affective aesthetics'. This film has emerged as a result of a collaborative-performative workshop between Durga Vishwakarma, a Dalit performance/theater artist, and the filmmaker. Just like the workshop, the film is also animated by the desire to rupture the dominant representational realm that is either essentializing or reductive. Moving away from the indexical and mimetic, the film embraces the affective and participatory registers to (en)act out the difference between 'critical presence' and representation of Dalits.





You Told Me

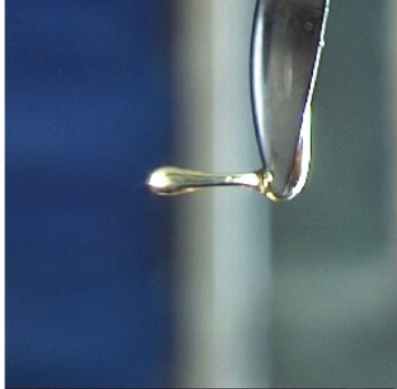
artistic research PhD

completed 2010

HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg

by Magnus Bårtås

(now Head of Research at Konstfack, Stockholm)



*You Told Me*. Three words and two people are involved. You is not a complete stranger, since *Me* is addressing *You* in the past tense. A continuation is also implied; you told me *something*. This something may be a story, or it may be a fact.

This dissertation in artistic research is grounded in the *You Told Me* situation and certain resonances of the act and context of utterance. Fundamental to the work are meetings, conversations and storytelling – activities that are closely linked to the biographical genre, but also to the oral dissemination of artworks. *Work story* is a concept that points to the stories about the making of art, the very sequence of actions that inform the work, and the order of the actions within the sequence – practically, symbolically, ethically, metonymically, metaphorically...

*You Told Me* is also about the making of video essays – about listening and talking to images, and making transferences between the working instances of narrative video. Video essays, like work stories, do not just give an account of their own orbit of production, but they also reflect on their own choices of method and subject matter as well as their own contingent nature. The video essays and work stories in this book privilege the meaning of the local, the situated, the neglected detail, the personal pronoun, the individual's body and its experience of pleasure and pain, and the striking repetition among people and in history. These singularities, and their mundane and fantastic stories, are formed by, inscribed in – and producing – our social and political realms.

ArtMonitor is a publication series from the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg.

ArtMonitor

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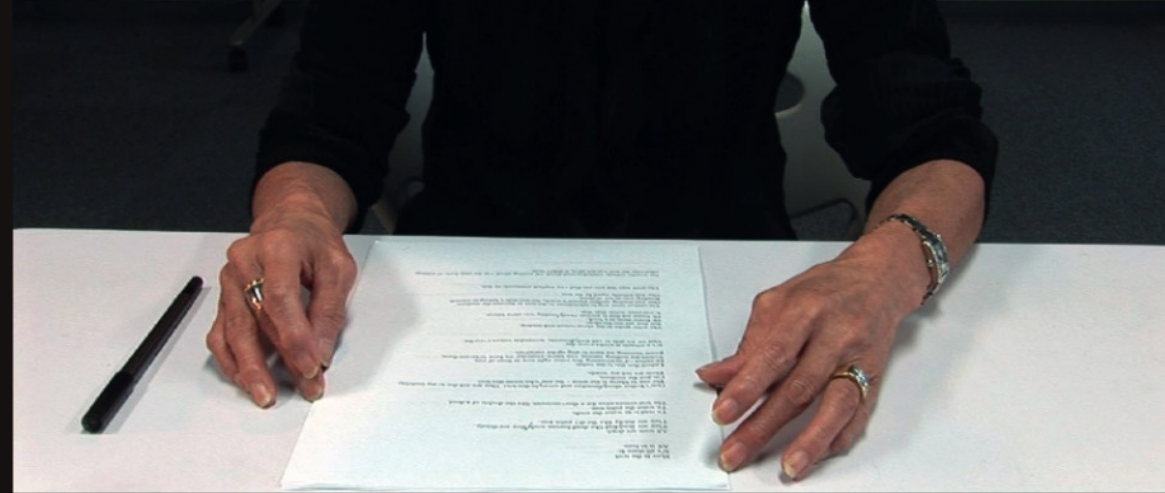
Valand School of Fine Arts  
Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

*You Told Me* – Magnus Bårtås

ArtMonitor



*You Told Me*

– work stories and video essays/  
verkberättelser och videoessäer

Magnus Bårtås



*Magnus Bärtås*

YOU TOLD ME. WORK STORIES  
AND VIDEO ESSAYS

## YOU TOLD ME. WORK STORIES

## AND VIDEO ESSAYS

My dissertation (University of Gothenburg 2010) consists of five video works, an introductory text, and three text essays. The video works are based on meetings, conversations, and storytelling; activities not only closely linked to the biographical genre, but also to the dissemination of artworks – as I will demonstrate. As a biographer, I travelled in the footsteps of films while staging different memory acts together with the ‘biographized.’ The method of repetition I use coincides with and is inspired by Chris Marker. In his video essay *Sans soleil*, he calls it pilgrimage or travelling in the footsteps of film and texts which implies many of his key motifs: the return, the search, multiple identities, the connection of memory, situations, and events where pasts manifest themselves in the present.

# Madame & Little Boy

(the voice-over text from the video essay)

You cross the Golden Gate bridge.  
You see Alcatraz on the right.  
This is the story about Madame Choi,  
and the Little Boy.

Over the mountain.  
On the way to the coast.  
All monsters must die.

These buildings were built for the military.  
These eucalyptus trees were planted as camouflage.  
Now they say they're going to cut them down.

Now these buildings are for artists.  
We have dinners in the mess hall  
and we look at things.

Look at the fog that's coming.  
There's a rainbow inside the fog.

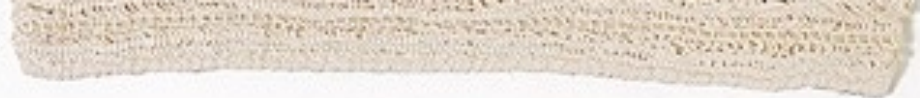








Fig. 1. Detail of an infant-wrapping cloth, handwoven, material silk and wool, 2011.

*Infant Wrapping Cloth*

*(Shrouded in*

on woven textile and undefined loss)

2022-ongoing

HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg

by Birgitta Nordström

BIRGITTA NORDSTRÖM

## Dressing the dead body

**M**y current research focuses on textiles and rites, especially woven textiles for funerals and moments of loss. What active role can a textile such as an infant-wrapping cloth or a funeral pall play in the mourning process? This article will describe the development and current questions that address 1) the infant-wrapping cloth – the textile that is used to dress, clothe, or cover the dead body with particular attention to the question of infant mortality and the material practices of care. 2) The funeral pall that is used at funerals, draped over the coffin or as a body cover at hospital viewing rooms. One example to be presented is *Kortedalakrönika* ('The Chronicle of Kortedala'), a collaborative project, woven for a church in Gothenburg. My work is based in artistic practice but opens up several scientific and existential questions.

In everyday life it may be looked upon as the integral ingredient of a picnic, or maybe find its place on the back seat of a car, or on a settee. However, as I have discovered in my role as a textile artist and artistic researcher, a blanket can also be experienced as playing a far more important role. In the research project I wish to describe in this article, my artwork, in the form of blankets of different kinds, has been seen to act in a number of different ways, particularly in situations where life encounters death.

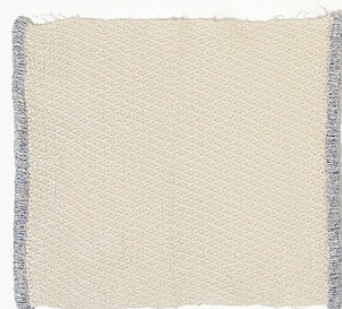
For more than 20 years I have been weaving funeral palls, which has been an experience that has led me to new understandings of grieving processes – and, in my artistic practice specifically, these new discoveries have been made possible through the use of textiles. Then an opportunity arose to investigate this specific relationship further, one where I was able



Fig. 7. The beginning; the warp.



Fig. 8 (left). Pulling on the warp with weights. Fig. 9 (right). Heddlng.





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# Section 05:

## Infant Wrapping Cloth

Birgitta Nordström is a weaver and textile artist who has been researching the use of textiles—blankets, shrouds, funeral palls — in situations of death, especially perinatal death. With a wide community of midwives and clinicians, and a weaving research team, she has developed extensive field studies with respect to radically early death /end of life.

The research is centered on the ways in which the dead body is covered, wrapped, supported, held, and dressed by specifically designed textiles, in cases of, stillbirth, miscarriage and late term abortion.

The enquiry is anchored in lived processes of navigating death in spaces of loss that are not always marked as grievable.

These different forms of perinatal death are not treated as a single common death, but rather as a differentiated field. Personhood is not necessarily invoked in the idea of death, but rather it is often a matter of the death that comes to the *not yet*: the not yet born; the not yet person; the not yet lived.

This is an enquiry through material making.

“I am speaking, acting, researching and writing from a maker’s—from a weaver’s—perspective. I often think of my loom as the point of departure. In my studio, thoughts and threads are linked together in the form of small-scale samples, or full lengths of fabric. When thinking of the outcome of my weaving, that is, in the making of textiles related to the death process, I place the crafting process and myself in a world of references that are situated between weaving and thoughts of time, or sometimes even a lack of time, a time limit.”

It is also a collaborative enquiry that draws upon the different experiences and perspectives of different roles. A recent phase of the research (2017-2018) has been an open multicentre study, conducted in five obstetrics departments and one gynaecology clinic. This study examined the role of the textile objects within the different processes around wrapping, viewing and final farewell in different cases of perinatal death.

The outcomes of this strand of the research will be published shortly within the professional clinical peer review literature. Previously the research process has been communicated through exhibition and publishing in a number of different artistic and academic contexts.

The infant shrouds are often displayed as artefacts inviting the viewer to touch and understand the material qualities of the cloth. They are also represented in photographs that try to indicate the different textures and sizes of the cloth. We have combined both modes of display here.

What is not shown, however, is the material practice of wrapping a small dead body. The display of these images, texts and objects proposes an imaginative projection to another site, that is not here. The ways in which this other site is imagined can range from clinical abstraction to ritual; from sentimentality to dignity; from identification in personal memory to empathy from safe distance. This is a surface of contact with the dead body.

# Section 01: Exhibition / Non-Exhibition

Researchers from the University of Gothenburg previously held workshops in this space under the heading “exhibition / non-exhibition”. These discussions took place over four days during May and June of 2015 as part of the first research pavilion. Debate focused on the dynamics of exhibiting—of showing things—and of the possible limits to exhibition. Are there practices of art, practices of thinking-and-making, which cannot be shown, or which are not well-served by exhibition?

This discussion of a contrast between “exhibition” and “non-exhibition” was not set up as a simple “yes” / “no” dichotomy. It was a means to think about the ways in which exhibitions both reveal and conceal, both show and hide, both tell and don’t tell, in the same moment.

These discussions were staged here, within the space that you are now standing in, reading this text. These discussions were also part of an exhibition process.

In these discussions, some people also spoke about the continuous production of new shows and a possible effect of forgetting. “Amnesia” was a way of naming how the cycle of shows—each new exhibition replacing the previous—could erase, or push out of memory and awareness, the work of previous shows.

As a counter to this, some participants spoke about the accumulation and interaction of different shows over time. They argued that successive exhibitions generated layers of experience and meaning.

This talk of memory and amnesia led some speakers to talk about the different times and tempos created through exhibitions. For example, different experiences of time can be produced through the spacing of exhibits to suggest journeys or vistas or montages. Another example is the two-year turn-around logic of a biennial, the exhibition marking time like a metronome.

Works often propose different durations of looking. Consider the different possible tempos and rhythms to viewing paintings, moving image works, audio-loops, models, installations, performances or archives.

Now, consider the time needed to read a text piece like this. Do you wonder just how much longer this all might take?

# Geo-Aesthetical Discontent

Svalbard, The Guide and Post-Future Essayism

completed 2022

HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg

by Eva La Cour

(now postdoctoral fellow at Art as Forum,  
the Department of Art and Cultural Studies, University of  
Copenhagen)

Propelled by the acute ecological crisis this dissertation moves between artistic affinities and academic disciplines to craft an intervention into imaginaries of Svalbard as an Arctic place. Designed as an iterative set of artistic practice experiments with live editing, it seeks to demonstrate a Geo-Aesthetical Discontent – a dissatisfying lack in the representational discourse – upon terrains with colonial history for visual production. By subverting the historically monolithic and singular narrative of the Arctic, the artistic research unsettles the traditional exemplars of the artist and the scientist. Rather it mobilizes The Guide as an analytical figure and tool with which to propose a Post-Future Essayism: a precarious filmic methodology and epistemological strategy of the moving image; a fragmentary and momentary compositional effect that seeks to navigate and negotiate the role of film in relation to a historiographic concept of futurity.

The dissertation, then, is a response to a discontentment with current portrayals of the Arctic that produce the region as an outside to the global west. At stake is to connect the production of an artistic practice – significantly described in relation to historical image-makers such as Jette Bang, Emilie Demant Hatt and Johan Turi, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson – and the production of the Arctic.

Eva la Cour

Geo-Aesthetical Discontent

**Eva la Cour**

# **Geo- Aesthetical Discontent**

**SVALBARD  
THE GUIDE AND  
POST-FUTURE ESSAYISM**



Propelled by the acute ecological crisis this dissertation moves between artistic affinities and academic disciplines to craft an intervention into imaginaries of Svalbard as an Arctic place. Designed as an iterative set of artistic practice experiments with live editing, it seeks to demonstrate a Geo-Aesthetical Discontent – a dissatisfying lack in the representational discourse – upon terrains with colonial history for visual production. By subverting the historically monolithic and singular narrative of the Arctic, the artistic research unsettles the traditional exemplars of the artist and the scientist. Rather it mobilizes *The Guide* as an analytical figure and tool with which to propose a Post-Future Essayism: a precarious filmic methodology and epistemological strategy of the moving image; a fragmentary and momentary compositional effect that seeks to navigate and negotiate the role of film in relation to a historiographic concept of futurity.

Nick Aikens

Kersti Grunditz Brennan

Ram Ranjan Krishnan

Magnus Bartas

Birgitta Nordström

Eva La Cour

- exhibition-making as enquiry
- filmmaking as part of enabling  
an enquiry into editing contra directing
- reflexive film-making and limit of telling
- an artist looking at methods of telling
- an artist weaver looking at infant death
- an artist seeking a post-representational  
politics *modus operandi* - live editing

they do not all subscribe to a common credo

but all use making as a central part of the process of enquiry

**tactics for starting**

## **tactics for starting**

not to start with a master theory of art, of film or of research

start in the middle ... which also means with implicit operational thinking

talk with people ... in the sense of listen to them

look at and inform yourself of things that are not interesting to you,  
or that you just don't like, but that are somehow nearby your interest

do things ... but consider before and after – and at some point during –  
how you are doing things, and what assumptions and ideas are  
embedded already in what you are doing

## tactics for starting

we often get stuck in our own rhetorics

– we have a “name” for what we are interested in... but maybe we have mis-named, mis-recognised... what it is that we are interested in

test different formulae, different terms,  
simplify jargon, to described and name what we are interested in...

but don't just talk ... do something ...

## **tactics for starting**

structured encounters with others who have a take on what you are interested in...

try get a sense of what else is going on out there among the neighbours

test, play, make, dabble ...

but don't commit to a massive production-task based project on day one

put some time into testing the connections between your rhetorics and the actual activities, practices and productions that take place

## **tactics for starting**

research can be specified as trying to ask or answer a question

it can also be specified as trying to show that something is possible

it can also be simply describing and disclosing a phenomenon without understanding that much about it

it can be about seeing what happens if ...

it is helpful to have a sense of a research task as a little bit more than, and different from, a simple production task ... not a theory of research but a differencing between a focus on production and a focus on enquiry

**thank you for listening**

**From the general themes of  
methods and methodology  
to the particular question of  
"academic" writing**

“To begin with reading, one might cite the talk in which Maori writer Patricia Grace undertook to show that “Books Are Dangerous.” She argues that there are four things that make many books dangerous to indigenous readers: (1) they do not reinforce our values, actions, customs, culture and identity; (2) when they tell us only about others they are saying that we do not exist; (3) they may be writing about us but are writing things which are untrue; and (4) they are writing about us but saying negative and insensitive things which tell us that we are not good. Although Grace is talking about school texts and journals, her comments apply also to academic writing. Much of what I have read has said that we do not exist, that if we do exist it is in terms which I cannot recognize, that we are no good and that what we think is not valid.”

“Aubid was a witness in a dispute with the federal government over the right to regulate the manoomin, wild rice, harvest on the Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota. Federal agents had assumed the authority to determine the wild rice season and regulate the harvest, a bureaucratic action that decried a native sense of survivance and sovereignty. Aubid, who was eighty-six years old at the time, testified through translators that he was present as a young man ...

Gerald Vizenor (2009) Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance, University of Nebraska Press.

<https://sites.smith.edu/indians-in-art-museums/wp-content/uploads/sites/241/2018/04/j.ctt1dgn41k.8.pdf>

Where did you first learn to speak?

Where did you first learn to speak? Where did you first learn to write?

Were the first language you learned  
and the first language you wrote  
the same or different?

Do these different locations and institutional settings of learning have a bearing on how these practices operate?

- Rwanda by Alfredo Jaar, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=312gkMepISg>
- Love is a Treasure by Eija Liisa Aatila <https://www.lacan.com/perfume/athilla4.html>
- River Rites by Ben Russell <https://vimeo.com/25532189>

Why bother talking about ways of working at all...?

- 2018 "Engaging Performative Contradiction:  
Introducing the Rhetorics of Practice and Method to Artist Researchers"  
in P. Sormani et al. (eds.) *Practicing Art/Science: Experiments in an Emerging Field*.
- 2020 "White Mythologies and Epistemic Refusals:  
Teaching Artistic Research Through Institutional Conflict",  
in R. Mateus-Berr & R. Jochum (eds.) *Teaching Artistic Research*.
- 2022 "La Mise-en-Abîme: Placing Academic Writing in Scare Quotes"  
in Bernd Herzogenrath (ed.) *The Thing that Wouldn't Die:  
New Perspectives on Academic Writing*, Bloomsbury.