



University of
Reading

Diffraction Curatorial Practice:
Ripples, Gaps and the Space In-between

Doctor of Philosophy
Fine Art

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Author's Declaration

Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the potential for practice-based research to impact and challenge current discourses surrounding contemporary curating. Current curatorial practice frequently focuses on socio-economic political ideologies (Althusser). By focusing on the ideological discourse concerning curating, what other dialogs, discussions, or forms of knowledge are excluded or suppressed? Can a diffractive (Haraway) approach to research be applied to curatorial practice? If so, how would a diffractive curatorial practice function?

My thesis asks the question, “Can curatorial practice offer opportunities for increased capacities to act outside of ideological limitations?” Drawing on the theoretical traditions of Spinoza, Deleuze, Haraway, Barad, and Braidotti among others, this thesis is based in a relational ontology that questions the premise that the roles in a curated exhibition are clearly defined and immutable. Can curatorial practice be viewed as an assemblage where the boundaries of the elements of an exhibition are constantly erased, re-drawn, re/de-territorialized and can fluidly mix with each other? This thesis asks if practice-based research can be analyzed both reflectively and diffractively in order to include marginalized, situated, and partial knowledges. Can embodied research methods (such as affect theory that can involve using sensations in the body) be used as methods to collect and analyze data? Can curatorial practice deploy a concept of distributed agency that acknowledges the agency of all participants of an exhibition, both human and non-human, and not just the curator? What is the role of technology in diffractive curatorial research? What is the “matter” of curatorial practice and how does a practice-based curatorial researcher engage with matter? The conclusion of my thesis brings together my research into all of these questions to develop an “onto-ethico-curology” (in resonance with Barad) that creates a method to evaluate curatorial practice outside of a specific ideological framework.

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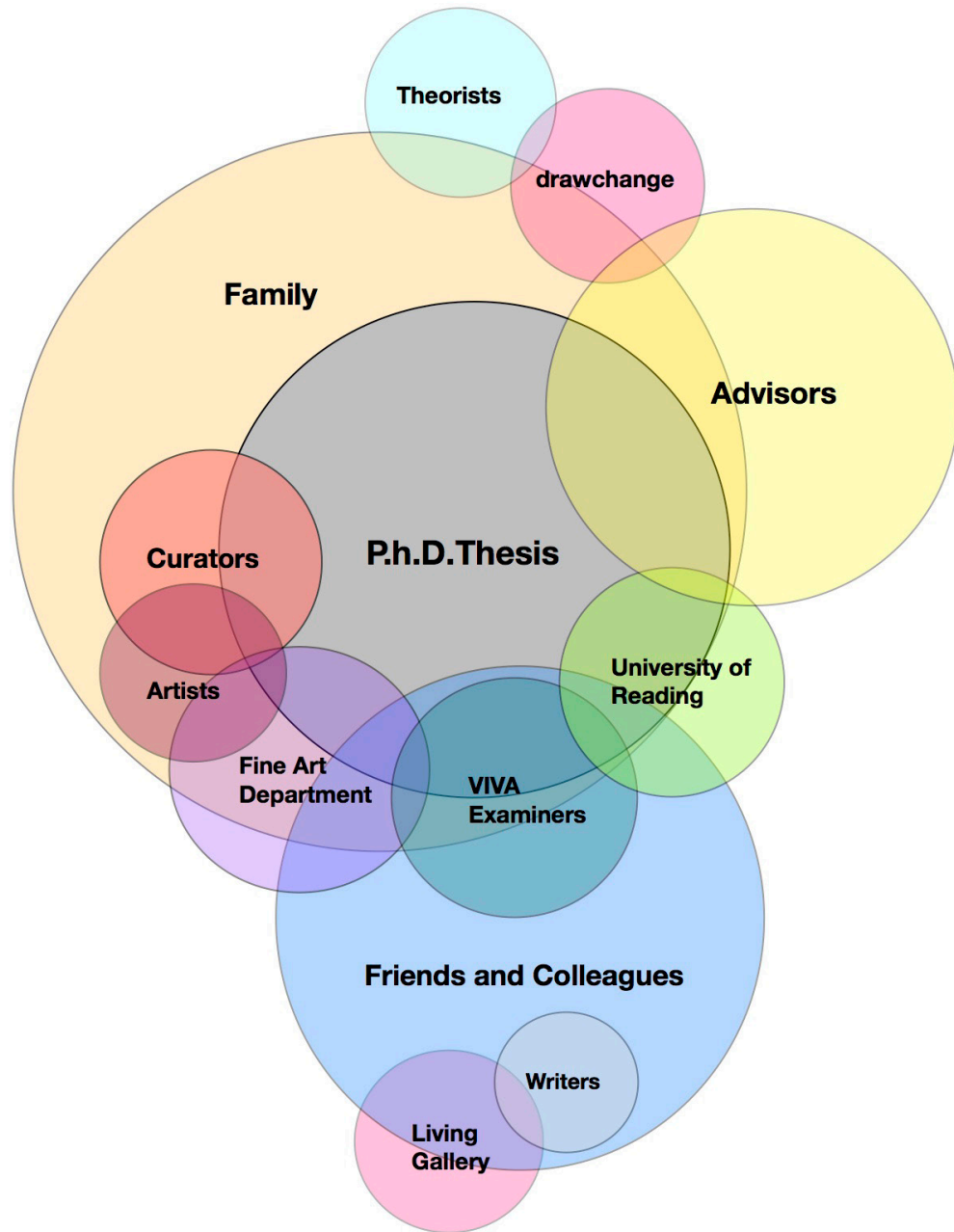


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Introduction

This introduction serves as a road map for the flow of my thesis. Each one of the elements that I describe in this introduction is expanded in the sections that I reference.

Chapter 1, Section 1 of my thesis begins with a definition of curating. In this section, I explain my use of Barad's agential realism as my lens for viewing curatorial practice. I describe how agential realism treats matter as a phenomenon that emerges from specific intra-actions. I then frame "practice-based" research as research that occurs from "within" intra-actions. In my research, I treat intra-actions as the basic unit of analysis from which difference emerges. I then explain how agency is one of the forces that emerges from intra-actions, which is a precursor to power. An analysis of intra-actions leads to an accounting of the origin of power imbalances. Once I have established my agential realism perspective, I explain how my curatorial practice can be viewed as creating an exhibition assemblage from which specific intra-actions emerge. The matter that curating works with is the intra-actions between various elements. Curators facilitate the intra-actions between elements in an exhibition assemblage. In this way, I am curating "gaps," meaning the intra-actions that emerge from an assemblage. I go on to explain how artwork has a particular history as a research subject that questions boundaries and definitions. Subsequently, curatorial research allows for intra-actions that encourage pursuing unknown capacities for being regardless of preconceived boundaries.

Chapter 1, Section 2 is a brief history of curating from a variety of perspectives. This section is very important to me because I view my research as contributing to the long and rich history of curating as well as to the diverse field of contemporary curatorial practice. In this section, I explain how I view curatorial

skills as an assemblage of historically defined skills that are “accumulated.” This “accumulation” is a complex assemblage because it comprised of elements that are their own complex assemblages of discourse. I then give a personal history of the intersection of my curatorial practice with curatorial history.

I then present a “Case Study” of my work with Ph15. I have a number of case studies throughout my research. I use case studies as a particular instance of the preceding section I have just described or as an illustration of a method I have just described. For example, some of the methods I employ are designed to question traditional roles of curators and to raise awareness of alternative approaches to curation.¹ My case studies then reflect that analysis.

Chapter 1, Section 4 is an explanation of my use of technology in curatorial practice. I differentiate this from curating technological artworks and highlight the technologies I use in my practice. I then provide a case study of my analysis of technology in curated exhibits with “People’s Screen.”

I conclude Chapter 1 with an overview of my methods of analysis. My research methods are based in Haraway, Braidotti and Barad’s concepts of diffractive analysis. However, I do not use diffractive analysis only, but incorporate reflective analysis as well. I then provide Sayal-Bennett’s artwork as a case study in diffractive art making practice. I then extrapolate diffractive practices to define my diffractive curatorial practice.

Chapter 2 is concerned with curatorial research practice of this PhD, the exhibition *Access(able)* (2018) that I co-curated as part of this research. I begin with a detailed explanation of my understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory. I then detail some of the elements I feel are part of my

¹ In *Ways of Curating* (2014), Hans Obrist states, “In the first half of the twentieth century it was the norm for Western art museums to present Western art and society.” (Obrist, 2014, p. 72) Throughout this thesis, I refer to this historical frame of curating as “traditional curating.”

curatorial assemblage. I then provide a reflective and diffractive analysis of Access(able).

Chapter 3 describe the ethics I have used in my thesis. I begin by explaining the value system of my research is not necessarily only based in socio-economic ideology. I present “Learning to Love You More” as a case study in alternative value systems. I explain my understanding of Spinoza’s and Deleuze’s concept of affect and how I use affect as a measurement within the intra-actions of my research. I then present “File Transfer Protocol” as a case study for using affect within research. I explain how the ethics of my research is based in Barad’s concept of onto-ethico-epistemology. I then build on Barad’s theories to construct a specific ethics for curating that I have coined as “onto-ethico-curology” that I use to evaluate my research. I also enlist Braidotti’s “affirmative nomadic ethics” in support of the ethics of my research. I also explain my use of diagrams to think through materials as described by Simon O’Sullivan and Guattari. I address the issue of ideology in Chapter 3, Section 4 and explain the role of ideology with my onto-ethico-curology. I conclude Chapter 3 with a description of my concept of curatorial power based on the research I have conducted.

Chapter 4 is my conclusion and further supporting data.

Chapter 1: History and Methods

Defining Curatorial Practice

I view curating through the lens of Karen Barad's agential realism.² In *Meeting the Universe Halfway Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007), Barad states,

“Agential realism’ as an epistemological-ontological-ethical framework that provides an understanding of the role of human and nonhuman, material and discursive, and natural and cultural factors in scientific and other social-material practices, thereby moving such considerations beyond the well-worn debates that pit constructivism against realism, agency against structure, and idealism against materialism.” (Barad, 2007, p. 26)

It is important to note that Barad's agential realism is part of a new materialism that is built on, but moves beyond poststructuralism by presenting an alternative perspective on how matter comes into being. Patti Lather described new materialism when she said, “This is a return to materialism AFTER Derrida, NOT old school Marxist materialism with its identity politics and economics in the last instance. In feminist terms, it is more about biology and the body than Marxist contests between base and superstructure.” (Lather, 2018, p. 345)

In agential realism, matter is viewed as a phenomenon that is always entangled with discourse. Subsequently, matter is presented as a phenomenon that comes into being due to the specific intra-actions between many heterogeneous forces including discourse, physical materials, political forces, and other forces. In agential realism, a phenomenon due to specific intra-actions is the smallest unit of analysis. Barad states, “A phenomenon is a specific intra-action of an 'object'; and the 'measuring agencies'; the object and the measuring agencies emerge from, rather than precede, the intra-action that produces them.” (Barad, 2007, p. 128).

From this perspective, “the object” of research analysis is an enactment that is entangled with “the way” that it is analyzed.

² Karen Barad is an American theorist whose writing centers on feminist theory, physics and ontology among other topics.

Barad states, “Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world.” (Barad, 2007, p. 185) With the frame that a researcher is inextricably part of the world, agential realism is based in the belief that there is no privileged position where knowledges can be produced. Agential realism constructs a perspective where research becomes the methodological practice of evaluating the impact of the ways research is conducted on the knowledges that are produced. Research that is conducted from within the intra-actions with research matter is called “practice-based.” The research in the thesis is “practice-based” because it deploys agential realism’s perspective that a researcher is part of the world they are researching.

The term intra-action is used in agential realism instead of “interaction” in order to emphasize that within any phenomenon, the elements are comprised of mutually co-constituted and entangled agencies rather than separate agencies that are acting upon one another. In this way, matter is viewed through a relational ontology as an assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari) that is constantly coming into being, reconfiguring and disappearing depending on the various configurations of intra-actions. I will define what I mean by an assemblage with more detail in Chapter 2. Agential realism is based in the notion that matter’s fundamental condition of all being is a process comprised of intra-actions of entangled material/discursive agencies. It is called agential “realism” in order to emphasize how the entangled intra-active agencies within a phenomenon have real effects that become the elements in new assemblages of intra-active agencies.

In agential realism, Barad defines agency through the lens of a relational ontology.

Barad writes:

“I want to say that I try to stay away from using the term “agent,” or even “actant,” because these terms work against the relational ontology I am proposing. Also the notion that there are agents who have agency, or who grant agency, say, to non-humans (the granting of agency is an ironic notion, no?), pulls us back into the same old humanist orbits over and over again. And it is not easy to resist the gravitational force of humanism, especially when it comes to the question of “agency.” But agency for me is not something that someone or something has to varying degrees, since I am trying to displace the very notion of independently existing individuals ... Agency is not held, it is not a property of persons or things; rather, agency is an enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements. So agency is not about choice in any liberal humanist sense; rather, it is about the possibilities and accountability entailed in reconfiguring material-discursive apparatuses of bodily production, including the boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by those practices.” (Barad in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 50)

So, through the lens of agential realism, agency is not the property of an individual that can be granted to others, it is a phenomenon that emerges from the entangled intra-actions within a material/discursive assemblage. Barad addresses the issue of power imbalances when she writes,

“Agency is about response-ability, about the possibilities of mutual response, which is not to deny, but to attend to power imbalances. Agency is about possibilities for worldly re-configurings. So agency is not something possessed by humans, or non-humans for that matter. It is an enactment. And it enlists, if you will, “non-humans” as well as “humans.” At the same time, I want to be clear that what I am not talking about here is democratically distributing agency across an assemblage of humans and non-humans. Even though there are no agents per se, the notion of agency I am suggesting does not go against the crucial point of power imbalances. On the contrary. The specificity of intra-actions speaks to the particularities of the power imbalances of the complexity of a field of forces.” (Barad in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 50)

In this statement, Barad delineates the difference between agency and power.

Agency is a capacity to act that emerges from intra-actions, power is a derivative of agency. In agential realism, it is possible to have agency without using power,

but it is not possible to have power without having agency first. Barad states, “power is not an external force that acts on a subject; there is only a reiterated acting that is power in its stabilizing and sedimenting effects.” (Barad, 2007, p. 235) Barad goes on to state, “Crucial to an agential realist conception of power is a reworking of causality as intra-activity. Indeed, what is at issue is the very nature of causal relations: causal relations do not preexist but rather are intra-actively produced. What is a ‘cause’ and what is an ‘effect’ are intra-actively demarcated through the specific production of marks on bodies.” (Barad, 2007, p. 236) Barad is also very clear that the goal of agential realism is not to find ways to distribute agency across an assemblage, but rather, agential realism provides a method for account for the intra-actions that cause specific differences to occur. Barad’s interrogation of the relational ontology of agency allows for an analysis of the intra-actions that give rise to power imbalances. In this way, agential realism is the required, “the first step in taking account of power imbalances, not an undoing of it.” (Barad in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 50) Agential realism’s starting point of analysis of intra-actions is contrasted with other forms of analysis, such as Marxism, that may take the existence of power imbalances as a priori assumptions. Agential realism does not take power imbalances as pre-existing, but rather asks, “What are the specific intra-actions that have caused power imbalances to emerge?”

By not treating agency as the pre-existing thing that can be transferred to others and by delineating how agency emerges from specific intra-actions that can lead to power imbalances, Barad has outlined a method of accounting for power imbalances. In this method, the intra-actions between bodies must be first analyzed in order to determine which specific intra-actions in a field complex and overlapping intra-actions allow specific agencies to arise which then lead to power imbalances. Only after the intra-actions that have led to power imbalances are accounted for can power imbalances be properly addressed and potentially altered.

Through the lens of agential realism, I view curating as a specific instance of an assemblage of distinct intra-acting elements. This thesis is an accounting of some of the intra-actions within a curatorial assemblage that give rise to agency. So, from the perspective of agential realism, curatorial practice creates assemblages that produce specific intra-actions that can then be analyzed to determine what agencies arose from the intra-actions.

The matter that curating works with is the intra-actions between the heterogeneous elements of an exhibition that include, but are not limited to art, artists, political ideologies, curatorial discourse, gallery space, physical locations, collectors, etc. all of which co-constitute their agencies (both human and non-human) through their intra-actions within the exhibition assemblage. In this way, I am curating “gaps,” meaning the intra-actions that emerge from an assemblage. From this perspective, I am defining a curator as the element of the curatorial assemblage that gains the agency to facilitate the intra-actions of all the elements of the exhibition assemblage. In this way, curatorial practice is the practice of facilitating the intra-actions between various elements in an exhibition assemblage.

An example of this can be seen when analyzing the agencies that come into being in a curated exhibition. One of the typical issues a curator deals with is the relationship between gallery space and artwork. The agency of the artwork of an exhibition and the agency of the gallery space of an exhibition co-constitute each other. In this case, the “agency of things consists in their ability to shape and mediate human actions.” (Hirsch 2003, 8) For example, the physical size and location of a gallery space determines if humans have the agency to exhibit certain artworks. The physical size and specific location of certain artworks like Smithson’s Spiral Jetty (1970)³ seem to highlight the agency of the artwork in specific relation to the agency of a traditional gallery or museum space that lack

³ Information on Spiral Jetty can be seen here: <https://www.diaart.org/visit/visit/robert-smithson-spiral-jetty>

the agency to house the artwork. A curator working with an artwork like *Spiral Jetty* for an exhibit can be a person who facilitates the agency of other elements of an exhibition such as the political dialog surrounding the artwork, the press, public access to the work, reproductions of the work, etc. The difference between curatorial power and curatorial agency can be seen in the example of *Spiral Jetty* because while the curator has the agency to facilitate the intra-actions of an exhibit, the curator only has power to actualize changes that are given to the curator. A curator in London does not have the power to display *Spiral Jetty* in London because the agency of location is retained by the artwork. In this way, curatorial agency is to facilitate intra-actions, but curatorial power requires others to use their agency to give power to the curator.

When asked, “Why curating and why art?” agential realism provides an answer because the phenomenon of an art exhibition is a unique assemblage of intra-acting agencies that allows for unexpected and previously unknown capacities of becoming to be explored. Art exhibitions allow for the creation of a space that does not require specific agencies to be defined and remain defined. Art, art history, and art theory are all research fields that have a deep history with relational ontologies. An example of this includes Duchamp’s “Readymades” (1915)⁴ that “disrupted centuries of thinking about the artist’s role.” (MOMA, 2019 p. 1) While other fields of study may allow for a reassessment of pre-defined roles and agencies, fields of study revolving around art have a history of challenging preconceived notions, erasing boundaries and shifting definitions. By focusing on analyzing the intra-actions surrounding art, opportunities for exploring unknown capacities to act are encouraged. Where many fields of study seem to seek solid definitions and re-entrenching of agencies, fields of art study include an interest in asking “What can this become?” In this way, because curatorial practice revolves around facilitating the intra-actions between the elements of an exhibition and art is generally one of the central elements in an

4 Duchamp’s Readymades (1915) can be seen here: https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/dada/marcel-duchamp-and-the-readymade/

exhibition assemblage, curatorial practice, in particular, deals with intra-actions that explore potentially unknown capacities to act.

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A Diffractive Reading of Curatorial History

For this overview of curatorial history, I will be primarily employing a diffractive research method where histories are “read through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge: How differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter.” (Barad, 2007, p. 30) In “Hans Ulrich Obrist: The art of curation,” (2014) Obrist reflectively highlights the skills of preserving, selecting, connecting, and displaying as the primary skills of curatorial practice. These skills primarily focus on objects. (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1) My research includes reading curatorial history as a diffractive history of curatorial skills. From this perspective, curatorial practice exists as an emergent phenomenon based in how historically isolatable skills now overlap and resonate with other previously excluded skills to produce new potentials. Through a diffractive analysis, the skills that Obrist locates and elevates remain relevant and used, but other skills such as caring, listening, attention, and presence can be consciously and purposefully integrated into curatorial practice. These skills are more commonly related to participants, visitors and other individuals.

A reflective analysis of curatorial history consists of locating curatorial roles and then examining the results of those positions (the exhibitions). For example, a reflective historical analysis of the curator of The Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille, France from 1912 to 1937, Emile Theodore, would focus on locating his role as curator where he deployed the skills of preserving, selecting, connecting, and displaying and then examining the impact of his curatorial work after the end of the First World War. My research includes a diffractive view of curatorial history rather than only focusing on a reflective analysis. When discussing diffractive practices, Barad states that “particular possibilities for acting exist at every moment, and these changing possibilities entail a responsibility to intervene in the world’s becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from

matter.” (Barad, 2003, p. 826–827) I believe this diffractive perspective expands the dialogue of historical analysis to highlight skills of curatorial practice that may have always been utilised but may not have previously been recognized as vital.

Many experts in the field of curating (such as Hans Ulrich Olbrist, Helena Reckitt, Paul O'Neill and Jean-Paul Martinon) have written about curatorial practice by looking at the origin of the word from Latin root “*curare*” meaning “to take care of”. By applying a diffractive frame, my research examines curatorial practice as resonating with skills of care and attention as well as the skills of rigorous research, academic study, and expertise in art movements and aesthetics.

A panel discussion called “Accumulation” at the College Art Association Annual Conference, Los Angeles, 2012, defined “art practice” as an “accumulation.” (Last, 2012, p. 1) By “accumulation,” the panel was referring to a diffractive process where multiple heterogeneous elements of an assemblage, such as time, space, labor, materials, and discourse can all intra-act with one another. A reflective analysis of art practice has a tendency to define art according to the final product of the diffractive artistic process rather than an analysis of all of the intra-actions, including elements that are excluded from the final product such as time and labor. One element of the concept of art practice as accumulation that has specific resonance with my research is the idea that a “...’cumulative process of time and labor’ may help to define art certainly. Moreover, the temporal aspect of accumulation obviously helps situate art historically.” (Boyd & Last, 2012, p. 1) By applying the idea that curatorial practice is also a “cumulative process of time and labor” it may provide a diffractive definition of curating as well as an additional understanding of the practice historically. In the following brief overview of curatorial history we will see how the roles of a curator have changed over the centuries and how the term curator has expanded to include many skills generally not considered as relevant to curatorial practice, such as time, labor or attention to elements other than research in the field or care for objects in a collection.

The following quote, from the 2012 panel discussion, examines accumulation in relationship to art practice:

“If we recognize the accumulative process of art practice, the day-to-day studio work, the requisite research and study necessary to become artists, then we can begin to understand that this involves an incredible amount of time and labor. It is a further given than that the temporal progression of one’s practice extends parallel and in harmony with one’s life, following a trajectory that produces objects (or perhaps “art as ideas”).” (Boyd & Last, 2012, p. 2)

By applying these ideas to curatorial practice alternative views of curatorial history may be introduced:

If we recognise the accumulative process of “curatorial” practice, the day-to-day work, the requisite research and study necessary to become “curators”, then we can begin to understand that this involves an incredible amount of time and labor. It is a further given than that the temporal progression of one’s practice extends parallel and in harmony with one’s life, following a trajectory that produces “exhibitions” (or perhaps “exhibitions’ as ideas”).

As I have outlined in my application of accumulation to my review of curatorial history, the frame of this diffractive method generates space to include skills and abilities of curatorial practice previously not included in the canonised dialogue. This research is not attempting to re-frame all of curatorial history, it is suggesting an additional view and an alternative approach to how to use the history to inform current practices. Dr. Philip Ursprung, Professor of History of Art and Architecture at ETH Zurich, wrote the following on the relationship of accumulation and art practice in his paper entitled “Who’s Afraid of Accumulation?” (2012):

“What strikes me in the concept of accumulation is the fact that it cannot be reduced to an art discourse. It leads beyond the definition of an artistic genre or medium. It thus promises to overcome the limits of self-reflective notions cherished by museums and historians ... the term accumu-

lation is highly elastic and reaches from artistic methods of arrangement to the enumeration in a text, to gardening to electricity and to economy.” (Ursprung, 2012, p.1)

What Dr. Ursprung has highlighted here is the application of accumulation to a discussion of art, and for this research of curatorial practices, the concept is “elastic” and allows for the frame of the subject to be expanded upon. The concept of accumulation has the potential to lead beyond the definition of a curatorial genre. I would not go so far as to say that it “promises to overcome the limits of self-reflective notions” such as curator as keeper of a collection, or as an academic expert on artists movements, because I am not suggesting that there something that needs to be overcome. (Ursprung, 2012, p. 1) The reflective view of curatorial history highlights important moments, people and exhibitions that inform current curatorial practice. This research re-examines that history and highlights what else is diffractively accumulated beyond the previously noted roles and seminal moments. Following a brief historical overview, I will examine a case study that meant as an example of framing my own practice as a diffractive accumulation.

I view my curatorial practice as contributing to the long tradition of curating as well as participating in the many contemporary curatorial voices. While I view my curatorial research practice from the perspective of agential realism, I deploy many curatorial skills that I have accumulated from historical research and analysis of contemporary curators. According to Hans Ulrich Obrist, “Today, curating as a profession means at least four things. It means to preserve, in the sense of safeguarding the heritage of art. It means to be the selector of new work. It means to connect to art history. And it means displaying or arranging the work”. (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1) In this way, I view the skills I use in my curatorial practice as a set of practices, methods and perspectives that I have diffractively accumulated through my research. Throughout this thesis I will refer to my assemblage of curatorial skills as an “accumulation.” I refer to this assemblage as

an accumulation because I feel it is important to highlight how this assemblage is unique. The accumulation of curatorial skills is comprised of elements where each element is its own assemblage with a long history. For example, simply stating that a curator is a “selector of new work” as Obrist states, has a huge history to it that requires explanation and historical context. (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1) This section seeks to explain, at least partially, the depth of how the skills in my accumulation function.

A Brief Review on the History of the “Curator” and “Curatorial Practices”

Section 1: Ancient to Early Modern

For this section I will explore how the “curator” has shifted from its historical origins of having specific roles within socio-political or religious structures into complex and always evolving positions within the structures of the art world.

David Levi Strauss delineates the early curatorial positions in his article *The Bias of the World: Curating After Szeemann & Hopps*. He writes,

“Curator’ as a title has moved from the specificity of the Ancient Roman senior civil servants in charge of various departments of public works, Under the Roman Empire the title of curator (“caretaker”) was given to officials in charge of various departments of public works: sanitation, transportation, policing. The *curatores annonae* were in charge of the public supplies of oil and corn. The *curatores regionum* were responsible for maintaining order in the 14 regions of Rome. And the *curatores aquarum* took care of the aqueducts.” (Strauss, 2007, p.1)

What is important about this origin of the term “Curator” is that a curator was once an important public servant. Strauss goes on his article to outline the shift in curatorial roles within the middle ages.

“In the Middle Ages, the role of the curator shifted to the ecclesiastical, as clergy having a spiritual care or charge. So one could say that the split within curating—between the management and control of public works (law) and the cure of souls (faith)—was there from the beginning. Curators have always been a curious mixture of bureaucrat and priest.” (Strauss, 2007, p. 1)

The historical importance of curatorial roles in both government and religious institutions “cura” or care were required in both areas of structured society.

“The closest historical reference that resembles the curatorial practice, which is currently carried out in institutions related to culture and the arts, was the

work of the guardians of religious images, mainly from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.” (Aleph, 2014, p. 1) This quote from the article “Reflections on Curatorship and Art” from 2014 by Faena Aleph, highlights the beginning of the curators role including the care of significant objects in the Middle Ages. While contemporary curatorial practices bare little resemblance to these roles certain skills have been accumulated from the beginnings of “Curatores” roles to the “Curators” of today. I would argue that the perpetual use of the title suggests that the care (“cura”) of “matter” (which, for this research, I have defined as “intra-actions between various element”) in curatorial practice maintains its significance.

In early the Early Modern time period a curator began to resemble something closer to what we know today. Curators were traditionally in charge of maintaining cultural heritage institutions like libraries, archives and museums. In museums, curators were tasked with selection, arrangement, and display of the collector in order to best highlight the objects themselves. Objects that were not on display would be archived, stored and cared for by the curator. The curator of one of these institutions would also need to have knowledge of the history, the materials used as well as the significance of the objects in the museum collection. In an article published by the archives of the PBA Lille, Emile Theodore, curator of The Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille, France from 1912 to 1937 was described as,

“Emile Théodore est à la tête du musée tout au long de la Première Guerre mondiale. Il se consacre à la protection des œuvres et à la restauration du musée touché par les bombardements d'octobre 1914. Son action au cours de cette période nous parvient aujourd'hui, notamment grâce aux carnets qu'il a tenus pendant ces quatre années.” (Archives, 2018, p. 1)

Translation: “Emile Théodore was at the head of the museum throughout the First World War. He devoted himself to the protection of the works and the restoration of the museum hit by the bombings of October 1914. His action during this period reaches us today, thanks in particular to the notebooks that he

kept during these four years.” The importance of this description is the focus on his “devotion to the protection” of art works and that Theodore documented his actions as a museum curator. The care and attention that was given to his role as a caretaker of art objects is a skill that remains in contemporary curatorial practice. The PBA Lille’s archiving of his notebooks and their statement of it “reaching us today” can be framed as an early example of how important the curator’s voice becomes. From Ancient Rome through to the early 1900’s the actions of the “Curatores” to the “Curators” began with public service, to caring for the spirit of the people to caring for objects that were considered worth preserving. The preservation of Emile Theodore’s notebooks hints at the rise of the importance of the ideas and thoughts of the curator which becomes even more relevant in the Late Modern period.

Section 2: Modern and Post-Modern

By the Middle of the 20th century the care and conservation of objects due to their historical, religious and cultural relevance was widely expected as fundamental skill of the curator. Additional skills accumulated by curatorial practice by this time include the care of, archives, collections and the ability to display, select and arrange those objects to highlight their importance. There are traces of skills accumulated by early curatorial roles such as the ability to work within socio-political structures and religious institutions and their relations to the public. While the curators of religious objects may have been tasked with simply caring for those objects, it is in that act of taking great care to preserve and display them that their relevance was disseminated. The power of objects and the ability to express that power, or use that power to influence modes of thinking is also a skill that has been accumulated by contemporary curatorial practices. Strauss stated in a quote earlier in this chapter, “Curators have always been a curious mixture of bureaucrat and priest.” (Strauss, 2007, p. 1) Is this still the case? Do current curatorial practices resemble their historical counterparts in the

ways they communicate? Or is it that the skills needed to navigate bureaucracy and beliefs (like religious, spiritual or ideological) are skills that curators need in order to continue in their field today? These questions are important to raise as the role of the curator becomes more complex, more diverse and more influential in many areas.

Many of the skills accumulate by curatorial practise have the ability to influence how people view not only the artwork but the makers as well. The concept that curators are using art to lead people to a specific method of thinking is why people are often suspicious of art, its makers and those who display the work. One example of where curatorial power (meaning the parameters in which curatorial actions are taken) was used to promote a particular ideology is the “Degenerate Art Exhibition” of 1937.

In 1937, Adolf Hitler began a campaign to promote the ideology of the Third Reich through the mounting of two art exhibitions. One exhibition would display art objects that were considered to be (as the show title delineated) “Great German Art.” The artworks included in this exhibition were “Nazi-friendly: classical in style, and often idealized presentations of pastoral scenes.” (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 1)

This exhibition was on view at the Haus der Kunst in Munich, while the other exhibition, the “Degenerate Art Exhibition” was installed at the Institute of Archaeology at the Hofgarten. The Degenerate Art Exhibition” had over 600 works of art that had been confiscated from museums all over Germany because the artists were considered “degenerates”. Among the artists included in this exhibition were Emile Nolde, Franz Marc, and Paul Klee. It would not have been enough to simply exhibit examples of German artworks, “in order for the German people to understand the difference between “degenerate” and “great” art” both exhibitions were on view. (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 1) One being on view

at a cultural institution known for exhibiting great artwork, the other being an institution of cultural examination, and historical preservation. The “Degenerate Art Exhibition” of 1937 used the tools of curation to promote the ideological message of the Nazi regime. While many curators of German institutions have worked to recognise this difficult history the ripple affect of those exhibitions is part of curatorial history. Even in the 21st century, Paul O'Neill, Artistic Director of PUBLICS, in Vallila Helsinki, writes, “Exhibitions (in whatever form they take) are always ideological; as hierarchical structures they produce particular and general forms of communication.” (O'Neil, 2010, p. 15)

It is important not to overlook or dilute the power curatorial practices have on influencing audiences perceptions or directing viewers towards a certain way of thinking. A carefully curated exhibition could potentially support ideological messages that may be conveyed in non-verbal language that therefore may be more difficult to challenge. The ideological discourse around art is not necessarily designed for continued dialog, it is often orchestrated to be a final word. Is ideological structure the new spiritual structure that curators are working within? Is this ability to influence modes of thinking about certain ideologies actually the same skill as historically directing the public through religious structures? Have we had a turn from spiritually leading people to ideologically leading people through curatorial practices? Is it possible to view the accumulation of skills from Ancient Rome through Modernism as shifting from directing people through object based curatorial practices within religious structures to ideologically based curation where it is the ideology around the objects that is conveyed? In the next section we will look briefly at the next shift in curatorial practices that results in diffractive accumulation of skills rooted in discourse. In addition we will look at the relationship of discourse practices and their resonance with ideological structures within curatorial practices.

Curatorial Practices in the Post-Modern art world shifted away from object based exhibition making to focus on the discourse around the exhibition. Curators began honing their linguistic skills, directing people to ideas through exhibition concepts and discourse. In his article “The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse” (2010) Paul O’Neill writes:

“During the 1960’s the primary discourse around art-in-exhibition began to turn away from forms of critique of the artwork as autonomous object of study/critique towards a form of curatorial criticism, in which the space of exhibition was given critical precedence over that of the objects of art.” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 13)

O’Neill is a curator, artist, writer and educator and is well known in the curatorial field for his research and publications on curatorial practice. In the above quote highlights a shift in curating (or as he calls it a “turn”) where the discourse surrounding a curators selection and arrangement of an exhibition begins to appear more relevant than the artworks themselves. For this research the concept of a “curatorial turn” FROM one aspect of curating TO another is suggesting that hierarchies in curatorial roles begin to form. As outlined in Chapter 1, I am defining curatorial practice as an assemblage of accumulated skills, so for this dissertation I would argue that during this time period in curatorial history, curators were beginning to accumulate new skills rooted in dialogue and critique. O’Neill goes on to examine this “turn” by stating,

“Curatorial criticism differed from that of traditional Western art criticism (i.e., linked to modernity) in that its discourse and subject matter went beyond discussion about artists and the object of art to include the subject of curating and the role played by the curator of exhibitions.” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 1)

One example of this could be Harald Szeemann’s exhibition, “Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form,” (1969) exhibited at Kunsthalle Bern,

Bern, Switzerland. The exhibition has had a lasting impact on curatorial practice and many have stated that it was the exhibition that led Szeemann to work independently as a curator. In the Post Modern era, curators were becoming more responsible for communicating the concepts of the artworks to a wider public. As more people began to participate in the art world, curatorial practices needed to accumulate the skills to “establish and administer the cultural meanings of art.” (Reesa Greenberg in Obrist & Bovier, 2008, p. 7) Bruce Altshuler describes the impact of Szeemann’s curatorial methods in the book *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History: 1962-2002* (2013):

“As both foundational event and conceptual model, “When Attitudes Become Form” holds a special place in the curatorial imagination. It was the exhibition that brought international acclaim to the most important curator of the post-war period, Harald Szeemann. And it was the show that led Szeemann to re-create himself as an independent exhibition maker, founding a career path that would be followed by generations of curators. ‘Attitudes’ has also come to represent the romantic conception of the curator as inspired partner of the artist, a creative actor who generates original ideas and structures through which art enters public consciousness.” (Altshuler, 2013, p. 1)

What components of historical curatorial practice did Szeemann accumulate and how did his re-conceptualization of the process and execution of exhibition making allow for those accumulated skills to be mutable and/or interchangeable? Did the act of re-defining himself as an independent curator allow Szeemann to generate new capacities to act for himself and for this involved in his exhibitions? Were the collaborative methods he utilised in curating “When Attitudes Become Form” (1969) a catalyst for viewing curatorial independence as a way to expand on collaboration, exhibition making and curatorial practices? Szeemann is described in *Biennials and Beyond* as:

“a great supporter of “work grounded in an ‘inner attitude’, elevating artistic process over final product. He displayed this attitude and this as-

piration by turning the Kunsthalle Bern into a giant artist's studio, accommodating the practical demands of process-based art through Piero Gilardi's idea of the exhibition as workshop and locus of discussion." (Altshuler, 2013, p. 1)

Included in "When Attitudes Become Form" (1969) were projects such as Richard Serra's lead splashed on the inside foyer of the museum, an excavated a corner of the building exposing their foundations by Jan Dibbets, as well as Michael Heizer's smashing of the sidewalk outside the museum with a wrecking ball. While the concept of curating an exhibition with a variety of artists working on-site, and using the exhibition space as working studio, is not new for contemporary curators working in the 21st century, Szeemann's curatorial choices of artists, projects and collaborations with both required the development of new skills not previously related to curatorial practices. The skills of traditional curating such as specialised knowledge of a particular era of art history, the ability to select and arrange objects that represent that specialised knowledge, or the ability to explain the relevance of those choices and arrangements were not only the skills Szeemann needed to see his exhibition concepts come to fruition. By expanding on how an exhibition is conceived, such as; through extensive travel and interaction with artists as opposed to having detailed knowledge of a certain collector within a museum, Szeemann may have accumulated the skills of being able to envision an exhibition that included processes, changes and events not previously included in museum exhibition. The skill to envision something beyond a situated position, (a curator choosing form a collection) and the skill to then create a set of parameters that allowed for those possibilities to become, (inviting artists to use the museum as a material to make) are both skills that have become part of contemporary curatorial practices. "When Attitudes Become Form" (1969) can be viewed as creating the space for an emergence of new assemblages of curatorial practices.

Section 3: Contemporary Curatorial Practices

Contemporary curating can be framed as having diffractively accumulated skills from deeply rooted traditions as well as both artistic and curatorial practices.

More recently potential curatorial practices have emerged from areas of social engagement, performative acts, and activism.

“Today, curating as a profession means at least four things. It means to preserve, in the sense of safeguarding the heritage of art. It means to be the selector of new work. It means to connect to art history. And it means displaying or arranging the work. But it's more than that. Before 1800, few people went to exhibitions. Now hundreds of millions of people visit them every year. It's a mass medium and a ritual. The curator sets it up so that it becomes an extraordinary experience and not just illustrations or spatialised books.” (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1)

This quote examines the cumulative nature of the role of curator over the past century. When the focus turned from the object based practices of caring for collections, the term curator absorbed the tasks of selecting, displaying, mediating, educating, and disseminating. Contemporary curatorial practice has developed to encompass a broad category of exhibition makers, from museum curators who focused on the development of exhibitions from collections, to independent curators who worked on everything from small alternative space exhibitions, commercial gallery exhibits, to large scale biennials. Hans Olbrist's, *A Brief History of Curating*, (2008) delineates the historical development of the multiple concepts of a curator from selector of objects to a producer of the whole exhibition and the space encompassing it. “The curator's role appears already built into preexisting art professions, such as museum or art centre director, dealer or art critic.” (Obrist & Bovier, 2008, p. 5) As these various roles of the curator came into focus, how curators have approached exhibition making has also expanded to include what NYU's Director of Museum Studies, Bruce Altshuler described as “the rise of the curator as creator”. (Altshuler, 1994, p. 263) With the lines between the roles of curators and artists, curators and critics, curators and event facilitators all blurring, the term “curator” is limited in its ability to bring all of the threads together into a

clear picture of what curatorial practise entails.

Curatorial practice and support of artists

An important aspect of curatorial practice that became relevant in the 20th century was the importance placed on the relationship between the artist and the curator. That relationship grew beyond the curator selecting finished works for exhibition. As described by Hans Ulrich Obrist in his interview in “Hans Ulrich Obrist: the art of curation” (2014):

“I've realised that the curator's role is more that of enabler. The Italian conceptual artist Boetti told me to pay attention to artists' unrealised projects. Many artists have not been able to realise their fondest projects. My role is to help them.” (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1)

In the quote above by Hans Ulrich Olbrist, the statement is made that the curator's role includes supporting the artists, not just selecting the artworks for display or for inclusion in a collection, but rather as an enabler to assist artists in both the exhibiting of their work and in supporting unrealised projects. Obrist states that the curator does not merely display objects within a space, but “brings different cultural spheres into contact” (Obrist, 2014, p. 24), and thus acts as mediator between artworks, objects and ideas. Therefore we could frame curating as including both a focus on the materiality of objects made by artists as well as the support for the ideas of those artworks and how they are realised, displayed and exhibited. These components of curatorial practice can also be framed as facilitating the “translation and mediation of artwork from its place of production to its space of public display, or from private to public territory.” (Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1) In this way, curating has accumulated the practices of selecting, arranging and displaying of objects, supporting the artists, their artwork and their unrealised projects, as well as being the facilitator of the ideas of those artworks from the private (collections) to public (exhibitions). The curator functions as mediator or facilitator by bringing artworks, objects or ideas together.

Then curators began to display their own understanding of the artworks and their relationships, "...allowing such relationships to be communicated nonverbally through visual, contextual or relational dialogue. Exhibition-making has become a potential dialogical space for questioning and is (or at least, can be) throughout its realisation and display, active in the ideas, thoughts and knowledge it provokes." (Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1) By tracing the historical trajectory of curatorial practice we can begin to see how the practice has not turned from one role to the next but rather it has been continually accumulating skills and becoming an assemblage of practices.

A Maker of Exhibitions - The Curator/Artist entanglement

Once curators began to make their mark on the exhibitions they curated by not only mediating between the public and the artwork, or artists intentions, the lines between artist and curator began to blur. By including their own interpretations of artists works as well as forming dialogue around why they displayed certain works together, the exhibition itself began to emerge as its own artistic project. The concept of artistic and curatorial practice merging developed from both the artists desire for curatorial independence, as well as the "diversification of artistic practice into the realms of research, academia and pedagogy." (Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1) Even if an artist provisionally utilizes curatorial practices, they still remain fundamentally an artist. When a curator functions in some form of artistic capacity, do they remain fundamentally a curator? Or does their role become complicated by the interdependency of the curator and artist relationship? An artist can adopt aspects of curatorial practice more easily than the reverse of that situation, so while an artist may temporarily shift their focus to assume curatorial roles, the curator simply incorporates aspects of artistic practice and accumulates another set of functions within their practice. This oscillation between curatorial practices and artists practises relates directly to another thread to the definition of assemblage, a work of art made by grouping together found or unrelated objects. Both artists and curators take elements that may appear to

be unrelated on their surface and they create the relationships, the resonance, the experiences between those objects, or between the objects and the viewers, or between participants in a collaborative project.

Elena Filipovic states in her paper “When Exhibitions Become Form: On the History of the Artist as Curator”, (2014) that the “ontological impurity of exhibitions” (Filipovic in Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1) or the categorisation of exhibition-making as curating or as art, is a difficult balance between the presence of both the curator and the artist. This balance is made more precarious by their individual desires to disseminate their own perspectives and dialogues around the artwork within an exhibition. Doubtfire and Ranchetti write:

“The artist who functions as curator, temporarily shifts his/her attention from making work with raw materials to exhibition-making, often with and through the use of the work of other artists. The artist-curator undoubtedly brings their experience as a maker (the manipulator or mediator of materials to their own end and in accordance with their own ideas) to the process of curating an exhibition.” (Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1)

The focus again here is on the “shift of attention” when an artist assumes the practice of curation, “what does it mean to shift attention from objects to exhibitions?” (Filipovic in Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1) We could frame this as the “artist as curator” curates in line with their ideas, interests and often with their own visual or artistic practice in mind. By using the space, objects, display and arrangement, the exhibition becomes the medium. However as we have discussed, this is a temporary shift and the artist often fundamentally remains under the role of artist. These exhibitions, according to Filipovic “may or may not be considered an artwork, or even an exhibition, but [...] ask us to fundamentally reconsider what an artwork or an exhibition are —or could be?” (Filipovic in Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1) For this research I would expand upon this question to also ask how we can reconsider why we must define under what role these exhibitions/artworks/or projects are executed?

“I’m trying to expand the notion of curating. Exhibitions need not only take place in galleries, need not only involve displaying objects. Art can appear where we expect it least.” (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1)

As we have defined the ‘artist/curator’ as an artist who temporarily shifts focus from objects to exhibitions as a practice, assuming the roles of curatorship, to assume that the ‘curator as artist’ shifts focus “within the parameters of the artist in the making of actual artworks,” (Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1) would be a misdiagnosis. Doubtfire and Ranchetti outline this as “the role we attempt to define is that of the curator who functions more artistically, but who fundamentally still performs as a curator: the curator as artist as curator.” (Doubtfire & Ranchetti, 2015, p. 1) I would expand upon this statement to say that not only are curators who use exhibitions as a medium working artistically, they are accumulating those skills into the definition of curation. I would also like to note that not all curatorial practices, approaches, and exhibitions resonate with this particular frame of current curatorial practice. However, for this research it is important to show how particular curatorial practices can be better understood because of these accumulations, and have to some extent, developed from them. Paul O’Neill references these blurring and adopting of roles as “the curator and the artist now closely imitate each other’s position.” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 252) As the term curator has now accumulated the abilities to care for objects and collections, focus attention to display and arrangement, develop cultural content and dialogue around exhibitions to the degree where the exhibitions become their own artistic endeavours, another area in which curators accumulate new roles is in collaboration. Each new set of skills curatorship has accumulated has not lead to a turn from any of these roles, nor has it shifted focus from them, they are all simply being added to the term in a form of a practice assemblage. Peter Weibel states, "the role of the curator is about structuring access and mediating work — curators by definition have the time to explore work that is not always available to spectators. Curators bring work together from disparate areas and structure it in an accessible manner." (Cook, 2000, p. 1)

If this is one of the frameworks in which it is accepted that curatorial practice works within, all of the components of practice we have explored would be necessary. In the following section we will look at collaborations as another component accumulated by curatorial practice in order to produce “something that would otherwise not take place; it has to make possible that which would otherwise be impossible.” (Billing, Lind, & Nilsson, 2007, p. 204)

Collaborative Practices

For this research and for this section, I will focus on how the skills of collaborative practices have been accumulated by curatorial practice. Previous reflections on collaboration as a practice, and as a method of production have raised fundamental questions about the nature of artistic and curatorial work, and its complexities. As delineated by Nkule Mabaso in her editorial for the ONCURATING issue on collaborations and biennials, “to varying degrees, collaboration subsumes under its definitions what we understand to be relational, participatory, community, and collective practices and their varied manifestations.”(Mabaso, 2006, p. 1) Up until this moment in our exploration of the components of curatorial practice, the concepts of relationality and the participatory nature of exhibitions have not been defining components accumulated under the term “curator” or the “practice of curating”. As exhibitions and the practice of exhibition making have expanded into biennials and globalisation of projects that happen over many locations and in a multiplicity of forms, the singular curator/artist has turned to collaboration to “make possible that which would otherwise be impossible.”(Billing, Lind, 2007, p. 204) Obrist describes what he recalls as one of his favourite projects entitled, “Do It”, that he co-curated with artists Christian Boltanski and Bertrand Lavier, the project began in 1993:

“It is still going. It was inspired by Marcel Duchamp sending instructions from Argentina to his sister to assemble one of his readymades, and by John Cage's music of change, and by Yoko Ono's work. Lots of artists contributed how-to instructions to do things in the gallery or elsewhere. It's been to more than 120 cities, often to places where there isn't oth-

erwise much of a contemporary art scene. Right now, it's in Salt Lake City. It can continue for the next 100 years. Joseph Beuys talked about expanding the notion of art. I'm trying to expand the notion of curating. Exhibitions need not only take place in galleries, need not only involve displaying objects. Art can appear where we expect it least." (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1)

Olbrist outlines here how collaboration itself is a component to curatorial practice that expands the notion of curating, creates spaces to examine the perceived boundaries of the relationships between artistic/curatorial practices and makes those boundaries permeable and mutable. Curator and Director of the Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm, Maria Lind describes the rise in collaborative practices as the “collaborative turn”. (Billing, Lind, & Nilsson, 2007) I would position the exploration and integration of collaborative practices not as a turn from, or a shift to, but rather as another diffractive accumulation of a set of components to curatorial practice that allows for an expansion of the term once again beyond what it previously encompassed.

Section 4: The 21st Century “Curator”

While the roles of curatorial practices have been diversifying within the art world, the term “Curator” has become a common word in popular culture. The concept of a “curated life” is commonplace on Instagram and Facebook, “curated playlists” on Spotify and even getting a snack requires a curator to facilitate a selection for the public. However the skills used by these “curators” are more traditional in nature, selection and arrangement of objects. While these new forms of curation become common place, utilised by the public, the specific use of the term “curated” references a behind the scenes expertise assumed by the curator of these commodities. The entanglement of commercial commodities or products, with the cultural, artistic, academic persona of a “curator” is a fairly new concept. Tom Morton, Curator of the British Art Show describes this new phenomenon in his article, “A brief history of the word ‘curator’” (2011):

“Here in the third millennium, the word curator has undergone a further shift in usage. Appropriated by the marketing departments of businesses keen to imbue their products with an air of hard-won distinction and borrowed avant-garde cool, it is now used to describe anybody from the celebrity programmer of a pop festival to a fashion stylist who puts together a 'capsule collection' from a department store's fall/winter stock. A curator, here, is essentially a paid selector of stuff for sale, whether it be concert tickets or cuff links. (Notably, commercial art galleries tend to fight shy of describing their exhibitions staff as 'curators', leaving the title to professionals in the not-for-profit sector who do not, um, profit from the works that they choose to display).” (Morton, 2011, p. 1)

What is relevant in this article, for this research, is the desire for the wider public to participate in a concept of curation. Through the mass usage of online social media spaces, or the shift in online hubs like Spotify for products like music, the adoption of the title of “curator” or “curated” implies a desire to be seen as being actively engaged in choice. By naming an Instagram page “curated life”, it is stating that the user of that page is choosing how they want to be viewed. It says, “I am doing something with purpose”, not just posting without careful thought and selection. Morton continues his analysis of this by writing:

“Perhaps they are merely responding to the wider 'curatorial turn' in patterns of consumption outlined in New York-based literary magazine *n+1*'s collection of essays *What Was The Hipster?* which argues that the current generation of fashionable young things are 'prosumers' who prefer to select cultural artifacts rather than produce them, brandishing them 'like capital'.” (Morton, 2011, p. 1)

So while Morton's article brandishes the term curator as being the most overused word of modern times, it is important to mention that the term IS being used. It is being used beyond the art world, beyond academia, it is being adopted and adapted because it has a long history attached to it. I would argue that while Morton may have appoint in staying that, “the marketeers who employ the word 'curator' have no more interest in evoking the world of the museum than they do of evoking Roman middle management or the medieval church,” (Morton, 2011, p. 1) I do not think it was a random choice. It appears to be a choice of term that allows for the expression and dissemination of personal ideologies

that can be shared, liked, re-posted, downloaded, pinned, tweeted and seen. I agree with Morton that this use of the term curator may be, “a long way from the public museum, let alone aqueduct administration or the care of the eternal soul,” however, for this research it is an example of another set of skills curatorial practice can accumulate. (Morton, 2011, p. 1) Perhaps this is another curatorial assemblage that has de-territorialized the arena of consumership allowing for “the influence of today's empowered consumer” (Morton, 2011, p. 1) to have more capacity to act in their own agency?

Systems and Distributive Curating

In *Curating Immateriality: The Work of the Curator in the Age of Network Systems* (2006), Krysa defines the parameters of Systems and Distributed Curating by stating that “curatorial work has become more widely distributed between multiple agents.” (Krysa, 2006, p. 7) Krysa goes on to write that, “The curator is part of this entire system but not central to it.” (Krysa, 2006, p. 15) *Systems and Distributed Curating* examines, “emerging models of practice that use information technologies (internet, networks and software) not simply on the level of the medium or as a tool but as an integral part of the curatorial practice.” (Krysa, 2006, p. 9-10) When commenting on Vishmidt’s comments on *Systems and Distributed Curating*, Krysa states, “Vishmidt asks if (distributed) curating can influence production outside of a value system based on the commodity and social reproduction - as counter-action.” (Krysa, 2006, p. 14) From this perspective it appears that *Systems and Distributed Curating* has significant overlap with the notions I am using in research with diffractive curating. These similarities include examining how agency can be held by multiple agents within a structure that includes technology and is not based in a commodity or pre-existing social value system. However, systems curating is inherently reliant on the concept of the system. “A system can be understood as a collection of interrelated parts, both maintaining its internal order and also drawing the resources necessary for its survival and reproduction from the external environment.” (Edgar, & Sedgwick,

2008, 400-401) In many ways, the construction of a system serves the opposite function of a diffractive assemblage.⁵ A system is, by definition, always seeking to maintain an internal order. Subsequently, Systems Curating has a perpetual problem of always asking if the system itself is designed to continually re-enforce previously established power imbalances. When looking at Systems Curating, a researcher always has to ask, “Who or what is responsible for creating and sustaining the system? Is the system in System Curating a subjunctivizing force?” Diffractive curating does not try to maintain an internal order. In fact, diffractive curating assemblages are constantly de-territorializing with lines of flight. It is through the destabilizing action of the lines of flight that diffractive curatorial methods allow the potential for previously unknown capacities to act to emerge. So, while Systems and Distributed Curating and diffractive curatorial methods are interested in some similar issues, the end results of creating a structure designed to “maintain internal order” (System Curating) and one designed for continual unknown change (diffractive curating) can be very different.

Section 5: Diffractive Accumulations in Curatorial Practice

As outlined in Chapter 1, I define curating as a specific instance of an assemblage of distinct intra-acting elements viewed through agential realism. My practice is rooted in an diffractive accumulation of skills acquired over the history of curatorial practices. Those skills include care and selection of objects, paying attention to the dialogue and cultural relevance of artworks and the artists who create them, collaborating with others (this includes but is not limited to artists, spaces, participants, etc..). The skills accumulated by my own personal experiences include, elements of social engagement, performative acts, advocacy, as well as fundraising and administrative skills. I have also accumulated the skills needed to effectively utilised social media and online spaces. There are far more skills curatorial practices have accumulated over the millennia and this is simply meant

⁵ I am referring to an “assemblage” as defined by Deleuze and Guattari. I will describe my understanding of an assemblage as well as deterritorializing lines of flight in detail in "Deleuze and Guattari's Assemblage: A model for oscillations within curatorial practice." on page 91

as a brief examination. For this research, the resonances between the various roles of curatorial practice, the gaps, is where my practice emerges.

In conclusion, this brief history of curatorial practices is not meant to cover all aspects of curating, nor does it examine the nuances in between each of the aspects of discussed. For my research, this diffractive reading of the history of curatorial practice intends to highlight skills of curatorial practice that may have always been utilised but may not have previously been recognized as vital. In addition, this additional diffractive analysis notes where previously excluded skills (such as listening, attention, caring, and presence) of curatorial practices may generate new possibilities for new unknown and potential skills of curatorial practice to emerge.

Case Study - La Fundación PH15:

This review of my work with La Fundación PH15 serves as an example of a diffractive analysis of previous work to examine previously overlooked or undervalued skills of curatorial practice. I have broken this case study into a “reflective” and “diffractive” analysis. Later in this chapter in the section, *Methods: Reflective and Diffractive Analysis*, I explain in depth what I mean by these modes of analysis.

In the beginning paragraph of the preceding section, *A Diffractive Reading of Curatorial History*, I noted the skills of curating highlighted by Hans Ulrich Obrist, he writes that curating, “...as a profession means at least four things. It means to preserve, in the sense of safeguarding the heritage of art. It means to be the selector of new work. It means to connect to art history. And it means displaying or arranging the work.” In this case study I will outline those skills as well as the skills that for my research are warranted more attention. This case study will reflectively analyze the work I did with La Fundación PH15 and as a result what fundamental curatorial skills I utilised. Then I will use diffractive analysis to explore other skills that I gained through intra-action and how those skills are situated, embodied and still becoming. In the conclusion of this case study I will outline framing my own practice as a diffractive accumulation.

Reflective Analysis of my work with Ph15

For my reflective analysis of each case study I will use the format of Who, What, When, Where and Why. This reflective method locates important elements of my previous practise as well as highlighting how this method excludes other elements that may not fit seamlessly into one of these categories.

Who Participated?

During June, July and August of 2004 I worked with the students, faculty and visiting artists of La Fundación PH15, a photography workshop program in

the slums of Buenos Aires. The “Ph” in the name represents what they teach, photography, drawing with light. The number 15 that identifies “Villa 15” also called “Hidden City”, one of the many slums of Buenos Aires. The faculty that I worked with were volunteers who had been with the foundation for several years. The 13 students were from Villa 15. The students I worked with had been in the program from between one year to a few months. I also had the opportunity to work closely with three visiting artists who were each invited for their expertise in a particular area that was needed based on the projects the students were currently working on.

What work did I do with Ph15?

The beginning of my research fundamentally began in 2004 while curating exhibitions with PH15. I was invited to be a visiting artist specifically because of the narrative aspects to my photographic work at the time. The students were preparing a body of photographic work to make into books and were in need of artists who had experience in that area. While my role began as a visiting artist and photography workshop teacher, my involvement with the foundation became more of a curatorial and fundraising position that lasted beyond the 3 months of being a visiting artist. During my time as a visiting artist I assisted the teachers with gearing their workshops towards learning about the various ways narratives are expressed through sequencing, layout, lighting, color and book format. I lead and participated in group and individual critique of student work, assisted in darkroom development and printing of film and prints. In addition, I worked closely with another visiting artist giving extra instruction to the newest and youngest student of the program so that she would have work ready for exhibition by the end of our 3 months together. The students asked for each visiting artist to show their own work and we discussed how our work related to why we were asked to be visiting artist and why we decided to accept the invitation. At the end of the 3 months I played a key role in the curation of an exhibit of the work we had been focused on that summer.

When I returned to the US in August, I continued to work with the foundation in several ways. I was asked by Tufts University Exhibitions to give a lecture on my experience as an alumni of the Traveling Scholars program. After that lecture I had many young artists inquire about how to volunteer and how to donate materials and equipment. In the months following I worked with Ph15 on developing a screening process for volunteers applicants, creating a network of people to gather donations of materials and manage the shipping of those donations to Buenos Aires. I then began to write proposals for exhibitions in the US, at this time the foundation asked me to be their US Exhibitions Representative and Coordinator. Between fall of 2004 and 2006, I curated multiple exhibitions (listed by date in the next section) of their work in Buenos Aires and internationally. During the exhibits, webcams were set-up between the international galleries and lucotorios in the slums of BA where the students could converse with visitors in the gallery space. They also produced books of their photographs that I helped to edit.

When did I work with La Fundación PH15?

The work I did with La Fundación PH15 was between summer of 2004 to fall of 2006. It began in June of 2004 (as previously stated) when I spent 3 months in Buenos Aires Argentina working as a visiting artist with La Fundación PH15. During that time I curated the exhibition ph15 Fotografia at Sonoridad Amarilla, Verona 04 in Palermo Soho that took place in August. When I returned to Boston I in August of 2004, I continued to work with La Fundación PH15 writing exhibition proposals, giving lectures on my experiences and working on helping the foundation connect to other possible Visiting Artists. In Spring of 2005, I curated "Camera's, Communities, Connections" at the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Centre in Cambridge, MA. Then in the fall of 2005 I curated Ph15: Eyes of the Hidden City at the Sorenson Center for Visual Arts, in Babson, MA. In 2006 I curated ph15 Fotografia at Carlitos Café, Art for Change, in New York. I

spent the rest of 2006 facilitating other exhibitions for Ph15 as well as fundraising through grant writing for the organization.

Where did I work with Ph15?

My work with La Fundación PH15 as a visiting artist or workshop teacher was in Buenos Aires at the community centre in Villa 15 where they ran the workshops at that time. The exhibitions I curated and facilitated were in Buenos Aires Argentina and various locations in the United States including Massachusetts, South Dakota, and North Carolina.

Why did I work with La Fundación PH15?

The students involved in Ph15 are all selected from underserved communities. These communities are underserved in multiple aspects including exposure to other cultures, opportunities to hear different perspectives, and support for personal analysis and growth. Subsequently, the workshops invite visiting artists, teachers and curators with the singular purpose of meeting the student's needs. Participation in Ph15 also raises awareness for the foundation by inviting international visiting artists, curators and teachers. With these goals in mind, I accepted the invitation to be a visiting artist in summer of 2004 because I had been working on narratives in my own photography and I hoped my perspective, knowledge of color and black and white photographic processes, and my experience as a teaching assistant during my undergraduate work would meet the needs of the workshops at that time.

The reasons listed above for why I went to Buenos Aires to work with Ph15 address the needs of the program and reflectively how I thought my skills as an artist and a teacher could meet those needs. At the time I received the invitation to work with Ph15 I had recently finished an exhibition of work that revolved around the influences of life experiences beyond formal education, studio work, or organized critique on art practices. So while I felt I could meet the needs

of the workshop, I also felt the experience of being in a completely different environment would inform my own practice and enrich my own perspective on future projects.

For this examination, I will be primarily employing the diffractive research method used in the preceding section (A Diffractive Reading of Curatorial History) where histories are “read through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge: How differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter.” (Barad, 2007, p. 30) I have broken this diffractive analysis into two sections, one that focuses on what new capacities to act emerged from my work with Ph15 and the other examines what interactions were generated. The goal of these two sections is to show how the analysis of my work with Ph15 can be used to frame my own practice as a diffractive accumulation.

New capacities to act?

Students participating in Ph15 photographed their lives and I curated and facilitated multiple exhibitions of their work both in Buenos Aires and the US. The goals of these exhibitions were to expand awareness for the foundation as well as provide opportunities for the students work to be exhibited outside of Buenos Aires. The students were interested in using technologies that they were familiar with such as webcams and texting in order to further their participation with the exhibition. In order to meet this student need and to create new opportunities for the students to have an expanded concept of presence at their own exhibitions in the US, I set-up webcams in both the exhibition space in the US and in lucotorios in Buenos Aires to allow for simultaneous communication. The goals defined by Ph15 at the time were to try to minimize the perceived and real linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, and geographical boundaries that appear to be between the students and those like me whose participation was only for a short time. While the students certainly gained from the experience of

photographing and displaying their lives, the work gained heightened meaning when the students were able to witness their own openings via webcam. By being able to virtually participate in their own exhibition, the opening itself became a generator of the meaning of the work in the lives of the artists and the viewers. The acts of seeing, showing and talking are highlighted in the following interview of one of the students of Ph15 by one of the teachers from the workshops:

Excerpts from an Interview of Ph15 Student Juan Alfonso
by Ph15 teacher Pablo Altuve, July, 2004

Altuve: Why are you in the workshop?

J. Alfonso: To leave the slum, to not be locked in there, besides, I like it.

Altuve: What do you like about it?

J. Alfonso: It's art. It's photography.

Altuve: What do you like about photography?

J. Alfonso: Cause it helps me express myself, I can't explain

Altuve: Do you like participating in shows?

J. Alfonso: Yeah.

Altuve: Why?

J. Alfonso: It's good for people to see your work. To talk to them.

Altuve: Thank you Juan

J. Alfonso: You're welcome

The addition of the webcams and the instant messaging generated a new capacity to act for the students of Ph15, they were able to talk to the exhibition visitors. While being able to exhibit their work was important to the students of Ph15, J. Alfonso made point to say that being able to talk to the visitors was also worth noting. Within the common parameters of exhibition making, the curators often become the voice of the exhibition. By using their skills of selection, display, and arrangement, curators become a central figure in forming how visitors interact with an exhibition. By including the webcam in the exhibitions, J. Alfonso, and the other students whose work was on display, were able to make connections to the visitors by talking with them that were not mediated by a curator (who at the time was myself). The cross continental dialog during the opening created a new set of complex and interdependent collaborative meanings that has continued to evolve even after the closing of the exhibits. The diffractive analysis of this case study emphasises paying attention to the elements of the exhibitions that the students mentioned as important, such as using technologies they were familiar with, or the importance of being able to talk to people about their work, not just put their work on display. By expanding curatorial practice to include the ability to pay attention to exhibition elements that may have previously been considered less important, new capacities to act can emerge.

What intra-actions were generated by the parameters of the exhibitions?

As outlined in the previous section, including attention to exhibition elements that may have been previously considered less important, new capacities to act can emerge, as well as possibilities for new intra-actions. Hans Ulrich Obrists writes that, "...Before 1800, few people went to exhibitions. Now hundreds of millions

of people visit them every year. It's a mass medium and a ritual. The curator sets it up so that it becomes an extraordinary experience and not just illustrations or specialised books.” (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014) In previous exhibitions of the work of the students of Ph15, the work as often on display in places the students would not have access to. In this way, the exhibitions became what Obrist describes as “illustrations or specialised books” that showed the results of the students work but did not have the ability to allow visitors to experience their process. (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1) By including the webcam technology, those elements that “...help illuminate differences as they emerge: How differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter” are not only present, they situated intra-actions that become the exhibition. When the students were able to talk with visitors via webcam, the differences that emerged from their conversations were no longer about where they were located geographically, or a focus on socio-economic status. One visitor who purchased a photograph by N. Alfonso, described her connection to N. Alfonso’s photograph of a carousel, she told N. Alfonso via messaging though a translator how she grew up near a carousel and that the photograph “captured the feeling of going around and around” as a child. In that moment, N. Alfonso became an internationally collected artist, and the buyer added to her photography collection an image of a memory not just a photograph by an underserved young person from Villa 15.

Conclusion

I began this section with the intention of reading curatorial history as a diffractive history of curatorial skills. To utilise the method of diffractive analysis, I began by outlining what curatorial skills have been previously defined through a reflective view of curatorial history. By looking at the skills of preserving, selecting, connecting, and displaying, at various times throughout curatorial history, we can see how they are still relevant in contemporary curatorial practice. Then by diffractively re-examining the history of curatorial practice, other skills emerged as potentially gaining more relevance as curatorial practices become more diverse,

more complex and more accessible to a larger group of practitioners. As I wrote in the introduction to this section, from this perspective, curatorial practice exists as an emergent phenomenon based in historically isolatable skills that now overlap and resonate with other previously excluded skills to produce new potentials.

Through this diffractive analysis, the skills that Obrist locates and elevates remain relevant, but other skills such as caring, listening, attention, and presence become consciously and purposefully integrated into curatorial practice. The case study of my work with Ph15 outlined the importance of using the skills of being able to help the students select work for their exhibitions and books, the ability to teach proper darkroom techniques to help preserve their work, helping to connect their program to the right gallery environment and displaying their work to best convey their concepts. In addition to these historically grounded skills that met the needs of the workshop, this case study also highlighted other skills that were instrumental in generation new capacities to act. For example, the skills of paying attention to what was important to the students in terms of what technology was used to connect them to people at openings in other countries, or listening to them explain how they wanted their narratives to be conveyed. These skills that have emerged from a diffractive accumulation method in my curatorial practice have been integrated into new projects with a greater intention. In paying more attention to developing those skills, new potential intra-actions have space to emerge and those participating in my curatorial practice potentially have a greater capacity to act. This will be discussed in greater detail in the section on my research exhibition *Access(able)*.

Intra-actions through Technology: A diffractive approach to curating with technology

My curatorial practice utilizes a few specific contemporary technologies that facilitate intra-actions within my curatorial assemblage. These technologies include social media platforms, cell phones, shared online documents, digital imaging, and webcams among others. While technology and technological methods have had significant impacts on curatorial practice as a whole, in order to limit the scope of my PhD research, I am mainly focusing on technologies that facilitate further intra-actions that emerge from each exhibition.

The concept of using technology in curating is different from the history of curating technological artworks. For example, the exhibition “NAM JUNE PAIK” at the Whitney Museum of American Art from October 24, 1981 - April 30, 1982 was curated by John Hanhardt. The retrospective exhibition included works like, “V-yramid,” (1982), Medium: Video installation, color, sound, with forty television sets. While the artwork consisted of and was a commentary on technology of the time, the technology was on display in the artwork. The piece was on display as a towering stack of television sets installed floor to ceiling in a corner of one of the galleries. For my research it is important to note that the technology present in this exhibition was not part of the curatorial practice, it was part of the artistic practice that was curated into the exhibition.

There are technologies that are interactive and can be used in art spaces, however that does not mean that they are part of the curatorial process, nor are they intra-active. For example, a company called Cuseum has created an augmented reality app called “Hacking the Heist” that can be used in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, MA, USA. The augmented reality app digitally displays images of the 13 paintings that were stolen from the museum in 1990 in the locations where the artwork was stolen from within the museum. A curator

using technology similar to this could curate exhibitions in any location through augmented reality on participants' phones. In this way, the curator would be using the technology as part of the exhibition, not displaying technological artwork. However, this would be using technology to curate an interactive exhibition it would not be intra-active.

There is overlap between using technology as part of curatorial practice and displaying technological artwork. For example, Alexandra Munroe, the Asian Art curator at the Guggenheim Museum, curated an exhibition of Cai Guo-Qiang work in both the real world and in Second Life in 2010. (James, 2010, p.1) The exhibition both used technology in the curatorial process and as the subject of the technological artwork on display. This is another example of how technology can be interactive, meaning people could log into Second Life and view the virtual exhibition. If virtual visitors to the Second life exhibition were able re-curate the exhibition, or collaborate in that process, then the technology would have allowed for potentials for intra-action. While online platforms like Second Life, or Minecraft are inclusive to a wider audience, they still rely on the individual users having access to a computer and to the internet. For my curatorial practice I rarely use technologies similar to Second Life or augmented reality apps because they generally require fast, stable internet access, significant digital knowledge, the ability to download apps from western app stores, or they frequently require expensive computer equipment.

So while, "the spread of affordable information and communication technologies, such as mobile phones and the internet, has broadened the public sphere; and shifted it from the institutional realm to the new communication space," a significant part of that space is still hard to access. (Castells, 2008, p. 78) For my curatorial practice, I am interested in technologies that are easily accessible to many groups of people around the world. Social media platforms, shared digital drives, etc. have a low barrier to entry for the groups I am working with.

As I outlined in the preceding paragraphs, my curatorial practice is not curating technological artworks, I employ a method of curating with technologies that are readily available to all participants. The access to cell phone technology and platforms like Skype or FaceTime are available to many regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location. This means that a young person in Ethiopia is using virtually the same technology as a collector from New York when they visit an exhibition. For my research, this allows for participants like these to connect without the need for someone to manage the technology that creates the space for intra-action. This is relevant in my curatorial practice because this use of technology allows for unknown potential intra-actions to occur. As I stated in the previous section, *Defining Curatorial Practice*, the term intra-action is used in agential realism instead of “interaction” in order to emphasize that within any phenomenon, the elements are comprised of mutually co-constituted and entangled agencies rather than separate agencies that are acting upon one another. By utilising technologies that are easily accessible to many people, the technology is no longer a barrier where one group with limited access, is waiting for another group with wider access to provide the space of connection. The technologies are used in known ways, within the parameters of a potentially unknown outcomes.

In conclusion, while there are many applications of technologies that can be used in curatorial practices that be harnessed for potential intra-action, for my research I have limited my practice to those technologies that are accessible to many groups of people around the world. By utilising a diffractive method of analysis to identify those technologies, only the technologies that have the potential to allow for possible unknown intra-actions, and new capacities to act are used in my curatorial process. While I have curated technological artworks in many of my exhibitions, (such as videos made by artists involved), those pieces are considered pieces selected to be displayed, not pieces with potentials for intra-action. In the

following case study, I will examine the project, *People's Screen*, by Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould. *People's Screen* is large scale technological artwork that provided space for intra-action. The relevance of this case study is in the potential capacities to act in both large and small scale projects. While the technology used to create the project is not readily accessible to the general public, the participants used their cellphones to further the experience and create moments of individual impact.

Case Study - *People's Screen*: technologies that facilitate intra-action

In this case study I will examine the project *People's Screen* (2015) by Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould. Paul Sermon's practice explores technologies that facilitate shared experiences across global boundaries. I will be examining the piece *People's Screen* as an example of the use of technology to create the parameters for unknown intra-action. Through interviews with him I explored the importance of this work and how it might be translated using low cost technologies available today. In addition, by applying a diffractive method of analysis to our discussion, potentially new possibilities for intra-action emerged.

As I outlined in the previous section, my curatorial practice utilizes specific contemporary technologies that facilitate intra-actions within my curatorial assemblage. Examples of those technologies include social media platforms, cell phones, shared online documents, digital imaging, and webcams among others. The technologies used in the creation of *People's Screen*, like the use of public screens and virtual spaces, allowed for unexpected intra-actions with unknown capacities for the participants to act, perform, participate and encounter others. Due to the locations of the public screens used to execute this project, it was easily accessible and allowed for the interjection of personal cell phones to become part of the experience.

Reflective Analysis of *People's Screen*

As I stated in the case study of my work with Ph15, each reflective analysis of the case studies I will use the format of Who, What, When, Where and Why. This reflective method locates important elements of significance as well as highlighting how this method excludes other elements that may not fit seamlessly into one of these categories.

Who Participated?

During 12 evenings in November of 2015, over 25,000 people participated in the piece *People's Screen* to created by Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould. Public Art Lab, Berlin commissioned the piece and Connecting Cities Network, produced the work. *People's Screen* was installed on large screens in Guangzhou, China, and Perth, Australia. The participants were the visitors to the Huacheng Square Public Screen, Guangzhou, China and Northbridge Piazza (a public square) of Perth. In addition to those who visited the sites where *People's Screen* was installed, the artists had continual involvement throughout the duration of the display.

What was the piece People's Screen?

People's Screen was, “telematic public art Installation by Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould”. (Sermon & Gould, 2015, p. 1) The installation connected two public video screens, normally used for advertising, through the creation of virtual worlds that were simultaneously on view. When visitors entered space of the screens, they would see themselves entering the virtual environment on the screen. The two screen were then converged so that the people in China would be in the same virtual space with the people in Australia. The participants then encountered others from both locations within the same virtual environment.

When did the participation in People's Screen happen?

The installation *People's Screen*, was connected for 12 evenings in between the 14th to 29th in November of 2015. As previously stated, during these 12 evenings the two screens in their two separate geographical locations converged to create one virtual location in which the visitors encountered one another. The installation in Guangzhou was live during the Guangzhou Light Festival and the screen in Perth was live in a public square.

Where did the installation and event take place?

People's Screen was installed using large public screens in Huacheng Square Public

Screen during the Guangzhou Light Festival, and the Northbridge Piazza Public Screen, in Perth Australia. The environments of these locations are very different but also have some similarities. Both of the public screens are in one squares within busy metropolitan cities. Huacheng Square, is an open square surrounded by the high-rise buildings of the city of Guangzhou. There are gardens, trees, fountains and grassy park areas, with a constant flow of people in and out of the shops and businesses that surround the square. Northbridge Piazza is a large grassy square nestled within the city of Perth. The skyline of Perth is significantly lower than that of Guangzhou, and the population of the city is smaller by about 10 million people. For the reflective analysis of this case study, the differences between where the two events happened are noted but not emphasised.

Why did the artists create People's Screen?

Artists Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould have “collaborated on numerous public video installations and bring together twenty years of experience of interactive media arts” (Sermon & Gould, 2009, p.1). *People's Screen*, was commissioned as a version of their previous project *Occupy the Screen* (2014), that was, “an original site-specific work for the Connecting Cities event URBAN REFLECTIONS, linking audiences in Berlin and Riga” (Sermon & Gould, 2014, p. 1). Described by the artists:

“People's Screen offered public audiences in Guangzhou and Perth the opportunity to co-create chance encounters and self direct spontaneous performances between these cities. These unique transitory events rely entirely on the roles and performances the local communities bring to these urban screens and the experiences they choose to live out. Inspired by their urban and cultural surroundings and re-contextualized in a diverse array of digital milieus, 'People's Screen' aims to allow these public audiences the agency to reclaim their urban screens akin to a telepresent fluxus happening”. (Sermon & Gould, 2015, p. 1)

People's Screen provided participants with a wide range of digital interaction, from performing for the environments on the screens, to taking selfies and posting

the images of themselves of themselves in the screen to Instagram and other online social media platforms for sharing images. The following interview with Paul Sermon serves as part of the diffractive analysis of this case study. Following the transcript of the interview I will examine particular sections to highlight their relationship to elements of the uses of technologies related to this research.

Diffractive Analysis: Interview with Paul Sermon

Transcript of interview with Paul Sermon over Skype.

Wednesday, May 2, 2018 10:00 AM US time, 3:00 PM UK time.

Aishman: How well do you think the virtual space functioned as a “meeting place” for both the people in Guangzhou and Perth?

Sermon: I think of People’s Screen in the frame of “incidences that occur” or opportunities for meeting in places that are extensions of how we are already use them. I think about time of the environment, the spectacle of people interacting and the isolation of it. It is an opportunity to introduce people who might not meet and as a result they meet themselves remotely, they observe themselves in a third space. It is the objectivity of our own sense of being whatever that even is, it is in the encounter, the meeting, it is about the space.

Aishman: How do you feel the technology functioned as an intermediary or as a connecting element of the communities involved?

Sermon: The artwork was completed by the audience, the experience they have is the artwork, it is the main objective. I see myself as the instigator of a narrative, both physical, and visual depending on the environment. In some of my earlier work *Telematic Dreaming* was about making simple

spaces complex and humorous, initiating a narrative can be complex. It always comes back to creating this third space. It is about creating spaces of potential, just hinting at the environment and seeing how participants can play out at performing a role. I rarely use audio, participants can only use visual communication, so they play out self performed roles, a form of embodiment or disembodiment. I am hinting at Lacan's mirror. It is the environment you are presenting yourself in.

Aishman: Do you think your project could be installed in museums, galleries, art spaces and used to connect more communities globally to the arts? What are the technological challenges there and what could be done to overcome them?

Sermon: Technology presents financial obstacles, other obstacles are environmental, geographical, the longevity of installations is challenging because most spaces don't have the technological staff to keep up the maintenance on an installations like these. You have to have a space that really has the funding and the staff. They need to take more risks.

Aishman: Do you think your project is a good example of an affect event? Where affect is shared and transferred from one body to another either by presence of those bodies or through technology?

Sermon: As I said before I am really discussing Lacan's mirror, because of the nature of the screen the people self-identify and then they are in this third space where they share the same view, the same eyes, the same visual portal. Its like Sartre's gaze of seeing and being seen. By doing that we share empathy with the other because you have an identical visual encounter. In that sense you can find a kind of levelling of the playing field, because you are looking at my body with my eyes just not my actual visual cortex, but it's

the same view.

Aishman: Do you feel that your project had kind of levelling effect, where people came to gather crossing cultural, geographical, ideological or economical boundaries?

Sermon: I watch the line-out feed, that I record and watching it is like seeing what is causing what you are watching, you see people find empathy, you can see shared experience.

Aishman: How do you think curators can work better to support projects like People's Screen?

Sermon: The best spaces for projects like this are a project space or a lab where work can be created. Work like this can get lost in an overly curated space. Curators need to work more collaboratively with artists, inviting the artists to be part of exploring the work theoretically and be more involved with what philosophically the work is. Curators need to take more risks, to be more open because with pieces or experiments using technology you have no idea what the response will be. It is about installing the work, hanging out and seeing what happens, not in the studio but when it is installed and the exchange with the public. That moment is what I want to experience and look at. The artwork happens when the concept leaves the studio and interacts with the public. (Aishman & Sermon, 2018, p. 1)

What intra-actions occurred due to the technology?

Sermon stated in our discussion, "that I watch the line-out feed, that I record and watching it is like seeing what is causing what you are watching, you see people find empathy, you can see shared experience." (Aishman & Sermon, 2018, p. 1) The technologies used in "People's Screen," for this research, allow

for intra-actions that have a variety of outcomes. One of these outcomes is shared experience, as Sermon describes, “because of the nature of the screen the people self-identify and then they are in this third space where they share the same view, the same eyes, the same visual portal. It's like Sartre’s gaze of seeing and being seen. By doing that we share empathy with the other because you have an identical visual encounter.” (Aishman & Sermon, 2018, p. 1) The large scale of the intra-actions that occurred in the project were possible due to the technologies used. Marie Louise Angerer outlines, in her book *Desire After Affect*, (2015) the affective body in relationship to the “multitude” or mass and how the body is affective through technology. That the digital representation of the body (the participants) has an affective meaning as “a kind of statement of behalf of the body itself concerning its surroundings”. This project is an example of how geographical location of the body does not limit the affective body’s capability to share experience.

What new capacities to act emerged from the use of the technology?

“People’s Screen” can be framed as an example of how we have opportunities to commune together, to find shared space, to connect through technology on a mass scale in the 21st century. This project is an example of how specific technologies, like the use of the public screens to provide virtual environments for people on two separate continents, create new spaces of intra-action that did not previously exist. As I previously mentioned, Manuel Castells describes this new phenomenon by describing, “the spread of affordable information and communication technologies, such as mobile phones and the internet, has broadened the public sphere; and shifted it from the institutional realm to the new communication space.” (Castells, 2008, p. 1) Paul Sermon describes this new communication space in the interview above as, “creating spaces of potential, just hinting at the environment and seeing how participants can play out at performing a role.” (Aishman & Sermon, 2018, p. 1) He also states that, “The artwork was completed by the audience, the experience they have is the artwork, it is the main objective.”

(Aishman & Sermon, 2018, p. 1) While the concept of a participant experience within a project being the artwork is not a new concept, the technology used in “People’s Screen” is an important facilitator in allowing for that intra-action to occur, thus being a major factor in the completion of the artwork itself. In this way, the participants gain a new capacity to act as creators of the artwork.

Conclusion

I began this section by outlining how my curatorial practice utilizes a few specific contemporary technologies that facilitate intra-actions within my curatorial assemblage. I outlined how those technologies include social media platforms, cell phones, and other technologies that are more available and commonly used by the groups and individuals that I work with. While the technology used in the “People’s Screen” a large scale is an artwork, there are aspects of the work that resonate with my own research. By paying attention to the use of technology to generate intra-actions, that method can be diffractively applied on a smaller scale. In the interview above, Sermon describes how “the artwork was completed by the audience, the experience they have is the artwork, it is the main objective,” (Aishman & Sermon, 2018, p. 1) this concept could be applied to curatorial practice through applying a diffractive method. By paying attention to how curatorial practice can use technology in the curatorial process, the curation can be completed by the audience, the experience they have can be the curatorial practice, and that can be a way new capacities to act emerge.



Figure 2: Installation shot of "People's Screen" in Ganzhou, China, Courtesy of Paul Sermon, http://www.paulsermon.org/peoples_screen/

Reflective and Diffractive Methods of Analysis

Staring down into tranquil waters of a pond, I see my own reflection. In the reflective analysis of my own image, my impulse is to seek an accurate representation, free of distortion. Should I rely on my own vision? Is this an accurate representation? Is my reflection the same in this lake as it is in other lakes? My investigation is at a distance. Reflection in the case of research is a metaphor for the mental activity of “taking a step back” in order to purposely make observations at a distance. From this distance, I can analyze factors that influence knowledge production, I can interrogate my own knowledge and the influence of my own subjectivities, and I can emancipate myself from my own circumstances. The distance in reflexive analysis gives me room to unpack power relations and how they influence the process of knowledge production. Critical reflection is more than just thinking about experiences, it involves critique of my own assumptions and values. This method also involves critically deconstructing how I have developed my skills of analysis and an evaluation of how certain internalized discourses may be working against knowledge production.

Looking at my own reflection, I have to ask, “Is a reflective analysis the only method available to me? Should I have an uncritical adoption of reflective methods? Should the reflective process be complicated or should I take it as an a priori assumption of method? What are some problems with deploying reflective analysis in curatorial research?” It feels like the central concern of the reflective process is a separation. I am split from my reflection. Difference in this reflective analysis is always framed as a separation and a lack. Is reflection as a primary method of thesis research really just a search for reflected sameness? Haraway states, “Reflexivity has been recommended as a critical practice, but my suspicion is that reflexivity, like reflection, only displaces the same elsewhere, setting up worries about copy and original and the search for the authentic and the really real.” (Haraway, 1997, p. 16)⁶

⁶ Donna Haraway is an American writer whose work centers on feminism, science and technology among other topics.

Reflective analyses purposely disconnect the meaning of process or object from the way that it was created and attempts to make sense of something purely based on an outcome. Theorization of curatorial practice in purely representational terms excludes both the practice of curating and the curators themselves.

Reflective forms of analysis substitute a representation for an action. Curatorial theory and curatorial practice are distinct investigative processes, as attested by their methodologies and hence have distinct ethics. Does reliance on reflective methods of analysis relegate curating to only being able to illustrate preconceived theories which are then reflexively analyzed? Perhaps curatorial practice requires an alternative to reflective analysis that is based in an ethics that is not focused on creating a distance but is instead primarily concerned with the space between things. Is it possible that curatorial practice requires an ethical method that emphasizes the ethics of an embodied material engagement with the space in-between things rather than one that requires the production of divisions in order to have a distanced analysis? What would that method look like and how would it function? What is the epistemological potential for curating? What is curating's role in generating knowledge, not just illustrating theory? Perhaps my reflection requires some distortion ...

I drop a stone into my calm reflection. Suddenly, the surface is filled with ripples. I drop a second stone and the new circles of water waves interfere with the first forming a pattern of waves that have magnified and reduced amplitudes from both impacts. What is formed is a diffraction pattern and the method to analyze this pattern is a method of paying attention to difference. There are no binaries in the diffraction pattern because there is light in the dark and dark in the light of part of the pattern, just at different amplitudes. We only see the differences when they are in relation to one another because only when the stone is thrown into the water do the ripples appear.

In “Diffractive Art Practices,” (2015) Pritchard & Prophet write,

“Diffraction reveals the ways materialities emerge as differentiated events, as they come together, in relation to one another, and this includes the materiality of stone, water and the thrower. Whereas the common metaphor of reflection (discussed later) might be to ‘look back onto’ arts practice, diffractive patterns manifest through reading practices through each other. In the metaphor of diffraction, diffractive patterns describe intra-actions and interferences (which includes practices) from which different entities (which in this case might refer to art works, art theories, art practices) emerge.” (Pritchard & Prophet, 2015, 1)

Pritchard and Prophet mention how the phenomenon of the diffraction pattern includes the stone, the water and the thrower. The thrower is part of the phenomenon, not a separate, objective observer. Karen Barad says, “Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming.” (Barad 2007, 185) The implication of this statement is that from an epistemological diffractive perspective, to know something is to be in imminent relation to it. In this way, diffraction is always a method of understanding something from within.

Difference exists both within and beyond the boundaries of any one specific wave. Nothing is fixed in the pattern as every element is fluid and simultaneously co-constituted by every other element of the diffraction pattern. In the case of research methods, the concept of diffractive analysis is a metaphor for a method of analysis that focuses on difference. This diffractive method of analysis is a process of paying attention to how differences get made and the effects of differences over time. “A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of differences appear.” (Haraway, 2010, p. 300) Central to diffractive analysis is the exploration of how materials can be understood through effects created by difference as opposed to a reflective emphasis on linguistically locating what the differences are. For example, a reflective analysis might focus

on locating economic inequality as a source of difference where a diffractive process might focus on the embodied impact of how people interact during a particular process in order to provide a space where all participants are potentially empowered. The diffractive mode of analysis regards the entire assemblage as a becoming of difference, rather than a fixing of individual states of perceived difference as the reflective mode necessitates.

A diffractive mode of analysis can potentially answer specific questions like, “Why work with underserved children?” by showing how the question itself implies a reflective mode of analysis because the question isolates participants as individual bodies and fixes them by the difference imposed by the question. The diffractive analysis does not seek validity through the method of locating and fixing difference, but instead is focused on producing and examining the conditions that allow for difference emerge through the interaction of various bodies. They are not regarded as “underserved children” in the diffractive mode of analysis, but they become exhibiting artists through the process of interacting with the materials (objects, processes, people, etc.) of the exhibition process. The difference is not reflexively fixed, but is a diffractive becoming where all of the participant elements are simultaneously co-constituted (the artists become artists at the same time the curator becomes the curator at the same time the artwork becomes the artwork, etc. as they are all constituted by the provisional interactions between each other). All elements come into being through their relationship to all the other elements. Without the relationship, they do not exist. With a different set of elements, they become something else. With a different configuration over time, they become something else.

In this way, a diffractive mode of analysis has significant ontological and epistemological differences from a reflective mode. Reflective process is epistemologically grounded in the notion that something can only be known at a distance. Reflective processes assume that observing and knowing are the same

process. The diffractive process holds that things are known through an imminent embodiment. A diffractive mode of analysis requires a relational ontology and epistemology where a reflective mode of analysis does not. Diffraction is a method that pays attention to material engagement with data and “the relations of difference and how they matter.” (Barad, 2007, p. 71) A diffractive method of analysis is a strategy for making and analyzing difference in the world that breaks from self-reflection and the epistemological concerns of a reflective method of analysis.

For my research I employ both reflective and diffractive methods. In my reflective practice based curatorial research I employ a method that ontologically assumes that identity precedes difference. So, if I say, “A is different from B,” my reflective research process assumes that A and B are pre-existing things and the concept of difference is derivative of the identity of the two things. In physics, this is the equivalent of asking, “Is light a wave or a particle?” In the question, it is implied that light can be categorized into the pre-existing notions of either a wave or a particle and that waves and particles are different by their attributes. For curatorial research practice, that means the research is conducted by identifying the elements within curatorial practice (ie. the art, the artists, the gallery, etc.) and then writing a reflective analysis about how these elements function within an ideology. The notion that curatorial practice and analytical research writing are different is taken as an a priori assumption and part of the research involves linguistically naming elements in order to know the ethic of how each element should be treated. This reflective analysis is grounded in an individualistic ontology in which humans and other entities are viewed as discrete, contained and immutable beings with the agency to affect and to be affected by one another. I explain more about the ontological base of my thesis in Chapter 3.

I also employ diffractive research methods that are grounded in a partial, situated, relational ontology where bodies are viewed as open systems with fluid

boundaries. In a diffractive analysis, the concept of pre-existing bodies is not taken as a priori but rather, all bodies are taken as phenomena that emerge as they interact and can only be categorized after they have become. As Pritchard and Prophet say, “Diffraction does not fix the object of study and the perceiving subject (the observer and observed) and they are no longer in opposition.” (Pritchard & Prophet, 2015, p. 1) Agency is not bestowed upon individual, pre-existing bodies, such as art, curator or artist, but rather, agency emerges through intra-actions between and among entities as boundaries are created or collapsed. (Barad, 2007, p. 33) In my diffractive processes, the concept of difference is treated as primary and, ontologically, objects are phenomena that are a process of differentiating. The diffractive process pays attention to the situations and processes that lead to difference. In physics, this means not asking, “Is light a wave or a particle?” but rather asking, “Under what circumstances does light become a wave or a particle?” For curatorial research, this is the equivalent difference between reflectively asking, “Are you working with underserved children?” and diffractively asking “Under what circumstances are people involved in the curatorial process labeled and limited as ‘underserved children?’” In the metaphor to quantum mechanics, in the diffractive process, light is not limited to becoming only a wave or a particle. In different situations, light can become a currently unknown object. What this means is that we can never know all of what light “is” because we cannot ever know every possible situation where light becomes something. All we can ever know about a thing is the specific phenomena that we have observed. From this perspective, epistemologically, all knowledges are partial, situated and provisional. So, the question is reduced from, “Is light a wave or a particle?” to “Under what circumstances does light become?” The ethic in my diffractive research practices is not to linguistically locate things within existing systems, the ethic is to produce novel situations where things have unknown capacities to become. (I define my ethics more in Chapter 3.) This means for my practice based curatorial research, I create novel, specific situations where things have the capacity to become.

Why I Am Holding On To Reflection

I do not believe that things are ontologically limited to either a diffractive or reflective perspective. In physics, light can be analyzed using quantum mechanical tools as it comes into being as well as with classical optical tools after a wave function has collapsed into either a wave or particle. Similarly, in my research I am interested in using both diffractive methods to analyze the conditions that allow difference to emerge and reflective methods to analyze phenomenon after they have come into being.

For example, one of the primary questions of feminism is, “How do power imbalances function?” Althusser’s ideological structuralist perspective addresses the question through a reflective method to provide a subject with a distanced perspective. The reflective method allows the subject to realize that they are always subjugated within a larger pre-existing social structure.

Diffractive methods account for the circumstances that allow difference to occur. Diffractive methods address the question of how power imbalances function by accounting for how social structures come into existence.

From this perspective, diffractive methods focus on examining the origins of power imbalances before they emerge where reflective processes allow for an analysis of power imbalances after they have been created. I believe it is productive to simultaneously analyze where the structures that house power imbalances originate from as well as analyzing how existing structures function. Subsequently, my research practice includes both diffractive and reflective methods.

Diffraction Practice

The previous section contrasted reflective and diffractive methods of analysis, both of which are used in my research. Practical applications of reflective methods of analysis are quite common and I do not feel require significant delineation. Reflective practice in any field of research generally consists of defining terms, developing a hypothesis, conducting an experiment, and then reflectively analyzing the final product of the analysis. Diffractive practice, on the other hand, has relatively fewer participants and perhaps requires a more narrow definition in order to clarify how I am practicing diffractive methods in curatorial research.

A number of books have attempted to define diffractive practice under the heading of “new materialism.” Dolphijn and van der Tuin’s *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (2012) discusses practical applications of diffractive methods with Rosi Braidotti, Manuel DeLanda, Karen Barad, and Quentin Meillassoux. Dolphijn and van der Tuin’s frame new materialism as a diffractive “practical philosophy” that is structured by a “performative understanding, which shifts the focus from linguistic representations to discursive practices.” (Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 141) (Barad, 2003, p. 807) In the book, Braidotti describes how she was looking for an alternative to reflective practices by defining “nomadic subjects” when she stated, “nomadic subjects’ is neither about representation nor about recognition but rather about expression and actualization of practical alternatives.” (Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 21)⁷ Barad explains how she had developed a “method of diffractively reading insights through one another.” (Barad in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 50)

There are examples of diffractive practitioners involved in many fields including art, curatorial studies, and education all of whom share in a few common attributes. Pritchard and Prophet identified some of the common methods of diffractive practices in their article “Diffractive Art Practices: Computation and

⁷ Rosi Braidotti is an Italian and Australian writer whose work focuses on subjectivity and feminism among other topics.

the Messy Entanglements between Mainstream Contemporary Art, and New Media Art” (2015). Some of the attributes of diffractive practice include:

- 1) Diffractive practitioners in any field of study begin their research by embracing a critical practice of engagement. This primary diffractive engagement is followed by a reflective analysis. In this way, diffractive practitioners seek to understand a phenomenon from within. This perspective embodies and operationalizes a relational ontology where all elements are known through their relationship to the other elements.
- 2) Pritchard and Prophet describe the entangled intra-actions of various elements when they state, “Entanglement suggests that different entities (material configurations) interweave and entangle in an ongoing process of intra-action, resulting in the production of new entities, comprising entangled groupings that, in turn, entangle with others.” (Pritchard & Prophet, 2015, p. 8)
- 3) Diffractive practitioners then assess differences that emerge due to the intra-actions of the elements within the practice (including the practitioner).
- 4) Diffractive practitioners do not begin their process with a limited set of parameters or pre-existing definitions of what things are or can be. Within diffractive processes, all elements have the capacity to change and become other elements with no pre-described limits.
- 5) Diffractive “practices continuously reconfigure the boundaries between” the elements of the practice. (Pritchard & Prophet, 2015, p. 7)

The goal of diffractive practice is the analysis of the differences cause by the intra-actions in between the elements of the practice. The goal of diffractive practice is not limited to reflecting on a final product.

Case Study - Diffractive Practice

One artistic diffractive practitioner is Sayal-Bennett who wrote “Diffractive Analysis: Embodied Encounters in Contemporary Artistic Video Practice” (2018). In her analysis, Sayal-Bennett describes how her practice-based research is based in the diffractive theories of Donna Haraway and Karen Barad. She explains how her research is an,

“inquiry into the material effects of difference through an embodied engagement with the materiality of the research data. In the present study,

the research data can be understood as film and video, and the material effects of difference that I explore are the disruption or distorting effects caused by the encounter of the two different mediums of video and film within Arcangel and McQueen's artworks. The embodied engagement is the bodily sensations generated by the encounter between video and film." (Sayal-Bennett, 2018, p. 1)

Method

Sayal-Bennett's research method is to collect data by watching films and video and to pay attention to how her intra-action with the films and videos causes differences to erupt within her. This knowledge is embodied knowledge and Sayal-Bennett draws on how Haraway's "notion of 'situated knowledges' can be used to elaborate the kind of insights produced by the embodied findings presented here." (Sayal-Bennett, 2018, p. 1)

Matter

Sayal-Bennett's diffractive artistic method views film and video as consisting of matter, rather than "visual representations of absent objects or subjects." (Sayal-Bennett, 2018, p. 1) Her method requires an embodied viewing, rather than "the ocular emphasis that is characteristic of film and screen theory." (Sayal-Bennett, 2018, p. 1) I describe more about how I use matter in curatorial research in Chapter 3.

Agency

Sayal-Bennett describes her perspective on agency in a diffractive practice when she describes, "non-human or material agency." (Sayal-Bennett, 2018, p. 1) Sayal-Bennett writes,

"The common difficulty in understanding the concept of non-human or material agency is most likely linked to a prevailing idea of agency that connects it to conscious decision-making and personal intention. As such, there is generally little scope for considering agency beyond the strictly human realm ... However, the idea of decentralised agency has gained momentum across the social sciences over the past two decades. The focus

of this paper is aligned with these new materialist accounts, which seek more dynamic ways of understanding the multitude of materialities we encounter in our everyday lives, and which aim to bring into focus processes of materialisation, intensities, forces and potentialities that are not solely human, transforming the divide between mute objects and speaking subjects.” (Sayal-Bennett, 2018, p. 1)

Sayal-Bennett describes how material, non-human elements of her research have agency. As such, the agency in her research is decentralized away from her as the artist to include, “agency of materiality – the enactment or arrangement of materials that produces bodily sensations and further actions.” (Sayal-Bennett, 2018, p. 1)

Diffraction Practice in Curating

In my research, I have not found an instance of someone clearly identifying their work as diffractive curatorial research. My intention in developing diffractive curatorial research is defined by a few specific elements:

1. An approach to research from within and thus generating situated, embodied, partial knowledge.
2. Not making assumptions about what things “are” before my research has begun. (What I mean by this is that I try not to pre-categorize elements as “artist, writing, artwork, curator, etc.,” but instead, treat all of the elements as “becoming” within the research and identifying the source of difference as it occurs.)
3. Assess differences that emerge due to the intra-actions of the elements within my research practice.
4. Approach to agency as decentralized, and I am looking at the various agencies (human and non-human) that participate in my research.
5. To reflectively analyze what has occurred in my research.

With this framework of diffractive practice in place, I begin the practice of the research.

Chapter 2: Practice

Diffractionally Situating Myself within My Research

I remember when I was 8 years old being in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts with my grandmother. She had taken me straight to one specific painting, *Calm Morning* (1904) by Frank Weston Benson. I said, “Oh! His name is like my grandfather!” And my grandmother told me a secret, “Don’t tell anyone ... but your grandfather’s father was not his father. His father was actually the man who painted this painting. Frank Weston Benson is actually your great-grand father, and his work is right here in this Museum. People from around the world come together here to see his work.”

Art has never been as exciting as that day. I was not excited by the painting itself; I was excited by the connections. I was excited by how the connections opened up possibilities that I did not know existed. If my great-grandfather was in the museum, maybe I could be too. Maybe my work could bring people from all around the world together. Maybe, I could be the one who helps people learn they can do things they never imagined. Maybe I could be the one who brings together the elements to make something meaningful. Maybe. Maybe. Maybe.

So I picked a goal of making artwork that could hang in the museum next to my ancestor. People told me that it was almost impossible to get a show at a museum, but I knew there was a possibility. So, I started making art. Lots of art. I went to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston so that I could walk by *Calm Morning* for inspiration. And I worked hard at making art. I entered lots of competitions to “get my work out there.” I entered one competition that the Museum holds called “Traveling Scholars” and I won. The prize was an exhibition in a Museum and money to travel the world. In 2004, I had an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and my work was hanging next to my secret great-grandfather’s work. Ever had one of your dreams come true? Like literally

true. Not sort of true, not partially true, but all of it? It's not what you think. The movie always ends at that point. No one keeps writing the book after the main character's goal has been reached. I was never particularly interested in the art itself. I was interested in the possibilities and the connections that art opened up. After that impossible possibility was realized, I did not know what to do ...

With the prize money, I decided to go to Argentina and work with a non-profit that teaches art to children who live in the slums on the outskirts on Buenos Aires. At the end of the program, I curated an exhibition of the student's work that occurred simultaneously between New York and Buenos Aires that were connected by a webcam. Collectors in NYC said the best part was seeing the students in Argentina. The students could not believe that collectors in New York were interested in their lives. Both groups of people felt that they had more power over their lives. More power to positively impact other people. It was the connections that mattered. It was all of the elements coming together that mattered. I did not have the language for it, but I knew that was my next goal. To create more situations where connections that mattered could occur.

I knew I had to acquire a different set of skills to properly create my vision. So, I went to Boston University to get Masters in Art Administration. I learned how to organize, run, fund raise, and conduct international logistics. I honed my skills so I would be better at forming meaningful collaborations. For my master's thesis, I curated an exhibition titled "Temporary Walls." The exhibition was comprised of artwork made by young people who were incarcerated so that they could feel connected to the outside of the prison walls and so people from the outside could get a connection to them.

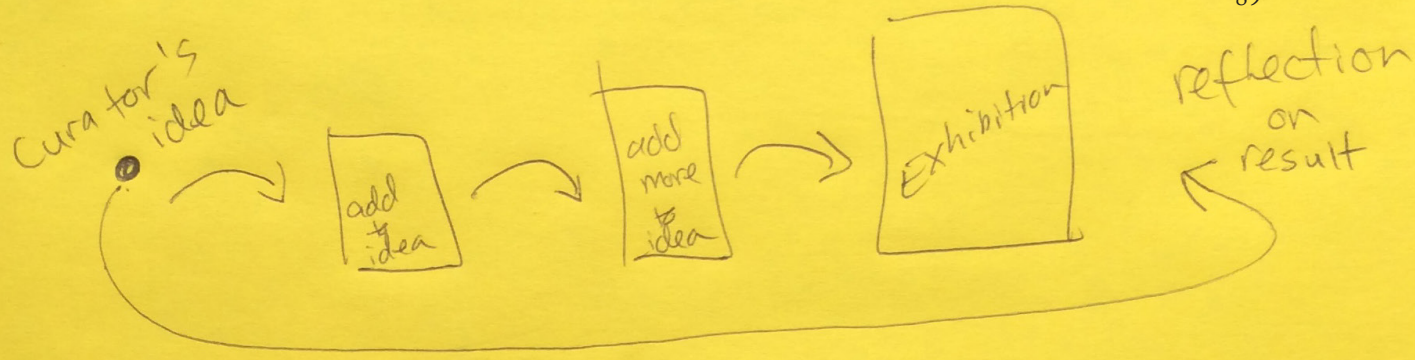


Figure 3: Reflective and Diffractive Curatorial Methods

8

8 Figure 3 is a diagram of two different curatorial practices that I am situated within. For the reflective practices, the process is a linear, arborescent structure where I am a curator who develops an idea, creates an exhibition and then reflects on the exhibition within pre-existing ideological structures. The diffractive process is an assemblage, of which I am one component with a dynamic boundary, that is constantly deterritorializing without any notion of a permanently, linguistically fixed set of structures.

“Temporary Walls” accomplished my goal of creating a space where positive connections could come into being through barriers that had been purposely created to prevent any connections at all. When the exhibition was completed, people kept asking me, “Oh so you’re a curator now?” I realized that I was not interested in being a “curator” or an “artist,” but rather I was interested in how both positions allow for the creation of meaningful connections. The goal of my practice has not changed since I was 8 years old in the museum with my grandmother. My goal has always been to create the conditions that allow connections to occur. I have moved between different labels associated with different modes of work like “artist,” “curator,” “facilitator,” “administrator,” but the job label has never mattered. My practice has remained the same.

However, I knew I had to go further in order to define my practice. I knew my work was about creating spaces where meaningful connections could be made, but I needed to research more about what was really going on. I needed to understand the mechanism of how organizing various heterogeneous elements could lead to people feeling like they had more power in their lives. So, I started this research PhD. Through my PhD research I have found the language to define my practice. My practice is a “Diffractive Curatorial Practice,” and an “Onto-ethico-curology.”⁹

9 I would like to acknowledge that I understand how a reflective analysis allows for raising awareness about existing systems. I acknowledge that within certain ideologies I am situated within a structure that attributes certain privileges and access to that position. Through this PhD I situate myself in a position of awareness of those ideological structures that would define my practice as one of sharing privilege, or including those with less access.

Deleuze and Guattari's Assemblage: A model for oscillations within curatorial practice.

In the previous section, I described how my research method is grounded in both Haraway's tradition of diffractive analysis and a reflective mode of analysis. I use both analytical research methods in concert with one another throughout my research. I am using these research methods while viewing the relationships between the elements of my research through the lens of assemblage theory as described by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980).¹⁰ I begin by asking: Can the elements of research such as reading, writing, curating an exhibit, etc. be modeled as an assemblage? Can individual elements of research, such as an exhibition, be modeled as an assemblage? What new knowledges emerge when analyzing an exhibition through the lens of assemblage theory?

I am interested in framing my curatorial research as an assemblage in the way Deleuze and Guattari describe in order to build on the notion that practice and discourse can function in tandem as opposed to one superseding the other in a "turn" to or from (such as Paul O'Neill's essay entitled "The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse" written in 2010. As I have outlined in the discussions up to this point, my curatorial practice has had many different elements and I have often had difficulty configuring where my focus should be, under what title I need to be working, and how to structure my practice to encompass all of the roles I find myself undertaking. In outlining curatorial practice from its historical roots to my own current practice I have explored the assemblage concept through tracing the relationship between various elements of the definition of assemblage, from a collection or gathering of things or people, to a work of art made by grouping together found or (seemingly) unrelated objects, and as a machine or object

¹⁰ Deleuze was a French neo-Spinozist writer who focused on fine art, philosophy, and film. Guattari was a French psychotherapist. Together, they wrote several books and papers in the 1970's and 1980's that focused on critique of psychoanalytic conformity among other topics.

made of pieces fitted together. In the following examination of how Deleuze and Guattari define assemblage I will further explain how the method of a practice assemblage will allow for my own curatorial practice to share the powers encompassed in the various roles and responsibilities the curator holds. (ie. the gatekeeper of access, the fundraiser, the disseminator of information, the selector of objects).

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, (2007) Deleuze and Guattari describe the components and functions of an assemblage:¹¹

“On a first, horizontal, axis an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both territorial sides, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and cutting edges of deterritorialization, which carry it away.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 97-98)

The machinic (material/practice) and enunciated (immaterial/discourse) sides of the first horizontal axis of the assemblage are comprised of heterogeneous components¹² that are in relation, but do not imply logical necessity. Because these components do not have to be all of the same type, a research (practice) method assemblage can accommodate many heterogeneous methods of research

11 I realise that the concept of an assemblage is unto itself an assemblage and various components will exist in tandem. I am territorializing the concept of an assemblage for the purposes of clarifying my research method. All of the terms I am using are provisional and will be deterritorialized in the future. However, I feel that territorializing them provisionally allows for an explanation of how I understand the various components of my practice. Subsequently, "Figure 4: Heidi Aishman, Diagram of Deleuze and Guattari's Assemblage, Drawing, 2017" on page 93 is a territorialized diagram of how I visualize an assemblage.

12 I use the term components as I see the various parts of curatorial practices as constituent parts, components, or ingredients to a system of practice, that every "component" in an assemblage is itself also an assemblage as seen in my diagram. I see "components" as interchangeable, non-hierarchical and cumulative (like an ingredient in a recipe, components can constantly be changed and interchanged to create a new outcome that then generates another assemblage).

by focusing on the relations between the methods rather than attempting to fit research methods into an a priori definition of what research (practice) methods can potentially be.

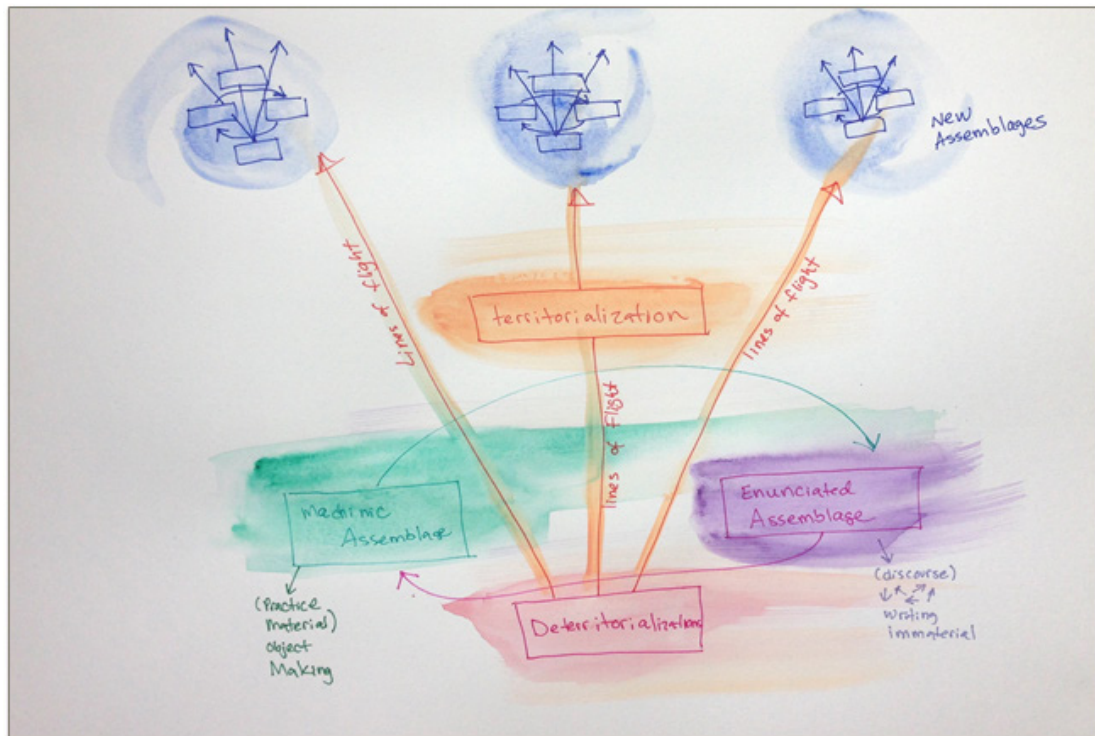


Figure 4: Heidi Aishman, Diagram of Deleuze and Guattari's Assemblage, Drawing, 2017

The structure of an assemblage can contain machinic/practice components like physical objects, happenings, events, and so on, but also enunciated/discourse components like signs, utterances, and so on. The discourse components of the assemblage are in reciprocal presupposition to the practice components. They exist because of each other, but neither causes the other. The discourse assemblage is comprised of language that is repeated through a social field. In this way, discourse is not an act of representing but a performance of “incorporeal transformations.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2007, p. 98) Language in this sense, does not represent the machinic/practice assemblage, it does something to the machinic/practice assemblage.¹³

¹³ This is like a curator declaring a set of objects as “curated”. The language does not represent the set of objects, it transforms them.

The second axis that comprises an assemblage is the territorializing/deterritorializing axis. The territorializing components of the assemblage constantly seek to stabilize the assemblage by placing boundaries on it. However, the assemblage is constantly being deterritorialized by the “lines-of-flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 9) that cause new assemblages to emerge. As an example, I view social engagements within curatorial-artistic projects as assemblages. The interaction is an enunciation into an already existing assemblage of ideologies of the project, the parameters of the space (whether it is located geographically or virtually), etc. The exchanges, interactions, impacts of participants are lines-of-flight that deterritorialized the assemblage and form new assemblages. In this way, analysis of a project with components of social engagement through the lens of an assemblage is a rhizomatic perspective that allows for multiple entry and exit points that allows for the meaning of the project to change contingently over time.

We can frame the components of an assemblage as entering the assemblage without any prior fixed meaning and instead meaning is constantly “becoming” through the relations between the components of the assemblage. In this way, an assemblage is a rhizomatic accumulation of practice and discourse that function in tandem, in reciprocal presupposition as opposed to one superseding the other in a “turn” to or from, which is where I am interested in situating my own research and curatorial research practice.

Deleuze on Research Methods - “Practice” vs “Theory” and Method Assemblage

Throughout this section I will approach my research as a method assemblage. My research method is therefore constituted by the relations between multiple components that are accumulated, superimposed, as well as somewhat distinct methods all of which are comprised of practices of thinking. An example of what I mean by methods being defined by the relationships between practices of

thinking includes my research method of thinking through the practice of making superimposed with making as a practice of thinking. In this way, I am defining all making as a form of thinking while simultaneously defining all thinking as a form of making. The two practices exist as a synthesis of making/thinking rather than two separate actions. From this research method relationship, other relationships are formed. The practice of making/thinking can be provisionally broken into the sub-practices of exhibition making, creation of social engagements, and other components of curatorial practice as it is currently understood in the forms of material or object based practise or labours. The practice of making/thinking can also include the crafting of discourse through language, writing and the areas of curatorial practice that are immaterial in their labour, in order to be contextualized and analysed. The sub-practice of writing can then be broken down into sub-sub practices of writing exhibition texts to think/make the flow of an exhibition in a fixed space, writing sections to think/make theory, etc. In this way, I view all research as practice and my research method as an assemblage constituted by the relationships between these merged, mutable and porous practices.¹⁴

I am particularly interested in integrating theory within the scope of practice in a manner similar to the one Deleuze delineates. Deleuze states, "For theory too is something which is made, no less than its object. For many people, philosophy is something which is not 'made,' but is pre-existent, ready-made in a pre-fabricated sky. ... However, philosophical theory is itself a practice, just as much

¹⁴ An example of multiple practices superimposing on each other in my research includes my practice of a series of exhibition events with Ph15 a NPO in Buenos Aires that occurred in many locations over a number of years. My practice(s) within this group was as an artist, curator, fundraiser, facilitator of dialogue, generator of discourse. While initially being invited as a visiting artist, this component of the assemblage was simply one entry point, where all the other components presented themselves in relationship to that original moment of connection to the group. As I will discuss later in a section on social engagement and working with marginalised groups, each of these roles of making/thinking relationships then also merge and superimpose along side questions of the practice of agency, validity and for this research, labour practices in its various forms.

as its object. It is no more abstract than its object. It is a practice of concepts.” (Deleuze, 2013, p. 268) In this way, I am interested in encompassing Deleuze’s view that theory can be seen as a sub-set of/component of practice to work in my own research. This view allows for theory and practice, and all of the components within, surrounding and developing from them, to exist in a non-binary space, but rather to evolve in an oscillation between parataxical occurrences and rhizomatic occurrences.

Instead of a thesis formed from the concept of a binary dialectic of “research” and “practice,” I am framing my research within Deleuze’s concept of “assemblages”. Deleuze writes, “Assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders ...” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 23) From this perspective, I can frame my research/practice as an assemblage of methods. John Law¹⁵ has written, “The task is to imagine methods when they no longer seek the definite, the repeatable, the more or less stable.” (Law, 2010, p. 6) Law’s statement can be easily applied to methods of curatorial practices that have been changing, expanding and accumulating to the point where the goals no longer appear to be derived from definite, stable or repeatable components. Law outlines his concept of a method assemblage that is “a tentative and hesitant unfolding, that is at most only very partially under any form of deliberate control. It needs to be understood as a verb and a noun.” (Law, 2010, p. 41-42) For Law, the development of an assemblage does not intentionally avoid boundary making, but instead the concept of a method assemblage attempts to, “imagine more flexible boundaries, and different forms of presence and absence.” (Law, 2010, p. 85) By framing my research as an assemblage of research methods I am then able to use an array of diverse methods that have flexible boundaries and can be readily

15 John Law was a Scottish economist that believe that monetary value was not the only means of exchange. Non-monetary value exchange will become an important component to a later section on labour practices. While the focus of this research is not on the economy of the art world, the market, value, and economics are still a thread that is woven throughout the assemblage.

imbricated upon each other or coalesce into each other.¹⁶

This perspective of research as an assemblage of methods highlights an awareness of perceived boundaries between research practices (writing/discourse, curating/practice, making, reading, etc.) The boundary creation between the practices is a focus on relations, not on characteristics of any individual practice. Deleuze outlines this, “In a multiplicity what counts are not the terms or the elements, but what there is ‘between,’ the between, a set of relations which are not separable from each other.” (Deleuze and Parnet, 2012, viii.)

Subsequently, defining my research method is not about identifying the parameters of a method, but rather understanding that all methods have permeable and mutable boundaries and the relation of methods encompasses the assemblage. This method assemblage is always ephemeral and by definition is always incomplete. The relations between various methods are always changing and “becoming.” Deleuze describes, “a line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination ... A line of becoming has only a middle.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 323) Therefore, it is my task as a researcher to enter in the middle, the in-between and then to relate. To do this, I must focus on the continuing changes in the relations between elements of my method assemblage. This requires a shift from trying to “know” various components of research/practice to “relating to” those components. From this perspective, I do not view my research as trying to “know” the myriad of components in the sense of being able to collect, distil and describe a singular concept, but rather to construct a contact zone with a shifting assemblage of

16 I situate my research/practice method within the assemblage because it frames the various components of my work in resonance with one another. It allows for reduction in the tensions between artist/curator, facilitator/participant, those with and without access/agency, and so on, because there is a transparency of intent not to exist within predetermined boundaries of roles like “curator,” “artist,” “writer”.

practices.¹⁷ In this way, my research method assemblage is not only descriptive and generative of thoughts; it is performative. This thesis examines applying Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblages in my research. Some notable, namable elements of a curatorial assemblage include (but are not limited to):

Gallery space
Artists
Art
Curator
Gallery Owner
Locations
Technology
Art history
Theoretical discourse
The food at the opening
Advertising
Money
Gallery Visitors
Language
Materials to make art
Time
Empathy
Attention
Inclusive approaches
Desire

Etc.

17 In using the term "contact zone" I am both referencing the theory developed by Miwon Kwon on social engagements in art practices as well as understanding that later on I will be showing how it is flawed when working with collaborations on a global scale with marginalised and non-marginalised groups.

Access(able)

Access(able), a collaborative exhibition by young artists from the programs of Atlanta based NPO drawchange, Buenos Aires based emerging curators Juan and Nanci Alfonso, and Angel Negri Alfonso, and Heidi M. Aishman, PhD Researcher, Department of Fine Art, University of Reading, UK.



Figure 5: Installation shot of Access(able) (2018).

Photo by Bob Krasner Photography



Access(able)

EXIT

Access(able): a Reflective Analysis

Access(able) (2018) is an exhibition that I co-curated as part of this research. This section relies heavily on a reflective analytical method for examining the exhibition Access(able). I will use the reflective method of Who, What, When, Where, Why for the similar purpose of locating all of the various elements of Access(able) as isolatable, pre-existing entities. This method of analysis will be followed by a diffractive analysis of the same exhibition to highlight those elements that allowed for new unknown capacities to act to emerge.

Reflective Summary:

Access(able) was an exhibition at The Living Gallery in Brooklyn, NY, USA from Nov. 9-13, 2018. Works displayed were produced by underserved children during art workshops with non-profit agency drawchange. The exhibition was curated by me, Juan Alfonso, Nanci Alfonso and Angel Negri Alfonso.

Who participated in Access(able)?

Access(able) began as a collaborative experiment between the students of the workshops run by Atlanta based non-profit organization NPO drawchange and previous students from the workshops of Ph15 in Buenos Aires. In addition, visitors to the exhibition participated in several ways, they were able to add their own drawing to the exhibition, they were able to virtually visit during the opening, and those who were present in the gallery were able to virtually converse with participants who were present through Skype and FaceTime.

Drawchange is a non-profit organization that organises workshops for underserved children in the US, Central America, Ethiopia, and Puerto Rico. In the U.S. drawchange works with children living in homeless shelters and abroad with impoverished children. *Access(able)* exhibited artwork from drawchange's programs that took place in Atlanta, GA and Orlando, FL in the US, Ethiopia, and Puerto Rico. The young artists who created the works in the exhibition

participated in weekly workshops to work on different art based projects each with a specific topic or goal. Jennie Lobato, Founder of drawchange, writes,

“Their projects focus on empowering young people to realise they can create their dreams and emerge from their cycle of poverty. The children who made these masterpieces come together every week to work on different art based projects, expressing emotion through their art. The time they spend creating allows the therapeutic aspect of art to flow through them, encouraging them to explore their subconscious and conscious thoughts. By igniting their innate creative spark, the children learn a healthy way to process emotions so that they can turn them into something truly remarkable.” (Lobato, 2018, p. 1)

The names of the individual artists are not used the exhibition, Access(able) and many are not disclosed for safety reasons due to their situations in the programs in the US. As many of these kids are in shelters for domestic reasons they are not named when participating in group exhibitions that are not specifically run by drawchange, or by drawchange affiliates.

The Access(able) exhibition curatorial team consisted of Juan Alfonso, Nanci Alfonso and Angel Negri Alfonso who were invited to co-curated with me. They were previous students of mine in workshops run by the Ph15 Foundation as described in Chapter 1 I met J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso while I was a visiting artists/teacher and together we worked on several exhibitions and a series of artists books. Now, many years later, we co-curated and organised Access(able) for the artists of drawchange who are located worldwide. Where once J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso were given access points to exhibit their work, they are now helping to provide access points for other young people by stepping into curatorial roles. All participants in Access(able) come from a variety of backgrounds and geographical locations. All of the work is viewable online and there were opportunities to FaceTime or Skype with the artists and curators at scheduled times during the exhibition.

What were the significant research elements of Access(able)?

There were several significant elements of Access(able) that were brought together in developing the concept of the exhibition. One being the use of technologies that were easily available to those involved in order to execute the entire show through those technologies. Images of the artwork created by students at drawchange's workshops were sent digitally to the co-curators J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso and myself. We then co-curated Access(able) through Facebook messenger and email. Our process was not to curate the exhibition by selection and editing but rather by inclusion and relational installation. All of the curators embraced their role as those with the power to generate access points for the drawchange workshop kids. In working together on this exhibition we were able to also reflect back upon our time working together back in 2004, what that meant and why we were all interested in participating in Access(able). Jennie Lobato, Founder of drawchange contacted each representative of drawchange for each of the locations of Ethiopia, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica and the US, and asked if each group wanted to participate in the exhibition to which they all agreed. They were all sent the press release and a small bio on the curators as well. The artwork was then mailed to New York. I then hung the work with input from all of the curators. drawchange then advertised the exhibition on its Facebook page

The exhibition included, printed artwork on the walls, video projection of the kids making the work, textual elements explaining the concept behind the project, bio's on the groups involved, a wall map piece showing all the locations of participants and their connections, as well as a space for visitors to make drawings and add them to the exhibition, and a place for visitors to purchase work, and donate to drawchange.

Where was Access(able)?

The reflective analysis of where the exhibition took place breaks the exhibition

into various stages and then locates the elements of the exhibition to specific times and physical locations. During drawchange workshops in Ethiopia, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica and the US, participants created drawings and sculptures for display during Access(able). The drawings and sculptures were mailed to The Living Gallery in Brooklyn, NY, USA where they were on display from Nov. 9-13, 2018. Works that sold from the exhibition went to private collectors and all unsold work was returned to drawchange for future events. The money collected at the exhibition went to drawchange to provide funding for additional art workshops in underserved areas. All of the workshop participants were informed of their exhibition and informed of the individuals who purchased their work.

Why was Access(able) conceived and executed?

Access(able) was fundamentally the practice portion of my practice-based research. From a reflective analysis perspective, the exhibition was an experiment in practicing my research methods. The exhibition concept directly relates to several of the theorists referenced in the written part of the thesis. For example, concepts of hospitality in curating, that are mentioned in the original exhibition proposal (see attachments section), stemmed from my reading of Beatrice Von Bismarck's, *Hospitality – Hosting Relations in Exhibitions* (2012). The exhibition was organised and facilitated in parallel with my methods and concepts as they developed. For example, Access(able) was facilitated through online communications in order to test my concepts of the use of technology in curatorial practice to execute exhibitions that may not come to fruition with those technologies.

Issues Raised by the Reflective Analysis

The reflective analysis of Access(able) brings many ideological questions into focus. I will discuss ideology further in the section titled "Ideology" on page 163, but for now will point out how a reflective analysis raises such questions.

What does it mean that the work was produced in economically underserved areas, but brought to a privileged area for display? Did this change in location provide an opportunity for the participants in the exhibition to have access to groups of people that they otherwise would not have due to economic or physical constraints? Did the change in location reinforce pre existing notions of difference and otherness?

Do ideological perspectives such as gender, socio-economic status, religion, etc. limit an individual's agency to capacities to act only within the ideology itself? Is it possible to increase capacities to act outside of a particular ideology? Does a lack of economic agency by definition mean that individuals have similar lack of agency in all ideological perspectives? For example, if an individual is ideologically interpolated and located as "underserved" due to a lack of economic agency, does that mean they also lack gender agency and are limited by the gender interpolated by their local social group? Is it possible to gain agency outside of already existing ideologies? If so, can that increased capacity to act influence other, pre-limited ideologies? Can providing agency to an individual, in an unknown capacity to act, influence their perceived capacity to act in all ideologies, therefore empowering individuals to resist all interpellations? For example, if an individual is interpellated by their local social group as an "underserved girl," is it possible to provide that individual with the tools to resist their gender interpellation and utilize gender agency in order to define their own gender regardless of social interpellation? If so, can that individual correlate gender agency to socio-economic agency and resist socio-economic ideologies that insist on defining and limiting their potential by interpolating them as "underserved?" Can providing opportunities to increase an individual's capacity to act in previously unknown or unexpected ways increase their agency in all capacities, including ones that had been previously perceived as limited due to ideological constraints?

Access(able): a Diffractive Analysis

Access(able) is an assemblage of many heterogeneous elements across multiple locations and at various times. Elements of the assemblage that come into being include people (such as students, artists, curators, collectors, gallery owners, gallery visitors, etc.), things (such as artwork, online postings, video collaborations, etc.), places (such as gallery space, schools, private residences, etc.) as well as concepts (such as agency, self determination, joy, etc.). All of these elements and more are included in the assemblage of Access(able).

From the diffractive perspective, all of the elements of the assemblage come into being due to their interactions with each other. The assemblage offers the capability for the elements to become something previously unknown. Through this set of novel interactions within the assemblage, difference can occur outside of previously established ideological constraints. Participants who are located as “underserved” within a socio economic ideology have the opportunity to become something completely outside of the constraints of ideology. Where the ideology limits their agency to their ability to act only with economic or social power, the assemblage offers the opportunity for all participants to have agency over their own definition along previously unknown capacities to act. They can have agency to become something unexpected such as a curator, an international exhibiting artist, someone whose life has global impact, someone who adds value to another person’s life (not necessarily economically, but perhaps along a different currency of value), etc.

Who, Where was the exhibition? (a diffractive examination of location)

The diffractive analysis of where the exhibition took place takes a different perspective on the notion of location. Rather than looking at location as a pre-existing source of difference that defines people according to their location in the world, a diffractive analysis examines the provisional phenomena that lead to difference. This diffractive knowledge is not universal; it is specific, partial and embodied. So rather than emphasizing a reflective statement like the notion that the work on display was made by Ethiopians and shown to Americans, a diffractive analysis may ask, ‘How can a drawing become an embodiment of the difference between two people in a meaningful way?’ In order to do this, an individual relationship must be examined.



Figure 6: drawchange, “Ball and School”, 13” x 19”, Painting, 2018,
Image courtesy of drawchange. drawchange.org



Figure 8: Image of participants making “Ball and School” during drawchange workshop, Ethiopia, 2018, Image courtesy of drawchange. drawchange.org



Figure 7: Image of first exhibition of “Ball and School”, Ethiopia, 2018, Image courtesy of drawchange. drawchange.org

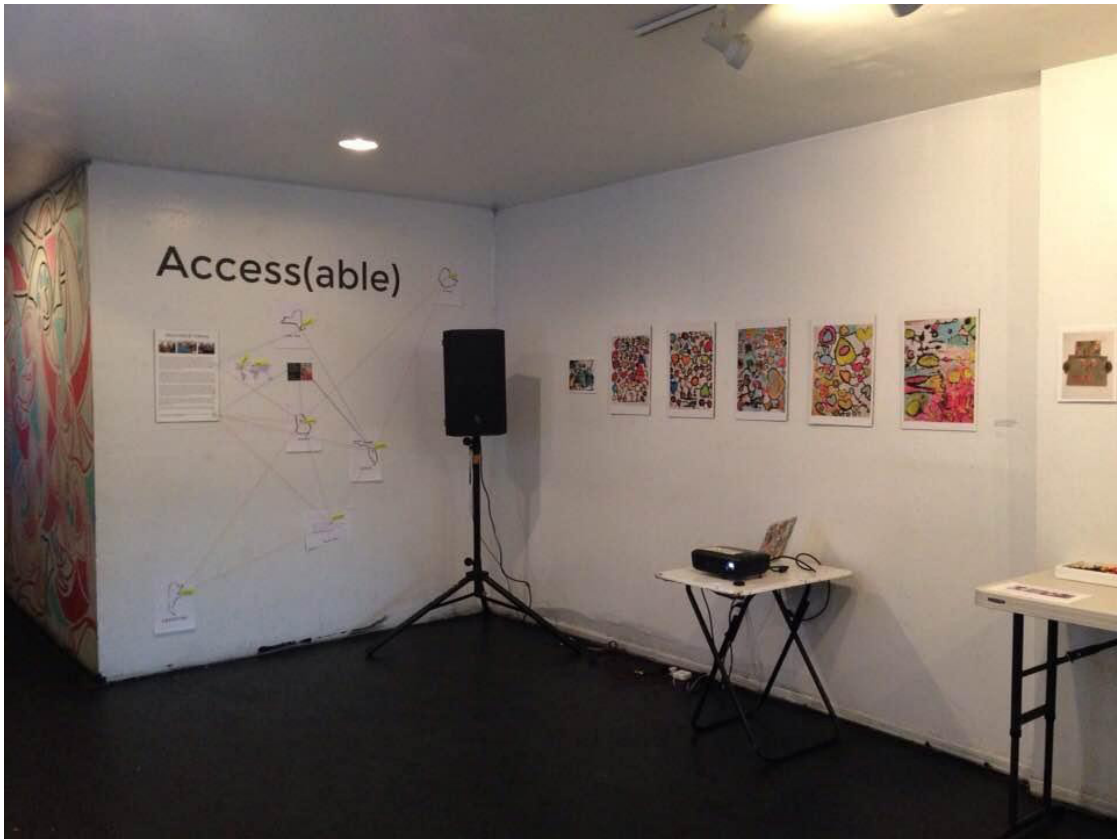


Figure 10: Installation shot of “Ball and School,” Access(able), 2018

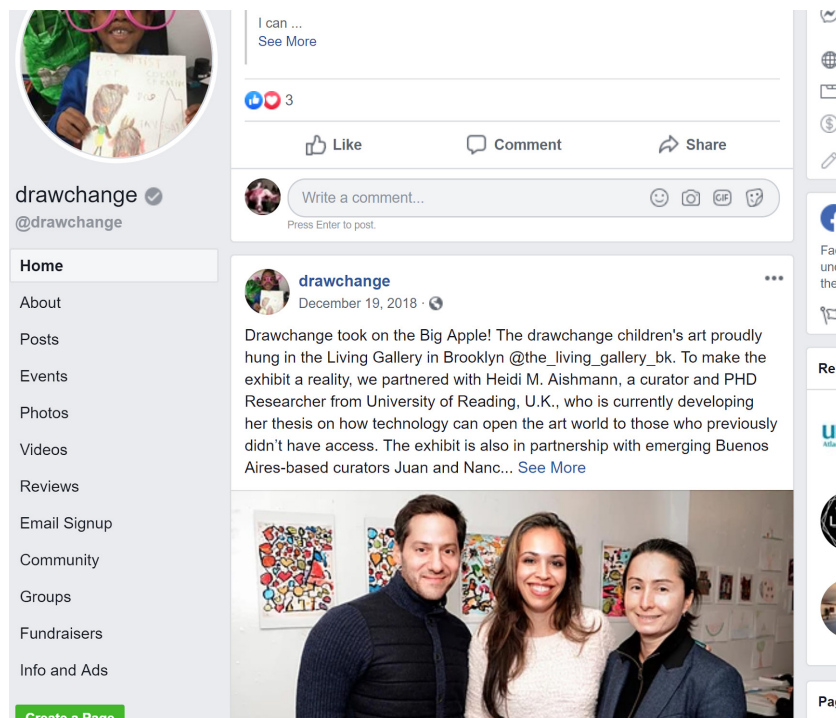


Figure 9: Screen grab of online discussion of “Ball and School,” 2019



Figure 11: "Ball and School," in Private Collection.

"Figure 8: Image of participants making "Ball and School" during drawchange workshop, Ethiopia, 2018, Image courtesy of drawchange. drawchange.org" on page 110 - "Figure 11: "Ball and School," in Private Collection." on page 112 depict the image "Ball and School," in various locations. When making the drawing, the participants said that it was about the connections between the things they love in life like playing ball and going to school. It is a map, both literal and metaphorical, of the relationship between various elements of their lives and how they are connected through love and joy. It is not a drawing of a ball or a school, it is a drawing of the space inbetween. "Figure 7: Image of first exhibition of "Ball and School", Ethiopia, 2018, Image courtesy of drawchange. drawchange.org" on page 110 is an installation shot of "Ball and School" in Ethiopia. All of the elements are connected. The drawings are connected by pink tape that is connected to the participants who are all touching, holding or connected to each other. "Figure 10: Installation shot of "Ball and School," Access(able), 2018" on page 111 is an installation shot of drawings in New York next to a map showing how the various locations are all connected. Finally, "Figure 9: Screen grab of online discussion of "Ball and School," 2019" on page

111 is a screen grab of the online discussion of “Ball and School” where the participants from around the globe can discuss the drawing. This discussion is still continuing and will remain live for the foreseeable future.

The collectors who came to the gallery and purchased “Ball and School” said, “I remember when I was that age, I drew a map from the soccer field to my school so I could make sure I could play as long as I could before running to school. I used the Crayola paints my school had which were the same color as the ones these kids used. This is identical to my map, made at a different time and place. Maybe time and place are not such great markers ...”

Where does difference occur? Is there difference first and then ideology simply locates it? Or does an ideology manufacture difference for its own goals of isolation? Can difference occur outside of a pre-existing ideology? What would that look like?

The diffractive analysis does not assume difference, but looks at where difference occurs. In the case of “Ball and School,” what was discovered was not difference, but instead, the ability to relate in the face of ideologically constructed differences such as age, race, nationality, socio-economic status, etc.

So, for this specific example, the diffractive answer to ‘Where is Access(able) located?’ is that it is located in the relationship in-between two people. The drawing “Ball and School” embodies the intersection of that relationship and serves as a nexus for a continued relationship that will change in the future. Access(able) is not locatable as one isolatable event within a finite time-frame. Access(able) is the diffraction pattern that emerges from the relationships in-between all of the heterogeneous elements that come into being. Access(able) is a partial, situated, transient phenomenon that occurs in the space in-between participants. It is on-going and ever changing.

It is important to note that the diffractive analysis fully incorporates the reflective analysis. Ideological difference is not dismissed, but the diffractive analysis asks if it is possible to create difference outside of ideologically established notions of difference. For example, all participants in Access(able) are fully aware that socio-economic ideology pre-locates all participants and pre-judges the potential relationships that various participants can have with one another based on the constraints of the ideology. Socio-economic ideology pre-locates the collector in New York as “rich” and the Ethiopian students as “poor” and states that the pre-existing difference between the two participants pre-determines all of the potential relationships that the two can have. This ideological, reflective perspective results in a feeling of lowered capacity to act in all participants because it says that ideology has predetermined all capacities to act and that no one has any agency outside of the ideology. The only solution to increased capacity to act from the reflective, ideological perspective is to fight for power within the ideological constraints. The diffractive position acknowledges this perspective, but asks if it is the only one. The diffractive position seeks to find unknown capacities to act, which by definition exist outside of ideology and can only be determined through experimentation and analysis.

Diffractive Methods of Assessment

At this point in my research, I would like to structure a method of assessment in order to determine if the exhibition was “successful.” A normalized, reflective analysis requires data that can be named, aggregated and presented in order to be assessed. Reflective options of assessment are frequently based in demonstrating how the exhibition participated in an ideological discourse. For example, I could define a successful exhibition as one where an ideological power imbalance was partially corrected by: “giving a voice” to a previously silenced group, providing money for specific participants, providing agency or access to a group of people,

removing power from a specific group, silencing a group, etc.¹⁸ I can also reflectively create a questionnaire and poll all of the participants in Assess(able) in order to aggregate their responses and then determine if the exhibition was successful based on the reflective data analysis of the questionnaire. But what knowledges are marginalized in all of these reflective processes of assessment? Can research be based in diffractive assessments that include marginalized knowledges?

My research is not based in evaluating a set of intra-actions defined by an immutable set of morals or a reflective set of ideologies. I describe the base of my research more in the next chapter, "Chapter 3: Ethics" on page 139 where I describe Haraway's notion of partial knowledges, Braidotti's nomadic ethics and Barad's onto-ethico-epistemology in detail. My research asks specifically, "Can an exhibition be assessed not on how much money was made, not on how prestigious the exhibition venue was, not on how much press was garnered, not on how much fame was accrued, and not on how many 'likes' were clicked? Can a successful exhibition be one that is not centered around production of ideological discourse? Can a successful exhibition be one where at the end, people involved felt they could do more and become more than they expected?" The notion of assessing an exhibition based on how people felt after an exhibition requires reliance on partial knowledges. Can a research method rely on asking people how they felt about an intra-action? How can research be based in knowledges that are typically marginalized because they might not be knowledges that can be linguistically located?

My research method does not demand a reflective analysis of data obtained from a questionnaire that forces people to quantify their affects into linguistically located and named concepts. My research method requires caring about individual affects, not about forcing individual knowledges into a data set that can be evaluated as

18 I am using the term "corrected" as defined by Reilly when she wrote, "exhibitions function as curatorial correctives." (Reilly, 2017, p. 1)

an aggregated summation. My research requires directly asking individuals how intra-actions impacted them. And then listen to their answers. And then caring about their answers, regardless of whether or not the answers can be “fit into” my research in a reflective manner. In order to assess my research, I have to ask individuals what their values are and how the intra-actions of the exhibition impacted them personally.

Why participants value their participation in Access(able)?

When talking about value in the art world things are complicated. Value has threads in economics like the “market value” of an artwork, value is often discussed as adding to cultural or educational experience like “the value of the arts” in schools or communities. The value of participating in collaborations with artists, or in performances, happenings, or even participating in exhibitions is a dialogue that has spawned books and PhD theses for decades. The value I want to discuss, as relevant to participating in my practice experiment Access(able), is a little different. And it starts with cake mix.

“In the 1950, the story goes, US food company General Mills wanted ideas on how to sell more of its Betty Crocker brand of instant cake mixes. It put psychologist Ernest Dichter – the “father of motivational research” – on the case. Dichter ran focus groups. Change the recipe, he then advised the company. Replace powdered eggs in the cake mix with the requirement to add fresh eggs. All-instant cake mix makes baking too easy. It undervalues the labour and skill of the cake maker. Give the baker more ownership in the final result. And the rest is history.” (Mortimer et al., 2019, p. 1)

Whether all of the facts about this story are true, it is the result of the investigation into what made the additional labour so appealing that caught my attention. As the article that included this story goes on to state:

“...it is the story of Dichter making a profound psychological insight into consumer behaviour that has passed into legend. Almost seven decades later, the idea of making things more laborious to get consumers to value them more is an established marketing tactic. We now know it as the ‘Ikea effect’.” (Mortimer et al., 2019, p. 1)

The Ikea effect – “that labour alone can be sufficient to induce greater liking for the fruits of one’s labour” – was named in a 2011 paper in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology* by Michael Norton, Daniel Mochon and Dan Ariely. They chose the name because products from the Swedish manufacturer typically require some assembly. (Mortimer et al., 2019, p. 1)

When asked about the importance of having J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso revisit their experiences as workshop students in the form of curators, or why it was necessary for the drawchange kids to be part of the whole process of organising the exhibition, my answer is very much in parallel with the Ikea Effect. By working in collaboration at each step of the execution of the exhibition, those in the roles of artists (drawchange’s workshop kids) or curators (J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso) put more labour into seeing the exhibition come together, and seeing it succeed. That labour imbues the show with a value that is not related to the economy, to the market value of the work on the walls, to a value of participation in the arts that they would normally have little or no access to.

The value is in the labour given, performed, shared, and even imagined in the collaboration of the process of the exhibition. During the opening a collector came. He spent 30 minutes drawing a picture to add to the wall, he asked if he could add it next to the pieces he purchased. The value of that participation was not in the final product of his drawing, but in the labour of making, and adding, and becoming, Becoming part of the exhibition as well as a supporter, a donor to drawchange, a collector of a new art form he did not have yet. In the same article that began with the cake mix story, the ikea effect was tested with an experiment in origami folding:

“The following graph shows the results from one of the experiments, in which participants were asked to fold origami cranes or frogs and then bid to buy the creations. The bidding phase also included origami made

by expert folders. They tended to see their own creations as much more valuable than those made by other participants, and almost equal in value to the expert origami.” (Mortimer et al., 2019, p. 1)

When Tichio brought the work he purchased from the exhibition to his framer in New York an interesting discussion about value came into the dialogue around his involvement with Access(able). Tichio was asked for the value of the work for insurance purposes (a normal question to ask a collector who often brings in pieces he has purchased from galleries and museums where replacement of the work if damaged is quite costly). He described to me the conversation that followed where he had to respond with, “do you mean what I paid for them? or what is their value?”.

The collector

While Tichio is not an artist, a maker, a creator, he valued the labour of the young artists who collaborated on the pieces he purchased, as well as the labour involved in being part of the exhibition collaboration by the adding of his own drawing to the wall next to the pieces sold to him. Even his efforts in traveling out to Bushwick on a rainy night to attend the opening (which can not be undervalued). Tichio expressed this in an email he sent to me well after the exhibition had closed:

“I thought I would drop you a note because I thought of you recently. I think I had mentioned how much I both enjoyed and was deeply moved by the Access(able) exhibition you organized and curated this past winter via Drawchange. I will be honest in saying that I attend an endless parade of gallery shows and exhibitions in my capacity as collector and my financial support of the Whitney Museum (via my position on the Chairman's Council) ...

Art is more passion than anything else for me, and one of things I enjoy most is accessing the range of artistic vocabularies being expressed across different mediums and, most importantly, different channels. I recognize you may be nauseated at my endless opinions on this topic after I cornered you at the opening for Access(able), ...I intend to hang the Access(able) artists opposite the new Mack or opposite my own collection of Bradfords (which I acquired long before he represented the US Pavilion at the Venice Biennial or set auction records with his \$12 million record

sale at last year's Spring auctions in London when it was learned that Eli Broad was the buyer of his work).

I simply cannot get enough of the idea of these Access(able) artists sitting in visual conversation with arguably the most relevant African American male painter of our generation (Bradford) ... and Cuban artists longing for agency and voice but whose content and practice is no less exquisite or insightful.

Thank you, again, for the kind invitation to the show, and I hope this note sheds some light on the long-lasting impact of your efforts.

Warmest wishes to you this summer,

Robert." (Aishman & Tichio, 2019)

I spoke with Tichio a few months after I had delivered the pieces he purchased and he had even more to talk about. He described to me his discussion he with his framer of how he had acquired the pieces from Access(able). He related the story to the framer of how the work was made, how he received permission to buy the work through the director of drawchange, how the money from the purchase of the pieces funds the program for further workshops, and about his excitement in adding them to his collection. And in the end, how he told the framer that if they were damaged during the framing process there was no replacing them. The works are valuable. Not because non-makers (critics, dealers, or curators) have deemed them of a certain dollar value based on a set of criteria accepted by the institution of the western art world (visual execution representing quality of craft, resume of the artist, the artists education, previous sales etc...). They are valuable because of the labour involved from how the artwork was made, by whom, and by how they came to be in Tichio's possession.

The Ikea effect in this exhibition can be applied to every aspect at every point of execution. Every participant in Access(able), the curators, the artists, the gallery and the gallery owner, the director of drawchange, the visitors, the collectors who purchased work, they all value the labour that they contributed to the creation of the exhibition. A resulting affect of that valuing of the labour involved is that each

participant regardless of their role began to value the labour performed by the others. Therefore the product of that labour, the relationships, the new capacities to act, the unknown capacities to act that have become after the exhibition, all have a value that is greater and more personal than simply having one located, fixed role within the collaboration.

The one thing that is not asked or answered by the research of the Ikea Effect is why we invest in our own labour, what is it that we are investing that makes the fruits of our labour so much more valuable? What is the internal mechanism at work that would make a kid from Ethiopia spend more time working in a collaboration that appears yields less individual gain? What affect is happening that inspires young adults in Buenos Aires to give time and effort to an exhibition that shows the artwork of other young people? In order to have an understanding of the goals of Access(able) and of my research as a whole an understanding of what this kind of value is, can become and how it can change is needed.

Why is personal investment in labour valuable and why does that personal labour make the products of our labour more valuable? These questions become key elements to why my research practice is produced in the form of exhibition collaborations such as Access(able).

Labour of Love

Let's begin with why J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso agree to co-curating the exhibition. No, wait, let's begin with why I asked them to co-curate with me. These two questions are both equally relevant to the question of why Access(able) was organised the way it was. I invited J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso to participate in exhibition making as curators, as access granters who may have a deeper understanding of the position of the perceived positions of drawchange kids. To return for a moment to the concepts of "...acts of inviting, offering and welcoming, of showing presence and paying attention,

of accepting and reciprocating, but also of refusal, exclusion and control, the exhibition generates relations of giving, taking and responding.” (Bismarck and Meyer-Krahmer) J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso were asked to consider how they once felt as students, as young artists, as kids working on artwork in a program that provided opportunities to make and exhibit photographs. Then I asked them to consider how they felt about those of us who were tasked with organising, funding, preparing and installing, their work in those exhibitions.

Curatorial practice as I have previously outlined is a process involving a wide range of skills, of responsibilities (self-imposed for those of us who curate independently) and therefore the practice of curating is labour intensive. I outlined this perspective in Chapter 1, framing my own practice as a diffractive accumulation. The sense of diffractive accumulation allows for my experience, education, and knowledge of exhibition making, to see the labour involved like a road map once an exhibition idea is conceived. If we then apply an examination of Access(able) through the lens of the Ikea effect, the outcome, meaning the final product of the exhibition, is imbued with value due to the labour involved in executing the exhibit. Some of the skills that have become part of my curatorial practice have been accumulated through time, labor and attention. These skills resonate with the concepts of hospitality in curating such as inviting, offering, and paying attention. These skills are also what make the Ikea effect so relevant in why J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso co-curated Access(able) with me.



Hi heidi how are you? sorry for the delay in the answer It's good that you can continue with projects similar to ours, we remember you very fondly with your visit, we would very much like to participate in this project. luckily my girlfriend speaks English 😊😊, henceforth if you prefer to send the emails she will translate. We are happy that you tell us a little more about what the project is about

JUAN

Figure 12: Screen grab of e-mail correspondence with J. Alfonso

Access(able) was organised fully by email, Facebook and FaceTime. All of the artwork was sent digitally from Jennie Lobato, Director and Founder of drawchange. J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso, reviewed the artwork and decided they did not want to exclude anything or anyone. They felt it was important that all of the work was included and rather it was arranged in a way that each workshop from each place (the U.S., Puerto Rico, Costa Rica and Ethiopia) were all hung together. Our discussions became not about the aesthetics of any one piece, but rather about how important each piece was because it was made, simply because someone had taken the time and the labour to create it. That alone, to J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso, meant it should be in the gallery.

The Best Exhibition Review Ever.

It was cold in the gallery. Living Gallery is in Bushwick, an area of Brooklyn NY that is just beginning to show signs of the inevitable gentrification, a cool coffee shop a few blocks away has gluten free cranberry turmeric muffins for \$4.50 and they only serve non dairy milk in their latte's that cost \$5.00. The gallery is under the train tracks of the M train that takes you from Broadway and Lafayette in Manhattan out over the bridge into Brooklyn. There was construction just outside the front door of the gallery, a pawn shop 3 blocks to the left and not much to the right beyond the construction. The gallery had no heat, but the space heaters were beginning to warm up the space as I set up for a 10:00 am to 5:00 pm shift of sitting in the gallery so the exhibition Access(able) could be open to the public. After an hour or so a young man and a young woman (I guessed they were no older than 20) came in. I greeted them, asked them if they had been to the gallery before and they said "no", but they had seen the sign outside for Wednesday night drawing and been wanting to go. I gave my small speech about the show, who was involved and what was on display, when I was done I said to take a look around and let me know if they had any questions. Usually this is how it goes when you work in a gallery:

Someone walks in off the street. You greet them, introduce yourself and ask them if they have been there before. Based on their answer you decide whether to give a leaflet/ info on the current exhibition or just say you are happy they have come back and to let you know if they have any questions. They walk around for a few minutes, maybe stare at something a little longer than something else, maybe ask a question, then say, “Thank you” and leave. You sit alone for another few hours until you do it all over again.

But that is not the interaction I had with these two visitors. They got as far as reading the intro wall text that stated:

“Access(able), a collaborative exhibition by young artists from the programs of Atlanta based NPO drawchange, Buenos Aires based emerging curators J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso, and A. N. Alfonso, and Heidi M. Aishman, PhD Researcher, Department of Fine Art, University of Reading, UK.”

When they asked “Is this your show?” I said no it’s theirs/ours? We then spent about an hour talking about everything from what was on display, why it was in that space, and working with young people in NPO’s like drawchange, why I asked my previous students from Ph15 to co-curate, until we began talking about relationships. They said they appreciated my taking the time to talk to them, I assured them it was my pleasure and told them directly it is what I love about what I do, getting to meet people, talk to people, learn about people I wouldn’t have known otherwise. The woman was 18, she was a fashion designer, she made clothes and sold them in some of the consignment shops in the area, the guy was DJ and likes to build his own turntables. As we talked about what inspired them to do design and music, what inspired me to curate shows with underserved groups, and we came to a place in our conversation where we all agreed it was about relationships. It was about inspiring people and being inspired by people, it was about seeing something emerge from a bunch of scraps of cloth, or a pile of broken electronics, or a bunch of art supplies given to a group of kids.

The young man paused, then he said, “I could do this, I could do this with my music, teach kids how to DJ, do a show with them.”

The young woman looked at him and said, “that would be awesome, I could do a fashion show with the kids in my neighborhood, maybe teach them what I’m doing, it would be so cool to see what they would make since my neighbourhood is crazy mixed.”

In that moment everyone’s capacity to act expanded, it became a space of unlimited possibility. They thanked me for my time. They wrote in the guest book (that I read later on), I gave them my card and said to reach out if I could help in any way, and they left.

As they walked out the door, I heard the guy say, “This show is lit!” By far the best review I have ever received. (If only I had gotten that in writing)

This interaction is the part of the exhibition, it was a real time experience in the diffractive practice. The resonances of the exhibition came into contact with the resonances of the visitors and in that moment they experienced a becoming, becoming part of the show, they became gallery goers, they became connection makers, friends of a curator, supporters of drawchange, fans of the artists, they became a DJ who wants to build turntables and collaborate with young people, a fashion designer who wants to include the kids in her neighbourhood and their cultural histories into her designs. Through our interaction I began to think about what other exhibitions I could organize that might include working with a DJ, working with a fashion designer, working with other forms of making that have a similar result of increasing capacities to act of those involved.

Once they had left, I read the guest book.

"Great experience! Conquer the world!" - Roderick

"This place, your soul, is amazing" - Susie Q

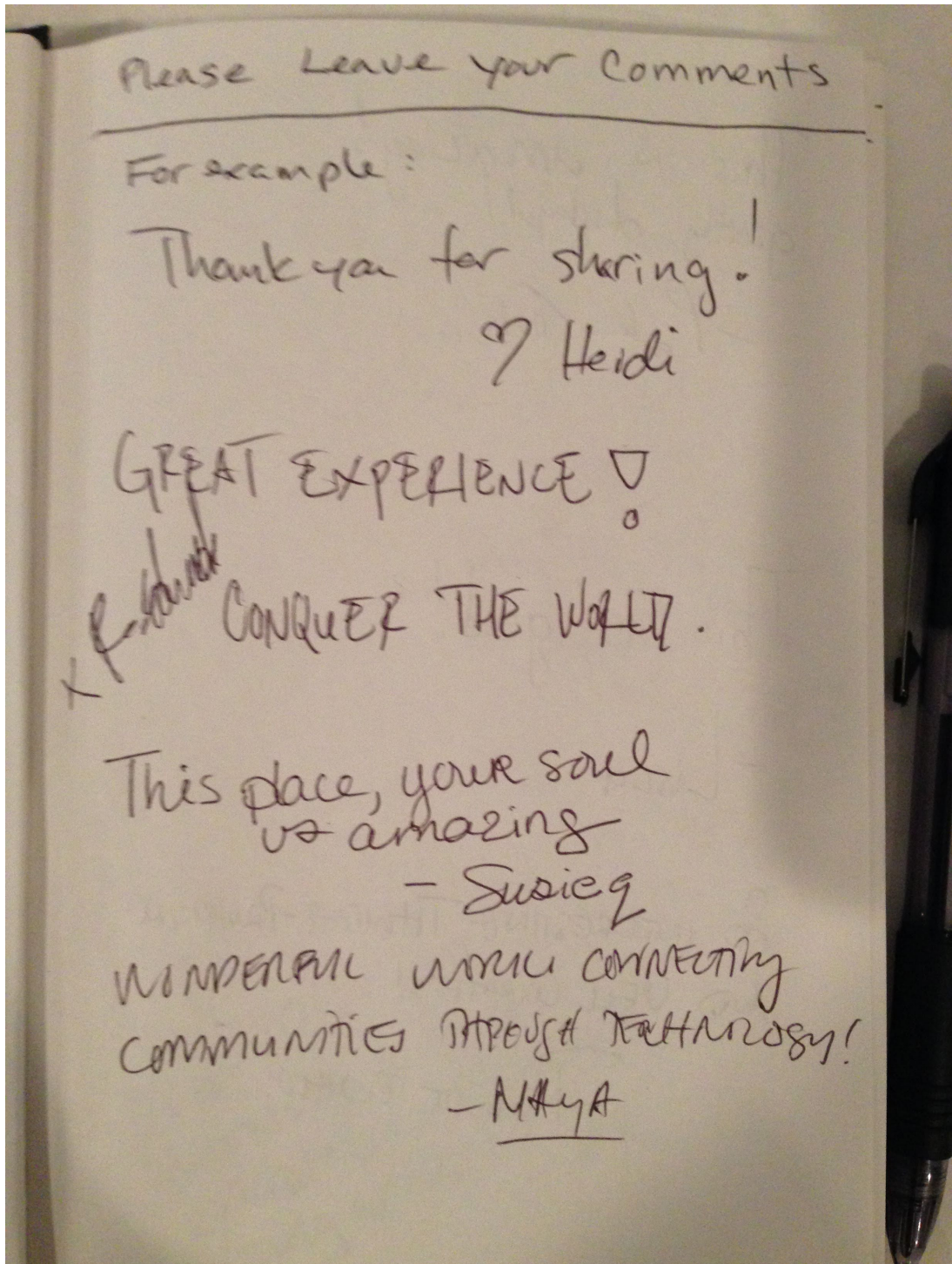


Figure 13: Documentation of exhibition book.

After the exhibition had ended, several people who visited the exhibition posted comments to the exhibition Facebook page. These comments shown below in a screen grab, are from Living Gallery owner, Nyssa Frank and Benjamin Sloat, Assistant Professor, Director MFA in Visual Arts at Lesley University. This is an example of the various impacts the exhibition Access(able) had on the participants. These Visitor Posts are able to be seen by anyone who visits the Facebook page.

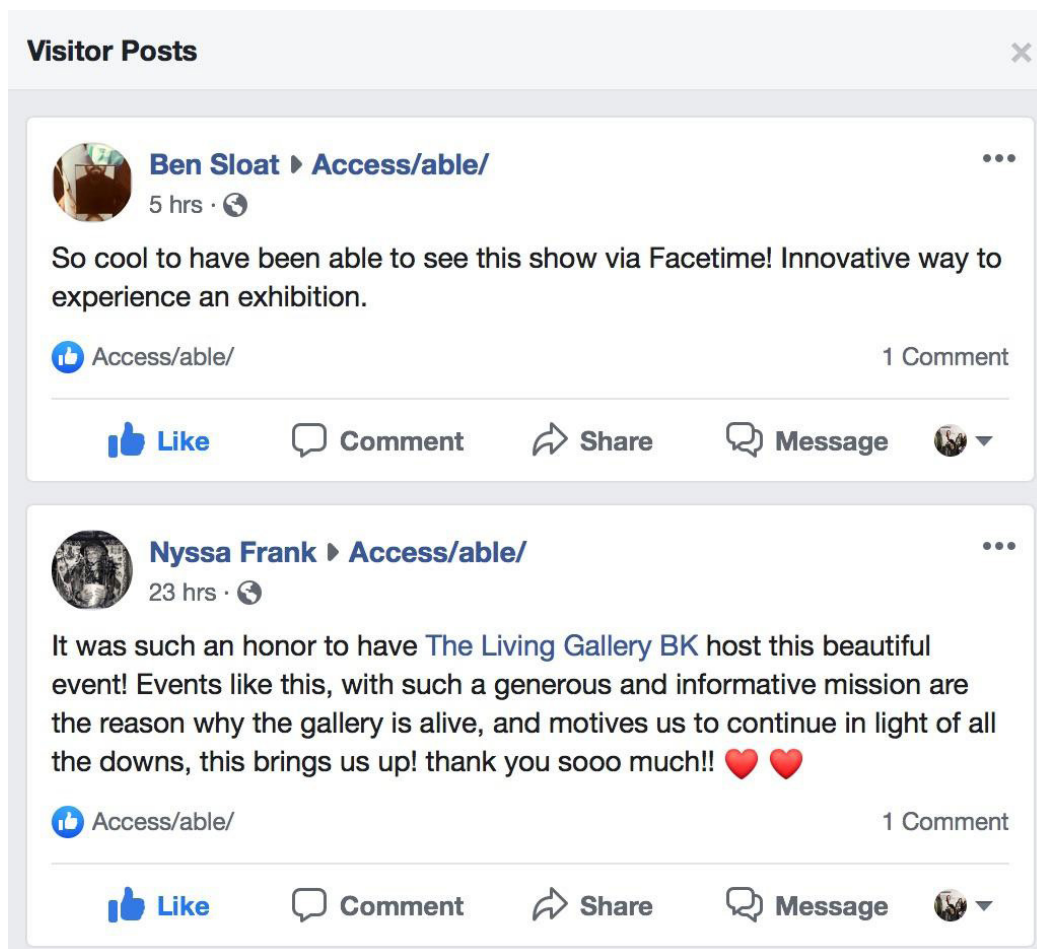


Figure 14: Screen grab of social media posts

In addition, some individuals who choose not to participate in particular social media platforms like Facebook, took the time to email me a comment I could post on their behalf.

“Having been a photographer for many years, I am well aware of the need for and power of documentation of important events. I knew that the images that I produced for Ms. Aishman's project would serve both the present and the future. For the artists around the world who could not be

there for the show, this was visual proof that their endeavors were seen and enjoyed by people that they had never met, in a city that welcomed them. Looking to the future, the photos will stand as a document of a special night. I very much enjoyed helping out!” (Krasner, 2018, p. 1)

Conclusion

At the end of my reflective analysis of Access(able), I posed several questions that were raised through the process. This exhibition asked what it means to exhibit work that was produced in economically underserved areas, but brought to a privileged area for display? Did this change in location provide an opportunity for the participants in the exhibition to have access to groups of people that they otherwise would not have due to economic or physical constraints? Did the change in location reinforce pre-existing notions of difference and otherness? Can providing opportunities to increase an individual's capacity to act in previously unknown or unexpected ways increase their agency in all capacities, including ones that had been previously perceived as limited due to ideological constraints? My research is not claiming that all of these questions can, were or should be answered thoroughly through this one exhibition, or through analysis of my previous curatorial work. But rather my research methods examine these questions, among others, and explores alternative avenues to create spaces of potential for new capacities to act. The quote above from photographer Krasner, does not call attention to the socio-economic differences between those who participated in Access(able), but rather notes his understanding of his role in providing, “visual proof that their endeavors were seen and enjoyed by people that they had never met, in a city that welcomed them.” (Krasner, 2019, p. 1) During the exhibition reception, the son of a collector showed his drawing to one of the drawchange kids who due to their geographic location could not be physically present at the opening of the exhibition.

Did participation in Access(able) provide both kids an opportunity they would not have otherwise? What was the impact it had on them? Through the analysis in this section, this image is a representation of one visitor sharing with another

visitor, through Facetime, a moment, an incident that occurred, a situated and embodied experience that happened due to the parameters of Access(able). My research does not claim to pinpoint, quantify or prove what that impact may be, it explores creating spaces of potential for new capacities to act. This potential can be seen in an email to me from the collector Tichio:

“Access(able), to me, was the ultimate demonstrative visual in bridging the proverbial gap between class and message; between creator identify and craft; between brand and content. This was so much on my mind that when I recently had the privilege of making a special trip to Cuba this Spring, which consisted of cultural outreach amongst artists of all differing disciplines, practices and pedagogy, I simply could not divorce this theme of "accessibility" to my visual consumption and collecting appetite.” (Aishman & Tichio, 2019)

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Access(able)



Figure 15: Installation shot Access(able) (2018).
Photo by Bob Krasner Photography



Figure 16: Installation shot Access(able) (2018).
Photo by Bob Krasner Photography



Figure 17: Installation shot Access(able) (2018).
Photo by Bob Krasner Photography

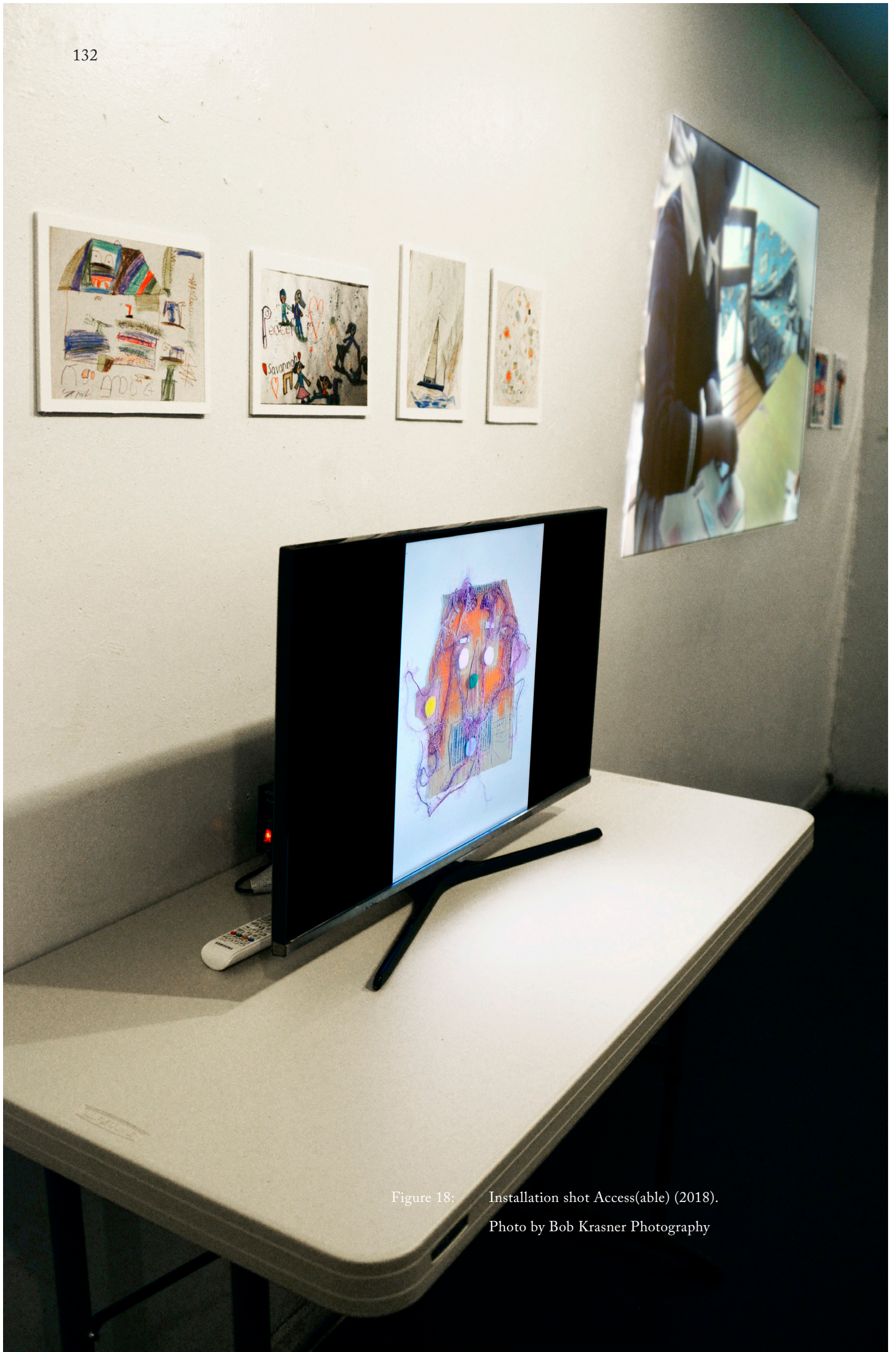


Figure 18: Installation shot *Access(able)* (2018).
Photo by Bob Krasner Photography



Figure 20: Installation shot Access(able) (2018).
Photo by Bob Krasner Photography



Figure 19: Installation shot Access(able) (2018)



Figure 21: Screen grabs of video chat during Assess(able)

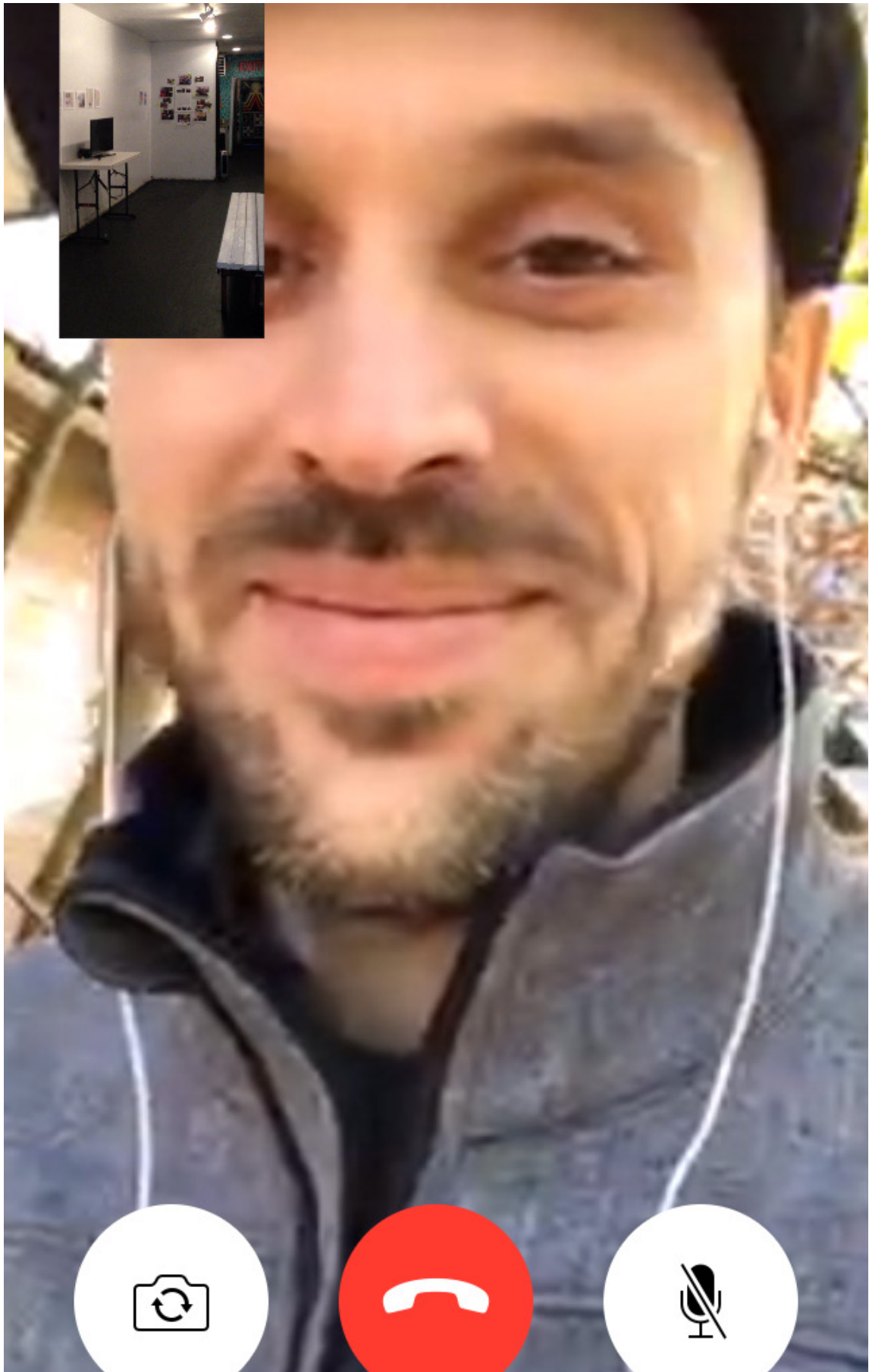
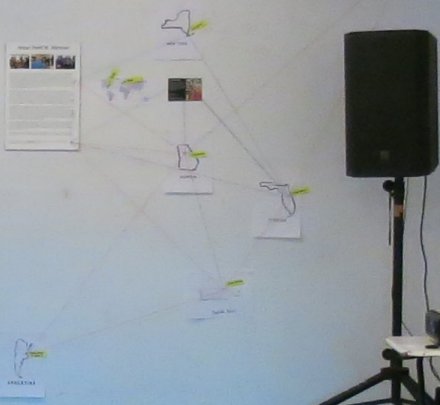


Figure 22: Screen grabs of video chat during Assess(able)



Figure 23: Installation shot Access(able) (2018)

Access(able)



Chapter 3: Ethics

Affect as both a grounding and a component of the Assemblage

Spinoza was a Dutch writer and philosopher who contributed to the Enlightenment in the 17th century. In 1677, Spinoza's attempted to apply Euclid's methods of mathematics to philosophy in his book *Ethics*. Spinoza's *Ethics* is useful in curatorial research because he frames and defines many of the terms and perspectives that can be directly applied. According to Spinoza, affect is to be understood as "affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections." (Spinoza, 1994, p. 154) In this way, I consider an affect a variation produced in a body by an interaction with another body that increases or diminishes the body's power of activity. Deleuze further defines affect by stating, "The affection refers to a state of the affected body and implies the presence of the affecting body, whereas the affectus refers to the passage from one state to another." (Deleuze, 2007, p. 49) Anna Hickey-Moody highlights the concept of affectus that "measures the material equation of an interaction, the gain and loss recorded in a body, or your embodied subjectivity, as the result of an encounter. This is distinct from affection, which is the feeling experienced by the embodied human subject." (Hickey-Moody, 2013, p. 79) Affections are, therefore, signifiers of affectus as feelings are markers of embodied variations. In this way, I can frame the body as a constantly responsive assemblage of affectus that is constituted through interactions with other bodies. Subsequently, the bodies are continuously transforming themselves through their interactions. Research based in affect presents the possibility that human subjects embody a personal structuring of affect. Seigworth and Gregg, write, "Affect spurs people to move, think, extend, and intensify. Affect is more of an event which occurs during exchanges and movements between intensities." (Gregg & Seigworth, pg. 10) For this research,

it is the movements of extending and intensifying of affect-events that resonate with curatorial practice. Deleuze outlines that an existing body is defined by a capacity to affect and be affected. When one body encounters another body an affect-event may happen that causes resonance that takes hold of both bodies. (Rai, 2011, p. 1) In this way, participants in a curatorial or artistic (for this research they are both equal parts of the assemblage practice) can be framed as bodies that are continuously transforming themselves through their interactions and thus embody a personal structuring of affect. I ground my research in affect as the third component in the movement from/to/into/in-between forms of practice to discourse to affect.

Nomadic thinking as a component of the Assemblage Practice

Etienne Balibar once explained that artists (we will also insert curators here as we have established them as component parts) and exhibitions need to become nomadic, physically and mentally traveling across borders. (Obrist, 2014, p. 127) While Balibar's thinking was with attention to national and geographical borders, languages and cultures as conduits for broadening of the translations of both artist and exhibitions his concept of the "nomadic" can be applied as a method of thinking within an assemblage. The method assemblage described above lends itself to a form of "nomadic thinking" utilizing a rhizomatic method of construction. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), Deleuze and Guattari define rhizomatic as having no specific origin or end because a "rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 25) They also state, "The life of the nomad is the intermezzo," (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 380) meaning it is a way of being that is in the middle, characterized by change, and unencumbered by systems of organization. *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) is an example of a book that utilizes a rhizomatic method of construction and "nomadic thinking". As Brian Massumi wrote in his foreword the book was, "conceived as an open system. It does not pretend to have the final word." (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007,

xiv) Massumi goes on to suggest that the book should be “played” like a record. He says, “You don’t approach a record as a closed book that you have to take or leave ... You find yourself humming them under your breath as you go about your everyday business.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, xiv) In this way, Massumi is recommending a reading practice for *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) that reconciles a potentially obscure study with a familiar practice that resonates with a possibility for affect-event. Like humming a tune that is then recognized by another body at some point during the day, my research assemblage aims to function with the same reading practice Massumi recommends. By utilising a rhizomatic method of research, writing and practice, this allows for affect to be simultaneously a ground and a component, as well as having a nomadic presence throughout each element of practice and discourse.

The concept of the nomadic is also related to the current ability of the public to use their technology to connect at any point and at any place. It is literally called “roaming” when you use your mobile devices in places where they are not grounded. As the ability to work, connect, talk and see (via Skype and FaceTime, Viber and WhatsApp) regardless of location, this questions why art related practices, projects, plans for projects, exhibitions seem to still work most commonly in a grounded physical site. For my own research and practice the ability to work while roaming, to be actively engaged in a curatorial project (from whatever point of entry is being used at the time, as an artist, a curator, a facilitator, etc) encompasses the concept of inhabiting the gap. The “gap” is nomadic, it is a space that allows for multiple entry points both conceptually and physically. If a project has a presence or roots in a social media space like Facebook, that projects participants are inherently nomadic, as they are at no point grounded in one location. In the following review of a previous project, and its relationship to the concept of a practice experiment created for this research, the idea of the nomadic becomes integral to how to both better use and understand the possibilities of new technologies.

Case Study - File Transfer Protocol: an example of a Nomadic Methods in a Curatorial Assemblage

In this case study I will outline how “File Transfer Protocol” (can be framed as an example of the applications of nomadic methods outlined in the previous section (Deleuze) as well as in the following section (Braidotti), In addition I will explore the project as a model for a type of curatorial assemblage as it relates to this research.

Reflective Analysis

For my this case study the reflective analysis of format of Who, What, When, Where and Why will be modified. “File Transfer Protocol” (2012) could be interpreted in several ways to undermine the notions of “What” and “Where” all together. The reflective method locates important elements of a project or a practise as well as highlighting how this method excludes other elements that may not fit seamlessly into one of these categories. This project is being used as a possible example of nomadic methods because of its intention to question locatability both geographically and materially.

Who participated in File Transfer Protocol?

“File Transfer Protocol” (2012) was curated by London-based artists, writers and curators working in collaboration, Pil and Galia Kollektiv. They were invited to create the project by The Mamuta Art and Media Centre who had been asked by Diego Rotman and Lea Mauas of Sala-Manca Collective (Jerusalem) to create a concept for their virtual collection. For my research the inviting process alone is already nomadic in nature. The artists who participated in the exhibition were Jem Noble, John Russell, Annabel Frearson, POLLYFIBRE, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, Paul Chaney and Kenna Hernly, Darren Banks.

What was File Transfer Protocol?

“File Transfer Protocol” was one exhibition from the virtual collection organised by Diego Rotman and Lea Mauas of the Sala-Manca Collective based in Jerusalem. Rotman and Lea’s intent was, “to create a virtual collection of exhibitions that could be realized in any exhibition venue, anywhere in the world” and they called this The Museum of the Contemporary. (Rotman & Mauas, 2013, p. 1) The virtual collection entitled The Storage Room, was part of The Museum of the Contemporary that was structured based on projects done by The Mamuta Art and Media Center. The fundamental concepts of Mamuta are, “to advance art projects and to create a framework for artists from different media, as well as curators, architects, designers, and researchers, who wish to create in the spirit of cooperation, dialogue, and technological innovation.” (Rotman & Mauas, 2013, p. 1) Rotman and Lea invited Mamuta to create a concept for the virtual collection, they then invited curator’s to propose an exhibition for that virtual collection.

The first exhibition from this virtual collection, “File Transfer Protocol,” had several parts to it that worked in tandem to reframe how exhibitions function from conception to execution in the digital world. The curator’s Pil and Galia Kollektive, an artist/curator duo currently working as Lecturers in Fine Art at Reading University and as the dual Head of Post Graduate Study in Fine Art, proposed “File Transfer Protocol”, “addressing the intersection between the virtual and the material.” (Rotman & Mauas, 2013, p. 1) Seven UK based artists were invited, “to produce digital art for a physical environment...the files ranged from sound, video, digital prints and net art, blueprints for an action to take place, something to be made, a conceptual text piece, etc.” The exhibition reconfigured how digital artworks were viewed. “The artworks included were not available to view online in a ‘screen’ environment but only as part of a downloadable package with the intention that the exhibition could be displayed (in a physical space) by any interested party and realised as ambitiously or minimally as the downloader wishes, based on their means. The artists will therefore also supply a set of

instructions for the physical installation of the work alongside the digital files.”
(Rotman & Mauas, 2013, p. 1)

When was the exhibition File Transfer Protocol?

“File Transfer Protocol” was exhibited in March of 2012 at the Haifa Museum of Art, Israel.

Where did the exhibition take place?

“File Transfer Protocol” was on view at the Haifa Museum of Art, Israel.

Why was File Transfer Protocol exhibited?

The dialogue around “File Transfer Protocol” begins with the idea that, “since the early 1990s there have been many artistic and curatorial attempts to use the Internet as a platform of producing and exhibiting art, but a lot of these were reluctant to let go of the fantasy of digital freedom. Storage Room collapses the binary opposition of real and virtual space by using online data storage as a conduit for IRL (in real life) art production.” (Rotman & Mauas, 2013, p. 1)

When discussing the project directly with one of the curators, Galia Kollektiv, she described the project as an example of how “the digital was thought through in curatorial practice. The concept was that institutions with asymmetrical power could participate in an exchange where work was realised to the capacity of the exhibition space, either printed/screened/performed very hi-spec or super lo-res, as appropriate.” (Kollektiv, 2018, p. 1)

This case study shows the applications of nomadic methods of curating by offering varying entry points, conceptually and physically, to execute this exhibition. The technology involved as both a curatorial method, and as a vehicle for which the works curated into the exhibition are transferred, experienced and exhibited can be framed as showing that technology allows for a non arboristic working method. “File Transfer Protocol”, can be framed as being conceived as

an idea, but then rather than a singular concept of exhibiting the work within the show, and then there being resulting effects and experiences from that one entry point, the exhibition had many forms. It moved and changed as needed and as the technology allowed for many forms of the exhibition to take place. “File Transfer Protocol” can also be framed as a curatorial project that incorporates the unknown, the known shape and form of how the exhibition will be downloaded, how it will be shown, how it will be experienced. By allowing for the unknown, that space of possibility within the gaps generated by the use of the technology, the exhibition had the capacity to take on more than one singular form and open up spaces of possibility for more than one experience of those artworks.

Diffractive Analysis

What intra-actions came from this curatorial project?

“File Transfer Protocol” created new parameters for how curators, artists, collectives and institutions (Both real and virtual) work in tandem to generate exhibitions (both IRL and virtual). The framework of the exhibition from concept to execution is an example of an assemblage of elements that functioned due to situated knowledges, such as, “what space is this digital package being downloaded for?” or “what are the limiting or extending factors that determine how this digital package of artwork can be exhibited (funding, printing abilities etc.). Beginning with these situated knowledges allowed for intra-action between humans and non humans, spaces, technologies, as well as the curators, artists, collectives and institutions that participated.

What new capacities to act were generated?

The curatorial choices made by Pil and Galia began with dismantling the notion that an exhibition must have predetermined frameworks for the exhibition to be realised. Through this curatorial practice spaces that previously could not exhibit works from a collection due to the various constraints previously mentioned such as, funding constraints for the shipping and installing of physical artworks, spatial

constraints for smaller institutions such as small galleries, artist-run spaces or other alternative spaces that lack the infrastructure of an established museum.

Onto-Ethico-Curology

One of the issues when developing a set of ethics for curating is the tendency toward a representational analysis in curatorial studies. An example of a representational analysis deployed in curatorial studies is Buurman's article, "Angels in the White Cube? Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at dOCUMENTA (13)," (Buurman, 2016, p. 1) In this article, Buurman uses her distanced position as a curatorial researcher to locate artistic director Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev within a larger power structure. Buurman states that during dOCUMENTA (13), Christov-Bakargiev positioned herself in, "the background like the Angel in the House." (Buurman, 2016, p. 156) Buurman argues that Christov-Bakargiev's position was not in the background, but rather she was, "presenting herself as the main subject of d(13)" (Buurman, 2016, p. 156). Whether or not I agree with this position, the entire framing of the article was from a reflective position that allowed for an examination of power structures involved in curating. I believe that this representational analysis is used by curatorial research to analyze and expose the issues of power relations in the process of knowing. This method is located in the "linguistic turn" that highlights language and discourse. As a representational method, it holds the material of analysis at a distance and foregrounds language as a tool of analysis. This form of representational analysis assumes that objects and language are separate from each other and that language constitutes reality.

This thesis primarily deploys a practice-based diffractive method of analysis because of the diffractive method's relational ontological and epistemological base. This thesis attempts to acknowledge and integrate embodiment and materiality into the research process. In so doing, I am reconsidering how curatorial practice can be theorized. This is not to say that my research does not also contain

elements of reflective analysis, but these reflections are always in conversation with a diffractive method. Diffractive analysis assumes direct material engagement in order to incorporate both things and words to form a grounding in one material/discourse. It is a critical practice of engagement that aims to gain knowledge from within. This method of diffractive practice-based analysis is not constituted as an inner mental activity of a separated human entities, but rather, it exists as an inter-connected assemblage composed of the fluid space in-between heterogeneous material of research data that includes humans, non-humans, processes, ideas, movements, affects, etc. Diffractive analysis requires enacting practices of knowing that are materially engaged with the data of research. This method “decenters the researcher as a knowing subject and moves us beyond the dominating subject/object, human/non-human, as well as the discourse/matter and nature/culture dichotomies.” (Allen, 2018, p. 40)

Karen Barad further integrated the ontological and epistemology with ethics to coin the term “onto-ethico-epistemology” in order to highlight how ontology, ethics and epistemology can be viewed as functioning in an assemblage of inseparable interacting agencies. (Barad, 2007, p. 26) The word itself (onto-ethico-epistemology) embodies the relational method of thinking that word denotes/connotes. Deploying a similar strategy to develop a specific ethics for the methods of this thesis, the linguistic assemblage would be something similar to: “onto-ethico-curology.” This word is meant to connote that the ethics of this thesis are constituted in an assemblage with the study of how things come to into being (ont) through caring for their relationships to other things (curo).

It is important to note that this linguistic assemblage uses the Latin root *curo* which is a verb and has the connotation of caring for something by paying attention to it and by facilitating its relation to other things. This is a different connotation than the word “curate” because curate has the Latin root *curatus*, the perfect passive participle of *curo*, that connotes “to have spiritual charge of” and

implies a division of spirit, mind and body. Presaging quantum mechanics, the Latin word *curo* implies that a thing is changed when someone pays attention to it. An example of this can be seen during the period leading up to the fall of the Roman Republic, Cicero writes about his relationship with his debtors by saying, “Ista non curo.” (Cicero, 1969, p. 154) meaning he is no longer paying attention to the relationship. To Cicero, the fact that he is no longer paying attention to the relationship implies that it is no longer there. Since he is no longer paying attention to his debt, it is no longer there, or rather, he has taken care of the debt by no longer paying attention to it.

Onto-ethico-curology is a set of methods that constitutes its ethics within an assemblage of how things come into being when they have attention paid to them. Curatorial practice based in this ethical method asks, “What comes into being when attention is paid to it and what ceases to exist when attention is not paid?” Curating within this ethical framework ceases to revolve around notions like caring for objects or arranging objects, but instead requires an ethics of attention. Curating in this sense becomes the caring for contingent relationships and paying attention to the volatile space in-between ideas, people, things, spaces, etc. It becomes curating the gap.

The ethics of curatorial practice must be an ethics of embodied engagement with the materiality of the research data, but what is the element that must be cared for in a curatorial ethic? What is the element that rests in the gap that a researcher must pay attention to? What difference is to be evaluated?

The ethics of my curatorial practice is grounded in a contingent mapping of potential variations of affect. Spinoza states, “by affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections.” (Spinoza, 1994, p. 154) My understanding of ethical interactions is grounded in this framing of affect as a variation that occurs in a body precipitated by an interaction with

another body that increases or diminishes the body's power of activity.

By bodies, I am not referring to the normative definition of the isolated “natural” body which is bounded by the physical and exists in opposition to the mind. I am referring to the body as a multiplicity existing in an ephemeral and procedural space that is continuously being created in-between “bodies,” both human and non-human. In this sense, the body is constituted through a continuously changing network of relations. Spinoza addresses the ontological concept of the body in *Ethics* (1665) when asking what the boundaries may be on a body's capacity to act. For Spinoza, a body is not constituted by a predetermined classification or fixed linguistic naming, but instead, a body is continually re-constituted by encounters with other bodies. Subsequently, bodies cannot be located as fixed abstract concepts, but instead bodies only exist in a field of encounters with other bodies. Therefore, ontologically, a body only exists in a provisional state while interacting with other bodies in a specific configuration. Due to the infinite possible configurations of encounters with other bodies, a particular body's capacity to act is unknown and potentially limitless. Spinoza's perspective means that not only is a body's capacity to act unknown, but we can never permanently know what a body is. All knowledges in Spinoza's ethics are temporary, partial, embodied and situated. Because bodies come into existence and determine their capacity to act due to the interactions of various bodies, the decisions on how those bodies interact carry ethical weight.

Deleuze expands on Spinoza's framing of the logic of affect by defining affectus when he states, “[t]he affection refers to a state of the affected body and implies the presence of the affecting body, whereas the affectus refers to the passage from one state to another.” (Deleuze, 2007, p. 49) Hickey-Moody further develops affectus as a measurement of “the material equation of an interaction, the gain and loss recorded in a body, or your embodied subjectivity, as the result of an encounter. This is distinct from affection, which is the feeling experienced by the embodied human subject.” (Hickey-Moody, 2013, p. 79) Affections can be defined

as signifiers of affectus just as feelings can be defined as markers of embodied variations. Building on the logic of affect, I have defined the body as a responsive assemblage of affectus that is constituted through interactions with other bodies. From this perspective, bodies perpetually re-constitute themselves through their interactions. Research based in this logic of affect performs the belief that human subjects are constituted in a personal structuring of affect.

In my research, I view affects as existing in an assemblage of resonances. When one body's affectus goes up, it has the potential to interact with another body's affectus. When the affectus of two bodies is increased due to their resonance, this is a more intense potential. Yve Lomax extends Spinoza when she writes, "[b]oth the affecting and affected body have their potential to interact increased - they compound to constitute a more 'intense' potential. And these times, for Spinoza, are joy ... Here we would not mock others in that vain attempt of self-mastery and control." (Lomax, 2000, p. 87) My research pursues the notion that joy can emerge when bodies are placed in a particular relationship so that the capacity to act for multiple bodies can increase.

The ethics of my research also follows in the research tradition of Braidotti when she developed her "affirmative nomadic ethics." (Braidotti, 2006, p. 239) Braidotti expands on "Deleuze's neo-Spinozist ethics rests on an active relational ontology that looks for the ways in which otherness prompts, mobilises and allows for flows of affirmation of values." (Braidotti, 2013, p. 342) Braidotti goes on to define "nomadic ethics" when she states:

"Consequently, rethinking the bodily roots of subjectivity is the starting point for the epistemological project of nomadism. The body or the embodiment of the subject is to be understood as neither a biological nor a sociological category, but rather as a point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic, and the sociological. I stress the issue of embodiment so as to make a plea for different ways of thinking about the body. The body refers to the materialist but also vitalist groundings of human subjectivity and to the specifically human capacity to be both grounded and to flow and thus to transcend the very variables—class, race, sex, gender, age, disability—which structure us. It rests on a post-identitarian view

of what constitutes a subject... A nomadic vision of the body defines it as multi-functional and complex, as a transformer of flows and energies, affects, desires and imaginings ... In contrast with the oppositions created by dualistic modes of social constructivism, a nomadic body is a threshold of transformations... The body is a surface of intensities and an affective field in interaction with others. In other words, feminist emphasis on embodiment goes hand-in-hand with a radical rejection of essentialism. In feminist theory one speaks as a woman, although the subject “woman” is not a monolithic essence defined once and for all, but rather the site of multiple, complex, and potentially contradictory sets of experiences, defined by overlapping variables, such as class, race, age, life-style, sexual preference and others... (Braidotti in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 33-34)

In Braidotti’s nomadic ethics, bodies are constituted by changes (flows) of capacities to act that “transend the very variables – class, race, sex, gender, age, disability—which structure us.” (Braidotti in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 33) What this means is that from the perspective of nomadic ethics, while a body may be ideologically and linguistically located, limited and structured along the dimensions of particular overlapping variables, bodies can increase capacities to act outside of those variables.¹⁹ Through nomadic ethics, “neo-materialism’ emerges as a method, a conceptual frame and a political stand, which refuses the linguistic paradigm, stressing instead the concrete yet complex materiality of bodies.” (Braidotti in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 21) The method of nomadic ethics requires developing, “visions that have been left untapped and by actualizing them in daily practices of interconnection with others.” (Braidotti in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 36) Braidotti’s nomadic ethics is a practice of hope that allows people a method of acting that can allow them the ability to escape the structures of ideologically located variables. This is not a naïve stance nor a flippant dismissal of significant ideological concerns, but rather robust method grounded in the ethical responsibilities of hope.

“The pursuit of practices of hope, rooted in the ordinary micro-practices of everyday life, is a simple strategy to hold, sustain and map out sustainable transformations. The motivation for the social construction of hope is grounded in a profound sense of responsibility and accountability. A fundamental gratuitousness and a profound sense of hope is part of it. Hope is a way of dreaming up possible futures, an anticipatory virtue that

19 I will describe more of what I mean by “ideology” in the section “Ideology” on page 163.

permeates our lives and activates them. It is a powerful motivating force grounded not only in projects that aim at reconstructing the social imaginary, but also in the political economy of desires, affects and creativity.” (Braidotti in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 36-37)

Braidotti states,

“At the core of this ethical project is a positive vision of the subject as a radically immanent, intensive body, that is, an assemblage of forces or flows, intensities, and passions that solidify in space and consolidate in time, within the singular configuration commonly known as an ‘individual’ self. This intensive and dynamic entity is rather a portion of forces that is stable enough to sustain and undergo constant though non-destructive fluxes of transformation. It is the body’s degrees and levels of affectivity that determine the modes of differentiation.” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 239)

In this quote, Braidotti explains how the core of her affirmative nomadic ethics is also a measurement of affect. From her perspective, Braidotti goes on to explain that in the ethics she is creating, “Joyful or positive passions and the transcendence of reactive affects are the desirable mode ... Thus, an ethically empowering option increases one’s *potentia* and creates joyful energy in the process.” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 239) Within Braidotti’s nomadic ethic, when asked, “Is this research ethical?” the answer is that it is ethical if the capacity to act for a body increases either in an existing variable that has been ideologically and linguistically structured or through the creation of a new variable.

What is at Stake in My Diffractive Ethics

From Althusser’s structuralist reflective framework, what is at stake in research is control over Ideological State Apparatuses. This form of analysis centers on large oppositional social structures and requires an ethics that concludes in increased power over those social structures. Examples of the ethics within this structuralist frame include providing people with the power to overcome social imbalances like rich/poor, man/woman, etc. For my research, intra-actions that mutually increase capacity to act are what is at stake. Braidotti states that, “mutual codependence

is what is at stake in a nomadic ethics.” (Braidotti, 2012, p. 305) The power to influence large social structures is not the central focus of what is at stake in my research.

Location of Affect

In investigating the location of affect, Erin Manning states, “The body is but one verging surface on the field of experience, where the body is always more than One. The more-than-Oneness of the body is always already collective, cutting as it does between life-welling and life-living. It is here, at this virtual-actual juncture, that the force of affect resides, activating the body-becoming.” (Manning 2010, p. 117) Brian Massumi discusses affect as, “nonobjective and asubjective, not-yet-thought and incipient action, activated and suspended, individual and collective, all rolled up together.” (Massumi 2007, p. 125) Massumi and Manning frame affect as more than any one individual human experience and state that affect is always collective. Framing affect as an assemblage comprised of the change in capacities that occurs when bodies (both human and non-human) interact as a collective raises some questions in practice-based research. Who or what is responsible for generating new knowledge in practiced-based curatorial studies? Does this perspective offer new opportunities to question if matter in practice-based research is passive or if the matter of research can be an active contributor to knowledge generation?

Deleuze describes the act “of thinking in cinema through cinema.” (Deleuze 1986, p. 23) Deleuze proposes that matter, like cinema, has the capacity to generate new modes of perception. In this way, researchers are able to think *with* matter rather than only thinking *about* matter as passive tool which is what a reflective mode of analysis demands. Specifically, with curatorial based research, affective encounters between various heterogeneous bodies involved in the curatorial process, like myself, selection processes, the artwork, the artists, Facetime technology, etc., change the capacities of each of the other bodies to act. As a researcher, my own

capacity to be affectively moved through interactions with humans and non-humans enabled me to think *with* the materials. My own individual knowledge about my research can be exceeded by the knowledge contained in the totality of my research assemblage. In this way, I frame my curatorial research practice as an environment that allows novel conceptualizations and embodied knowledges to emerge from the affective interactions of various bodies. This method allows for me to account for the active role of non-human bodies in research and think *with* the matter of research rather than only to think *about* the matter of research. This research method requires connectedness and for my experience of affective knowing to be participatory. My practice based curatorial research method responds to the gap between curatorial practice and curatorial theory by including materiality and embodiment to be integrated into the research process through affect.

An example of a research component that I can isolate for the purposes of better explaining what I mean by thinking *with* matter is my use of diagrams. Throughout my research I use diagrams and other forms of mental models like mind maps that function in the way Guattari describes when he says that,

“the systems of logical, topological, algebraic algorithm, the processes of recording, memory storage, and data processing used by mathematicians, sciences, technology, harmonic and polyphonic music, etc., do not have an aim to denote or fill in the morphemes of a fully constituted referent, but to produce them through their own machinics.” (Guattari, 2011, p. 216)

From this perspective, the mental models and diagrams I use do not represent my thoughts, they are a method for thinking *with* symbols rather than linguistically thinking *about* symbols in a reflective manner. When writing on diagrams, Guattari goes on to say, “Strictly speaking, these signs-particles are no longer semiotic entities.” (Guattari, 2011, p. 215) I interpret this statement to mean that “diagrams do not represent thought; rather, they generate them.” (Watson, 2009, p. 12)

When writing about the use of diagrams in quantum mechanics, Guattari says,

“The particle is defined by a chain of symbols; physicists ‘invent’ particles that have not existed in ‘nature’. Nature as existing prior to the machine no longer exists. The machine produces a different nature, and in order to do so it defines and manipulates it with symbols (the diagrammatic process).” (Guattari, 1984, p. 125)

In this example, Guattari is explaining how quantum mechanics uses diagrams to generate rather than represent new knowledge. If diagrams only represented existing knowledge, they could never have been used to generate knowledge about previously non-existent particles. Guattari writes,

“Of course there is a sphere where signs have a direct effect on things - in the genuine experimental sciences, which use both material technology and a complex manipulation of sign machines.” (Guattari, 1984, p. 166)

Subsequently, diagrams offer a space of knowledge generation by existing in the “conjunction between deterritorialized signs and deterritorialized objects.” (Watson, 2011, p. 12)

I use diagrams for curatorial research as a space to generate knowledge, not to reflect knowledge. The process of creating diagrams is a space where previously non-existent connections have the space to emerge. From this perspective, I view a curating an exhibition as a form of affective diagram creation. I am not using an exhibition to diagram how I think about various connections, I am using exhibitions as part of the curatorial process to generate new connections diagrammatically as Guattari described. By using an exhibition as a space where various elements can come into relationship to one another in novel ways, the exhibition allows elements to become something new through the embodied affective assemblage in specific and provisional ways. In the curatorial process, an exhibition is not a passive, fixed object that is to be reflected upon, but it is an active generator of affective connections between bodies, human and non-human.

For example, the objects created by the participants of the exhibit become the artwork when they are hung on the wall. Simultaneously, the participants

become artists as I become the curator, etc. The matter of the exhibition is an active participant in the generation of novel ideas and is therefore part of the thinking process of the research. In this way, I am thinking *with* the exhibition. An exhibition is not a reflection of my curatorial thinking, an exhibition is my curatorial thinking. My research is not about the curatorial process, my research is the curatorial process. The curatorial ethics of the creation of the exhibition are driven by assessing if the elements of the affective assemblage have an increased capacity to act due to their participation in the curatorial process. An ethical exhibition in onto-ethico-curology is one in which the capacities of the participants to act increases. This ethic is different from a reflective process that does not necessarily demand an increase in the capacity to act from any of the elements.

Using affect as a measurement of difference runs the risk of falling into set of moralistic, relational questions like, “Is the curatorial process a Good thing?” The onto-ethico-curology deployed in my thesis research is grounded in an imminent relational ethics, not a transcendent ethics. Spinoza’s *Ethics* (1677) includes Proposition 11 that states, “God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists.” (Spinoza in Lord, 2015, p. 29) Spinoza’s construction of a universe that consists of a single substance without transcendence allows for the construction of an ethics without reliance on transcendent judgement. In *Spinoza: Practical philosophy* (1970), Deleuze expands upon Spinoza’s construction of a universe without a transcendence to construct an ethics of imminence. Through his development of an ethics of imminence, Deleuze critiques the concept of transcendent morality and rejects the moralistic binary of Good/Evil. Deleuze interprets Spinoza as presenting a moralistic world view as an illusion that only has the capacity to reduce a body’s ability to act and therefore only allows for the experience of “sad passions.” (Deleuze, 2007, p. 25)

In Deleuze's essay "To Have Done with Judgement" (1997), Deleuze outlines an ethics concerned with the evaluation of an encounter of bodies in a plane of imminence rather than a transcendental judgement. The affective dimension of any encounter between bodies is evaluated as a change in ability of the bodies to act that can be registered as joy or sadness. This Deleuzian structure of ethics is contrasted against a structure of morality which Deleuze framed as the application of a transcendent standard of judgements to a specific case. Deleuze implies that objects, like people, can not be evaluated in a transcendent manner because their capacities are incalculable and what they might become is not knowable. The ethics that Deleuze's outlines is inherently experimental as it is grounded in an exploration of unknown capacities. Deleuze's ethical lens demands that experiments are conducted where the end result is not known, but the potential for increased capacities to act may be possible. Through Deleuze's imminent ethical lens, the notion of a transcendental scale to measure interactions is an illusion that must be replaced by relative, perspectival assessments based on specific bodies. This ethical lens demands a spirit of experimentation with unknown outcomes in order to further explore previously unknown capacities.

Braidotti's affirmative nomadic ethics is similarly based in the need to experiment in order to explore unknown capacities. Braidotti states, "If the point of ethics is to explore how much a body can do, in the pursuit of active modes of empowerment through experimentation, how do we know when we have gone too far?" (Braidotti, 2006, p. 240) Braidotti answers this by stating, "Your body will thus tell you if and when you have reached a threshold or a limit." (Braidotti, 2006, p. 240) What this means is that in a diffractive, embodied research model, the only way to know about affective changes is if the subjects themselves are aware of their own states of affect and then share that with the research as a whole. In this way, in my research, the power is always located within the subject's understanding of their own affect. As Braidotti states, "A higher form of self-knowledge by understanding the nature of one's affectivity is the key to

a Spinozist ethics of empowerment.” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 240) Braidotti expands on this by delineating how Spinoza explained how a subject can work toward “achieving freedom through an adequate understanding of our passions and consequently of our bondage. Coming into possession of freedom requires the understanding of affects or passions by a mind that is always already embodied. The desire to reach an adequate understanding of one’s *potentia* is the human being’s fundamental desire or *conatus*.” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 241) In this way, Braidotti explains how a subject can gain freedom and have their capacity to act increase even in the face of an apparent limitation. This means that even if a subject realizes that they are limited in their capacity to act from a particular ideological perspective (eg. monetary, political, physical constraints, etc.), they can still gain freedom by increasing their capacities to act in other unknown capacities.²⁰ From this perspective, the ethical choice is not necessarily to only work to free subjects from specific constraints, but rather it is also ethical to look for unknown capacities to act.

Technology plays a vital role in my research because frequently, technology can provide an opportunity to experiment with novel opportunities for increased capacities to act. For example, much of my research involves using technologies that allow for multiple participants to contribute to the curatorial process simultaneously across geographical and social contexts. Certain technologies can be seen as tools of diffraction enabling material entanglement of ideas that are relationally developed through the interaction of the technology and various participants who otherwise would not have a relationship. Technology, like Facetime, enables new forms of becoming. For example, a person at an exhibition in New York can Facetime with a person in Ethiopia allowing them both to become something new in a relationship that would have been very difficult or impossible without the technology. A person in New York can become a collector who knows the Ethiopian artist whose artwork she has just purchased. In this

20 I will explain more about what I mean by ideology in "Ideology" on page 163.

case, the curatorial research has used technology to create an environment where the capacity to act for two participants has increased because of the relationship created through the exhibition. I view my curatorial research through an ethical lens that is driven by an imperative to conduct experimental processes that may have the potential to increase the ability to act for all the elements of a process.

Deleuze removes transcendent moral judgement and replaces it with an ethology that can be used as a guide for developing relations between bodies where the power to act for all bodies in an interaction has the potential to be increased.

By ethology, I am referring to a study of bodies based in Deleuze's rejection of the ontological distinctions between human bodies, parts of bodies, non-human bodies, animal bodies, natural bodies, artificial bodies, etc. Instead of individual objects being studied as in a zoology or ecology, an ethology is concerned with the affective capacities of bodies and their environment. "Which define bodies, animals or humans by the affects they are capable of ... Ethology is first of all the study of the relations of speed and slowness, of the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterize each thing." (Deleuze, 1995, p. 627) An example deploying this ethology for research analysis could be an examination of how a caged bird can enter a relation with open air. The ethology will examine the relationship and measure how the relationship increases the bird's capacity to act. The same ethology could examine how a fish can be similarly put in a relation with open air and the capacity of the fish to act is reduced. There is no moralistic evaluation that can answer the question, "Is exposing a body to open air a Good thing?" because the relationship must be evaluated on an individual basis. More importantly, the ontology of Deleuze's ethology constitutes the notion of the bird in terms of its' relations. The free bird is not a preexisting object, it is the object that has its' capacity to act increased when exposed to open air.

The research practice of this thesis is based in the ethics of Deleuze's ethology. The purpose of this mode of inquiry cannot be evaluated through a moralistic ethic that evaluates a process through judgements of "Good/Evil." Instead, the

ethics of this thesis are evaluated through observation of differences in capacities to act. This is a diffractive process that finds its' ethical base in paying attention to affective changes that occur when bodies interact through the curatorial process.

The diffractive, imminent, relational ethics deployed in this research is distinct from an ethics that demands a specific result before a process has begun. This ethics does not demand a result that can be evaluated as "Good," but instead relies on attention being paid to the differences in affect that result as bodies interact with one another. The ontological lens that I am using to view the bodies of the assemblage participating in the curatorial process, is that all of the objects are simultaneously, provisionally co-constituted and continually de-territorialized as the relations between the bodies changes. In this way, the ethics I am deploying in this research does not have a fixed conclusion that can be moralistically evaluated. Instead, it is an ethics constituted by the attention paid to the constantly deterritorializing elements of process.

A practical example of this ethology at work can be seen in the curatorial process of working with J. Alfonso and N. Alfonso. In my first interaction with them, they defined themselves as students and stated that their capacity to act was increased through the knowledge they gained in my classes. This relationship and state of being was simultaneously co-constituted with my position as teacher as well as the other relationships like classroom, artwork, etc. None of these things existed until they were placed in relation to one another. Then these relationships de-territorialized as the environment changed and J. Alfonso and N. Alfonso self-identified as being artists participating in the multiple exhibitions that I curated with them. Most recently, they have identified as co-curator in our latest curated exhibition. In all the deterritorializations of interactions with other bodies, J. Alfonso and N. Alfonso have stated that their capacity to act has increased. My capacity has also increased as I have participated in becoming teacher, curator and co-curator. I acknowledge that one reflective ideological perspective, it may

appear that I “shared my curatorial powers” with my co-curators, J. Alfonso, N. Alfonso and A. N. Alfonso. However, in Braidotti’s frame of nomadic ethics, power “is collective, not individualistic.” (Braidotti 2015, 1) From the perspective of a diffractive relativistic ontology, power is not something that an individual possesses, but rather is set of relations that occur due to specific intra-actions. Therefore, from the perspective of onto-ethico-curology, I believe that the role of co-curator emerged from the intra-actions between the four of us. It is not that I “shared curatorial power,” we all manifested the notion of co-curator as we intra-acted. There is no conclusion to this ethology because it is a constant, embodied surface that cannot be properly evaluated in a moralistic, reflective analysis. The knowledge of this ethnology is specific, partial, situational and embodied.

Haraway describes the notion of “situated knowledges” which are biased, and partial knowledges as opposed to the totalizing notion of “objective” knowledges. (Haraway, 1988, p. 575) Situated knowledges are provisional to a given situation and acknowledge the agency of both the knowledge producer and the object of study. This perspective on knowledge does not assume that a knowledge producer has a singular, stable point of view and that an object of interrogation is fixed and passive. The position of situated knowledges recognizes that personal, affective and embodied knowledges of lived experience can provide a field of potentials where a new kind of theorization can emerge. Haraway’s “situated knowledges” allows for the production of “partial, locatable, critical knowledge.” (Haraway, 1988, p. 584) This thesis is situated within Haraway’s research tradition that uses personal and affective experience with research materials as a basis for thinking through engagement with curatorial practice. Specifically, the practice-based curatorial research of this thesis is based in the relational ontology and epistemological potential of the curating process to generate knowledge rather than reflecting or illustrating curatorial theory.

The ethics of my research is an onto-ethico-curology where primary ethical

concern revolves around caring for the provisional, embodied affective assemblage generated by the relationships between the elements of the curatorial process. It is the affective relationships between the objects that simultaneously co-constitutes the objects and the objects themselves can only be known through caring for the relations between them. This is a diffractive ethology that requires my participation within the affective assemblage in order to gain embodied, partial and situated knowledge instead of pursuing detached, objective reflective knowledge. This diffractive ethic is the primary reason I am conducting my research as practice rather than a detached, reflective method of theoretical curatorial research. My research acknowledges the active role of materials in research by thinking *with* the matter of the research rather than *about* the materials of the research. I do not conduct my research with a moral frame of Good/Evil, but instead utilize an imminent ethics that evaluates ethical research as research where the capacity to act for participants is increased. By definition, this is an experimental ethics as part of the ethics is a mandate to create novel assemblages that have the potential to increase unknown capacities.

With this ethics in mind, I begin my process based curatorial research. The research is the experimental embodied process of curating. Throughout this process I will pay attention to the relationships between the various objects and continuously measure the impact these constantly changing relations have on their capacities to act. With this ethics, I examine my research process of curating the gap.

Ideology

In the previous section, I described how my research is driven by an onto-ethico-curology. Onto-ethico-curology is an ethic that demands experimentation in order to discover/create new methods to increase capacities to act. In addition, I highlighted how Braidotti describes a body as an assemblage that can “transend the very variables – class, race, sex, gender, age, disability—which structure us.” (Braidotti in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 33) How are these variables structured? How can a body “transcend” these variables in order to increase a capacity to act? Do I want all bodies to have an increased capacity to act? In order to answer these questions, I must first explain my understanding of the “variables which structure us.” I believe these variables are ideologies and I understand them as Althusser described them.

Althusser was a prominent French Marxist writer. Althusser was a structuralist who believed that any analysis of humans must begin by first analyzing the structures that govern their interactions. Althusser states, “At the heart of Marxist theory, there is a science.” (Althusser, 2011, p. 201) Althusser states, “Historical materialism is the science of social formations.” (Althusser, 2016, p. 405) He goes on to explain more of his perspective on materialism when he states, “The role of historical materialism is to analyse (in the strict sense) the mechanisms producing the ideological recognition of the obvious, given facts.” (Althusser, 2016, p. 406)

Much of Althusser’s work can be framed as building, “on the work of Jacques Lacan to understand the way ideology functions in society.” (Felluga, 2011, p. 1) Althusser’s *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1971) frames the notions of ideology and interpellation. The base of both concepts is Althusser’s assumption of the existence of the “subject.” Althusser’s method differs from Barad, Braidotti and Haraway in that the base unit of his reflective analysis is the pre-differentiated notion of the subject, not the diffractive intra-actions that lead to agential cuts. Althusser’s reflective method holds all concepts such as the subject

or ideology as eternal. He directly states, “ideology is eternal.” (Althusser, 1971, p. 35) He goes on to state, “man is an ideological animal by nature” and “you and I are always already subjects.” (Althusser, 1971, p. 45-47) These quotes demonstrate how Althusser believes that humans do not have any agency, and that all agency is eternally held by ideology alone due to “the nature of man.” Althusser defines ideology as “a 'representation' of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real conditions of existence.” (Althusser, 1971, p. 45-47) Once, Althusser has established his concept of ideology, the central focus of his writing is the notion that the State uses various forms of power to force subjects to behave in a manner that supports the State regardless of an individual subject’s interests. He outlines the systems that he believes do this for the State including Repressive State Apparatuses that enforce behavior directly like the police and Ideological State Apparatuses that function through ideology like schools. Althusser then describes how the State creates subjects through the process of interpellation. Althusser states, “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects.” (Althusser, 1971, p. 46-47)

Althusser’s methods can be useful for reflectively analyzing and altering power imbalances within a system. However, because of Althusser’s ontological assumptions about the pre-existing nature of things such as the subject or ideology, his methods cannot be effectively deployed to analyze the intra-actions that allow power imbalances to come into existence. Fundamentally, Althusser never asks, “Does the process by which things like the concepts of a ‘subject’ or ‘ideology’ come into existence matter?” For my research, I believe before power imbalances can be analyzed and then addressed, the conditions that allowed for the imbalances to come into existence must be accounted for first.

Althusser’s Marxist materialism requires a pre-existing dialectic between structures like a base/super structure. This dialectical perspective on materialism is different from diffractive methods employed by new materialists. As I mentioned

in "Defining Curatorial Practice" on page 21, new materialist feminist authors such as Braidotti, Barad and Haraway propose an alternative to Marx's dialectical materialism. As I quoted Patti Lather previously, "This is a return to materialism AFTER Derrida, NOT old school Marxist materialism with its identity politics and economics in the last instance. In feminist terms, it is more about biology and the body than Marxist contests between base and superstructure." (Lather, 2018, p. 345) Braidotti states, "Poststructuralism questions the usefulness of the notion of "ideology," especially in the sense developed by Louis Althusser, as the imaginary relation of the Subject to his/her real conditions of existence. In a feminist version, ideology refers to the patriarchal system of representation of gender and, more specifically, to the myths and images that construct femininity." (Braidotti, 2005, p. 298) Barad also uses Althusser as a contrasting position on agency when she states, "the space of agency is much larger than that postulated by Butler's or Louis Althusser's theories." (Barad, 2003, p. 826) My research does not only employ Althusser's Marxist methods of dialectical materialism, but instead I am interested in using diffractive methods of new materialism to analyze the conditions that allow for power imbalances to occur.

To conclude this overview of Althusser's work entitled, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, within every action in relation to our existence is the understanding that we are all subjects to ideology and its functions. Althusser's concept of ideology begins with the a priori assumption that power imbalances exist. At no point does Althusser ask where these power imbalances come from. It is not that power imbalances are not important subjects to research, but a diffractive analysis would ask, "What specific intra-actions cause power imbalances to occur?" Perhaps an examination of the causes of difference should occur before an analysis of the mechanisms of the power imbalances themselves.

Case Study - Learning to Love You More Learning to Love You More; Analysis of Intra-actions

In this case study I will explore the idea that “Learning to Love You More,” (2002-2009) an online collaborative project, functioned within a space of intra-action between various elements that include, but are not limited to, humans, non-human, technologies, and exhibition spaces. In addition, I will outline how this project is an example of the use of technologies specifically highlighted within this research as allowing for these intra-actions to happen.

Reflective Analysis

In keeping with the consistent reflective method of analysis, I will use the format of Who, What, When, Where and Why to examine the project, “Learning to Love You More.” This reflective method again locates important elements of significance as well as highlighting how this method excludes other elements that may not fit seamlessly into one of these categories. For this case study, the excluded elements are framed as the parameters of a value system that functions outside of the ideology of economics.

Who participated in “Learning to Love You More?”

“Learning to Love You More” was an online collaborative project by artists Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher, as well as website designer and manager Yuri Ono. According to the artists website from 2002 to 2009, over 8000 people participated in the project.

What was the project “Learning to Love You More?”

Described by the artists as, “both a web site and series of non-web presentations comprised of work made by the general public in response to assignments given by artists Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher.” (July & Fletcher, 2002, p.1) “Learning

to Love You More” was a durational project that was active between 2002 and 2009. The original description of the project was as follows,

“Participants found an assignment on the website, completed it by following the simple but specific instructions and then sent in the result of their work in the form of a photograph, text, video, etc. The documentation of the participants completed assignments were then posted online to the website. ‘Like a recipe, meditation practice, or familiar song, the prescriptive nature of these assignments was intended to guide people towards their own experience’.” (Fletcher & Ono, 2002, p. 1)

The projects place of origin remained the website “<http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com>” and operated autonomously until the project was purchased by San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The project has been published as book documenting the published assignments as well as the full website archive is available through the collectors department at SFMOMA.

When did the project occur?

“Learning to Love You More” was an active participatory website between 2002 and 2009. In 2010, the piece was purchased as an archive of the project by San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The archive is still available to be seen by the public on the museum’s website.

Where did “Learning to Love You More” take place?

According to the project website, “Learning to Love You More existed as both an online website and a series of exhibitions or nowness based presentations.” (July & Fletcher, 2002, p. 1) The project functioned as an ongoing collaboration between the artists and the participants who exhibited the work they created from the website in many locations across the United States, However the artists describe the location of the webpage as, “the touch stone for all of those

involved.”(July & Fletcher, 2002, p. 1) The project generated multiple exhibitions at Institutions such as The Whitney Museum in NYC, Rhodes College in Memphis, TN, Aurora Picture Show in Houston, TX, The Seattle Art Museum in Seattle, WA, the Wattis Institute in San Francisco CA, among others. (see footnote for the full list of locations assignments from this project were exhibited)

Why was the project conceived the way that it was?

The artists description of the concept behind “Learning to Love You More” can be found under the “LOVE” section of the original website. It reads:

“The best art and writing is almost like an assignment; it is so vibrant that you feel compelled to make something in response. Suddenly it is clear what you have to do. For a brief moment it seems wonderfully easy to live and love and create breathtaking things. In this section we have archived some of the work that has commanded us in this way. In a sense, these are assignments -- in the same way that the ocean gives the assignment of breathing deeply, and kissing instructs us to stop thinking” (July & Fletcher, 2002, p. 1)

Assignment art is not a new concept and has a place in the cannon of art practice. For example, the “instructional” art of Yoko Ono such as “Grapefruit” (1964), where the instructors, Ono, is the only artist and the instructions are the artwork. In the case of Ono’s work, any realised works from those instructions are considered extraneous. The difference in the project “Learning to Love You More,” is that the website showcases both assignments given and the result of those instructions regardless of whether or not that work was created by a professional working artist. July and Fletcher have taken instructional art practice and added the collaborative aspect of recognising the artworks made through their assignments as relevant to the project.

Diffraction Analysis

What intra-actions came from this project?

The best example of an intra-action that relates to the research would be the blog made by The Oliver Family, who have their own section on the original webpage. This section entitled “Olivers” in the upper menu of the webpage chronicles the families completion of all 63 assignments posted by Learning to Love You More artists July and Fletcher. The family created their own blog “<http://oliverlove.blogspot.com>” that details their experience of working on, with, and through the 63 assignments.

What new capacities to act were generated?

According to the artists website after the purchase of the project by SFMOMA, there was, “no reason to stop doing assignments” they even post that they, “noticed some people are even posting them on their own versions of LTLYM.” The format of “Learning to Love You More” allowed for many who may have never considered participating in an art collaboration to become artists, to become exhibiting artists, to become bloggers, to become storytellers, and other possible unknown becomings. This case study is relevant to my research due to its resonance with a diffractive method of practice. A value system often associated with curating is socio-economic. This is also often the case in terms of evaluating an artist’s success, for example, how many pieces sell from a particular exhibition. Exchanges of socio-economic currencies like money or status are certainly relevant, but I believe it is important to examine value exchanges that are silenced or underrepresented when analyzing intra-actions. In the case study of “Learning to Love You More,” value systems that I believe are highlighted include knowledge exchanges, social cohesion, and other new capacities to act. All of these value systems and more use currencies that are not necessarily linked to socio-economic exchanges. The continuation of participants after July and Fletcher no longer posted assignments highlights the impact the project had.

Ideology in Onto-ethico-curology

Althusser's concepts of ideology and interpellation utilize a reflective, essentializing mode of thinking. In Althusser's ontology, subjects do not come into being, but rather, "individuals are always-already subjects." (Althusser, 2002, p. 119) For Althusser, "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." (Althusser, 2002, p. 109) In this quote, Althusser states that epistemologically, he believes there is a "real" existence, but that a subject cannot ever objectively know the "real" because of the subject's reliance on language. All that can ever be known in Althusser's epistemology is the language of ideology. A subject can gain knowledge about their location within an ideology through interpellation where, "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects." (Althusser, 2002, p. 116) Althusser's ethic is to linguistically locate subjects within immutable, eternal variables of ideology with no hope of increasing capacities to act outside of the dimensions of the existing variables that are forced upon all subjects before birth. Braidotti discusses her perspective on Althusser when she states, "In this sense, one could work with Althusser, on the classic dimension of the imaginary. The problem here is that there is no input from the people who would like to transform that imaginary into something else, something that is nomadic." (Braidotti in Andrijašević, 2008, p. 1) When Braidotti refers to the, "very variables—class, race, sex, gender, age, disability—which structure us," she is referring to Althusserian ideologies and interpellation as the mechanism that does the structuring. (Braidotti in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 33-34) It is important to note that Braidotti's nomadic ethic acknowledges, understands and incorporates the concepts of ideology and interpellation. However, Braidotti rejects Althusser's totalizing, immutable perspective in order to offer an alternative method of analysis that allows for a diffractive, relational ontology. When Braidotti states that her nomadic ethic "refuses the linguistic paradigm" and that it is a "radical rejection of essentialism" where a subject "is not a monolithic essence defined once," she is rejecting the a priori ontological, epistemological and ethical

assumptions that underlie Althusser's concepts of ideology and interpellation. (Braidotti in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 21) In the system of nomadic ethics, bodies are constituted through a field of society-power-ideology, but bodies are not limited to only being constituted through one set of power/ideology relations. Nomadic ethics says that ideologies are real and do perform the function of structuring subjects, however, in a nomadic ethic, these ideological variables are mutable and not eternal. This allows for the creation of new dimensions of variables that have not come into existence yet and therefore do not interpellate subjects. The nomadic ethic is to look to discover/create new dimensions where bodies can interact, and the affect of those bodies can increase because the variables exist in a space that precedes interpellation.

The lens of onto-ethico-curology that I use in my research can acknowledge, understand and incorporate the concepts of ideology and interpellation without accepting Althusser's totalizing perspective as well. Actions performed within my onto-ethico-curological frame are not performed with the goal of escaping ideology, they are performed to establish conditions where new systems of belief can come into being.

Onto-ethico-curology is grounded in an ethic of increasing capacity to act, but that does not mean capacity to act in every possible permutation of all dimensions of ideological variables. For example, if I put on an exhibition and a participant did not know they could be a curator, but my exhibition increased their capacity to act by providing the opportunity to see themselves as a curator, then I would say the exhibition was ethical. The participant had their capacity to act increased in a dimension that they did not know they could act in: the dimension of curating. Their capacity to act along other dimensions, like gender or race did not change. That does not mean that the exhibition was unethical as the goal of the exhibition was not to increase the capacity to act in all elements of life, the goal was to increase the power to act in one dimension defined by the participant.

One challenge with this ethical system is the question, “But how does your ethic address established ideologies?” Onto-ethico-curology deals with this issue by offering an opportunity for subjects to deal with existing ideological constraints through refusing interpellation within any particular ideological dimension. Judith Butler writes,

“As Althusser himself insists, this performative effort of naming can only attempt to bring its addressee into being; there is always the risk of a certain misrecognition. If one misrecognizes that effort to produce the subject, the production itself falters. The one who is hailed may fail to hear, misread the call, turn the other way, answer to another name, insist on not being addressed that way.” (Butler, 1998, p. 95)

Butler’s construction of misrecognized interpellation offers an opportunity for onto-ethico-curology to facilitate the capacity to act in pre-existing ideologies. An example of refusing interpellation can be seen in gender studies. Butler said that gender is a performance, “an active style of living one’s body in the world” (Butler in Benhabib and Cornell, 1987, p. 131) However, more and more people are refusing to perform a gender ideology. In his article, “How Rejecting Gender Made Me Happier, Healthier,” Micheal Whelan says, “I reject gender entirely.” (Whelan, 2017, p. 1) Whelan refuses to be interpellated and does not participate in gender hails of any kind. It is not that Whelan dismisses the ideology or claims that it does not exist, he simply refuses to participate in it. (He says he uses male pronouns for convenience, but he feels his capacity to act is not encumbered by using other pronouns.) When an essentialist says, “But you are a man, you have to deal with that,” his reply is that gender ideology is not one of the variables that constitutes his being.

In this way, onto-ethico-curology frames how ideologies can cease to be relevant if subjects refuse to be interpellated within them. For example, while living in England, I met a man who insisted on being hailed as “Lord” something or other. While I understand that some people see the world through a feudal ideology that ranks all people from King to peasant, I do not consider feudal ideology to be a variable that constitutes my identity. I also understand that the consequences for not participating in the feudal ideology in 14th century Europe could have

been severe, but as an American in the 21st century feudal ideology is no longer relevant. In this case, my refusal to be interpellated within a feudal ideology is not an active refusal to participate, it is that I don't care about that ideology. He is welcome to consider himself a "Lord" who is of a higher rank in feudal ideology than me. His ideology has no impact on my capacities to act in ideological dimensions that I do care about. Similarly, other ideologies like gender can cease to be relevant by refusal to be interpolated.

Can this model of refusing to participate in specific ideological dimensions like gender can be expanded? If gender ideology can be refused, is it possible to refuse to be interpellated other ideological dimensions like race, class, age, disability, socio-economic status, geographical location, etc.? Is it possible to reject all ideological constraints simultaneously? What would this rejection look like? Is it possible to define a body not in terms of existing ideological constraints, but instead on unknown fields of virtual potential? Onto-ethico-curology does not reject the existence of ideologies or interpellation, but it maintains that subjects retain the power to refuse interpellation and thus refuse being linguistically located in an ideology.

Onto-ethico-curology also participates in ideological structures when asked, "Do you want the capacities to act for all individuals in all ideologies to increase?" The immediate ethical answer is "No." The goal of onto-ethico-curology is not for all capacities to act to increase. For example, onto-ethico-curology does not want the capacity for Nazis to act to increase. This is because the ideology of Nazis is defined by an ethic of reducing the capacity to act for others. So, a general rule of the application of onto-ethico-curology is that I do not want the capacity to act to increase in an ideological dimension that is predicated on diminishing the capacities to act in others. While onto-ethico-curology is based in the notion of creating/discovering new capacities to act, it is not ethical within its system to create/discover a new capacity to act that lowers the capacity to act in others. In this sense, onto-ethico-curology retains the power to exclude ideologies that do

not follow its ethical formulation. The next section further delineates the power relations deployed in onto-ethico-curology.

Curatorial Power Within Onto-Ethico-Curology

The goal of understanding the power relations in onto-ethico-curology is to develop methods that increase the power to control which ideological variables constitute a being's identity. In the previous section, I outlined how in the framework of my onto-ethico-curology, subjects retain the power to refuse to be constituted by specific ideologies. In this section I outline the frame work for other power relations in my onto-ethico-curology.

The onto-ethico-curology I am using in this thesis is based on the power relations that Braidotti frames for her nomadic ethics when she writes, “power is not a static given, but a complex strategic flow of effects which call for pragmatic politics of intervention and the quest for sustainable alternatives.” (Braidotti in Saldanha & Song, 2015, p. 168) From this perspective, Braidotti is defining power in a relational ontology and subsequently, power is part of the assemblage that becomes when bodies encounter each other. It is not an a priori existing thing and power is limited to acting along specific ideological dimensions that may overlap but remain distinct. For example, power in a socio-economic ideology may overlap with power in ideologies of gender, but they are not the same power. This means that a body may not be able to participate or resist different powers within different ideologies in exactly the same way.

Braidotti writes, “In other words, the quest for identity is expanded to activate multiple becomings, away from reterritorialised identities.” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 1) From Braidotti's perspective, the quest for the power to shape identities cannot occur only through re-territorializing existing ideologies, but must be “expanded to activate multiple becomings.” It is the quest for “sustainable alternatives” to current ideologies (not attempts to re-territorialize power relations within existing ideologies) that dominates the power relations in onto-ethico-curology.

Braidotti goes on to further frame power relations when she writes,

“This politics of joyful affirmation of counter-subjects – far from being a regression into cultural narcissism, as the critics suggest – is an incisive intervention on the brutality and banality of power. It encourages the counter-production of different political affects and desires. The pursuit of political felicity is collective, not individualistic and not for profit. It is

a political project that is geared to the task of constructing social horizons of hope, as sustainable alternatives to the schizoid political economy of advanced capitalism, to its brutal materiality and murderous violence.” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 1)

In this writing, Braidotti outlines an ethic to pursue the “counter-production of different political affects.” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 1) What is implied in this statement is that political affects are produced and therefore counter-subjects have the power and ethical demand to produce new dimensions of political affect. The relationship to power is not to engage with power within an existing dimension of affect, but rather the power to create new dimensions. In this way, Braidotti is refusing to participate in existing ideologies. Braidotti says, “Feminism rejects the sanctimonious, dogmatic tone of dominant ideologies, Left or Right of the political spectrum, in favour of the production of joyful acts of insurrection.” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 1) By acts of insurrection, she includes the production of new dimensions of political affect. Braidotti states, “What’s left of the Left misunderstands the feminist politics of experience; they fail to see the relevance of the politics of desire and the affirmation of alternative ways of becoming subjects.” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 1) Braidotti is recommending an alternative method of becoming a subject that does not require participating in interpellation within a particular ideological variable, but the power to become a subject through the development of new dimensions.

In specific, Braidotti highlights how the struggle for power does not occur within an ideology, and subsequently, “is collective, not individualistic and not for profit.” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 1) The development of new power relations is not contained within the current ideology of “profit,” which means that a completely different socio-economic framework must be developed or the ideology can be abandoned as a useful element in subject formation. Continually referencing or seeking movement within the current socio-economic ideology is not the goal of a nomadic ethic or onto-ethico-curology. The goal is the production of new dimensions to act not to gain power within an existing ideology like socio-

economic status.

Braidotti goes on to describe the location of new ideological dimensions when she writes,

“Feminists have been openly critical of the universalistic orientation of most political theory, Marxism included. We stress instead the need for a change of scale, to unveil power relations where they are most effective and invisible: in the specific locations of one’s own carnal, psychic and social existence, in our immanent intellectual and social practices. One has to start from micro-instances of embodied and embedded self and the complex web of social relations which compose the self. A situated practice. The emphasis on the embodied and embedded nature of the subject results in trusting lived experience and renewed interest in the present. One has to think global, but act local: here and now. To come to terms with the present while resisting it, being oppositional without being negative, that is the challenge for politicized relational subjects.” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 1)

In this quote, Braidotti outlines how the scope of the production of new ideological variables is not universal, it is on an embodied, situated, micro-scale. The scale of this work is important because it acknowledges that the goal of onto-ethico-curology is not to try and completely re-territorialize power structures within a specific ideology for all of humanity for all of time. Some ethics do function on this universal scale like the ideological perspective that Marxism’s goal is to establish a classless society that will last forever. Onto-ethico-curology does not function on this scale. The goal of onto-ethico-curology is to produce the conditions where a subject develops an embodied knowledge of the power to act in a previously unknown dimension. This embodied knowledge is provisional, partial and situated knowledge.

Braidotti’s ethic does not require the development of new ideologies to always provide new capacities to act for a subject for all of eternity. The ethic is to potentially provide opportunities for a subject to have the power to choose which variables constitutes their being including unknown variables. Braidotti says, “Feminist politics work through transformative experimentations with new technologies of the self, new arts of existence and ethical relations. It is made

of progressive emancipatory measures but also of radical experiments with self-styling or critical praxis.” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 1) In this way, onto-ethico-curology also works through transformative experimentations to develop new dimensions where a subject can define what constitutes their own identity.

This is the power of the curator in onto-ethico-curology. A curator is the element of an assemblage that brings together various, heterogeneous elements for a transformative experiment in developing new dimensions to act. At any point in time, the other participants can choose to not participate or to define their roles according to any ideology of their choosing. The curator also retains an exclusionary power as the goal of the experiment is not to re-territorialize particular ideologies as described in the previous section. However, the structure of power deployed in onto-ethico-curology is not the historical power relations used by curators.

Conclusion

Summary

A) Theory

My thesis asks the question, “Can curatorial practice offer opportunities for increased capacities to act outside of ideological limitations?” In order to answer this question, I have based my research on the relational ontologies developed by Braidotti, Haraway, and Barad. 1) Braidotti’s nomadic ethics provided me with a concept of the subject that denies a concept of moral universalism and replaces it with an imminent, relational ethics. I have used Braidotti’s concept of the subject within nomadic ethics in opposition to the concept of the interpolated subject as defined in Althusser’s concept of ideology. 2) Haraway’s concept of diffraction provided my research with an alternative to a reflective analysis. Diffractive analysis allows research where “partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims.” (Haraway, 1988, p. 195) By focusing on how difference emerges rather than focusing on the notion of universally labeling pre-existing things, diffractive practices allow for the production of provisional, embodied, and situated knowledges that are frequently overlooked or marginalized. 3) Barad’s agential realism provides an alternative perspective to representational ontologies that divide “semiotic” from “material.” Agential realism allows for research into matter where matter is phenomenon due to intra-actions within an assemblage and agency is an “enactment of iterative changes” within matter. (Barad, 2003, p. 826) Barad’s onto-ethico-epistemology argues that due to the phenomenological nature of matter, how something is known, what something is, and the ethics of the differences that occur all simultaneously co-manifest. I have used Barad’s methods to apply the general frame of onto-ethico-epistemology to the specific field of curatorial practice to develop a concept that I have coined as “onto-ethico-curology.”

B) Method

Building on the frames of Braidotti, Haraway, and Barad, my research method has been to construct assemblages and then ask participants if the specific intra-actions that occurred allowed the opportunity for their capacity to increase. In this way, I have deployed Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the assemblage as well as Spinoza's concept of affect within my research method.

C) Practice

For my specific research practice, I constructed the assemblage "Access(able)." (2018) This assemblage was an exhibition where I attempted to create the conditions that would allow intra-actions where various elements of the exhibition would have the opportunity for their capacity to act to increase in unexpected ways. I then asked the participants if they felt their affect increase in an unexpected way. All of the participants that responded said that they had their capacity to act increased.

Diagrams

"Figure 24: Diagram "Pyramid of Research"" on page 188 and "Figure 25: Diagram "Life Cycle of Research"" on page 190 are two diagrams that visually represent how I view the structure of my research.

Contribution to Knowledge

My thesis contributed to knowledge by applying the diffractive theories of Braidotti, Haraway, and Barad to the field of curatorial practice. Specifically, diffractive practice can contribute to the field of curating by focusing attention on intra-actions that have previously been overlooked. I coined the term "onto-ethico-curology" to reflect the application of this diffractive framework to curatorial practice.

My thesis also contributed to knowledge through my method of assessing an

exhibition in terms of the partial knowledge of increased capacity to act. Through my research, I have defined a successful exhibition as not necessarily one where people made money, fame, or even one that participates in ideological discourse. A successful exhibition can be one where at the end, people involved felt they could do more and become more than they expected.

My thesis also contributed to knowledge through the specific and partial knowledge contained within my specific practice. My exhibition “Access(able)” is a form of new knowledge unto itself. The knowledge of “Access(able)” is not necessarily linguistic and not all of the knowledge of “Access(able)” can be extracted, summarized, and reflectively analyzed. Much of the new knowledge I contributed was tacit, partial, provisional and embodied knowledge that is frequently marginalized in other forms of research. The knowledge of “Access(able)” was felt by the participants and could only be measured in terms of personal affective variation. While I can write that the participants felt their affect increase, the writing is new knowledge about the affective knowledge. Part of the knowledge of “Access(able)” is only accessible to participants. This knowledge is not invalid because it cannot be universally expressed and should not be marginalized because it cannot be felt externally. It is personal knowledge and personal knowledge is valid and important.

Realizations About Method

During the course of my research, my methods continually moved and shifted as the assemblage of my research introduced new items and de-territorialized. For example, at the beginning of my research I was primarily focused on Althusser and identifying various reflective ideological frames. As my research continued, I realized that the ideological frames were useful for some reflective analysis, but over time, the frames became restrictive. Ideological frames like rich/poor were preventing my research from developing methods that allowed for increase in affect outside of the pre-existing structures. As I began deploying diffractive

methods, certain diffractive methods became more useful at certain times.

For example, I found the diffractive practice of paying attention to affective changes to be my primary method during the practice of the exhibition while the diffractive practice of “reading through” was more useful after the exhibition practice was concluded.²¹

As a specific example, I found that while I was conducting the live stream video chats as part of Access(able) as seen in "Figure 21: Screen grabs of video chat

21 A footnote about “reading through.” I mention Barad’s “method of diffractively reading insights through one another” in the section “Diffractive Practice” on page 83. (Barad in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 50) I employed this diffractive method of “reading through” because I was concerned that my research may be susceptible to a form of post-exhibition reflective data analysis that could potentially reduce research narratives to a set of previously established linguistically classifiable categories that fail to produce valuable or new insights. The method I have decided to deploy is a diffractive reading of exhibition data through multiple theoretical insights. This method moves away from reflective methods of analysis that ideologically locate data and instead employs a diffractive reading that can potentially allow for the production of thought and meaning in unpredictable phenomenon. In this diffractive process, I enter an assemblage with the various theories and my observations of the elements of an exhibit simultaneously. My method is to read my exhibit and textual theories through, with, and in relation to each other to construct a process of thinking with the exhibit and with the theory. Specifically, for Access(able), I read the exhibit through multiple texts: new materialist theory, the transcripts of my interviews with other curators, Barad’s intra-action, my legal contracts with galleries and artists, Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage and rhizome theories, Braidotti’s nomadic ethics, Althusser’s interpolation, my ongoing research with other curators, and other heterogeneous texts.

For example, one of the components of Access(able) was a period of time where viewers from around the world could live stream a video chat into the exhibit. A reflective analysis of this component of my research would have entailed locating the impact of the live stream video chat tele-presence within a pre-existing ideology. This would have read something like, “The presence of the live stream video chat component allowed viewers who could not attend the exhibition the opportunity to participate. In this way, I have used my position as curator to provide access to those who would have been excluded due to financial resources.” This form of analysis locates the action of using live stream video chat as part of a social structure where notions of access and agency can be distributed as explained by Althusser. Instead, for this example, I read the live stream video chat component through multiple texts such as Barad’s intra-action theory. Diffractively reading the live stream video chat component through the concept of intra-activity leads not to a conclusion, but to a question. “How do people intra-act with elements of Access(able), both human and nonhuman, in ways that produce different becomings?” To read the use of live stream video chat in Access(able) diffractively through the theory of intra-action is to engage questions about how a live stream video chat’s use in Access(able) simultaneously produced material effects (participating in an exhibit regardless of physical location) and how this use was simultaneously materially and discursively produced (as becoming part of an “exhibition” that can be linguistically labeled while simultaneously not held to the constrain of what an exhibit can be). A diffractive reading through the theory of intra-action produces a consideration of how a live stream video chat’s use in Access(able) is both constituting and constitutive of the discourses perpetuated in the concept of an “exhibition.” This diffractive analysis could potentially offer a method that accounts for the entanglement of theories, bodies, texts, language, and other heterogeneous elements of an assemblage and presents the potential for unknown phenomenon to occur.

during Assess(able)" on page 134, it was best to diffractively focus on affective changes to the viewers. So, I was constantly attempting to make sure that their affect was going up and not down. Rather than being forced to function only as outside viewers of Access(able) who were seeing the exhibit as I wanted them to see it, the people who video chatted became an integral part of the exhibit as a whole. I was trying to create the circumstance where tele-participants felt that they were both viewing and constituting the exhibit simultaneously. I found attempting to read the exhibit through theory while simultaneously balancing the affect of a person did not provide enough attention to either the person I was intra-acting with or the theory I was trying to read through. Only after the exhibition was over was I able to provide enough attention to employ a practice of "reading through."

I have had many realizations about my research and have constructed a plan to continue to develop these methods. One of the key elements I have learned is the timing of when I choose to deploy various research practices. I have found my methods function best when I use "diffractive logistics" first, diffractive practice of paying attention to affect next, diffractive "reading through" next, and then finally reflective ideological analysis. By "diffractive logistics," I mean that during the course of my research I realized that logistics function as an important non-human concept that has direct agency over the possibilities of an assemblage even before any other elements of an assemblage come into contact. Once the logistics of an assemblage diffractively emerges, only then can other elements come into existence in relation to the logistics. A specific example of the "diffractive logistics" I discovered was how material objects come into being through their coordinated movement in relation to other material objects that are in motion. It is insufficient to only account for the location of a material object at a specific "snap-shot" moment in time, the vector field of their motion has agency over what they are and what they are becoming as well. The coordination of the vector field of the material objects (logistics) is part of what a material

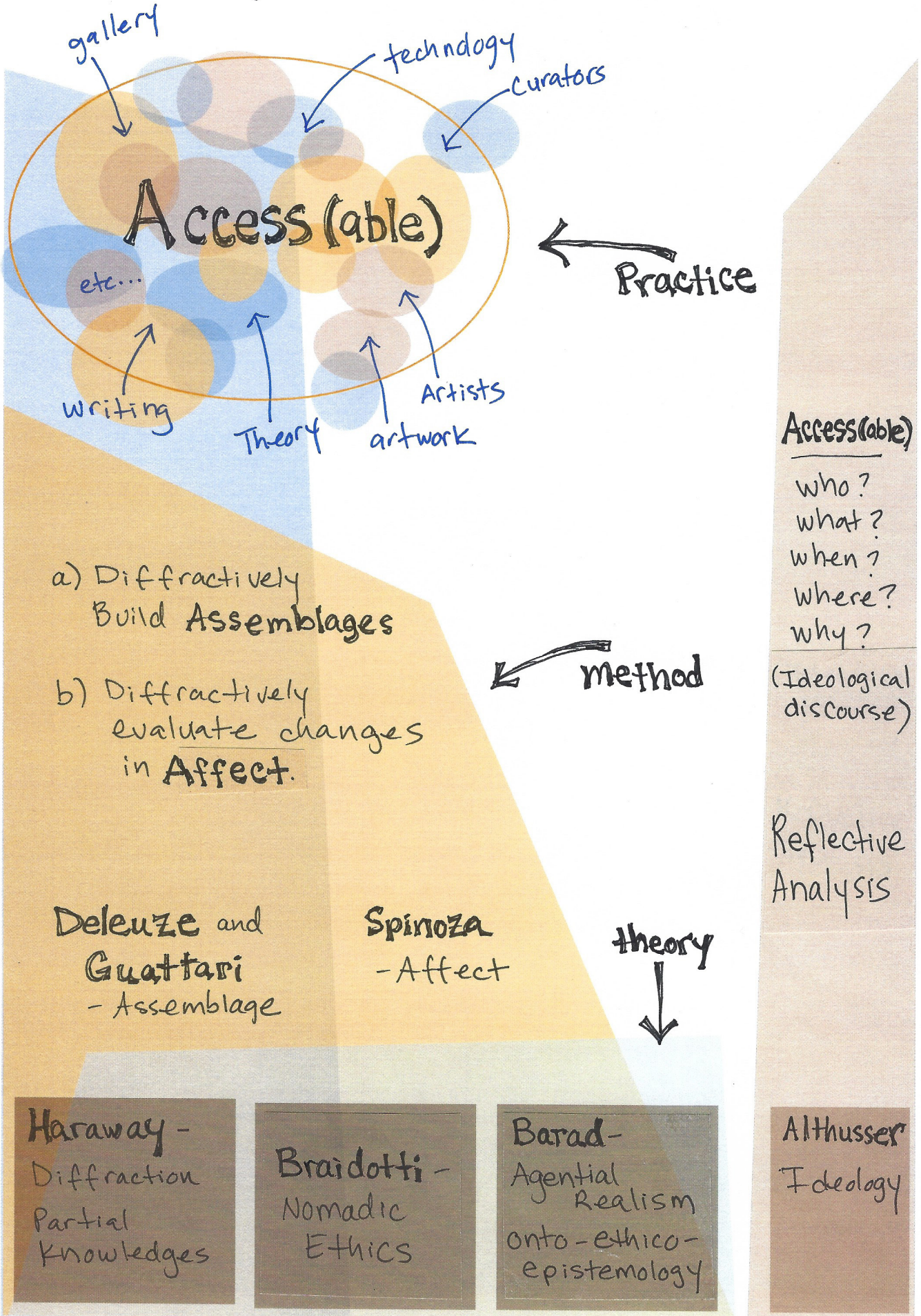
will become. For Access(able), I did not just need to secure “art” objects, I had to coordinate how they would all simultaneously arrive at the exhibition and develop contingency plans for what to do if the “art” became lost along the way. Suddenly what I thought was the “art” was not relevant if it was delayed in transit and what previous had been documentation of the “art” had become the art. This “diffractive logistics” accounts for how the movement of material objects is a constitutive force in the objects themselves. I plan on continuing to develop a concept of “diffractive logistics” in the next phase of my research. In specific, I intend on paying more attention to the impact and function of the “diffractive logistics” rather than focusing only on the what the objects are at any one specific moment in time.

What next?

My initial thesis question asked, “Can curatorial practice offer opportunities for increased capacities to act outside of ideological limitations?” While I believe that a reflective practice along ideological lines remains useful and should be vigilantly practiced, the addition of diffractive methods to curatorial practice in order to additionally analyze the conditions where difference occurs, is an exciting and powerful opportunity. I remain committed to facilitating opportunities for people to increase their capacity to act through various intra-actions.

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"Pyramid of Research"



Relational Ontologies

Figure 24: Diagram "Pyramid of Research"

constituent ontologies

"Figure 24: Diagram "Pyramid of Research"" on page 188 is a diagram depicting how I visualize my research as a pyramid with various elements supporting others. I believe I have used theories by Haraway, Braidotti, and Barad as the base of my research. On top of this, I developed a diffractive method based in Deleuze's assemblage theory and Spinoza's affect theory. On top of all of my research into theories and methods, I conducted my research practice in the assemblage "Access(able)" (2018). Parallel to my diffractive mode of research, I also conducted a reflective, linear and arborescent method of analysis based in Althusser's concepts of ideology.

"Life Cycle of Research"

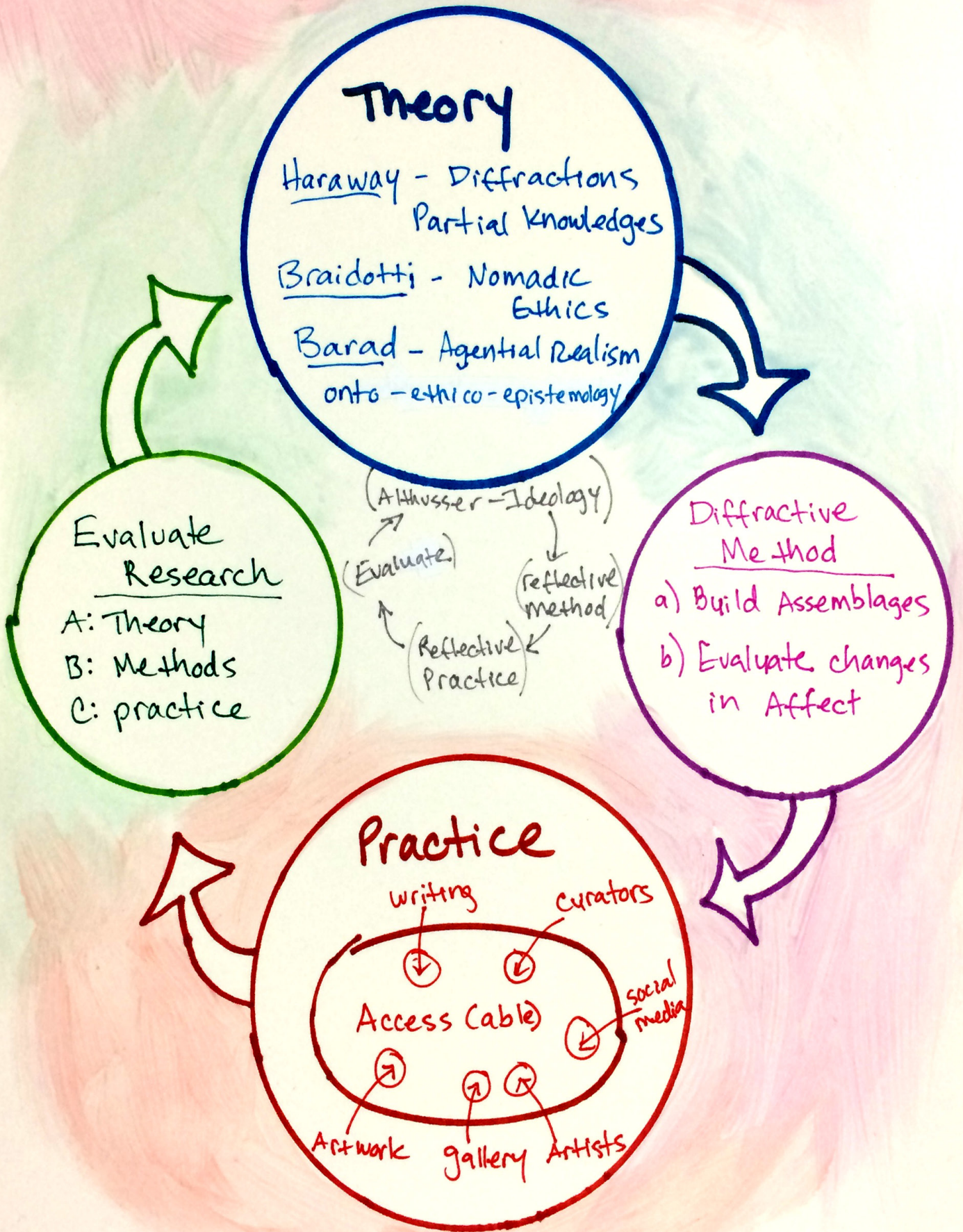


Figure 25: Diagram "Life Cycle of Research"

"Figure 25: Diagram "Life Cycle of Research"" on page 190 is a diagram that depicts how I visualize my research as a continual process of development, like a life cycle. In this case, I began my research into various theories by Haraway, Braidotti and Barad. This lead to the development of diffractive methods based in Deleuze and Spinoza. Following this research, I conducted my practice based research by developing the assemblage "Access(able)" (2018). Then I analyzed the outcome of my research to evaluate and then determine how I will continue my practice.

Glossary

Accumulation – An accumulation is the acquisition or gradual gathering of something. I am using the term in an ontological sense in combination with the concept of an assemblage. In this sense, all things are the accumulation of the all of the previous intra-actions that have occurred both within a body and with exterior bodies.

Affect – An affect is a change in the capacity to act that is experienced within a body. The term was defined by Spinoza in *Ethics* which was originally written in 1664.

Agential Realism – An theory of ontology, epistemology and ethics developed by Barad in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. (2007) In agential realism, things are comprised of phenomena that arise due to intra-acting agencies.

Assemblage – A relational, ontological framework developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. (1980) In an assemblage, things come into existence due to provisional relationships with component parts and other bodies.

Diffraction – Deployed by Haraway in *Situated Knowledges* (1988), the concept of diffraction is based in the physics of wave diffraction where difference emerges as the relationships that form between various parts of a field while they intra-act.

Interpellation – The concept of interpellation is developed by Althusser in *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. (1971) Interpellation is the process by which ideology forces an individual subject's identity to become concrete. Interpellation functions through "hailing" individuals in social interactions.

Intra-action – The concept of intra-actions is introduced by Barad in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. (2007) An intra-action is a relationship between component parts that make up a body that are entangled. This is different from an interaction that implies a relationship between two separated bodies.

Nomadic – Used by Braidotti in *Nomadic Ethics* (2013), nomadic refers to an unfixed, non-structured form of identity. The nomadic notion of identity formation can be viewed in opposition to the ideological structuring of identity proposed by Althusser.

Onto-ethico-epistemology - The concept of onto-ethico-epistemology is developed by Barad in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. (2007) Onto-ethico-epistemology refers to Barad's concept that ontology and epistemology cannot be separated in agential realism. Because in agential realism, agential cuts cause difference and exclusion to occur, the act of a thing coming into being always has an ethical component. Hence, the three concepts are actually one merged concept where all of the elements co-constitute.

Onto-ethico-curology – Onto-ethico-curology is a term I have coined where I have applied the general methods of Barad's onto-ethico-epistemology to the specific field of curatorial practice.

Annotated Bibliography

Annotated Books

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(3), 801-831. doi:10.1086/345321

The central proposition of *Posthumanist Performativity* (2003) is that an alternative perspective to representational ontologies that divide “semiotic” from “material” is possible. As an alternative, Barad constructs the notion of “agential realism” that 1) states that matter is phenomenon due to intra-actions within an assemblage and 2) agency is an “enactment of iterative changes” within matter. (Barad, 2003, p. 826) Within agential realism, all matter emerges from diffractive, fluid intra-actions into “things” that are affectively positioned in space and time. The concepts of subject/object are performatively enacted through specific intra-actions. The separation of one thing and another is called an “agential cut” and creates an illusion of agency.

Barad clarifies that the concept of “discursive practices” are not only linguistic expressions but can be constituted by material “specific practices of intra-action ... entangled with other intra-actions” that “produce material phenomenon.” (Barad, 2003, p. 820-822) In Barad’s relational ontology of agential realism, being is “not a static relationality but a doing ... that always entails constituting exclusions.” (Barad, 2003, p. 803) Subsequently, the method of engagement with performative matter must 1) first account for the sites of agential cuts and 2) then to challenge the ethical stakes of the cuts.

I have used agential realism as the philosophical base of my research method. I view my research as an analysis of the specific intra-actions that allow difference to occur within curatorial practice.

Barad, K. M. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Meeting the universe halfway (2007) expands on *Posthumanist Performativity* (2003) by further constructing the philosophical base of agential realism. Barad explains how Bohr's framing of quantum mechanics can be applied as a base for the phenomenological structure of agential realism. Barad also expands the base of her theory to include Haraway's conception of diffraction. From this expanded base, Barad develops her concept of onto-ethico-epistemology where how a thing is known, what it is and the ethics of how it came into being all occur in as one phenomenon that can not be separated.

I have used Barad's methods that she has deployed in this book to apply the general frame of onto-ethico-epistemology to the specific field of curatorial practice to develop a concept that I have coined as "onto-ethico-curology."

Braidotti, R. (2013). *Nomadic Ethics*. *Deleuze Studies*, 7(3), 342-359. doi:10.3366/dls.2013.0116

The central premise of *Nomadic Ethics* (2013) is that an alternative ethics based in a relational ontology is required in order to avoid "the pitfalls of postmodernism." (Braidotti, 2013, p. 342) Braidotti bases her nomadic

ethics in Deleuze and Spinoza's ethics that "rests on an active relational ontology that looks for the ways in which otherness prompts, mobilises and allows for flows of affirmation of values and forces which are not yet sustained by the current conditions." (Braidotti, 2013, p. 342) Braidotti's nomadic conception of a relational subject can be viewed in opposition to the concept of the interpolated subject as defined in Althusser's concept of ideology. In Braidotti's concept of the subject denies a concept of moral universalism and replaces it with an imminent, relational ethics.

I have used Braidotti's concept of nomadic ethics as the base for the ethics of my research. Nomadic ethics allows for the production of previously unknown capacities to act.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2007). *A thousand plateaus*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

One of the central concepts of *A thousand plateaus* (2007) is the notion of the rhizome. A rhizome is any structure where all points are connected in a manner so that no point is a specific beginning or an end, yet the whole is heterogenous. Deleuze writes, "A rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes." (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 11) The concept of the rhizome is a departure from the concept of "arborescent" knowledge in which things must have distinct origins that exist in hierarchies and binaries like subject/object. Deleuze states, "We're tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They've made us suffer too much." (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 15)

Deleuze introduces the concept of an "assemblage" when he states that an "assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities

drawn from each of these orders.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 23) He also describes how assemblages exist in cycles of “deterritorializing” and “reterritorializing.”

The text itself is not an argument, but an elaborate metaphor for the concepts like rhizomes and assemblages that it introduces. Subsequently, the text itself frequently serves as development of a new vocabulary without stopping for explanation or definition. Deleuze writes, “What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007, p. 12) The text of *A thousand plateaus* (2007) is a mapping of the concepts it introduces, not a tracing of the concept.

I have used Deleuze’s concept of the assemblage as the base for my ontological understanding of curatorial practice. I believe the elements of curating exist in an assemblage that is constantly and provisionally de/reterritorializing into new assemblages.

Haraway, D. (1988). *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599. doi:10.2307/3178066

The central concept of *Situated Knowledges* (1988) is the idea of diffractive rather than reflective knowledge. The concept of diffraction is based in the physics of wave diffraction where difference emerges as the relationships that form between various parts of a field while they intra-act. In this way, intra-actions can be seen as the basic unit of analysis, not objects/subjects after an agential cut.

Haraway also introduces the concept of situated knowledges. “I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims.” (Haraway, 1988, p. 195) Situated knowledge does not seek to locate, fix and name objects, but instead, knowledge is framed as a “material-semiotic actor.” (Haraway, 1988, p. 200)

I have used Haraway’s concept of diffraction as the base for my method of research. My research is comprised of both reflective and diffractive analysis. The diffractive element of my research is comprised of provisional, embodied, and situated knowledges that are frequently overlooked or marginalized.

Spinoza, B. D. (2001). *Ethics*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions.

Spinoza’s *Ethics* (2001) is a book originally written in 1664 that covers a large range of topics including theology, ontology and metaphysics. Of the topics that are covered, I am primarily interested in Spinoza’s framing of affect. Spinoza states, “By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections.” (Spinoza, 1994, p. 154) Spinoza’s affect is based in embodied experience. Spinoza goes on to describe how joy occurs when two bodies interact and due to their interaction, their power to act is increased.

I have based the ethics of on research on Spinoza’s concept of affect. The analysis of the ethics of my research is based on determining if the bodies in the assemblage I am analyzing have their affect increase or decreased due to their intra-actions.

Obrist, H. U., & Bovier, L. (2008). *A brief history of curating*. Zurich:

JRP / Ringier.

A brief history of curating (2008) is a reflective, linear survey of Obrist's perspective on the development of curating. In it, he proposes that curating is subject that can be defined and clearly reflected upon through specific definitions and boundaries. The book is comprised of interviews with specific curators who exist within a defined set of practices. He does not explain his criteria for who is selected to be interviewed as if the reader is supposed to know and accept a hierarchy of selection within the curatorial world. He continually references a perspective of universal moralistic judgement. For example, he asks one curator without irony or hesitation, "Any criteria that for you are the absolute criteria of what makes a good installation?" (Obrist & Bovier, 2008, p. 222) There is no questioning of the concept of "good" nor is there any explanation of the base of his moral structure of judgement. The existence of a "good" method of curating is taken as an a priori assumption throughout the book.

I have used Obrist's frame of curatorial practice and his implied philosophical lens as the base of my reflective analysis in my research.

Obrist, H. U. (2014). *Ways of Curating*. Great Britain: Penguin Random House.

Ways of curating (2014) is a reflective overview of Obrist's perspective on curating. "Today, curating as a profession means at least four things. It means to preserve, in the sense of safeguarding the heritage of art. It means to be the selector of new work. It means to connect to art history. And it means displaying or arranging the work." (Obrist, Jeffries, & Groves, 2014, p. 1) Obrist expresses his belief that curating can be clearly defined and permanently labeled.

I have directly employed Obrist's definitions of curatorial practice as the base of my reflective analysis.

Annotated Articles

Althusser, L., & Brewster, B. (1971). *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)*. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Retrieved March 10, 2017, from <http://my.ilstu.edu/~jkshapi/AlthusserISAs.pdf>

Althusser's *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1971) frames the notions of ideology and interpellation. The base of both concepts is Althusser's assumption of the existence of the "subject." Althusser's method differs from Barad, Braidotti and Haraway in that the base unit of his reflective analysis is the pre-differentiated notion of the subject, not the diffractive intra-actions that lead to agential cuts. Althusser's reflective method holds all concepts such as the subject or ideology as eternal. He directly states, "ideology is eternal." (Althusser, 1971, p. 35) He goes on to state, "man is an ideological animal by nature" and "you and I are always already subjects." (Althusser, 1971, p. 45-47) Althusser defines ideology as "a 'representation' of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real conditions of existence." (Althusser, 1971, p. 45-47) Once, Althusser has established his concept of ideology, the central focus of his writing is the notion that the State uses various forms of power to force subjects to behave in a manner that supports the State regardless of an individual subject's interests. He outlines the systems that he believes do this for the State including Repressive State Apparatuses that enforce behavior directly like the police and Ideological State Apparatuses that function through ideology like schools. Althusser then describes how the state

creates subjects through the process of interpellation. Althusser states, “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects.” (Althusser, 1971, p. 46-47)

Althusser’s methods can be useful for reflectively analyzing and altering power imbalances within a system. However, because of Althusser’s ontological assumptions about the pre-existing nature of things such as the subject or ideology, his methods cannot be effectively deployed to analyze the intra-actions that allow power imbalances to come into existence. Fundamentally, Althusser never asks, “Does the process by which things like the concepts of a ‘subject’ or ‘ideology’ come into existence matter?” For my research, I believe before power imbalances can be analyzed and then addressed, the conditions that allowed for the imbalances to come into existence must be accounted for first.

Buurman, N. (2015, December). *Angels in the White Cube? Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at dOCUMENTA (13)*. Retrieved January 12, 2017, from <http://www.on-curating.org/issue-29-reader/angels-in-the-white-cube-rhetorics-of-curatorial-innocence-at-documenta-13.html#.WHeCPhuLSdk>

The central argument of “Angels in the White Cube” (2015) is a reflexive analysis of the curatorial methods employed by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev during dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012 along ideological terms. Buurman’s argument is that curator Christov-Bakargiev politically stated that the purpose of the exhibition was to expand agency, but this ideological statement was contrary to the “concentration of author-ity in the hands of Christov-Bakargiev.” (Burrman, 2015, p. 1) Buurman’s argument constructs a power imbalance between the elements of curatorial power that are on display and curatorial powers that remain hidden or marginalized. Burrman’s conclusion is that highlighting previously hidden

curatorial powers produces “curatorial performances of ‘womanliness as masquerade’ (Riviere 1929) – not only risks upholding the myth of the white cube’s virginity but also – despite best intentions – whitewashing the actually existing inequalities of the current capitalist regime.” (Burrman, 2015, p. 1) This writing assumes an ideological framework exists and assumes that the primary ethic of curating is to “correct” power imbalances.

I have used this article primarily as a base for the notion of marginalized powers of curating such as caring.

Morton, T. (2011). A brief history of the word 'curator' | Art | Agenda. Retrieved May 17, 2017, from <http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2011/september/09/a-brief-history-of-the-word-curator/>

“A brief history of the word 'curator’” (2011) is a reflective analysis of the history of the use of the word curator. I am primarily interested in the article because it explains how the term can now be, “A curator, here, is essentially a paid selector of stuff for sale, whether it be concert tickets or cuff links.” (Morton, 2011, p. 1)

Obrist, H. U., Jeffries, S., & Groves, N. (2014, March 23). Hans Ulrich Obrist: The art of curation. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/23/hans-ulrich-obrist-art-curator>

“Hans Ulrich Obrist” is a reflective analysis of his own perspective on curatorial practice. Central to his perspective is his continual refutation of the notion that a curator is as creative as an artist. He states, “I’ve never thought of the curator as a creative rival to the artist.” (Obrist, 2014, p. 1) This is a fascinating statement because no one asked him about this, he just states it. In my opinion, his refusal is almost a statement of his belief.

Within the overview for *A brief history of curating* (2008) which Obrist also wrote is the quote, "If artists since Marcel Duchamp have affirmed selection and arrangement as legitimate artistic strategies, was it not simply a matter of time before curatorial practice--itself defined by selection and arrangement--would come to be seen as an art that operates on the field of art itself?" (Schuster in Obrist, 2019, p. 1) Obrist's continual denials amount to a passive form of comparison to art making.

Obrist's main thesis is that like Greenberg's application of the modernist frame of essences to various methods of art making, curatorial practice is also defined by an essence of method. Obrist states, "Today, curating as a profession means at least four things. It means to preserve, in the sense of safeguarding the heritage of art. It means to be the selector of new work. It means to connect to art history. And it means displaying or arranging the work." (Obrist, 2014, p. 1)

I have used Obrist's modernist framing of the essence of curatorial practice as a base for my reflective analysis.

O'Neil, P. (2010). *The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse*. In E. Filipovic (Author), *The Biennial Reader* (pp. 240-259). Osfildern: Hatje Cantz.

The central concept of "The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse" (2010) is delineated by O'Neil when he states, "Exhibitions (in whatever form they take) are always ideological." (O'Neil, 2010, p. 14) O'Neil, like Obrist looks for the essence of curatorial practice, however, unlike Obrist who determines that there are four methods that define curatorial practice, O'Neil determines that curatorial practice is defined as a form of discourse. For O'Neil, the central ethics of curating is production of discourse within

an ideological frame. O'Neil writes "Curating is 'becoming discourse' where curators are willing themselves to be the key subject and producer of this discourse." (O'Neil, 2010, p. 26)

For my thesis, I deploy O'Neil and Obrist's frame as a base for my reflective analysis.

Practice Documentation

Press Release

Access(able)

The Living Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition entitled Access(able), a collaborative exhibition by young artists from the programs of Atlanta based NPO drawchange, Buenos Aires based emerging curators Juan and Nanci Alfonso, and Angel Negri Alfonso, and Heidi M. Aishman, PhD Researcher, Department of Fine Art, University of Reading, UK.

The Living Gallery is located at 1094 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11221

Opening reception: Saturday, November 10, 5:00 - 8:00pm

On View: Saturday, November 10 - Tuesday, November 13.

Gallery hours during the exhibition; Sat - Tuesday 10:00am - 5:00pm.

“Encompassing acts of inviting, offering and welcoming, of showing presence and paying attention, of accepting and reciprocating, but also of refusal, exclusion and control, the exhibition generates relations of giving, taking and responding.” (Beatrice von Bismarck).

Drawing on some of these points of inviting, offering, and responding the exhibition Access(able), began to take shape. As a component within the PhD research of Heidi M. Aishman, Access(able) explores the use of technology in curatorial practices to generate multiple access points into the art world for those who normally would have limited participation. Through her research at the University of Reading in the UK, and through this collaboration with drawchange and the curators from Buenos Aires, this exhibition was discussed and executed through the use of Facebook, Google translate, Facebook messenger, FaceTime and email. This exhibition asks whether or not technology can open avenues of

access to the art world for those who currently have limited access or none at all? Can the use of social media platforms support new ways of collaboration across geographical, social or cultural boundaries? And can these collaborations live beyond the exhibition and facilitate longer term experiences or relationships?

Access(able) will have on display artwork from drawchange's programs, that took place in the US, Ethiopia, and Puerto Rico. The young artists who created the work in the exhibition came together every week to work on different art therapy-based projects, expressing emotion through their art. In the U.S. drawchange works with children living in homeless shelters and abroad with impoverished children. Their projects focus on empowering young people to realise they can create their dreams and emerge from their cycle of poverty. The curators, Juan and Nanci Alfonso and Angel Negri Alfonso were previous students in a photography workshop in Buenos Aires that develops workshops and activities aimed at promoting social integration and the socialization of artistic experience in children and youth. As young teenagers, they lived in Villa 15 (slum 15) outside the city of Buenos Aires and dedicated themselves to participating in the photo workshop. They met Heidi M. Aishman (PhD Researcher and Curator) while she was a visiting artists/teacher and together they worked on several exhibitions and a series of artists books. Now many years later they are working together to curate and organise an exhibition for the artists of draw change located worldwide. Where once Juan, Nanci and Angel were given access points to exhibit their work, they are now helping to provide access points for other young people by stepping into the curatorial role. All participants in Access(able) come from a variety of backgrounds and geographical locations. All of the work will be viewable online and there will be opportunities to FaceTime or Skype with the artists and curators at scheduled times during the exhibition.

About drawchange:

WHAT WE DO AND WHY

drawchange contributes to the education of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children by bringing art into their daily lives. Children are naturally creative. However, many of the world's children have no means or encouragement to envision a break in the cycle of poverty. We provide the means to improve school attendance, leading to gains in academic performance, by supplying the materials and art therapy-based instruction that inspire children worldwide to create real and lasting change for them, their families and their communities.

The children who made these masterpieces come together every week to work on different art therapy-based projects, expressing emotion through their art. The time they spend creating allows the therapeutic aspect of art to flow through them, encouraging them to explore their subconscious and conscious thoughts. By igniting their innate creative spark, the children learn a healthy way to process emotions so that they can turn them into something truly remarkable.

Working with impoverished children and children living in homeless shelters, we spend a significant amount of our time talking about the possibilities that are available to them, empowering them to realise they can create their dreams and emerge from their cycle of poverty. We are moved and inspired when they can identify that although they are currently in this situation, it will not be forever and they have all the support around them to excel and be whatever they want to be life!

100% of proceeds from artwork sales goes to purchase more supplies for draw change to continue its programming.

To learn more about us, volunteer with us and donate, please visit www.drawchange.org!

About the Curators:

Juan and Nanci Alfonso and Angel Negri Alfonso are young people based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. They have exhibited their own photographic work internationally through the organisation Foundation Ph15 in Buenos Aires. As students of the organisations' workshops, they had the opportunity to learn photography, work on artists books and discover ways of expressing the world around them through their artwork. In their work with Heidi Aishman, they were able to exhibit their work internationally. During the exhibits, webcams were set-up between the international galleries and lucotorios in the slums of BA where the students could converse with visitors in the gallery space. While the students certainly gained from the experience of photographing and displaying their lives, the work gained heightened meaning when the students were able to witness their own openings in cities like Boston via webcam. By being able to virtually participate in their own exhibition, the opening itself became a generator of the meaning of the work in the lives of the artists and the viewers. The cross continental dialog during the opening created a new set of complex and interdependent collaborative meanings that has continued to evolve even after the closing of the exhibit. Their participation as curators for Access(able), has given them the opportunity to step into the curator role and facilitate the access to art world for the young participants of drawchange.

About Heidi M. Aishman:

Heidi M. Aishman is an independent curator originally from the northeast area of the United States, she is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Reading, Department of Fine Art, Reading, UK. Aishman has presented her research on the use of technology for access to the arts at conferences such as: EVA London: Electronic Visualisation in the Arts, BCS London, Affect in Social Media #3, University of East London, Showcasing Women in Arts and Humanities Research, University of Reading, Reading, UK, DRHA 2016: Digital Research in the Humanities and Arts Conference 2016, as well as the Migros Museum,

Zürich.

Before Heidi began her PhD research she was the Fall Curator in Residence at the Hagedorn Foundation Gallery in Atlanta, GA, where she curated multiple exhibitions that included community workshops and a lecture series. Her past curatorial projects include, *New Takes*, and, *Interiors*, Hagedorn Foundation Gallery, Atlanta GA, *The Most Curatorial Biennial*, Apexart, New York, NY, *not quite art*, collaboration with Steve Aishman Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre, Hong Kong, *Community Through Cameras*, Hammond Art Gallery, Fitchberg, MA, *Temporary Walls: The Visual Voices of Detained Youth*, Rhys Gallery, Boston, MA and, *ph15 Fotografia*, *Sonoridad Amarilla*, Verona 04, Buenos Aires, Argentina. She has been awarded several grants for her work with underserved communities from organisations such as The Puffin Foundation, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Tufts University.

Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Heidi M. Aishman, Curator/Researcher University of Reading, UK

and

Jennie Lobato, Founder/CEO, drawchange

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between Heidi Aishman and drawchange to execute an art exhibition, November 10 - 13 at The Living Gallery in Brooklyn, NY.

Background

This partnership has been created to support to the collaborative nature of Heidi Aishman's PhD research and to facilitate an exhibition for drawchange, the NPO run by Jennie Lobato.

Purpose

This partnership has been created to benefit both parties involved. The exhibition will be used for research to be included in the PhD dissertation written by Heidi M. Aishman. The exhibition will also be for the purpose of exhibition and sales of artwork created by participants involved with drawchange, as well as to raise awareness for the organization.

The above goals will be accomplished by undertaking the following activities:

Heidi Aishman will be responsible for procuring an exhibition space, prepping artwork for exhibition (framing if necessary, or other means of displaying the work) installation of artwork (via gallery magnets, or other means of installation that causes no damage to the artwork), curation of the exhibition, liaison between the organization, herself and invited curators, generating Facebook page for online dialogue and promotion of exhibition. Heidi will be responsible for any shipping of artwork if necessary. Heidi will create/obtain any wall text, including artwork labels, show titles, names of curators, price list, press release etc. Heidi will be responsible for the collection of any purchases of artwork, documenting those sales, and seeing that those funds are delivered to Jennie Lobato for the sole purpose of donation to fund further programming for participants of drawchange. Sales of any artwork created by invited curators is to be delivered to those individuals. At the end of the exhibition, Heidi will de-install the show, return exhibition space to its original state, return all unsold work by drawchange artists to Jennie Lobato /drawchange

Jennie Lobato will be responsible for collection of artwork for exhibition, generating a detailed list of artworks including: materials, location of artists, dates created, and price. Jennie will be responsible for the physical shipping or transportation of artwork in a timely manner to either NY (the gallery) or to CT (to Heidi). Any textual information needed to properly represent drawchange, descriptions used in exhibition to inform the public of the organization's goals, mission, projects etc. Pamphlets, print outs or any information wished to be made available to the public during the exhibition.

Reporting

Heidi Aishman and Jennie Lobato will evaluate effectiveness and adherence to the agreement and when evaluation will happen. If any conflicts occur an outside third party will be decide upon to help resolve any issues.

Funding

Exhibition expenses such as shipping of artwork, gallery rental, materials for installation, reception costs (food/drink), printing of materials for those actions listed above will be the responsibility of Heidi Aishman. In so doing she retains the right to use the documentation (be it video, photography, online commentary/imagery, print reviews, and textual documentation) for her PhD research dissertation to be finished by August 2019.

Duration

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from Heidi M. Aishman and drawchange, Jennie Lobato. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the authorized officials from Heidi M. Aishman and Jennie Lobato and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials from Heidi M. Aishman and Jennie Lobato this MOU shall end on November 14, 2019.

Contact Information

Heidi M. Aishman

<personal information removed>

Jennie Lobato

<personal information removed>

Permissions for image use

Permissions were received to reproduce images of the children who participated in drawchange and artwork that was produced in drawchange from Jennie Lobato, founder and CEO of drawchange.

Permissions were received for use of “People’s Screen” images from the artist Paul Sermon.

Permissions for use of photography was received from Bob Krasner Photography.

Permissions for use of their image was received by Ben Sloat, Todd Marston and Robert Tichio.

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Access(able)

The Living Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition entitled ***Access(able)***, a collaborative exhibition by young artists from the programs of Atlanta based NPO **drawchange**, Buenos Aires based emerging curators Juan and Nanci Alfonso, and Angel Negri Alfonso, and Heidi M. Aishman, PhD Researcher, Department of Fine Art, University of Reading, UK.

Opening Reception: Saturday
November 10, 5:00-8:00 PM

The Living Gallery
1094 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11221
www.facebook.com/exhibitioncollaboration/

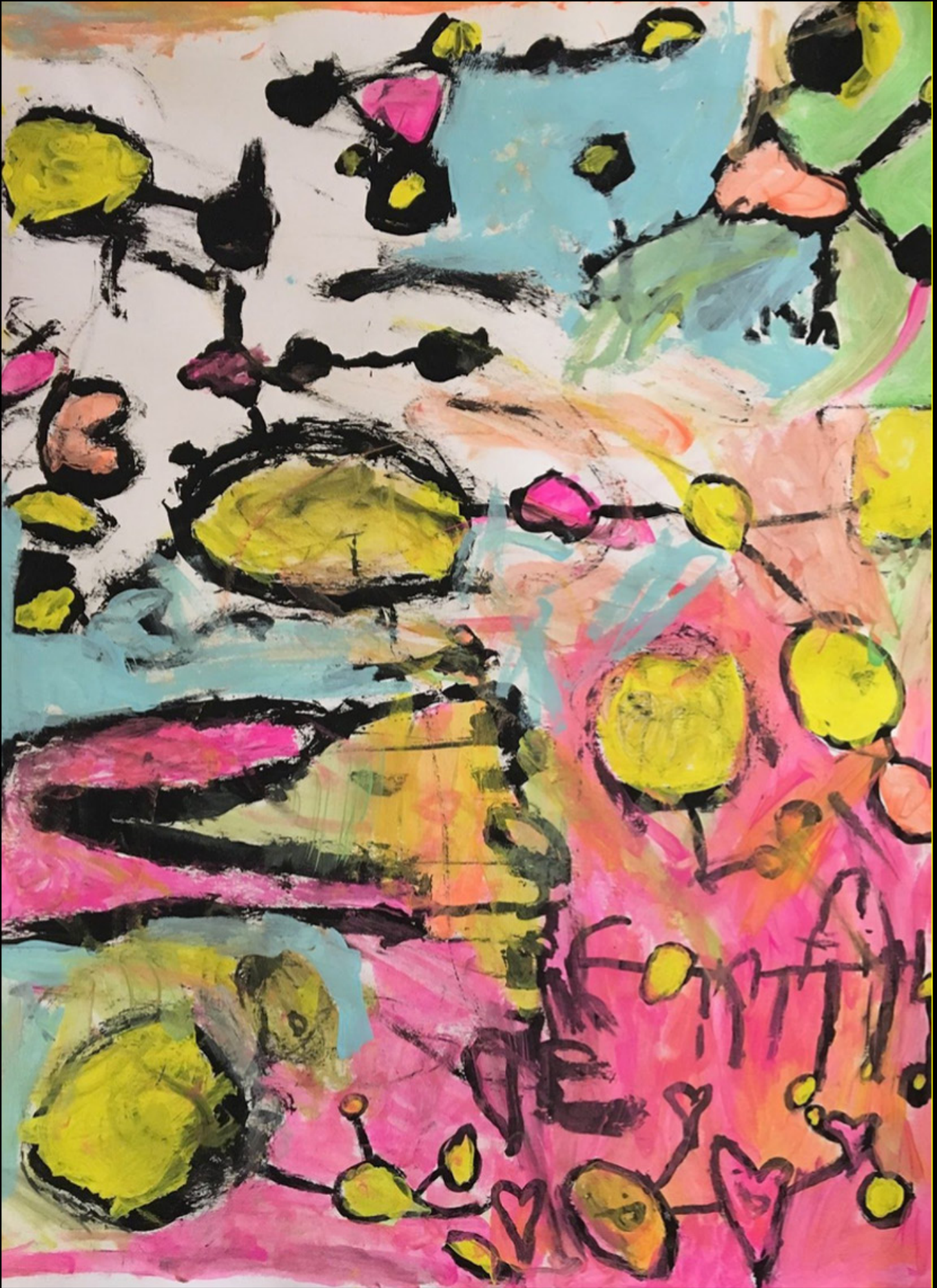


Figure 26: Postcard for Access(able)(2018)

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