A provocative book, an important book! jagodzinski | Wallin’s ‘betrayal’ is in fact a wake-up call for art-based research, a loving critique of its directions. jagodzinski | Wallin’s reference is the question ‘what art can do’ – not what it means. Theirs is an ultimate affirmation that uncovers the singularities that compose and give consistency to art not as an object, but as an event. Their betrayal consists in an affirmation of life and becoming, positing a performative ‘machinics of the arts’ which is in absolute contraposition with the hegemonic discourse of art and|as an object of knowledge and representation. This does not only concern academia, but also politics and ethics – an untimely book that comes just at the right time!

– Bernd Herzogenrath, Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main (Germany), author of An American Body|Politic. A Deleuzian Approach, and editor of Deleuze & Ecology and Travels in Intermedia|lity: ReBlurring the Boundaries.

jagodzinski | Wallin have written a challenging book on the theme of betrayal which aims to question the metaphysical ground of the practice of many arts educators and researchers. Dismantling the notion of praxis which assumes a prior will as well as the pervasive notion of the creative and reflexive individual, they revisit the notion of poiesis and the truth of appearing in order to advocate the centrality of becoming in pedagogical relations. Is it possible to develop pedagogies beyond those images of thought that attenuate learners, teachers and researchers? We need a new image of thought, or better, a thought without image, and this book asks us to take up the challenge.

– Dennis Atkinson, Director of the Centre for the Arts and Learning, Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths University of London, author of Art Equality and Learning; Peagogies Against the State.
Arts-Based Research
Arts-Based Research

A Critique and a Proposal

jan jagodzinski | Jason Wallin
University of Alberta, Canada
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DEDICATION

jan
This book is dedicated to my teacher
Harry Garfinkle
on his 90th birthday

Jason
This book is dedicated to Petrina
for her love and support
To do what I have done here has been an act of prolonged precision in cold blood beyond anything that I have ever written

– Raymond Pettibon
ENDORSEMENT

Approaching the creative impulse in the arts from the philosophical perspectives of Deleuze + Guattari, jagodzinski and Wallin make a compelling argument for blurring the boundaries of arts-based research in the field of art education. The authors contend that the radical ideas of leading scholars in the field are not radical enough due to their reliance on existing research ontologies and those that end in epistemological representations. In contrast, they propose arts-based research as the event of ontological immanence, an incipient, machinic process of becoming-research through arts practice that enables seeing and thinking in irreducible ways while resisting normalization and subsumption under existing modes of address. As such, arts practice, as research-in-the making, constitutes a betrayal of prevailing cultural assumptions, according to the authors, an interminable renouncement of normalized research representations in favor of the contingent problematic that emerges during arts practice.

Charles R. Garoian, Professor of Art Education, Penn State University, author of The Prosthetic Pedagogy of Art.
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INTRODUCTION

THE ETHICS OF BETRAYAL

“I write for a species that does not yet exist.”

– Nietzsche (958)

What does it mean to betray Arts-Based Research by offering a critique of its fundamental tenants? Why betray it in the first place? There are a number of ways betrayal might be thought more favorably than the one that most readily comes to mind: to be disloyal to friends by acting in the interests of enemies. And, of course, in the Christian world, Judas immediately comes to the lips. What form does his particular betrayal take? In the short story by Jorge Luis Borges, “The Three Version of Judas,” the most extreme version is where Judas premeditates his sins and violates trust. There is no virtue in his act. But then there is the Judas who alone, amongst the apostles intuits the necessity of the divine plan: the Word has to be made flesh through a sacrifice on the cross to assure a political rebellion and movement. Judas in some way reflects Jesus in his own sacrifice, willing to deliberately self-destruct. In this view Jesus needs Judas’ betrayal to assure that the divine plan would be accomplished. If Jesus’ aestheticism degrades and mortifies the flesh for the greater glory of God, Judas’ equally renounced honor, good, peace, and the Kingdom of Heaven in order that these very possibilities will be achieved. Pushed even further, Borges speaking through Nils Runeberg, one assumes a monastic scholar who is writing this account in 1904, blasphemously concludes that God only becomes Man, not through Jesus alone, but through Judas, to display the culpability of such a reprehensible act. Runeberg publishes his thesis, but riddled with guilt for having discovered this dark secret, or at the very least for even having thought such a possibility, is accused as a heretic, and dies of an aneurysm on the first day of March, 1912. This is his sacrifice for having a counter-factual claim released into the public world.

Slavoj Žižek (2003), alluding to Borges story, presents Judas as a hero, but a hero in a very specific way, a hero that betrays out of love. “I respect you for your universal features, but I love you for an X beyond these features, and the only way to discern this X is betrayal. I betray you and then, when you are down, destroyed by my betrayal, we exchange glances—if you understand my act of betrayal, and only if you do, you are a true hero” (16). Said in an equally strange Lacanian (1978) way: “I love you, but because inexplicably I love in you something more than you — the objet a — I mutilate you” (268). Betrayal becomes the absolute form of fidelity, or is it that fidelity is the absolute form of betrayal? And, so it is the betrayal directed at Arts-based Research. Our betrayal is both to see where the ‘divine’ plan might be
INTRODUCTION

heading, but stopping at a certain point, not following any further, as an act of love and in the belief that another direction is required to continue to make its promises possible. In this sense this work is a ‘betrayal’ for it can only go so far in its support of arts-based research, but in no way does it reject the general aspirations of many of its intentions—especially critical ones. This is not to say that it does not support the ‘divine’ plan of redeeming the arts to have their own ‘special’ forms of acting in the world, but to cut ties with a number of its directions for specific ethical, aesthetical and political reasons when it comes to furthering that trajectory along epistemological claims, and with a self-serving representational aesthetic.

Our proposal is therefore a critique as well as a direction. The arts-based research directions we critique and the people who have written these directions are friends, and therefore we love them in a particular way. So, if we ‘betray’ them in particular ways, arguing and defending why there are limitations to the in-roads they have made, it is done with love and respect. This, of course, should be part of academic life, yet critique is never easy, and needs to be reexamined. This agonistic/antagonistic side of the Academy performs a certain dialectic that persists as a sign of rigor to assure quality control. But critique should no longer be critique in the traditional sense; it strives to ask what each direction of an arts-based education is doing and what the limitations of its ‘doing’ entails. Hence, we would expect the same ‘betrayal’ of the proposed direction that we developed throughout the book to be questioned in the same way. To take ‘seriously’ the collegial directions taken to arts-based research is therefore this paradoxical position of “betrayed love” or “love betrayed.” Deleuze put it another way regarding his ‘mediators’ (*intercesseurs*), “Creation’s all about mediators. Without them nothing happens. […] Whether they are real or imaginary (*fictifs*), animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators. […] I need my mediators to express myself, and they’d never express themselves without me: you’re always working in group, even when you seem to be on your own” (1995, 125).

Our arguments will concern themselves with the practice of arts, however not as orthodox research, if research is continually enfolded into forms of epistemology, which is what some directions of arts-based research tries currently to do to ensure university legitimacy. Rather, it is an ethics as ontology to generate a “belief in the world” as Deleuze (1989, 166) would say. “[To] say that ‘truth is created’ implies that the production of truth involves a series of operations that amount to working on a material—strictly speaking, a series of falsifications” (Deleuze 1995, 126). In section 2, Contemporary Currents, we will argue that qualitative research, from where some claim arts-based research has its roots, is simply too conservative, repeating the technicity of science already forewarned by Heidegger. The claims to connoisseurship models and the like are the other side of the coin to quantitative research, and that this direction merely will continue to preserve the false dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research, which science as a leviathan in its own right has surpassed through the paradigm of complexity. In this section we also raise issues with arts-based research that calls itself cognitive,
arguing that the processes of art making should be limited in its use. We are better
served grasping these artistic processes as various forms of *simulacra*, as the
‘powers of the false, which create new worlds and new experiences informed by
the serialization of the information-digital age. This is “becoming” in a digital
age by following fabulation as Deleuze|Guattari developed it. We also worry the
variety of arts-based research that purport themselves to be phenomenological and
poststructuralist that are hegemonic in the field. There seems to be two directions
here: one direction tries to dismantle the humanist notion of self through forms
of radical autoethnography; the other marshals complexity theory that erases the
subject, often placed into the (post)structuralist collective ‘we’ of processes. We
argue that both these directions are well suited to maintain the complementarity of
arts-based research in the academy, but at the expense of repeating a subjectivity
that serves current neo-liberal and capitalist ends. Our direction is machinic. We
also put forward the thesis that various performance arts-based research are on
the right track, but are not radical enough for the posthuman condition we find
ourselves in, and that critical theory requires another level of subjectivity—that is
an understanding of the unconscious as theorized by both Lacan and Deleuze and
Guattari that problematizes a semiotic analysis. Finally, we try to develop the line
of flight for arts-based research that builds on the performative machinic understanding
of the arts, incorporating the view that art should not be theorized as an object but re-
theorized as an *event* that first emerged with the avant-garde but remains suppressed.
What art can ‘do’ is our focus. This project is Dada-like in its attempt to develop
a new ‘subjective’ research position of arts education, which laughingly might be
called Dada-sein (as a playful critique of Heidegger’s notion and claims of truth
as alethia as unconcealing). It is our contention that Deleuze|Guattari ‘complete’
the Heideggerian project of a ‘people to come’ as adumbrated by the Nietzschean
quote that opens our introduction. The imaginary self that informs so much of the
embodied arts-based research needs to be grasped for the fantasy structures that
emerge and that the “force” of art requires an understanding, not as a form of
epistemology, but from the position of the first philosophy, ethics with a particular
politics of the middle voice. As an ‘event’ it becomes a transversal transformative
act that escapes productionist logic of modern power that designer capitalism puts
into play. Politics in this regime looks very different when witnessing is taken into
account.

**Ethics of Betrayal**

As it pertains to the state of art education, this book is then intimately concerned
with the image. Specifically, our interest herein is in part oriented to the reception
of the image into educational research, including how this reception has functioned to
advance, limit, and disappear the pedagogical potential of the image itself. *What is
the relationship between art and research anyway?* This approach necessitates that
we not simply begin with the problem of how the visual is brought into relation with
INTRODUCTION

systems of academic thinking and action. This would be to commence our enquiry at the point of a synthesis that might already be called arts-based research. Instead, we would like to begin with the consideration of a different kind of image dubbed the image of thought (Deleuze 1994; Deleuze 2000). It is via the consideration of such an image that we aim to evoke new problems for the field of arts-based research. In address to these problems, we will argue that contemporary arts-based research requires the fabulation of a new ethics. More specifically, we will herein advocate four aphorisms for an ethics of betrayal functioning as an abstract-machine throughout this book. This will unfold due course. For now it will suffice to begin by asking what is meant by the image of thought?

The Sign Must be Set in Opposition to Logos

In Deleuzian terms, the image of thought refers to a particular territorialization that effectively stops people from thinking. In an example that is germane to the field of arts-based research, one such territorialization might be named “friendship”. Perhaps necessarily, friends come to agree on the signification of words and things (Deleuze, 2000). They come to share conventions that support the ease with which they can communicate and in terms of which such communication might proceed under the banner of mutual goodwill. The recognition of a truth between friends becomes easier for having the conventions of signification and communication upon which to found it. Yet, there is a problem that accompanies friendship, and in particular, the kinds of truth that friendship is capable of founding. Proust, for whom the fidelity and agreement shared between friends can only ever lead to conventions of thought, evokes such a problematic. This image of friendship is a corollary to a particular image of thought Proust detects in classical philosophy. For Proust, the founding of philosophy is drawn from the presupposition that thinking is naturally oriented to seek the truth. It is in this way that classical philosophy presumes the implicit friendship between thought and truth. For Proust, this moment of philosophy’s founding already proceeds from the discovery and organization of ideas according to an “order of thought…that would assure agreement between minds” (Deleuze, 2000, 94). Akin to the conventions upon which a friendship might be founded, Proust charges that the search for truth conducted in philosophy commences upon an image that restricts thought to already possible orders of signification. Yet, in Proustian terms, this has yet to think that which makes thought necessary in the first place. Such necessity, he avers, is obfuscated by the goodwill of friendship.

Like philosophy, Deleuze writes, “friendship…is ignorant of the dark regions in which are elaborated the effective forces that act on thought” (95). In other words, the goodwill shared between friends is insufficient to apprehend a radical “outside thought” that forces us to think. For Proust, what is summoned in this critique of the friend is the very thing that makes thought necessary. Put differently, the enjoinment of thinking and truth founded in classical philosophy does not yet
explain what necessitates thinking, nor does it apprehend truth of an order other than that presupposed by the possible. More important than an image of thought through which agreement can be founded is that which leads to thought in the first place. In a word, we might call that which necessitates such thought violence. Deleuze (2000) writes, “thought is nothing without something that forces and does violence to it” (96). Violence forces us to recommence thinking in ways subtracted from the necessity of the possible and the stupor of a priori agreement. Yet, we must be careful to avoid falling into an image of thought that is already intolerant of violence, for only in this way might we recommence its question as it pertains to the necessity of truth. Toward this, Deleuze advances a postulate germane to the conceptualization of art. Via what Deleuze dubs the secret pressures of art, we might once again encounter a violence that forces us to think: “There is no Logos; there are only hieroglyphs” (101). This is not simply an appeal to the absence of truth, but rather, the necessity that truth be commenced by an encounter that demands explication, deciphering, and translation. This is the impulse that lies at the heart of a good detective who, necessitated by the singular case, must always be forced to think anew.

It is only via an encounter with that which does violence to thought that the act of thinking itself is recommenced. Within the field of art for example, it is via a particular style no longer obsessed with recognizable objects that such a shock to thought might be forged. That is, only once the signs of art become capable of betraying the truth might they release thinking from an a priori image of thought. “The truth is never revealed” Deleuze writes, “it is betrayed” (95). This conceptualization is itself a betrayal of classical philosophical thinking, insofar as it suggests that thinking is not, in itself, naturally inclined to the discovery of the truth. What is necessary to the truth, Deleuze counterposes, is an outside thought, an unrecognizable sign, or “secret pressure” that does violence to thought, or more adequately, violates an image of thought that would attempt to think on our behalf. Thought can never come before the sign of art, since the sign appeals to a style of thinking that must necessarily come after. We might otherwise name this conceptualization “the pedagogy of the image” insofar as it commences thinking in ways not yet attributed particular contents. This is, of course, to assault a kind of representational lethargy by which signs are always-already distributed within a semiotic field. However, such representational fidelity is not yet to encounter thinking, lest a form of education (educare) capable of “leading out”, or otherwise, of creating a pedagogical encounter with an outside thought that might once again force us to think. This is, perhaps the most unique contribution of art to education insofar as it demands of teaching and learning something radically other than the voluntary movement of memory (reflection), the application of representational matrices (transcendence), or the deployment of laws known prior to that which they apply (morality). It is via the act of the necessity of thinking that founds truth so that it may be unleashed from that which we have already discovered, given ourselves, or derived from an image set out in advance. This is the beginning of an ethics of betrayal.
INTRODUCTION

APHORISM ONE

Betrayal is not the destruction of truth, but the condition whereupon the necessity of truth might be thought anew.

The Sign Must be Set in Opposition to “Common Sense”

The image of thought in relation to which we have begun to situate an ethics of betrayal is a corollary of common sense (Deleuze, 1994). Yet, by all means, we must be cautious to avoid treating the common as banal. As Deleuze develops, the character of common sense can be detected throughout the history of philosophy and specifically, in the categorical philosophizing of Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel. More contemporarily, the fabulation of common sense has become the domain of marketing firms and mainstream media outlets that depend on representational thought in their aspiration to recognizability. Briefly put, common sense is that which assures the harmonious resemblance between the act of judgment and the reality of its object. Deleuze (2004a) writes that “[c]ommon sense [is] defined subjectively by the supposed identity of a Self which provided the unity and ground of all the faculties, and objectively by the identity of whatever object served as a focus for all the faculties” (226). As such, common sense is an act of coordination between self and object that, in turn, forms the image of world composed of stable correspondences. Such correspondence carries a supreme power. As anyone who has spent any time in an early childhood classroom knows, pedagogies of correspondence have come to form the marrow of the educational project.

Common sense is one of the first senses to be cultivated in the subject and perhaps necessarily so. After all, it is via the coordinating power of common sense that our world might be recognized, and further, that we might communicate about the world with relative ease and understanding. Herein, we might begin to once again detect the image of friendship and the conditions of agreement upon which it is founded. That is, the very notion of agreement relies on the creation of categories through which agreement might itself be coordinated. Supporting such coordination, common sense “contributes the form of the Same”, that is, “the norm of identity…and the essential aspect of recognition – namely, the model itself” (169–170). While the conditions of common sense by which the thinking faculties are brought into correspondence with the world found the ease with which we might recognize things, such ease of recognition comes at a cost. That is, the fidelity to recognition instantiated by the idea of common sense requires the conformism of thought. Simply, it requires that thought seek its fulmination in representation. The problem that Deleuze detects in philosophy’s history of representation is that philosophy has left us virtually no tools to break with that which everyone already knows. It is in this way that Deleuze advocates for the emergence of “someone – if only one – with the necessary modesty [of] not managing to know what everybody [already] knows” (Deleuze, 1994, 130). In short, who might go
against common sense in order to break from those a priori correspondences already familiar to us?

Today, what is increasingly required is a figure capable of warring against common sense. But we must necessarily take caution here, for such a task must avoid locating its ideal in the gamesmanship of purposeful obfuscation. Rather, what becomes increasingly necessitated in an age wrought by the vicissitudes of common sense is a form of betrayal capable of making the representational solutions available to us inadequate to the problems they are made to contain. This is not simply an appeal to the slippage of signification. Rather, the challenge herein necessitates the introduction of new problems unequal to their a priori solutions. To put this another way, the mirror resemblance of the possible and the real must be opened upon a new dimension of potential. Those artists concerned with the fabulation of subjectivities (Matthew Barney and Motohiko Odani), times (Todd Hayes), and places (Öyvind Fahlström and Robert Smithson) not yet anticipated by representational thinking have already begun this project. In a style particular to the problems upon which they work, each betray a commitment to common sense, short-circuiting the habitual reterritorialization of the unthought upon a prior image. This tactic marks three aspects significant to composition of an ethics of betrayal.

First, insofar as art becomes capable of palpating the false, it functions to compose a plane from which different kinds of actualities might be selected. For example, the counter-mythologies of Matthew Barney’s Cremaster cycle are impossible to apprehend via the representational categories available to us contemporarily. As O’Sullivan (2006) writes, “[W]e might say that the [Cremaster] films are addressed less to an already existing audience, who is familiar with an already existing narrative, but to a future audience, a people-yet-to-come, who as such require specifically new narratives, specifically contemporary myths” (150). In the Cremaster cycle, the radical potential for instantiating a future people born of a different relationship between biology, mythology, and geology is premised on a fundamental betrayal of common sense. Put simply, in order that life be relinked to its powers of becoming, the dogmatic image of thought presupposed by common sense must be double-crossed. In turn, the notion of the double-cross suggests that the act of betrayal emerge from within common sense. In arts-based research, such a betrayal would entail stuttering the conventions of the field in such a way as to make strange the very prospect of what arts-based research might be capable of doing. Unfettered from the edicts of common sense, arts-based research might become a place for the fabulation of a-people-yet-to-come, or rather, a people for which there exists no prior image, narrative, or transcendent organizing myth.

Second, by breaking with the edicts of common sense, art assumes its most non-representational force. Art is no longer a reflection of the world, but as Deleuze and Guattari aver, monumental. The work of art stands alone and is autonomous from already constituted traditions and experiences. What is unleashed in art’s monumental autonomy is a sensation no longer born of modernism’s clock-time, or rather, that image of time premised upon personal or historical memory. Breaking
from the *common sense* notion that art is located in a time commensurate with the traditions of the present, or rather, that art is the reflection of distinctly human leitmotifs, art mobilizes an irrational sheet of time that is radically futural. This is not simply to represent a human image of the future but, as in the work of Paul Klee, to render the invisible relationship between chaos and rhythm visible. Palpating that which is obfuscated by *common sense*, the rendering of invisible forces unleash *sensations* that do not yet circulate within orthodox registers of semiotic meaning. More interestingly, it is via the irrational or untimely force of art that *sensation* is opened to what has not yet been thought. Such a style of thought is intimate to the works of Cézanne, who challenged the painter to look beyond the landscape and into its chaos. As Smith (2002) writes, Cézanne “spoke of the need to always paint at close range, to no longer see the wheat field, to be too close to it, to lose oneself in the landscape, without landmarks, to the point where one no longer sees forms or even matters, but only forces, densities, intensities…[t]his is what [he] called the world before humanity” (xxi).

Insofar as art productively fails to aspire to the reflection of the world, or rather, *betrays* the orthodox organization of sense into aesthetic judgment, it becomes a tactic for desedimenting the habits of relation and recognition Deleuze and Guattari (1987) dub “territory”. For arts-based research, the *betrayal* of such ‘territories’ might constitute the relaunch of our collective project. Specifically, by breaking from common sense, we might become better prepared to survey the unthought or virtual force of art. This is not simply an appeal to a kind of impoverished deconstruction that would critique an artwork in terms of what it leaves out. Rather, our interest here is oriented toward an analysis of art in terms of the sensations it is capable of composing and modulating. Detached from the edicts of common sense, we can begin to imagine new terms of expression irreducible to narrative, illustration, or the genius of the artist. Instead, we might begin to think of art in terms of what *desists*, or rather, in terms of what it is in art that precedes and yet invisibly inheres within the territories of codes and subjects (Rajchman, 2000). In Bacon for example, it is the violence of *meat sensations* that precedes the face, in Klee, the movement between chaos and rhythm that precedes the landscape (Deleuze, 2002). Surveying the singular and original sensations that both compose and flow through the work of art, arts-based research might hence overturn a culture of consensus born from an overdose of common sense. In its place, we might begin to take seriously a way of thinking art that does not begin with form, but rather, with force. Put differently, an ethics of betrayal in arts-based research would be less interested in the interpretation of art forms (conventions of artistic appearance) than in an analysis of *art forces*, or rather, the expressive potential of materials (colors, lines, marks) in the process of becoming-art.

An emphasis on sensation concomitantly suggests the undoing of communication. This third principle of an *ethics of betrayal* begins to intervene with an art reduced to pure communication, to the ubiquitous sign-exchange of information society, or to the automatic interpretation machines of representational thinking.
THE ETHICS OF BETRAYAL

(Deleuze, 1995). This is not to say that art does not communicate, only that the contemporary moment suffers from too much communication. As a symptom of contemporary marketing for example, the reduction of art to a matter of communication has already reterritorialized art forces within the structures of narrative, recognizable pictorial codes, and popular aesthetic tastes. Yet, this dangerous scenario is not reserved for the marketing firms of the West. As Deleuze and Guattari (1994) write, “the painter does not paint on a virgin canvas, the writer does not write on a blank page, but the page or the canvas are already covered over with pre-existing, preestablished clichés” (192). One such cliché begins with the attempt to frame art as a form of representation, to reterritorialize it upon the orthodoxies (doxa) of the socius or image of creative genius. It is against such readymade corridors of interpretation and communicability that art must be relaunched. Such a relaunch is not a petition to continually defer meaning and hence to fall into complicity with the automatism of neo-liberal broadcasting. Nor is it to think in terms of an alternative world beyond this one. Rather, the betrayal we would like to advance for arts-based research can be posited via the problem of how we might believe in this world, or rather, will a belief capable of unleashing the potentials of a life. This might not seem like an issue of communication. Yet, insofar as communication functions as the handmaiden of representational thought and the automatic interpretation machines of the Western socius, it works to effectively limit what might be thought and what might yet become.

The problem of believing in this world is one addressed by Deleuze in his second book on cinema, The Time-Image (1989). As Deleuze argued, the postwar period would be marked by the question of how life might continue in the shadow of wartime violence and mass murder. Put differently, the postwar period was fundamentally concerned with the problem of how one might believe in a world capable of such extensive and far-reaching brutality. As Adorno in 1949 famously pronounced, “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.” This pronouncement is less an augury on the end of poetry however, than a challenge to ask how art might instantiate new forces for believing in the world, or rather, for believing in the potential for the world’s becoming. As Adorno (1973) retracts, “it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems…[b]ut it is not wrong to raise the…question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living” (362–363). Adorno’s question on how one might continue to live is representationally unanswerable, since the popular imagery of the postwar period had become intractably associated with the wartime assemblage. The old forms had become inadequate to the shift in perspective required for a postwar world. In is along this problem that Deleuze (1989) documents the radical perceptual shift produced through the technical creation of a new kind of thought he dubs the time-image. While prewar cinema was overwhelmingly organized in terms of narrative continuity and the addition of events toward their rational culmination, postwar cinema’s developments with editing and camera technologies enabled the emergence of a new image of life, one capable of performing a radically irrational break with the tropes of continuity and narratology.
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that had come to dominate the phenomenology of film. Irreducible to communication, the time-image was able to produce an interval freed from sensori-motor habit. Simply, the cinematic time-image began to register the nomadic mind unlinked from clichéd movements of thought and action. It was in this artistic innovation that a new means for believing in the world was founded. Specifically, it was via the new relationship to time palpated by the time-image that transpersonal, transtemporal, and non-chronological ways of thinking were engendered. In short, the time-image allowed for a style of thinking unfettered from representation. Instead, it was through the image of difference born from the time-image that a new reason to believe in the world was created. If arts-based researchers take this problem seriously, it behooves us to rethink the connection between art and the future, or rather, the ways in which art can become cause to believe in the world. Such a task necessitates betraying the conceit of communication that might otherwise be called the will to representation (Roy, 2003; Roy, 2004). In its place, we must begin to survey new images capable of releasing potentials in the world without necessitating that they conform to an image of the world as it is given. More importantly, by breaking from the conceptualization of art as communication, arts-based researchers might more adequately address the ways in which art becomes capable of linking heterogeneous social machines for a future people. Such futural becomings are being palpated today in such diverse areas as the counter-gaming revolution, transgenic art experimentation, and in the guerilla art events perpetrated by Prou, Rhodia, Powderly, and Roth.

APHORISM TWO

Betrayal is an enemy to common sense - as what is most common marks a will to representation. Betrayal is hence what unleashes from common form those forces through which the world might be thought with difference.

Rise of the Traitor Prophets

If art-based education were to risk betraying its fidelities to representation and communication, it might begin to mobilize approaches distinguishable from the artistic conceptualism of the 1980’s and semio-analytic fetishism of the early 1990’s. Detached from the theorization of art as either conceptually meaningful or as a “slippery” object to be read, arts-based research might habilitate a political aesthetics. Yet, this is already to presume the non-political character of both conceptual and semio-analytic approaches to arts-based theorizing, a claim that first requires explanation. Such an explanation begins with a shift we are detecting in the style of contemporary art. Departing from the retroactive memory of interpretation, the resemblance of metaphor, and the drive for sprawling semiotic production that characterized contemporary art in the 1980’s and 1990’s, this new approach increasingly focuses on what might be called a “machinic arts” and its operative question: what can be created capable of constructing a new type of reality?
As this operative question suggests, the style of contemporary art we are today detecting takes as its task the creation of singularities no longer reflected by majoritarian semiotic regimes. Deviating from the question of what an artwork is, the “machinic arts” instead survey what art might do, how it might connect to and create a plane upon which social revolution might be thought. In its most political configuration, this is a question of what new kinds of social assemblages might be created in manner out of joint with the habits of social memory, metaphorical resemblance, and the automatic explanatory machines of the interpretive discourses. Such “machinic arts” might be seen via the rise of turntablism, in which the function of the turntable as a mechanism of reproduction was effectively reterritorialized as a musical instrument. Yet, the “machinic arts” of the turntable extend beyond this repurposing, giving rise to a minoritarian semiotic regime capable of directly intervening with corporate taste manipulation and copyright usemonopolies. While the hands of African American workers were being displaced from industrial manufacturing through outsourcing and automation, the turntable became a creative phylum for a new interface between bios and techne predicated upon such new ways of thinking as scratching, cutting, mixing, and beat juggling. As Guins and Cruz (2005) argue, this creative phylum would become concomitant to a form of desire-engineering severed from both the habitual conceptualization of the turntable’s expressive capabilities and majoritarian semiotics. In this vein, the reterritorialization of the turntable would become a machine for a people-yet-to-come, or rather, a micro political revolution marked by new enunciative practices, forms of collective assemblage, and subjective production. Deflecting the question of what the “machinic arts” of turntablism might mean, we want to recommence the question of what they are capable of doing. This is to say that for arts-based research, the emerging “machinic-arts” must be thought in terms of their capacities to transform art forms in situ to art forces in socius (Alliez, 2010). It is in terms of its capacity to release life from under its powers of limitation that the “machinic arts” habituate a political aesthetic of another kind altogether.

Of course, the “machinic arts” must necessarily rely on an ethics of betrayal insofar as they necessarily betray the orthodoxy of the actual. For example, Alan Kaprow’s Happenings drew from such everyday actions such as brushing one’s teeth in a manner to make them strangely non-habitual. Through performative expression, Kaprow released the passive habits that compose our lives by modulating their durations, their connections to specific contexts, and the alteration of their presumed utility. Briefly, what we are calling a “machinic arts” begins by betraying what is already given and in particular, the given as it functions as a passive sensori-motor responsivity to the world. One might think here of Cage’s event-composition 4’33”, which betrays both the utilitarian function of musical performativity and the presumed enunciative possibility of musical composition. In another example, the “machinic art” of Archangel functions by betraying the algorithmic code of contemporary video games by short-circuiting and rerouting their hardware, creating in turn an anti-game composed of hacked percepts and glitched video affects.
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The betrayal perpetrated by the “machinic arts” is one that releases difference from under its orthodox expressions, hence enabling new constellations of reference (Guattari, 1995). In this vein, the “machinic arts” demonstrate a political aesthetic insofar as they detect molecular affects operative within molar territories of form and orthodoxies of expression. Simply, via an ethico-aesthetics of betrayal, the machinic arts palpate practices not yet thought and concomitant to which a new people might be fabulated. Yet, the betrayal of the given is not, in itself, adequate for the creation of a new style of living. As we see in an emerging style of contemporary art however, betrayal must be thought in relation to a secondary movement: affirmation (O’Sullivan, 2008).

As O’Sullivan (2010a) avers, contemporary art is marked by an approach that both deviates and affirms, or put differently, criticizes and creates. Such a tactic might be seen in the work of Duchamp, whose readymade sculptures concomitantly criticize the aristocratic and commodified air of the gallery while reterritorializing the concept of art for a people in becoming (neo-dadaists, fluxus, and Situationists). In this way, a work such as Duchamp’s Fountain (1917) functions as an art force, betraying the orthodoxies and good sensibilities of the field while creating an experimental plane for thinking the question of what art can do. It is this process of deviation and affirmation that are linked in an ethics of betrayal. That is, betrayal marks both a deviation from what is and the potentially affirmative reterritorialization of referential terms along which a thing might be rethought. A case in point extends from the anti-biopic films of director Todd Haynes, whose features on David Bowie (Velvet Goldmine) and Bob Dylan (I’m Not There) radically betray the terms along which life is conventionally thought. Specifically, Haynes composes an image of Bowie and Haynes through an experiment in depersonalization, deviating from the conventions of autobiography particular to the self-reflectivity of the movement-image. In other words, Haynes steals the image of a life from under the image of unity and synthesis, rethinking it as a multiplicity of influences, impulses, and schizo-desires. In short, Haynes’ filmic style practices a betrayal that affirms another way of thinking a life no longer indebted to genealogy, continuity, or representational thought. The ethics of such a betrayal extends from Haynes’ approach to delinking life from the tyranny of representational thought. Instead, Haynes’ relaunches ontology as a practical matter for material creation not anticipated by prior images of who or what we might become. This is a challenge to create an original life – one not yet captured within preexistent identity formations. The ethics of betrayal practiced by Haynes is in this way marked by both a deviation from the tyranny of what is and the affirmation of what might become.

This posed, an ethics of betrayal requires one who is prepared to betray what is held most dear to thought. Put differently, what is today required is the emergence of the traitor prophet (O’Sullivan, 2010a). Yet, we must be careful to distinguish such a figure from the banal binary-machine friend or foe. This limited conceptualization remains dangerously cathected to State thought insofar as it requires this binary in order to fuel its mechanisms of surveillance and paranoiac productivity.
THE ETHICS OF BETRAYAL

If thought is constrained to this binary machine, this is to already fall back upon the representational terms of the State. Surely, this would mark a stupidity to be avoided. Alternatively, we would like to advance the notion of the traitor prophet as a figure that betrays so that we might think again. Such a tactic is intimate to the force of art which, at its best, steals away the comforts of thought in order promulgate new questions, kinds of expression, or terms of subjectivity. In this manner, the traitor betrays given conditions of meaning and aesthetic taste in order to advance a traitor object. Such an object might be apprehended in the becoming art of Lewis Carroll’s nonsensical writing, the self-destructive non-art of Jean Tinguely, or the supplementation of the artistic signature by such urban taggers TAKI 183 and FRIENDLY FREDDIE. In this vein, the traitor object might be taken up as a tool for thinking art’s becoming. It is via the creation of traitor objects that arts-based research thought might be relaunched toward the creation of a political aesthetic capable of forging new passages irreducible to prior semiotic systems or interpretive mechanisms. The tendency to reterritorialize the event of betrayal upon some prior semiotic matrix, moral edict, or identitarian image is the greatest danger to the traitor object. Perhaps the highest power of an political arts-based research is the creation of traitor objects through which thought might thrust into the future. The art force of the traitor object might change everything.

APHORISM THREE

Betrayal inheres a machinic quality that exposes the non-essential organization of object-relations. This quality of betrayal is marked by both deviation and affirmation, instantiating a plane upon which the creation of traitor objects might be forged.

The Symbiotic Force of Betrayal

What we are calling an ethics of betrayal might be characterized as a corollary of the parasite. The event of betrayal is never born ex nihilo, but draws its energy from a particular being. Net.art stands as a instructive example of an affirmative parasitivism insofar as it tactically draws organized codes and established networks into relation with an outside thought. In the work of Jodi (Joan Heemskerk and Dirk Paesmans) for example, such video game interfaces as Quake and Wolfenstein 3-D are brought into resonance with an artistic machine that draws preestablished systems of function into material relation with an alien aesthetic. The result of Jodi’s parasitic tactic is a machine of another kind - a deconstructed art game that exposes the non-unitary and machinic potential of computer’s creative phylum. Yet, Jodi’s tactic is not reducible to video games per se. Demonstrating the metamorphic potential of material connection, Jodi’s parasitical betrayal provides us with a practical way of thinking the renewal of expressive form. Simply, Jodi commences a practical parasitism through which a thing might become what it is not yet. In Jodi’s art games,
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this practical parasitism is operationalized by connecting the game’s algorithm with an anti-productive aesthetic machine that draws the coded body of the game into the circulatory system of another (an)organism.

This posed, a parasitical approach to material transformation must be concerned with an ethics of connection. Parasitism is not inherently disposed to the formation of “good” connections or rather, to the enhancement of transformative subjective or social potentials. Indeed, the rise of postmodern kitsch and the endless semiotic referentiality of contemporary popular culture practice a form of parasitic reorganization that has become knotted with a crippling cultural cynicism. Such cynicism might be linked to the cooptation of parasitic thought by the neo-liberal economic apparatus, which has produced an ally of the politically banal yet ostensibly transgressive productions of such contemporary cultural producers as Fox television and Death Row Records. Simply: parasitism is not, in itself, liberatory. This contemporary appropriation of parasitism calls for an ethical form of betrayal dispassionate of theft alone. It is in this vein that the tactic of parasitism might be rethought in terms of an ethical symbiosis. Put differently, where the parasite might degenerate its host, the symbiote enhances the potentials of that with which it enters into relation. Via the concept of the symbiote, we might more adequately think the qualities of relation capable of being formed through the connection of various subjective and social machines. Herein, we might turn to the paintings of Francis Bacon insofar as his work demonstrates the symbiosis of the figural body with a machinic probe-head for surveying animal, alien, and other non-anthropomorphic ontologies. It is in Bacon’s practical symbiosis of orthodox and alien machines that art is most profoundly rethought as a force of radical difference, freeing the body from the cul-de-sac of identitarian thought. Moreover, Bacon’s symbiotic figurations help arts-based researchers to think about art as a practice of desire-engineering, or rather, as a force for drawing heterogeneous machines into compositional assemblage. This, of course, does not guarantee that such symbiosis will be good. Yet, where guarantees are found to be lacking, we must become all the more ethically vigilant. This is once again to dispense the question of what art is in order to advance the question of what is does and might do.

Stealing away from the certitude of identity, symbiosis betrays two tropes that are quickly becoming popular conceptual tools in arts-based research. The first betrayal promulgated by symbiosis is levied against the popular notion of autopoeisis, or rather, the image of creation as an effect of internal perturbation. Symbiosis steals away from the image of the self-generating artist through its machinic conceptualization of connection. Autopoeisis maintains the privileged anthropocentric image of the closed and uncontaminated organism driven by a desire for autonomy. However, as Ansell-Pearson (1999) warns, the purely autonomous organism would ultimately become frozen within an evolutionary stalemate, unable to produce connective relations with a material outside or virtual ‘outside thought’. In this vein, the “highly restricted [transformational] economy” of autopoiesis leaves two choices: “either entropy or perfect performance” (196). Either the organism is
thermodynamically broken down upon the body of other machines (a ‘turning toward’ outside contaminants) or remains a closed and ‘stable’ self-generating system. The former image persists in the reactionary rejection of economic industrialization and repudiation of emerging technologies, while the latter is evident in the vitalist, student centered, and self-organizing image of arts-based research adopted from the explosion of ‘pop’ complexity theory in the late 1980’s. Against this, symbiosis provides a way of thinking in which creativity proper is always requisite upon an outside thought. The creative act is, at least, always-already a symbiotic linkage of the organism with technical tools of production through which it becomes. While arts-based research has become preoccupied with autobiographic inquiry, to take symbiosis seriously would necessitate a different form of analysis capable of thinking the radical depersonalization of the artist via techne. This is to think along more radicalized terms of relation - ones capable of destabilizing both the anthropomorphic conceptualization of creativity or a style of thought that automatically aspires to reflect a human agency. It is such a shift in artistic production that can be seen via the organization of guerilla art movements via the machine-brain of the internet, or otherwise, via the production of art forces from the automated spam of the computer network.

The second betrayal performed by symbiotic thinking is raised against the popular notion of hybridity. That is, the assumed radicality of hybrid thinking is marked by a particular conservatism that has yet to take seriously the import of symbiosis. Specifically, hybridic thought conserves the idea of originary elements prior to mixing and further, the ostensibly uncontaminated status of these generative sources (Ansell-Pearson, 1999). It is in this vein that hybridic thought only minimally deviates from dialectical thinking insofar as it remains wed to structural points of origin rather than facilitating a transversal exchange between such points. Such transversal exchange marks the crystallization of originary points into an assemblage irreducible to given generative or genetic elements. Against this modernist conceptualization, symbiosis suggests that what a thing is is already traversed by symbiotic filiations. It is in this way that hybridic thought can only erroneously be attributed to a creative human agency, since what we might call “human” is already composed of a multiplicity of alien intelligences that inhere the “self”. More adequately, the “self” is not a thing that then enters into hybridic relation, but rather, is already a hybrid formation or schizo-identity retroactively captured in an image of unity. Works such as Edgar Lissel’s Myself, in which the skin of the “artist” is brought into contact a nutrient agar that reveals symbiotic fungal and bacterial microorganisms, have begun to illustrate the already hybrid composition of flesh. More broadly, by drawing upon the conceptual tool of symbiosis, arts-based research might more adequately grapple with the question of how things are already connected and traversed by unthought modes of intelligence.

The particular tactic of betrayal enabled by symbiotic thought operationalizes the question of how things are machined or connected in the first place. While occluded by the popularity of autobiographic and representational research, this question
remains crucial for arts-based researchers. Specifically, those features of arts-based research that have become essential to the field need first to be explained. This is not to advocate for an encyclopedic pedagogy, but rather, a mode of analysis that inquires into the concept as a form of composition. Such a question implicates such conceptualizations as creativity, artistic genius, and the “work” of art itself. This is not to say that such terms require jettisoning, but rather, require understanding in terms of how they are machined or organized in the first place. Approaching arts-based research in such a manner enables three potentially transformative tactics. First, it begins to approach our key points of reference as concepts that have been composed, and hence, open to modification, decomposition, and linkage with other conceptual machines. Second, it suggests an approach to the concept in terms of what thought it makes possible, and alternatively, its limitation on what might be properly thought in arts-based research. Finally, via an approach to the composition of those key terms in the field, we might more adequately identify points of connection that might be rerouted, blocked, or made to flow more freely. It is via such an act that betrayal spills over into the affirmation of a future becoming capable of exceeding what is.

APHORISM FOUR

An ethics of betrayal is a corollary of symbiosis insofar as its action draws what is into unanticipated qualities of rearrangement. Since what is already the product of machined relations, the potential of betrayal is always immanent to what might be called fundamental.

We wish finally to distinguish our mobilization of ethics from that of Alain Badiou given that Badiou has pitted himself as the nemesis to Deleuzian development of multiplicity. In his Ethics (2001) Badiou brings a vitriolic response to two positions that he identifies as ‘ethical ideologies.’ The first is the concern for social and cultural differences that champion various forms of multiculturalism and diversity, while the second calls on the universalizing of human right and the idea of a general or collective ‘good.’ Emmanuel Levinas is a representative of the first, where the ‘face’ of the Other calls for the respect of difference in the ‘last instance’ so to speak. The Kantian notion of a universal transcendental forwards the second, where duty and responsibility are placed within reasonable action that has universal applicability. Badiou has his own particular claims as to why the Same1 and truth are much more of a challenge to articulate within a global shrinking world since, for him there are only differences to contend with. For the purposes of our arts-based research exploration that draw primarily on Deleuze/Guattari, ‘differences’ are emerging and vanishing depending on the specific situation. Differences are neither stable nor given but emerge within a context, always becoming. This will become evident as we proceed further. Ethics will be along the lines of ‘becoming’ and will be posed throughout the book.
To reorientate arts-based research along posthuman lines as first charted by Deleuze/Guattari, who stand in a long line of philosophers: Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Kant, Bergson, Leibnitz and Foucault, it will be important to introduce their orientation throughout our book. Our attempt is to shift research from an information society to an in-form-ation society, from being to becoming, from knowing the world to being in the world as one ‘object’ amongst many, and one species amongst many species: privileged certainly, but radically centered. Re-animating thought as the ontology of lived life that rethinks the phenomenological reduction “to the things themselves” since consciousness is a becoming with the world—there is no subject/object divide for this assumes actor and acted upon. Rather arts-based research that foregrounds ‘becoming’ does away with this distinction altogether stressing the movement of things. Our sections explore what arts-based research might be in relation to these considerations presented above.

NOTE

1 “The Same, in effect is not what is (i.e., the infinite multiplicity of difference) but what comes to be. I have already named that in regard to which only the advent of the Same occurs: it is a truth. Only a truth is, as such, indifferent to differences” (Ethics, 27, original emphasis).
CHAPTER I

THE CONTEMPORARY IMAGE OF THOUGHT

Milieux

It should be no surprise why arts-based research has grown in stature and popularity over the last decade or so. Look around. We live in a culture of the image where even the edifice of ‘science,’ that bastion of objectivity, has had to face its own ‘image’ crisis. The ‘visualization’ of science has become an important area of study as the dovetailing between cognition and the imaginary is well on its way. The American entrepreneur and president of the Edge Foundation, John Brockman (1995, 2006) has called this merger a ‘third culture.’ Brockman’s ‘third culture’ meets the demands of the information society where the visual and the literary have come together, i.e., image and text form the new ‘hieroglyphics’ today as company branding of logos and the emergence of an ‘image’ culture makes it mandatory that an aesthetics of the ‘glance’ becomes operational. By a ‘glance aesthetics,’ we mean that consumer attention has to take place at the ‘blink of an eye,’ so that the ‘eye’/I becomes spellbound for that infinitesimal moment. The FCUK logo is an all too obvious example. Its misspelling is a direct intervention of contemporary keyboarding that generates all sorts of interesting errors and neologisms and the demand for rapid text, like Twitter, where speed of the message can deliver its headline for maximum effect. The organ of the eye/ I has been territorialized by the advertising industry. This alone has consequences as to how we should think of arts-based research today, especially when so much of design education is wedded to the entertainment industries and the future of ‘edutainment’ through videogames1 (Gee, 2003; Charsky, 2010).

Capitalist marketing strategies have also adapted to the outcry of ‘difference’ by adopting a superindividuated approach wherein ‘mass customization’ no longer appears to be an oxymoron, but the way to do business and survive in tough economic times. Bernd Schmitt’s (1999) Experiential Marketing is a primary example in the way new forms of marketing have latched on to biopower. The subtitle of his book is “how to get customers to sense, feel, think, and relate,” which covers all the basic human capacities. The flamboyance of entrepreneur Richard Branson of Virgin airlines or Chris Anderson’s entrepreneurial innovative quests as promoted through various TED talks, brilliantly capture the imagination and desire to show what the ‘best’ can do. There is a reason why Rolex sponsors the TED talks with commercials that follow. The ‘spiritual face’ of capitalism is carried by the flamboyant performatives of such CEO executives like the late Steve Jobs of Apple. It seems that ‘green capitalism’ and ‘green consumerism’ (Luke, 1999) are
the euphemisms for bio-capitalism, biogenetic capitalism and eco-capitalism have become the only choice in town. Environmentalist discourses have been mobilized to legitimate corporate profiteering (Littler, 2009, 50–69). Sustainability has become the key buzzword within the trajectory of finitude (death) wherein an economics of distributive ‘lack’ rather than ‘excess’ forms the ground floor. The ‘three ecological registers’: the environmental, the social and the mental, what Guattari (1989) identified as the complex assemblage of Integrated World Capitalism (IWC), have been calculated through cost effective measures since the Earth Summit of 1992 sponsored by the United Nations Conference on Environmental and Development (UNCED). The Anthropocene, if the anthropologists have it right, does not distinguish between rich or poor. Capitalism, however, profits on disaster (Klein, 2008). New schemas are already in place to take advantage of oil reserves in the Arctic and Antarctic as the snow melts away. It ought be understood that globalized capitalism needs to destroy the environment so as to continue its creative functioning. This has always been the case and today’s environmental crisis is not any different.

Creativity is now theorized as a blend of art and science/engineering. The new slogan is STEAM (Science, Technology, Art, Mathematics) (http://steam-notstem.com), which provides the new rationale for arts education. The husband and wife research team of Robert and Michele Root-Bernstein (2001), who specialize in ‘creative’ practice, have shown that noble-prize winners are ‘artists’ as well. And, of course, the new rhetoric of the image (Tufte, 1990, 2006; Hill & Helmers; 2004; Prelli, 2006) further show how quantitative and qualitative research findings have imploded through an array of visual rhetorical displays. Graphs are read to show how quantitative data (numbers), placed in visual form, manipulate public perceptions so as to ‘picture’ a stabilized world. Alan G. Gross’ explorations on the rhetoric of science (1990), and the continual importance that aesthetics plays in the visualization of particle physics and string theory as developed by Murray Gell-Mann, Garrett Lisi, and Brian Greene, provide little doubt as to the intimate relations that intertwine mathematics, language and the imagination. There is now a website, Journal of Visualized Experiments (JoVE), which enable peer reviewed biological and medical research to be published via video. Performance and desire have become the two key indicators of success.

Museum and art education have also turned toward exhibitions that now break down the borders between art, technology and science; these fields have now become more and more fluid and symbiotically engaged with each other. A neologism for art should therefore be appropriate, something ridiculous like a non-sense signifier arttechnosci, a combination of all three signifies to form a new combinatorie. Art is no longer just visual. It has become spectral, imbued once again with a spiritual aura. Peter Weibel, an influential Austrian art critic who was the chairman and CEO of the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie in Karlsruhe, Germany has curated many exhibits where art and science come together to form a hybrid genre, for example net_condition (Weibel and Druckrey, 2001) and Iconoclash (Latour and Weibel, 2002). Not surprisingly, he too calls this a ‘third culture,’ which he maintains.
is ‘beyond art’ as we know it. *Jenseits von Kunst* (1997) literally “the other side of art” was translated into English as *Beyond Art: A Third Culture* (2005). This is a thick compendium of the influences of technology on art in the 20th Century. In his own essay, called “Logokultur” (1997, 732–733), he makes the point that we have moved from the symbol to the logo where everything became commodified, the condition that we call ‘designer capitalism’ (jagodzinski, 2010a). The globalization of the marketplace though designer capitalism requires a shift in educational curriculum and reform, and that is what is precisely taking place globally as new flexible workers are needed; as Martin Heidegger (1993) once put it, this is the creation of “standing reserve” (*Bestand*) (322) of laborers for the 21st century.

Arts-based research is very much a product of this *Zeitgeist* change and the standing reserve has now moved into the realm of harnessing the imagination, cognitive brain-workers. Eighty million YouTube video hours are watched globally everyday. Within the next 4 years it is estimated that more than 90% of the web’s data will be video, most of it touch screen technology. What has emerged is a new dispositif or ‘apparatus’—an inverted panopticon, which we refer to as a *synopticon* where the many watch the few who are able to assert their influence through contagion and imitation. On the other side of the synopticon there are the few that watch the many through surveillance techniques and control demographics. Desire flows perversely on both sides of this new emergent dispositif. Exhibitionism and narcissism of the few is abetted by the voyeurism of the many who then satisfy their virtual screen desires in any number of ways, from outright copying to total rejection. Pornography is the leading screen genre. The many watching the few enjoy a perverse voyeurism of control that shapes and designs the flow of mass movement. It is a soft totalitarian position where technologies offer a sense of desubjectification in exchange for attention and being tracked.1 Zombie films of the ‘walking dead’ critically speak to the first side of the synopticon; brain dead, their bodies infected by a life force that can only be identified as ‘evil’ mesmerized by spectacular entertainment. The vampire genre addresses the second. Animal fangs come out to prey on the living, to suck on the life force so they can perpetually live.

We are also living through what could be called a post-alphabetization, a shift to another grammatization that has serious consequences for education, as well as post-emotionalism, the phenomenon where screen media relieves the subject of his or her emotional projections. The ‘canned laughter’ of television, the melodramatic forms that offer easy solutions to difficult questions via good and evil characters, the spectacular action flicks to keep us on the edge of our seats, the horror shows to keep mystery alive, and so on. There has never been another historical period like this one where the shift from the electric age to the electronic age to eventually the nano-age will take place. Many teachers today are already recognizing the shift in literacy; children cannot spell like they used to, neither can adults. A film like *Akeelah and the Bee* sponsored by Starbucks is one of those ‘feel-good’ movies where ‘minorities’ are given the gold stars to ‘make it’: African American, Mexican American and even Japanese America are all now allowed to participate in what
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is becoming an eroded form of literacy. It is a fantasy that is no longer sustainable as screen culture continually pervades and penetrates lives making the old form of literacy no longer viable as a general strict undertaking. Many have written that a multi-modal approach to literacy is needed (Kress, 2010), while others are rethinking the entire status of this change as ‘intermediality’ where art and technology have collapsed into one another. This is the position we take. *Ars and techne*, as discussed above, no longer are separate spheres.

Contemporary discussions of art and technology continue to work on the assumption that making entails the imposition of form upon the material world, by an agent with a design in mind. What has held the field of art and its education is the hylomorphic model stemming from Aristotelian heritage where bringing together form (*morphē*) and matter (*hyle*) gives us the typical model of creation as the imposition of form on matter by an agent with a particular design in mind. Form follows function has been the leading principle. This is repeated, for example, in hegemonic forms of anthropology as well as biology where the design of the *genotype* underwrites the manifest form of the *phenotype*. In anthropology, culture becomes a construction, a product of the representation of difference. Matter is passive and inert to the point that its characteristics or qualities can be manipulated to produce the desirable form. These are now given a genetic spin in consumerism as second, third, fourth … nth generation products that have been modified through technical engineering to improve the quality, durability, and strength no matter what is being referred to: human beings (especially babies), vehicles, drugs, tools, software, computers and so on. Primacy is placed on the improved product, which has ‘staying power’ and a ‘survival quotient’ based on turnover and use. As critics of the hylomorphic model, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (designated as Deleuze|Guattari) maintain that ‘life’ is vacated through the research practices of such a way of thinking through a double reduction—materiality becomes objectified while life is without agency.

*De-subjectivation*

Throughout this book we attempt to follow Deleuze|Guattari’s lead in identifying art, its ‘education’ and ‘research’ as a ‘monumental’ undertaking, which is to say the decentering of the humanistic phenomenological subject by radicalizing ‘life’ as something more radical and inhuman (see Colebrook, 2010). In Deleuze|Guattari’s *What is Philosophy*, it is architecture, which is the exemplary art whose aim is to achieve affect that stands alone, radically cut out from its environment. Added to this radical position is the place of the artist (as researcher) and the receiver|spectator|participant|student. What does the artist/researcher risk? What does the student gain? We shall come back to this, what seems, counter-intuitive position in relation to the developments of arts-based education as they have thus far put in motion by the field that prefers a humanist orientation and supports representation in both its critical and neoliberalist forms.
The decentering of the artificing subject in art is uncomfortably presented in machinic rather than humanistic terms. Jacques Lacan articulates this inhuman side as he rethorizes Freud’s more biological understanding of the drives (Triebe) or passions. Beyond the representational realms of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, the subject also participates in the realm of the “impossible Real.” These are the bodily drives that cannot be reduced, nor tamed or represented by images and language. The drives are described in machinic terms of a feedback circuit that is satisfied apart from any biological function of ‘rational’ or coherent reactions. Lacan somewhat famously provides a bizarre surrealist machinic collage and employs a phallic metaphor when describing the drive. The drive, he said, operates like “a dynamo connected up to a gas-tap, a peacock’s feather emerges, and tickles the belly of a pretty woman, who is just lying there looking beautiful” (Lacan, 1978, 169). It is an incoherent assemblage. Yet, apart from this phallic assemblage, there is the rhythmic pulsation of the drives not subject to lack of the sexuated subject as Lacan theorizes it in his early and middle periods (in his ‘late’ period he modifies his claims). Lacan’s own myth of the lamella identifies this stratum as “immortal … irrepressible life” (Lacan, 1978, 198). This drive energy we call zoë (as opposed to jouissance) as life’s pure potential. Lacan refers to the lamella as the ‘organ’ of the libido that presents the paradox of “life that has no need of no organ” (Lacan, 1978, 198). The compatibility with Deleuze/Guattari’s Body-without- Organs (BwO) is obvious, but Deleuze/Guattari go much further in developing the bodily drives (Triebe) through what they call a “double articulation” (see Bell, 2007, 3–10) when it comes to creative enfolding that avoids Lacan’s succinct humanism and structuralism. This ‘double articulation’ leads us to the porous boundaries between the inorganic (or anorganic) and the organic (as both/and), the human and the nonhuman (as both/and). The body becomes a mode, a swarm of agencies that address a posthuman ontology. Art and its education need to recognize this ontological transformation.

Lacan’s lamella, as the pre-sexual and pre-subject substance, is expanded upon by Deleuze/Guattari and theorized as a “preindividual” realm, relying on Gilbert Simondon’s articulation of “individuation” (Deleuze, 2004b, 86–89), and this is where the “double articulation” comes into play by what they call an “abstract machine.” An “abstract machine” is characterized by a both/and logic, which is its double articulation. The first articulation is the potential of the unstructured, singular flows of the Body without Organs (Lacan’s lamella) that is drawn into a plane of consistency, which is then actualized as a determinate identifiable entity through the second articulation. In this schema, DNA as a set of potentials is not simply a code that determines the nature of the individual; 90% of the human genome is so called ‘junk DNA,’ a sort of virtual potential with no clear function. The BwO can be envisioned as an emergent mode at the ‘molecular’ level. As a set of processes, the DNA’s plane of consistency can unfold in various directions that attain form only in the actual process of unfolding. This avoids any binarism or dualism when it comes to theorizing this “double articulation.” Such processes Simondon calls ‘individuation’ whereby an ‘individual’ is never given a form in
advance, but is produced, and this is a never ending processes as there are always untapped potentials for additional possibilities for metamorphosis. This is a shift of thinking from “reality-made” to “reality as becoming,” from “being-individual” to individuation. Individuation can happen to any individual, but also it can happen on the level of a group or transindividually.

Simondon’s explorations of creativity form the basis of Deleuze|Guattari’s understanding of the virtual and the actual. For arts-based research, the relationship between them, as a ‘double articulation’, becomes more and more profound as the movement image has penetrated all aspects of life in control societies. Simondon posits a “preindividual nature,” like the Greek physis, from which individuals are ‘actualized.’ Nature is thus ‘transcendental’ concerning individual existence but in no way should it be equated with any form of Romantic holism where the preindividual plane already has the possibility of accounting for all probable individuals. This is not a realm we return to, be it the death drive or Nirvana, heaven or some transcendental level of all-knowing, Preindividual nature is radically a constructivist idea which ‘produces’ individuals. It is here that Simondon introduces the notion of preindividual singularity, which defy any representational description, or rather they are always to be specified by their function since they refer to elements that are able to ‘cause’ a transformation (or an individuation). We are tempted to equate singularity with Lacan’s object a as the ‘cause’ of desire, which is equally ephemeral and unspecifiable. Its conceptualization, it seems, also speaks to the space of indeterminacy (the virtual Real) as a zone of preindividuations that are connected in infinite ways. The relationships that an individual forms in this way of thinking are extended to physical, biological, technical and social elements. All are ‘transversed,’ forming ‘milieu’ within the individual itself as an event. They are therefore immanent and singular. These relationships are simultaneous and, in effect, like objet a, one cannot know prior as to which singularity can give rise to an effective connection (territorialization, subjectification) or disconnection (deterritorialization, or desubjectification) when it comes to a creative emergence or dissolution.

This preindividual nature or plane of immanence, as Deleuze|Guattari named it, is the virtual domain of what is “actually possible.” Simondon makes the distinction between the potential and the actual. The potential consists of the preindividual singularities that ‘cause’ an individuation; the actual is the individual that is produced by this double articulation of individuation. The passage from the potential to the actual, or from singularities to individuals is the processes of individuation. Arts-based research therefore must dwell on the potentialities for actualization. Every individual that emerges is an event. To reiterate, the individual can and does undergo further individuation. There is no final phase. Rather, it is the virtual potential (or what is ‘actually’ possible), what we have called the ‘virtual Real,’ that triggers through singularities a transformation. Deleuze’s ontology, therefore, equates being with creativity, or with inventive differenciation — being is creating, or to ‘be’ is to differ. Creation as becoming has less to do with creating a thing; rather creation is an internal force (zoë). A “thing differs with itself first, immediately” through the
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differential creative power that ‘animates’ it. As we latter point out, this animism is not anthropocentric, it has nothing to do with essences as such but refers to impersonal effects, crucial to rethinking arts-based research along Deleuze/Guattarian lines.

Lacan in our view underestimated the place of techne (technical objects as well as the biological and physical processes) that mediate the Nature|Culture divide, and ‘art’ in its forceful perfomative efficacy, is precisely where such a mediation takes place, that is, its ethico-political impact when it comes to territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization. These three geopolitical processes form the flows of becoming. In What is Philosophy, Deleuze|Guattari (1994, 184–187) maintain that art begins with the animal in the sense that a habitat, as a territory, is characterized by pure sensory qualities that are the expressive features diffused in life, which also include the body postures, colors, song and cries that the animal makes within that territory. This is the first ‘ready-made.’

Representation

One wonders whether art is ‘research,’ which is knowledge creation though an epistemological methodology. Doesn’t art raise questions concerning ontology: the way of the world? Perhaps the irony of methodology and research goes all the way back to Descartes? The Discourse on Method was written after the scientific essays of which it is the preface. Descartes’ ‘method’ appears after the fact. Koyré (1956) pointed out that no single science has begun with a method treatise or a body of knowledge that progresses based only on an abstract set of rules. This, of course, is the great irony when it comes to Academia. When it comes to research grants and support, academics have to learn the jargon of application language, the key master signifiers that are required, which a university’s research office(er) helps you with when filling out the bureaucracy of forms. There is the usual jargon of commitments and declarations of intent that promise clear objectives so that the knowledge will be practical and usable. When it comes to science, this is usually for profit, ‘pure’ science is always problematic and requires risk. The ranking and assessment measures are already in place as to what is the rationalization for the dominant unspoken ideology. Hence the universities master research plans, like the Bologna process in Europe, sets the agenda as to what areas will be supported. Economic priorities, appropriability, and predictability of research assure that control is maintained, and that research dollars are well spent to further a market economy. Artists and art educators find themselves unable to compete against these sorts of competitions and rely mostly on government ‘handouts’ to continue their experimentation. This has all been well-documented by Henk Borgdorff (2012) in his The Conflict of the Faculties: Perspectives on Artistic Research and Academia. Similarly, Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge’s (2006) in their Thinking Through Art: Reflections on Art as Research gathered a group of artists, philosophers, art historians and cultural theorists to present the case as to why art research can be considered for PhD work, a position defended by James Elkins (2009), and adopted more and
more by universities globally. This defense of art goes all the way back to Leonardo and Lorenzo Ghiberti who maintained artistic knowledge was the equal of literati. PhD recognition or not, creativity has already been hijacked by capitalism making ‘art’ useful again. The possibility of Nietzsche’s die fröhliche Wissenschaft has long gone, and we would hope it’s picked up by a reorientation to arts-based research as we advocate in this book that evades social control. Not an easy task.

Art and technology, perhaps more familiarly art&design, have to be rethought once more within the context of arts-based research. The tensions between ‘art’ (Latin artem or ars) and ‘technology’ (Greek tekhne) have been well explored. For much of the 20th century the division between them has hardened. Art was the realm of the imagination and free play, while technology became the application of an objective system of productive forces—applied design, technicism in its worst forms. Self-expressionism was confined to art, while applied design was more limiting, more objective, less creative and so forth. Creativity was bestowed on art while novelty was its second hand expression. One was governed by a gift economy, the other by market economy. Schools reflected this division with separate courses in both art and in design, the latter was always seen in more practical terms closer to meeting the needs of the economy, what has emerged now into ‘career and technology studies.’ The extreme division between body and mind as repeated by skill and intellect lies between craft on one side of the dichotomy and conceptual art on the other. For the 21st century this dichotomy has been conflated yet again to comply with the shift from industrial manufacturing jobs where the body was still ‘in use’ to post-industrial cognitive jobs, the non-material labor of creating design for consumerist ends. What activists like Paolo Virno, Christian Marazzi, Maurizio Lazzarato, ‘Bifo,’ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have called “immaterial labour.” The body is now incorporated ‘interactively’ with software and wetware programs. While modern architecture still maintained a ‘genotype,’ the pre-existent building had plans, specifications drawings and maquettes, what does one do with a Gehry building where computer software does much of the job to get at designs never imagined before? Gehry’s buildings have become his algorithmic signatures.

One critical branch of arts-based research has continued to develop identity politics on the bases of social praxis. Drawing from the Marxist and structural-Marxist or neo-Marxist traditions, this approach remains the dominant leftist position and is offered as the dichotomous alternative to the neoliberalist agenda. Paulo Freire’s ghost continues to haunt such research, as do developments that Augusto Boal has initiated in this same tradition that have deep roots in drama education. During the ‘reconceptualist movement’ in curriculum in North America in the 1980s, it was the key oppositional direction for those of a critical mind to take. Praxis became synonymous with cultural transformative change. There was a force within this position that enabled the social justice agenda to make headway, raise awareness concerning inequalities in mainly racism and feminism. Its success depended on (and still depends on) the claim that identity is somehow identifiable and knowable, held together through an allegiance to master signifiers and the assumption that identity
remains ‘somewhat’ stable within the symbolic order; or, rather the symbolic order prescribes various identities that have fixed characteristics. Identity is most often imposed when a person merely belongs to a set of entities named under the signifier. Identity becomes formed around some ‘cause’ that defines allegiance and anchors belief. Certainly it has been hybridity and multiculturalism, which have been seen as progressive advances as ways to overcome difficulties of what often become atemporal notions of identity. Today, identity has become a bit of a farce, like a social costume to be worn and shedded depending upon the social context one finds oneself in.

A praxiological approach to arts-based education as a strategy finds itself faced with the continual cooptation by forces of the marketplace, which turn any form of dissent and resistance into a commodity. ‘Concientization,’ as Freire once envisioned it, finds little toe hold in classes where students are well-off and media saturated and savvy. The irony is that in a commodified society the success of political counter-resistance and controversy depends on how capital can use it and make it its own—as in the cases of Madonna, Rage Against the Machine, Lady Gaga, Gangsta Rap, Fcuk and so on. Criticism and resistance are needed to assert that we live in a democracy where such ‘free’ expression is allowed, enabling the capitalist system to feed off emergent rebellious energy, and so on it goes.

Praxis is intimately related to representation, and representation is tied closely to perception and the imaginary of primary idealized and defining clusters of signifiers. Race cannot escape its primary signifier ‘color,’ feminism remains burdened by the signifier ‘woman,’ nationality by the purity of its ‘language.’ Islam as a religion is often generalized with Arabian culture, or Islam becomes a culture rather than a religion. What practices belong to the general culture and which are proper to Islamic rituals and beliefs? Can one ever separate such nuances without freeze-framing terms? The short answer is no, which is why pejorative claims are made that the Diaspora cling onto cultural rituals that undergo fundamental changes in their mother countries, or that ‘born again’ Muslims or ‘Christians’ practice a refined traditional set of rituals and beliefs, more ‘pure than pure,’ escalating the iconic representation to new impossible transcendental levels.

Representational differences are easily managed by the market forces through what we call a Benetton approach to difference, a particularly insidious form of post-racism that draws on the well-known taxonomic ‘tree’ of structuralism that categorizes the animal kingdoms. Here what is different is cleverly conflated into the same through a simple maneuver wherein the human species is identified as a genus with the numerous phenotypes being its various variables of expression. Phenotypic variation is due to the underlying heritable genetic variation of the genotype as influenced by the environment. We are our genes according to Walter Gilbert (Human Genome Map).

Benetton ads play on both sides of the fence to retain difference as sameness. The first strategy (where the phenotypes are exploited) has a variety of hominoidea (the superfamily) faces on poster display (several varieties of chimpanzees, gorillas,
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orangutans, bonobo or pygmy chimp). Eight primate faces photographed by James Mollison are given a proper name: James, Bonny, Jackson, Arron, Fizi, Shanga, Tatango, Pumbu. A book, *James and Other Apes*, (rather purposefully named given the attempt is to individualize each and every orphaned primate) was published simultaneously with the exhibition of these photos. Each face is displayed separately with the usual Benetton logo, but they also appear together on one poster. The intent of Benetton’s campaign 2004 to ‘promote’ the awareness of the possible extinction of our closest relatives, and to gain a “face to face” encounter through the sadness in their eyes. We are told that these are orphaned primates, having witnessed violence. In some cases poachers killed their mothers. With the endorsement of Jane Goodall and the Natural History Museum in London, Benetton’s campaign drew only praise. The anthropomorphization of primates is an old ploy. Here the gap between human and nonhuman is meant to vanish. There is no difference between them: Chimps R Us. A long series of ‘Planet of the Ape’ films forms the backdrop.

The second strategy is just as clever. Three slightly different, but certainly identical heart organs are placed side by side in a row. On each heart are the words white, black and yellow from left to right. This is very reminiscent of Lacan’s (1977, 152) famous example of washroom doors where the only way to differentiate the toilets was by the signifier boy or girl written on them. For Lacan, the signifier is ‘barred’ from the signified as an inseparable and fundamental division. This bar (or division) between the signifier and the signified functions as a barrier to transparent meaning. The signifier does not refer to a signified but to another signifier in an endless chain of signification; the chain of signification subject to a process of incessant sliding. Benetton however presents the opposite scenario. The first glance suggests that all the heart organs are alike, what is separating them is the signifiers. ‘Underneath’ we are all alike. We all have the same heart. It is the signifier that is dominating—the typography is heavy black Helvetica. To eliminate difference, or to tolerate difference, one needs only to recognize that ‘in essence’ we are all the same. Two strategies that forward difference are thus subsumed into the same. The first instance is where the inhuman is humanized, an important consideration as we develop arts-based research within a posthuman context. In the second case, what appears as a universalizing humanist gesture, raises as many questions as it hides: why only ‘three’ colors? Why those and not red and brown as two other iconic representations? Why is ‘white’ the ‘first’ signifier given that in western culture we read left to write? What does eliminate difference if not money? If you can afford Benetton you have already asserted a certain difference. But, above all else, Benetton once again is capitalizing on what has become a return-to-nature approach, an immediate access to nature and the biological, used here as a means to level the species homo sapiens. What is not taken into account is that the ‘image’ of the heart is itself a signifier—like Rene Magritte’s famous paining “This is not a pipe” which can yield three ‘archaeological’ readings: 1) the demonstrative emphasis on ‘this’ places the image (the painting of the pipe) and signifier (the word ‘pipe’) as a particular instance of not being equivalent: “This is not a pipe” emphatically means
that the image and signifier cannot be equated. 2) Then there is the straight-forward claim that the image and the written are not equated, and 3) lastly, the physical realm comes into play: any representation—be it an image or a linguistic one—cannot be equated with a ‘real’ (material) pipe.

Representational difference is played off on both sides: right and left. Both need each other to form a single coin. On the one side we have identity politics and social justice that offers constant critique as to why the transcendental claims to social justice and equality are not being met. On the other side the claims to meritocracy and the forwarding of exemplary successful people who have ‘made it’ despite race, sex and what have you, show that ‘anyone’ can make it. They have overcome all odds confirming that the neoliberalist system still works. Melodramatic forms and performative competition as exemplified by the glut of reality television shows buttress such a ‘dream.’ At the same time, there is no escape from the gaze of xenophobes, homophobes, racist bigots and so on. The Other is needed to affirm the anxiety of identity. All forms of ethnographic research already assume this subject/object split. The subtle introduction of power evokes itself when the researcher claims to want to know the Other better and more thoroughly so as to have an ‘inside’ or emic understanding of their culture, lifeworld (Lebenswelt) and beliefs. Yet, it is through the very structure of such well-intentioned research that the Other is distanced, incorporated into concepts that are understandable to the researcher. Outside this more formalized structure are the everyday transactions that continually go in the megalopolises of the world where polycultural translation is continually taking place. We have moved from the ‘melting pot’ through multiculturalism to various claims of transculturalism where hybridity becomes the operative term. It is the problem of the signifier ‘culture.’ As Guattari (2008) once argued, the concept of ‘culture’ itself is the stumbling block. Culture cannot be divorced from mind and nature.

While ethnographic research is far from ‘dead,’ death has also become the Other of life when it comes to rethinking research that has already decentered the human within the context of various complex networks, what is often referred to as post-anthropocentrism. Risk and insurance, medical and scientific research, by and large, search out ways to prolong life given that death is that which is to be prevented, immortal.

Contemporaneity

The above model of consumerism of a glance and logo aesthetic is paradigmatic for industrialization and post-alphabetization. It appears ‘voluntary’ and ‘willful,’ as if a conscious self makes decisions as to what is being consumed. A critical faculty (as Kant developed it) presupposes a particular structure of the message. Within a grammaticized technology of the word, the sequentiality of writing and the slowness of reading make it possible to judge the sequence of the truth or falsity of statements. Hermes rules the day. Within video-electronic technologies,
extended through digitalization, Hermes, as the hermeneutic messenger, is replaced by ‘angels’ in Michel Serres’s (1995) account. The message bearing systems of contemporary society is instantaneous and immaterial, subject to fluxes like that of ‘angels,’ the mythological bearers of ambiguous messages. The information networks have a myriad of potential connections in what appear as an endless circuitry resembling the crisscrossed paths of ‘angels’ fluttering here and there, disappearing and reappearing at will, so it seems. Sequentiality has been replaced by simultaneity, and the capacity for mythologization now succeeds critical elaboration. The fantasy structures of stories elaborated and hyped become the way of seduction. A distinction might be made between story and narration, whereas the former has an open structure compared to the latter, which is more closed and sequential. Art, if we stay with Serresian thought, becomes a ‘quasi-object,’ which weaves social relations together. Art seems to fit the call of a quasi-object for it remains ambiguous enough, its properties change as it passes through a collective network; this is quite different from the ‘agency’ claims of quasi-objects by Bruno Latour (e.g., like a speed bump on a road). Serres is concerned with the flows of things, much like Deleuze |Guattari, “This matter-flow can only be followed” (TP, 451). Art, in this sense is not an ‘object’ but an objectile that is continually being formed by interested parties within an assemblage (or swarm). Within designer capitalism this objectile has become spectral, shimmering and displaying itself during movement, capturing the attention of the glance with each transformative change. Arts-based research needs to take this change into account—the world of 2.0 culture: the ‘thingness’ or ‘thing power’ of art in its ‘performative’ mode within an assemblage where efficacy, trajectory and an emergent nonlinear causality are at play. This is far from a humanist accounting that leaves out inhuman and nonhuman agency.

To attempt to ‘escape the overcode,’ as Brian Holmes (2009) puts it, of spectacular commodity capitalism as the branded patterning of existence that already structures the padules (patterns and schedules) of movement so that a particular perception is conditioned, requires, in Brian Holmes’ projection for the 21st century, a thinking on different scales: from the most intimate relationships of the subjectivated body through to the national urban territories, from geopolitical trading blocks to the global economy. Not all art research can engage on all scales at once. Strategic research is in order. Holmes terms his own artistic activist project “affectivism,” art activism that opens up and expands territories through constructivist decoding.

Perhaps one of the more cited claims for art based research follows Nicolas Bourriaud’s ‘relational art’ project. Bourriaud, a well-known art curator, has now a number of books (2002, 2005, 2009) to his credit that draw on Deleuze|Guattari that are often cited by critics, art educators as well as other curators. Bourriaud maintains that relational art refuses mass media standardization, rejects spectacle society and instead dwells on the diversity of the everyday; the scale is at the level of intimacy in Holmes’s tripartite agenda. The relational object is valued in the way it can serve as a catalyst for free interaction, knowledge exchange, and conversation between artist and viewer|participant|interactor. The question emerges is whether 1)
the relational object can ever escape the institutional market, with its populist demands; or the art market with its call for a continuous stream of commodities, and 2) whether the event that is generated by the performativity of the installation is intercorporeal or incorporeal? The former is phenomenological and empirically experimental, the latter radically ‘experimental and transcendental.’ They appear alike yet are radically at odds. To dispel the first is to call on the critiques that have already been made regarding relational aesthetic, both pro and con.9 In a nutshell, performativity of installations in gallery spaces never escape the institutionalized art market. Art business interests already control (post)Situationist interventions and social practices. To claim a Situationist heritage, as Nicolas Bourriaud does, seems disingenuous. The gallery space can be escaped by finding sites/sights/cites outside its influence. We have identified artists who have found other venues outside the gallery institution who are more rightfully considered post-Situationist than the ‘relational aesthetic’ artists Bourriaud solicits.10 Bourriaud has emerged as the new style of curator who is a ‘broker of artistic knowledge,’ shaping the direction of the fundamental problematic of the 21st century art: the reworking of the postmodern legacy. For Bourriaud this rests with what he calls “altermodernity” that explores the themes of travel, exile and borders. Bourriaud maintains that geography and history as time form the unknown continent to be explored by artists in the 21st century. While we are sympathetic to his Deleuze|Guattarian rhetorical leanings, we remain nervous that his program is simply inadvertently yet another form of molarization of the global art market economy.

**Machinic Vitalism**

As artists and art educators we are better off theorizing creativity and art as emerging from the ‘gap’ or chiasm between nature and culture following a material vitalist or vibrant agency, such as proposed by contemporary theorists who continue to explore Deleuze|Guattari’s machinic materialism, and further their political and ethical concerns such as Claire Colebrook (2010), William E. Connolly (2002, 2005, 2011), Karen Barad (2007), Jane Bennett’s (2004, 2010, 2011) ‘vital materialism’ or ‘vibrant matter,’ Tim Ingold’s (2007, 2008, 2011) anthropological musings over line, earth, sky and animism, Tim Morton’s (2010) ‘ecology without Nature,’ Peter Schwenger’s (2005) recounting of the life of ‘things,’ and those philosophers who are developing what has been called object-orientated ontology (notably Graham Harman (2005, 2010), Levi Bryant (2011); Ian Bogost (2012). While there are many nuances between the authors we have listed, in general they support an object-oriented ontology (OOO), which maintains that the world is made out of autonomous objects, be it humans, hammers, or ghosts. These ‘objects’ are unable to make full contact with each other; they can only meet indirectly in an encounter that is always mediated by another one that acts as a proxy. Such an orientation would reanimate the world that is already considered somewhat lifeless—but not to simply repeat a Pinocchio fantasy, rather it is to revisit that fantasy to come to grips with our
hominid ecology that shapes and is shaped by the materiality of ‘things’ as they inter-communicate between each other by means that is beyond our comprehension, and how is it that we intervene in that communication (intentionally and non-intentionally) via our own invented technologies—techne as such.

What remains controversial is to what extent do OOO philosophers remain caught by the trap of phenomenology where the object is not simply a differential set of relations, that is pure difference, which is the Deleuze/Guattarian position, but remains a ‘thing-in-itself,’ a discrete unit. Deleuze/Guattari’s most basic claim is that there are no objects. This was their response to philosophers like Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. Rather, it is relationality that is ontogenetic. Intelligibility is a relational structure, and relations in-themselves are simply multiplicities that have “neither subject nor object” (TP, 8). These intensive multiplicities cannot be enumerated without being translated into extensive relations (objects) that are necessarily reductive.

We are sort of caught between an oscillation between thinking of art in terms of multiplicities of intensive mutuality and differencing—as ‘diagrams’ of thought and also as extensive objects of representation. Yet, no representation can exhaust the intensive multiplicity of its own possibility. Yet another object can be always be produced that then denies any form of mimesis. To think this way is to recognize the creative process of thought and the unthought. It remains paradoxical. The stakes are not immediately evident how these theoretical stances will play themselves out in the artistic field. Heidegger remains the dividing line between philosophers like Graham Harman who still see the usefulness of his heritage if only to work beyond him, versus Deleuze/Guattari who dismiss any subject/object distinction. OOO has yet to produce a consistent stance concerning the question concerning ‘art.’

We think of the tension between Kandinsky and Klee in this regard. A significant phenomenological philosopher of the pathos of life like Michel Henry (2009) is able to write an extraordinary account of Kandinsky’s basic premise concerning ‘abstract art’ that evolves from Kandinsky’s fundamental claim that every phenomena can be experienced in two ways: internally and externally given that all phenomena are characterized by two characteristics: External/Internal. The subject/object distinction is maintained. In contrast Deleuze turns to Paul Klee’s exploration of line in his Leibniz book (1993) on the fold (as variable curvature) to develop the concept of “inflection,” which does away with the subject/object distinction. A surface has to be desquamated to make curves and exfoliations perceptible. “Inflection,” as a folding point, turns out to be that (metaphysical) elastic ‘point’ where the radius (the radial line from the focus to any point of a curve) appears to ‘jump’ or ‘become’ from the inside to outside. The misperception is the emergence of ‘becoming’ in its commonsense understanding of ‘between’ rather than as Fold, or Zweifalt. A line is a path of a point that changes direction at a point of inflection. Such a ‘line of flight’ is where the ‘eternal return’ of difference occurs. Paul Klee defined “inflection” as the genetic element of the active line. It was the locus of “cosmogenesis” for it was precisely at this ‘indiscernible’ point that the pure event of the line took place seemingly in a non-dimensional space (the jump between inside/outside). The point
of inflection was therefore virtual. It was where the tangent touched and crossed the curve (or point-fold). This is what gave line its ‘life,’ and was in opposition to Kandinsky who was closer to Descartes by basing his abstraction more on geometric angles, points and contained shapes of colors that could only be moved by external force.

Experimentation

Deleuze|Guattari do not return us to animism, it is however a recognition of an immanent or ‘passive vitalism’ (see Colebrook 2010) as opposed to an anthropocentric transcendental animism. It is when the object ‘looks’ back, that the extraordinary event happens for Deleuze at the point of ‘indiscernment’ or ‘inflection.’ This is not to say a simple ‘reversal’ happens between subject and object, rather something opens up to an Outside, what we call the ‘virtual Real,’ an impersonal plane of subjectivity that is populated with object processes and physical phenomena that constitute their own subjectivities.

This is where OOO appears to gain some ground, but only briefly as the ‘textures’ of the world are explored much differently by Brian Massumi and Erin Manning (2010; Massumi, 2008). Massumi (2008) calls this approach “thinking-feeling of what happens,” which expands perception into “affective co-motion” that enables us to be affected so that we increase our own power to affect in return. Indeed, there is an entire journal for research-creation Inflexions (http://www.inflexions.org) that is highly influenced by Deleuze|Guattarian point of view. Epistemology as method has no play here; rather the research exploration is much more artistic: to generate ‘newness’ through participation, contact, transduction and relation. The journal’s emphasis is for transformation as a creative in-between, at the intersections of philosophy, art and technology. If there is a method, it follows Henri Bergson’s idea of ‘intuition’ where the ‘researcher’ becomes aware of other durations beyond his/her own. “Research-creation explores becoming, which more than any object is what art is, what concepts do—it puts the movement back into thought” (Thain, 2008, 3).

The journal emerges from the Sense Lab at Concordia University, Montreal, run by Erin Manning and Brian Massumi. The emphasis is on the “relational potential” of becoming. The body becomes a locus of research-creation through a double becoming of affecting and being affected. Massumi (2011) maintains that art needs to be rethought in terms of ‘dynamic form.’ “There is no such thing as fixed form—another way of saying that the object of vision is virtual. […] Art is the technique of the technique of living life—experiencing the virtuality of it more fully, living it more intensely” (2008, 7). Individuals have become zones of resonance due to the so-called ‘interactive arts’ of digitalization that are caught within the loop of action-reaction. Another approach is required to break this loop via a turn to aesthetics (or aisthetics for us).

This turn to ‘aisthetics’ can easily fall into traditional thinking concerning aesthetics if Massumi|Manning’s (in their attempt to repeat the multiplicity of pairing that is
Deleuze/Guattari call to “thinking-feeling” or their “techniques of relation” miss the mark and fall into a phenomenology. Their claim is that this approach to the object is to see it as an event; to be able to grasp the virtual relationships of objects. To break with habituated forms of perception has been a long-standing endeavor in art/research and its education. The Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky (1965) maintained that “Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony” (12, original emphasis). This goal was attained through techniques of defamiliarization so as to turn the ‘object’ into the strangeness of a ‘thing.’ To recall Heidegger (1971) here, “the ordinary is not ordinary; it is extra-ordinary, uncanny” (54). How does Manning/Massumi’s initiative differ from this well-known development? Seems to be on the same path as when Massumi (2008) says, “there’s a sense of aliveness that accompanies every perception. We don’t just look, we sense ourselves alive. Every perception comes with its own ‘vitality affect’ (to use a term of Daniel Stern’s)” (5). Massumi/Manning forward a double-looking, of thinking perception while engaged in the act of perception so as to involve movement in looking. The value of such ‘useless’ experience is that it allows for the potential of life to be felt.

Massumi’s view seems to repeat Heidegger’s approach to art as a ‘truth-event.’ He seems to play with the useful (equipment-tool) and useless (art) distinction that makes art for Heidegger. “Seeing an object is seeing through its qualities,” says Massumi (4), or its qualities as Earth in Heideggerian terms, which are radiant and mysterious but resistant to full exposure. Art, for Heidegger is therefore ‘animistic,’ it opens up a world when it moves into the Open or clearing (Lichtung) to reveal Being and the cosmos. What is concealed becomes unconcealed during that event—truth as alethia emerges. The Open is the becoming of truth, but only glimpses are made available. The entire Truth is not possible. Art in this sense is sublime and mythological in the sense that myth itself presents us with what can be said through the mouth in terms of intelligibility and yet it is also paradoxically mute, withholding and withdrawing from us its full truth. World (intelligibility, meaning) and Earth (qualities, resistance) are put in tension within a work of art. In the Open such ‘objects’ are in dialogue with spectators and questioners so that Being might be revealed. It is fair to say this Open is a place of wonder, existing at the vanishing point where knowledge and belief become indiscernible. For Heidegger, the artist was the mediator between the Word and the Earth, between ‘man’ and the ‘gods,’ helping us in the revelation of Being, a sort of an alchemist of the spirit, releasing the essences of things.

Art as ‘research’ in this view is therefore not strictly an epistemological affair; rather it becomes an ontological one with modification. Intelligibility (knowledge) and intuition are not dismissed, only limited as to their potentiality. Axiology supplants both epistemology and ontology in the way the limitation of revealed truth must, nevertheless, call on action that has no precedence, raising the specter of issues of judgment and ‘taste.’ Taste is now elevated from the simple sense of pleasure in the mouth, as in a vulgar sense of aesthetics, to aisthesis, which brings back the
body/mind together as the general perception of the senses that constitute both the tactile and visual. Perception is extended to the intellect as well as the sense where discernment becomes an ethical matter. The dichotomous pair beauty/ugly take on ethico-political concerns, not as a ‘logic of sensation’ that refers to the subjective feelings of individuals (the art of expression and so on) but always to the ‘pre-individual,’ the larval subject.

The art ‘research’ of Paul Harris (2009) along Deleuzian lines closely touches the thrust of Heidegger’s musings on art. But Harris and Massumi|Manning we argue, displace and complete the Heideggerian account of art (poetry in particular) and a ‘people-yet-to come,’ which was Deleuze’s call to go ‘beyond’ the human. Deleuze radicalized Heidegger’s key concept of event, ontological difference and the transformative power of art. Art does not reveal Truth for Deleuze, but is a being of the sensible, as an aggregate of sensation, which is a genetic positive concept of difference. The ‘becoming’ implicated in concealment and unconcealment of alethia is in every element of reality. The concept of Earth, as that which is hidden and resistant, is maintained by Deleuze|Guattari by way of a ‘plane of immanence.’ It remains as the realm of the unthought. The Earth as a deterritorialized plenum is a plane of forces, speeds, intensities and potentials that are real but virtual and yet to be actualized. What is perceptible to consciousness is but a section of the plane of immanence, which is always in movement. Thinking the unthought is the concern for both philosophers to overcome the world of representational thought and to think a people-to-come, but they diverge as to what this program should be. The world forces us to think, says Deleuze, when an object is no longer recognized but encountered (see DR, 139–140). Such an encounter should not be thought as meeting between two constituted identities or wholes in dialogue or communicable exchange; rather as a field of effects from which the creation of something new and unforeseen has yet to be determined. These encounters produce nonsense, which is not the opposite of sense as it is commonly thought. Rather nonsense has something to do with the encounter as a particular affect, such as love, hatred, suffering or wonder. It is precisely this nonsense within sense that has to be thought. Nonsense is precisely that which can only be sensed. It is opposed to recognition where the object that is sensed can be recalled, imagined and conceived representationally. Paradoxically, then Deleuze can write about the sensible as: “It is not a sensible being but the being of the sensible. It is not the given but by which the given is given. It is therefore in a certain sense the imperceptible [insensible]’’ (176; DR-1, 140, original emphasis). Common sense limits the specific contribution of sensibility. Thinking is always a process of becoming and the artwork for Deleuze brings the imperceptible into this realm of thinking. Artworks ‘preserve’ the event of becoming, the encounter with Earth; they capture the virtual forces as the movement of Being. They reveal the conditions of the Real at the molecular level of becoming. They too engage with the unheimlich, as did Heidegger, however whereas Heidegger remained caught by a question of origins, a return to the Greek, calling on a repetition of history, Deleuze|Guattari call on the making of a “cosmic people,” an open future
where the people are always ‘coming’ and always unpredictable with no national ties to identity or group think, a development we turn to at the conclusion of this book. Following their work, research will be envisioned as a ‘war machine,’ that is research as ‘invention’ that abets deterritorialization within a minoritarian politics, a form of schizonanalysis.

Harris’s quest for the ‘spiritual’ within a Deleuzian context leads him to develop a procedure of experiential self-engagement (much like that of Massumi|Manning) that leads him to an empiricist form of wonderment when ‘awe’ struck by a sublime event that produces a productive discord of the faculties. For Harris (2005, 2009), this is most often the experience of architecture (e.g. Hall of the Two Sisters in the Court of Lions at the Alhambra Palace in Granada, Simon Rodia’s Watts Towers in Los Angeles). Harris follows the Deleuzian encounter that poses a problematic idea when the sign ‘perplexes’ or moves the soul that can only be resolved through an apprenticeship as a learning process. Wonder defines this encounter, which unfolds in stages and can extend into various durations. The attempt is to grasp this experience of wonder, which situates the experience of the event in a zone between thought and the unthinkable. Knowledge and belief become indiscernible. We are placed in the presence of something greater than us that stirs the spirit within us, like children looking into the night sky of twinkling stars. Harris’s particular twist to this experience of wonder is to maintain that the struggle for comprehension is not overcome through Kantian rationality, nor is it comparable to learning to swim in the ocean (Deleuze’s own example), rather it is to apprehend the mystical sense of fusion between the inside and outside, the moment of delirious joy. It is Harris’s quest for the mystical side of art, especially architecture, which connects us to the wonder of the cosmos. It presents the dream of many science-fiction writers. We are reminded of Carl Sagan here, especially his science fiction novel Contact that charts his cosmological fabulation.

Harris presents an approach to self-reflexion, in our terms, that goes through a number of phases of duration or ‘circuits,’ which begin by a ‘flashback’ that attempts to explore the ‘sheets of the past’ in an attempt to understand the object of wonder. Harris works through five circuits in all, but this must be an arbitrary count. The ‘first circuit,’ Harris names ‘watching on instant replay.’ Here Harris offers some self-reflective descriptions of his experience, which then leads to a ‘second circuit’ termed ‘crystalline chaos.’ In this duration Harris attempts to capture a glimpse of the primordial chaos. For Deleuze/Guattari chaos is defined in terms of quantum theory where particles appear and disappear at infinite speeds in what is a virtual realm (WP, 118–119). Harris’s strategy here is to remark that the smallest circuit that tries to capture this appearance and disappearance of the chaos via a screen or sieve as a passing event is referred to as a ‘crystal’ of time. The third circuit as ‘the fall into representation’ tries to articulate the signification of the event as an encountered sign on two levels. The first level grapples with how to translate a religious mystical experience into transcendental empiricism where the cosmology of ‘nomadic spirituality’ can be grasped in its historical mediation of a people’s earthly experience,
while the second level grapples with the mediated physics and metaphysics that are revealed. The fourth circuit works with the metaphysics of light that holds the key to working out the spiritual vocabulary, which is then articulated in the fifth and final circuit. Harris’s ‘method’ or strategy is to push beyond the actual as the demands of the immediate material so as to strive for the virtual, or the spiritual. It is the artist as mystic “who plays with the whole of creation [or universe]” (Deleuze, 1988, 112). In this way it may be possible to generate a “belief in the world,” as Deleuze says (WP, 74), and on which we have much to say in the conclusion of our book.

A contrast, or rather an extension, elaboration or a problematization, to Harris’s approach might be made by calling on Simone Brott’s (2011) approach to architecture from a Deleuzian perspective that has interesting importance for research when it comes to the question of “impersonal effects” and personal (subjective) effects as in the distinction we have accepted between aesthetics and aisthetics. Their separation as well as their relation forms a ‘disjunctive synthesis’ in Deleuze/Guattari’s terms. Its pedagogical value emerges since the move is once more removed from phenomenology where the minimal gap between subject/object is posited through conscious intent via the *epoché* that suspends the ‘natural attitude.’ This has been a staple approach to aesthetic education and pervades arts-based research as a well-trodden strand. Brott’s approach, as we see it, has affinities with OOO, and yet worries it as well. In the OOO of Graham Harman, “intentionality” is taken to be an ontological feature of objects in general, not just confined to human beings. Objects relate to one another not directly, but through “vicarious causation” wherein “aesthetics becomes first philosophy” (Harman, 2008, 221). Objects have intentional relations to one another, yet neither object is completed, defined nor exhausted by this relationship alone. It is their “allure” (Harman, 2005, 141–144) that catches us and that identifies an object’s quality. “This term [allure] pinpoints the bewitching emotional effect that often accompanies this event for humans, and also suggests the related term ‘allusion,’ since allure merely alludes to the object without making its inner life directly present” (2008, 215). The “withdrawal” of objects behind all relations was an insight of Heidegger, which he termed Earth as discussed above. OOO rediscovers the object/subject problematic all over again and offers another ‘solution,’ wherein “intentionality” becomes the ‘third,’ or in-between, interval, chasm, Real, fold and so on, which takes on a relationality between objects. For Harman there are five distinct sorts of relations between things: containment, contiguity, sincerity, connection and no relation at all (2008, 199–200). There is of course an entire theoretical edifice around the Lacanian *objet a* that addresses this question far better than OOO, and *objet a* can be thought of an indistinct affect, which retrospectively is the cause of desire—that which stands out. Whereas Lacan wishes to keep the *objet a* empty or ephemeral in a pre-individual, preformed state, Harman is already turning it into an ‘object,’ whereas affect for Deleuze is power or quality, something expressed (2005, CI–I, 99) that has an independent impersonal existence, equated with Charles Sanders Peirce’s ‘firstness.’ While affect does not exist independently of something that expresses it, affect remains completely
distinct from the object of expression. Cowardice is an entity, a ‘feeling-thing’ distinct form the face that ‘expresses’ cowardice. The shift from affect to emotion, or from the affect-image to the action-image, or from the affect of cowardice as an entity free of spatio-temporal coordinates to the face displaying cowardice marks the virtual/actual divide where place in situ is now specified. Lacan is closer to Deleuze than Graham here as objet a is virtual entity, although it is not specified. What Deleuze| Guattari do is turn objet a into a process of becoming that takes place in a relational field of the internal or fold. ‘That’ which ‘sticks out’ for Lacan becomes a singularity within an assemblage, imbued with a quality and power that takes on force when individuated or actualized. As ‘that’ which ‘stick out,’ as objet a can both territorialize and deterritorialize.

While Harris dwells on the phenomenon of wonder, there are other states of aesthetic exchange that produce an assortment of aesthetic emotions. It is perhaps here that Brott (2011) offers yet another ‘becoming’ besides wonder. Brott contrasts Deleuze’s approach to architecture by differentiating it from both the phenomenological subjective approach as developed by Norberg-Schulz’s (1979) genius loci and the Derrida-Eisenmann approach to deconstructive architecture as text where desubjectification takes place by positing an absent center, the lost object. Here the primary example is Tschumi. In the first instance, phenomenology is modernism’s endgame where space is still perceived subjectively, if not to dominate or capture it, then to know what it is uniquely “like,” which is the distinct character of a site (genius loci). In the second instance, the poststructuralist subject is decentered: space becomes a symbolic surface where fantasies, memories and anxieties are projected.

Brott develops a “subjectivity of architecture” that is radically composed of “impersonal effects” that form an assemblage as a particular series, which confers on the ‘inhabitant’ the accumulation of effects that condition perceptions and experience that is unique for each person as there are unconscious selections involved in the experiencing of the ‘building.’ This is what constitutes the “real” of architecture. So architectural “impersonal effect or part-subjects constitute subjectivity directly and not through the circuit of representational orders” (47, original emphasis). Brott goes further and develops what she calls an “effects-image” of architecture by drawing on the Deleuzian cinema books to distinguish this approach from two typologies of images in contemporary architectural discourse: image as photograph and the image as sign. This is also a move away from the emphasis on architecture as a time-image by Stanford Kwinter (2001) by Brott taking the affective-image as close-up, which Deleuze develops in Cinema 1 regarding the face, and applying it to the way there is an affective merging of subject-object through it. Her examples are drawn from a number of films (Bergman’s Through a Glass Darkly, Cohen Brother’s Barton Fink and Roman Polanski’s Repulsion) to show how in each case there is a ‘becoming’ with the wallpaper by the protagonists. The architectural close-up demonstrates in these three films an affective merging of matter and subject via the haptic touch of the wallpaper where the architectural subjectivation as a Real event takes place. The body of the protagonist is colonized, as if the wallpaper deindividuates or
deterritorializes corporally the protagonist differently in each case. In the case of Bergman’s Karin, the close-up of the wallpaper takes on subjectivity as she touches it and hears voices that emanate from inside it as her schizophrenic delirium increases; for Barton Fink, the affective-image close-up of peeled wallpaper that he desperately tries to fix overwhelms him as the sticky and tacky wall-sweat covers his hands, ‘disgust’ seems to cling to them. In Repulsion, Carol’s handprints on the wall, which begin with a crack, seem to move by themselves as her madness ensues. This visceral merging of subject|object through the asignifying attributes that are at play in an affectual close-up is extended to a point where the subject is completely absorbed by the object. Here Brott calls on the explosion in Antonioni’s Zabriskie Point to make the case for the dissolvement of the subject. Here the object in question is withdrawn and concealed in the very process as the absorbed subject is thrown into “any-space-whatever,” (espace quelconque) as Deleuze developed it. In each architectural close-up there is affective transition in power, which has affinities with Graham’s OOO and his ‘vicarious causation’ thesis in the way objects relate to each other in a relational field. Speculative realism proposes that the world of objects is withdrawn into a realm that is beyond human thought, the position of Heidegger. If all objects are given ‘intentionality,’ then a form of vitalism arises that is independent of human beings. This is a ‘passive vitalism’ that Deleuze favored (Colebook 2010).

Brott’s exploration between cinema and architecture through the affective close-up has strong affinities with the ‘vibrant matter’ explorations of Jane Bennett. In her latest research explorations, Bennett (2011) has interviewed what are called ‘hoarders’ of material. Rather than examining their pathology (as psychoanalysis might), she too identifies the way the horded material overwhelms and thereby desubjectivizes the ‘hoarder’ as if they are completely at the mercy of the hoarded material. The pull of the material is such that a powerful feeling of being absorbed is generated. There is almost a complete deterritorialization of subjectivity. Brott attempts to extend these insights into the experience of architectural materials and their specificity for each viewer in the way such material acts in the subject|object divide. This is a different project than the Arcades project Walter Benjamin developed as he chartered the movement of the flâneur wherein the subject is caught by the display behind the vitrines. It deals with the pre-space|time development, more with the question of ontogenesis than ontology. If a schizoanalysis as arts-based research is to be entertained, the recognition of this primary process that continues to co-exist with the secondary processes of representation must be taken into account.

As we have argued above and elsewhere (jagodzinski, 2010a; Wallin, 2010), designer capitalism has already captured ‘attention.’ It knows full well the game of affect. The pre-individuated realm of the unconscious raises all sorts of problematics for arts-based research that wishes to free itself of the capitalist lure. Perhaps it can’t. The renewed emphasis on affect in cultural studies raises once more commodity fetishism and what has been termed ‘capitalist animism’ in some circles, where the conception of a commodity is endowed with a soul and an agency of sorts (Holert, 2012). It is
what Christian Marazzi (2010) calls an “anthropogenetic model” of capitalism where the biopolitical production of various forms of life (“the production of man by man”) become the basis of added surplus value. There is no ‘vacational’ break away from work as we are all networked together to keep on ‘working.’ Capitalism in this sense is machinic, an alien monstrosity that sustains itself indefinitely through continuous cycles of deterritorialization and reterritorialization (Moreno 2012a,b). Its animistic agency is manifested through ecopagic practices, which harbor a Freudian death drive to the point where everything will be used up, a drive to the inorganic as our species is liquidated by its own narcissism. This was the thesis developed by Nick Land (1993) and queried by Reza Negarestani (2011) who demonstrates how the wedding of science with capital provides the paradoxical account of its being both seemingly emancipatory and liberatory at the same time our death knell. Some feel that the illusion of art’s autonomy, which escapes commodification since a price can’t be put on it, forms capitalism’s alibi to keep the art markets booming since the human labor that goes into them appears to vanish. When art becomes such a useless plaything it becomes a non-alienated product of human labour, supporting once again capitalism’s alibi that not all is for sale, that there is refuge from the marketplace. Sotirios Bahtsetzis (2012) calls this the economy of “intensified fetish”, what he refers to as an acheiropoieton, an icon seeming freed of the toil of labor. However, as Martin Stewart (2011) rightly argues, and shows by meditating on three terms: work, life, and death, that questions concerning art as a form of commodity and labor power cannot escape the binary frames of capitalism and communism. He concludes by what can be read as an aphorism. “Art is not capitalism, and it is not communism. Art is the opposition of communism and capitalism. Which is to say that art is constituted by this opposition and by its own opposition to this opposition” (147).

To question art as an intensified fetish and to avoid its fall into ‘uselessness’ as unalienated human labor requires an axial change. Art, its education and research, becomes something much more alien in this perspective. Art is not for individual ‘self-expression,’ the defining modernist tenet, nor is it defined by its corollary: contextualism, namely, art is what others make of it once it is released into the world. We have here the subjective/objective positions that are overcome by OOO (object-orientated ontology), the ‘gap’ between these two positions is explored by these philosophers relationally as we have briefly mentioned in the case of Graham Harman. However, OOO still heavily relies on the notion of the object, which is categorically dismissed by Deleuze|Guattari. “I have, it’s true, spent lot of time writing about this notion of event: you see, I don’t believe in things” (Deleuze, 1995, 160). Massumi’s (2011) “activist philosophy,” where emphasis is placed on “occurrence” (becoming) and “semblance” (virtuality) “makes it fundamentally nonobject philosophy [...] and noncognitive [...]. The world is not an aggregate of objects [...] To ‘not believe in things’ is to believe that objects are derivatives of process and that their emergence is the passing result of specific modes of abstractive activity” (6, original emphasis). Massumi does not dismiss the subject/object divide.
“Activist philosophy does not deny that there is a duplicity in process between subjective and objective. It accepts the reality of both. Rather than denying them, activist philosophy affirms them otherwise, reinterpreting them in terms of events and their taking-effect” (8). Art, it’s research and education, thought in this way, as encounter that is the event of becoming, and hence of ‘learning,’ emphasizes ‘doing’ rather than ‘knowing.’ Art research as ‘doing’ where the subject is formed in the becoming of the event, as subjective self-creation, which is not autopoietic, but very much part of assemblage in the way it ‘works’ as a symptomatic complex of generating an affect. This is the way that desire needs to be thought: as always being assembled through the relationships within a field.

It is then, the pre-subjective chiasm or interval as fold that subject/object opens up the way nonhuman ‘objects’ or ‘things’ look and interact at/with us and us at/ with them at the unconscious level of machinic assemblages. This is where the attributes of ‘thing’ as partial objects combine to impact us as ‘signs.’ It is thus a radically deanthropomorphized view. Subjectivity becomes a differential concept, spread throughout an assemblage or haecceity. The aesthetic paradigm, for Guattari (1995, see O’Sullivan, 2010a), is a transversal concept, meaning that it crosses all levels of life, transforming any open structural system through desire. Transversality is the production of subjectivity that includes the technological, artistic, cultural and institutional dimensions, as well as the nature|nure of biology. In general transversality is the mapping and occupation of subjective territory and going beyond it. In TP (1987, 349), Deleuze/Guattari refer this as a ‘readymade.’ This is not the readymade of Marcel Duchamp but the readymade of a humble bower bird that builds its territory from the surrounding environment. Art and ‘Nature’ are no longer so easily distinguishable.

This gap or chiasm as a ‘relational field’ is not somehow wedged ‘between’ Nature and Culture (capitalized here to affirm the usual divide that is established) as if these were two entirely different substances. Rather than a ‘space’ in-between, as is so often the case, the void, gap or chasm is best envisioned as micro-processes teeming with the potential of creative ‘life,’ existing not in chronological time, but in the time of Aion—a virtual time of continuous becoming that leaves us only traces of the movements taken. So as to not mislead what this entails, Ingold (2006) puts it this way: “The animacy of the lifeworld […] is not the result of an infusion of spirit into substance, or of agency into materiality, but is rather ontologically prior to their differentiation” (10, emphasis added). This is a radical notion of life, which we take as zoë in distinction to bios. Ingold just as well might be referring to the Deleuze/Guattarian ‘plane of immanence,’ an ontological field without any unequivocal demarcations between human, animal, vegetable, or mineral. Such a view is inconsistent with OOO realist speculations. We have flows, not objects.

Affect—or life itself (zoë) is experienced by the ‘subject’ in the gap between cause (sensation, movement, material nature) and effect (perception, reaction) as actualized culture. The chiasm or void between nature|culture can be thought of as the complexity of the conjunctive and disjunctive syntheses that Deleuze/Guattari
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identify as the three synthesis of unconscious desire (connective, disjunctive and conjunctive). Virtual life becomes complexly screened as body-schema-image and then actualized. Immanent life progressively becomes more and more allusive and mysterious to grasp, drawing, it seems on elements of both alchemic and Gnostic traditions, as well as Taoist and other indigenous wisdom philosophies, but transcendent as distinct from transcendental vitalism needs to be maintained. While both are ‘immanent’ in their animating force, the assemblages that emerge with the former transcendent position is generated by the production of forces by the multitude rather than by essences that are inherent in the substance. Differentiated combinations are foremost. The vital materialist position “points out that culture is not of our own making, infused as it is by biological, geological, and climatic forces. (There is … a life of metal as well as a life of men)” (Bennett 2010, 115, original emphasis). The ‘life’ of metal, however, has more to do with attributes and qualities rather than a spirit that has been infused within a pantheistic cosmology of a ‘grand design.’ Accident, fate, contingency as the general turbulence of ‘nature’ needs to be recognized as well.

The shift is to the flows of matter and force is advocated by Deleuze|Guattari in the early 70s. But this direction has already been somewhat co-opted by the biopolitics of networked research. Capital is spectral; xenomoney has replaced any semblance of ‘real’ cash as a debt society closes down a possible open future. One is ‘locked-in’ to pay off the debt, a form of soft enslavement to pay off the ‘goods.’ What is art research within the context of spectral art, an art that is ephemeral and virtual?

Neuropolitics

The transversal force of art is much more alienating and strange since it acts on us in ways that are unforeseeable. It ‘retards’ perception, or ‘speeds’ it up, twists it, and disables ‘normative’ perception. What this means is that the production of subjectivity as a structure between art research and ‘science’ raises questions of neuropolitics, as modes of perception. Just what is ‘normative’ perception, and just why is the ‘human’ privileged; further, why is ‘human’ defined by a neurotypical norm? Both questions raise questions of disability as being flawed and non-human. Autism is the paradigm case here, as there is so much evidence to show that a portion of those who are diagnosed as autistic have extraordinary imaginary and drawing abilities as famously developed by the case study of Nadia (Selfe, 1977). But this also applies to such phenomena as synaesthetia (Munster, 2006), which forms another potential of the ontogenetic field of perception. Many artists are said to have had this ability, especially Kandinsky.

Sacks (1995), a well-known neurologist at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, reported about a successful New York artist, a certain Mr. I., who became colorblind after a car accident at the age of 65. The world became “grey,” “leaden” and a “dirty white” as all he could “see” were objects in their tonal intensities.
These were the closest words he could think of to describe the perceptual qualities of things he saw. But language was inadequate to describe his newly found condition. His condition was identified as minute damage to the V4 layer of the visual cortex that processes color. Mr. I was “seeing” the world with his cones, seeing with the wavelength-sensitive cells of V1. Interesting enough, after two years of adjusting and hoping that the colored world would be restored, a revisioning of the world occurred as the memory of his former colored world began to fade. Sacks also relates his neurological observations and friendship with Franco Magnani, an Italian immigrant who came to San Francisco shortly after the Second World War. Franco seemed to possess an eidetic (iconic) memory of his childhood memories of Pontito, the little Tuscan hill town where he had grown up before the war. He was obsessed by the need to paint every building, every street of Pontito with almost photographic accuracy from every possible angle, including imaginary aerial views fifty or five hundred feet above the ground. By that time he had painted more than a thousand images of Pontito. It seemed that Franco had “experiential seizures” (cf. Penfield), which presented literal memories that made him re-experience Pontito as he had experienced it from a child’s eye vision. These flashes of memory, rather than being dynamic recreations of past events as is often thought, were scenic photographic views, which he could actually scan and ‘see’ several directions by physically reorienting his body to see a different perspective.

Artistic prodigies and “idiot savants” present further insights into the question of neuropolitics. When it comes to the neuroplasticity (the brain’s constant relation of neurological formation with its milieu) the ‘human’ variation stretches itself out differentially. This is an entirely different issue from the bogus findings extrapolated from fMRI brain scans, which attempt to extrapolate cause and effect claims between media and violence. Art research here should be suspect. The best known prodigies, like Nadia whose developmental psychologist Lorna Selfe (1977) had minutely documented, and Stephen Wiltshire, interviewed and examined by Oliver Sacks, were both autistic and spoke very little. Nadia, for example, grew out of her autism when she began talking. Her “artistic” ability began to fade and left her. Nadia and Stephen’s artistic output seem to confirm an ability to artistically “capture” the “literalness” of reality by rendering objects as they were perceived rather than conceived at a very early age. But perception here can no longer be identifiably normative despite the resemblance of ‘realistic’ drawing, the rendering of the world ‘accurately,’ since a particular convention of perspective is being employed. Their representations are not a ‘primitivism,’ nor does it present ‘naïve’ visual solutions as does folk art. There is a feeling among psychologists of perception, that icons lie outside the science of semiotics, that they may be “other” to language, linked to instinct, the unconscious, the body, or other pre-or nonlinguistic domains. Icons are said to be symbolic condensations that root social meanings in material form (Alexander 2010). Jonathan Culler (1975), whose contribution to semiotics has been immense, admitted (quite some time ago) that “the study of the way in which a drawing of a horse represents a horse is perhaps more properly the concern of
a philosophical theory of representation than of a linguistically based semiology” (16–17).

Cognitive neuroscience of perception cannot contribute much to how artworks ‘work’ either. The normative claim of ‘neuroaesthetics’ by Semir Zeki (1999) seems to be that art and the function of vision are synonymous, i.e., the visual cortex is turned to the formal structures of art. The formal structure of an artwork is there to provide cues sufficient enough to be able to recognize its representational content. Seeley (2006) reviews Zeki’s claims, questioning this simplistic causality. Jennifer McMahon (2007) makes an extended claim: viewers who experience a resonance between an artwork and their perceptual facilities sense satisfaction and pleasure. McMahon’s reliance on neuroscience develops a biological theory of aesthetics, especially beauty that is said to update Kant. Unfortunately, virtually all perceptual cognitive constructivist theories as applied to art fail to account for the non-perceptual events that determine its meaning or engender its affective force. The virtuality of the event, as in Deleuze|Guattari, is entirely absent. Much more interesting when it comes to neuroscience is the cross-modality that occurs amongst the various senses. This is dramatically illustrated by fMRI brain imaging scans that are ‘performative’ portraits, more of an acoustic mirror than a visual image, which is capable of bearing a ‘look’ and ‘looking back’ at the onlooker (Casini 2011, 76). The idea that fMRI images are a transparent window into the inner self should be vigorously disputed, yet as art and science research come together, this is approaching a standard way to receive grants and become legitimated in the Academy.

Going back to autism as the ‘other’ form of perception that raises the specter of neuropolitics opens up other insights. Amanda Baggs, an activist from Vermont, posted a video on YouTube entitled “My Language” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn70gPukdY). Her case has become both a form of protest and fraud; protest as part of the Autistic Liberation Front (ALF) who desists any form of medication for autism and champions Baggs’ efforts, and called a fraud by other members of the autistic community, feigning autism when she has another form of social disorder. On the other hand, someone like Temple Grandin appears to be genuinely sensitive to animals, especially cattle. In Sack’s study, Stephen had a penchant for architecture, while for Nadia it was farm animals, especially horses which she enjoyed drawing. Both seemed to bypass “normal” artistic development. Nadia had a sense of space, an ability to depict appearances and shadows, and constantly experimented with different angles and perspectives. Stephen seemed to be able to reproduce buildings he saw only at a glance weeks and even months later. Such exceptional cases, which are littered throughout history, offer a number of speculations concerning the perception and rendering of reality “realistically” by artists. “Realism,” often referred to as a “naturalistic” stage of adolescent art, remains a strong impulse in Western art development that seem to go back to Pliny and the staging of a contest between Parrhasius and Zeuxis as to who could render reality ‘more’ realistically. The trajectory leads us to virtual reality environments today such as CAVE environments.
Autistic artistic savants present a hypertrophied account of mimesis. They seem to have a perceptual genius for concreteness; an ability for catching the formal features of things, i.e., the structural logic or “thisness” of things, as if they could capture its haecceity. It is characteristic of the savant’s eidetic memory (be it visual, musical, lexical) to be prodigiously retentive of particulars, yet there is no sense of generalizability, only an immovable connection of content and context in their drawing. Theirs is a concrete-situational or episodic memory—each moment stands out distinctly and almost unconnected with others. Such hypertrophication of perception provides the worry that ‘art’ becomes boxed in as again representational.

It is well-known through the psychological study of children’s drawings during the pre-schematic stage by Goodnow (1977), the time of holophrastic speech development when children as yet have not yet fully entered into the symbolic order of language, but begin to mimic and sound out words which begin to stand for things, that a “concrete” atomistic perception is characteristic of this age. Each “thing” has its unique individual existence in the world. It is present and then gone, which causes anxiety, frustration and rage for the child. It cries and demands its return. Only when a child completes the circuit of a “thing” being gone and can begin to control it coming back (Freud’s fort/da game) does certain constancy for a word and the “thing” begin to form. This absence/presence is what begins to structure perception. Eventually a “baby-talked” word begins to stand in for the absent “thing” which the mother repeats and tries to modify so that the child will be able to say the word “properly” in the mother’s tongue. The sound of a word and the precept for which it stands undergoes this process of modification, which art educators refer to as the transition from the pre-schema to the schema stage. It is precisely in this interval where the most open dimension of imaginative exploration is available. Children in the pre-schema age as yet cannot understand how it is possible that two objects could occupy the same “space” through overlapping since a patterned signifying chain has not yet been formed. This only occurs when certain schemas become established for each child, when eventually children begin to “talk” and narrate stories with their unique schemas, which is a sure indicator that they have entered more fully into the symbolic order of language and can begin to relate socially to their parents, i.e., they can “talk back.”

Perception

Much of the talk concerning perception remains caught by an anthropocentrism that cognitive approaches are unable to shake. The mediation of technology seems to forgotten or transparent. Scribbling and drawing with a pencil, or ink pen or a ballpoint make all the differences as to the affects and effects rendered and made possible. We seem to forget that it was only with the advent of the cinema that a mode of seeing that breaks with the human eye becomes possible. We should think this way when it comes to the digitalized image as well. In what way does it transform thought into modes that are as yet unforeseen. A wonderful research study
in this regard, utilizing Deleuzian framework is Liselott Mariett Olsson (2009). Olsson illustrates how subjectivity and learning occur in a relational field when it comes to pre-school children. Cooperative work leads to strategies that are picked up, stolen and exchanged. When it comes to art, teachers look at what takes place between children; their interests are treated like a contagious trend that does not reside in each individual. This is where the ‘lines of flight’ emerge, the transversality of creativity generated that is continuous, productive and in movement. Research as transcendental empiricism in Deleuzian sense means to collectively invent rather than discovering something at a distance. Again, artistic research is an invention rather than a discovery. Something new is added to the world, a new assemblage of desire formed. In this perspective, theory cannot be put into practice; rather it is an encounter between theory and practice. They are both ‘practices’ but of a different sort. We use the term aesthetic, rather than aesthetics for this force of art in its shaping of invented worlds in arts-based ‘research.’

Art, in general, does not measure up to positivistic neurotypical criteria, nor does it perform to what might be thought as neurotypical standards. It is the ability to go beyond perceptual standards that forms the core of artistic desire. Henri Bergson (1911, 7) theorized the concept of perception with the idea of images being a subtractive process wherein we focus on what is at hand, and in our own interests and desires. Perception is primarily instrumental. Intelligence is a ready-made reality that simplifies the complexity that is at hand. Hence, a blind spot is always there that frames vision. “Instead of attaching ourselves to inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside them in order to recompose their becoming artificially. We take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality […] We may therefore sum up […] that the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind” (1911, 332, added emphasis). Image becomes identical with movement: ‘image=movement.’ It is the blindness to the Outside, to the ‘x’ that remains outside the frames of perception, which distinguishes an ‘object’ from a Thing, the ‘thing-in-itself’ [Heidegger’s Ding an sich] that is not exhausted by perception. Knowledge, in this view, remains caught by the ‘human’ mode of representation, by a phenomenology that established the subject from the object as described in Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception and Mikel Dufrenne’s phenomenology of aesthetics. This ‘x’ however can be extended in two posthuman directions—towards the Outside through non-human and inhuman (AI) means. These are the two directions art research as invention can deterritorialize sedimented ways of being in the world.

Deleuze (1986, 1988) was to ‘rescue’ Bergson’s failure to recognize that cinema as the ‘moving image’ could estrange perception, it is precisely this ability of art through or as techne, which bridges the Nature/Culture divide making them categorically ambiguous. Art becomes an ‘object’ (process, perforative, objectile) of perception itself that has a force about it, which acts on us as a body ‘thing’ as well, especially at the neuronal level. We use the term self-reflexivity for this possibility that attempts to leave the realm of anthropocentrism behind: the grapheme (the capitalized ’X’) stands for this very possible invented worlds of speculation. It has
nothing to do with self-reflection proper as the idea of thinking and reflection as an inner mental activity inside a human subject. Rather, the X marks the **incorporeal event**: that which happens to us from the Outside (the virtual Real), the encounter with an object as the place of becoming or learning. While self-reflexivity has affinities with notions of inter-connectivity with things in an assemblage (*agencement*), and with Latour’s (2005) well-known concept of “intra-reflection” that takes place within a complex network where a wide variety of forces are at play, we wish to use self-reflexivity (as an extension of the Cartesian notions of self-reflection and post-structuralist views of self-reflexion) to preserve the specificity of human agency, which has certainly been further decentered in its distribution within an assemblage. However, as an object the ‘human’ remains a highly encephalized complex ‘object’ comparatively speaking, so that the question of desire (as affect and relationality) does not simply drop out. This I believe is the limitation of Latour’s ANT theory, which is weak on the question of desire (*desiring-production* in Deleuze/Guattarian terms) at the micro-level: objects are given equal footing through intra-activity in the networks where nature/culture are blurred, but this is theorized at the constitutive level of the corporate body. So, Deleuze/Guattari’s position is not a ‘celebration’ of the ‘death of the subject.’ More so a recognition, when it comes to art, of modes of consciousness that are excluded from dominant forms of reason: dream states, pathological processes (autism, attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD), anorexia and so on), esoteric experiences, rapture and excess. Guattari clarifies this issue when he speaks that thinking on subjectivity for them was not a question of anti-humanism. “Rather it’s a question of being aware of the existence of machines of subjectification” (Guattari 1995, 9). Solely internal faculties such as the soul, impersonal relations, and intra-familial complexes do not produce subjectivity. It also produced via nonhuman machines, such as social, cultural, environmental, or technological assemblages, which enter into the very production of subjectivity itself. Within OOO the human possesses no special place within being. Humans are not at the center of being but are among beings; but in what capacity do they act is the question within these networks of non-human and inhuman beings? The question applies to art as well. What sort of ‘agency’ does an objectile art have as a ‘relational performative’ within an assemblage? Obviously this requires the articulation of a singularity. Art objects in OOO terms can become a ‘guerrilla metaphysics’ (Harman 2005)— forms of thought that enable speculation on the strangeness or “weirdness” of the world and its objects. All objects, in this sense for Harman are works of art, and it appears phenomenology is thus smuggled in.

To think of perception as machinic or autonomous that forms its own ‘individuating capacity,’ be it cinema, television, video, printmaking, painting, and so on, leads us into a rather different realm of possibility as these then becomes ‘forms of thinking.’ In Deleuze’s (1986) terms, their individuating capacity is a ‘time-crystallizing engine,’ or a spiritual automaton that has a temporal agency of its own, forming the basis of an impersonal theory of subjectivity. This machinic understanding of perception can only be grasped if it is understood that, for Deleuze,
perception has nothing to do with representation. Perception is co-terminus with matter. It is substantive rather than referring to something outside itself. Perception and matter differ only in ‘degree, they are the same ‘kind.’ There is no negotiation between an inside/outside, a phenomenal interior and a empirical exterior, rather perception “puts us at once into matter, is impersonal, and coincides with the perceived object” (Deleuze, 1988, 25). Subjectivity is a production of perception that incorporates perceptual, psychological and corporeal levels. Perception does not mediate between subject/object; it take place in a third register—as an absolute exteriority or Outside. In Logic of Sense (1990a) he calls this “a zone of objective indetermination” (113). This productive sense of perception is referred to as a ‘singularity.’ Singularity refers to the emergence of a connected assemblage. These singularities exist within series, and there is a potential that vibrates across all series. Deleuze calls such an arrangement of singularities “non-personal individuation.” As a pure Outside this forms an impersonal field, which exists independent of any ‘subject.’ Personal identity is then a working effect of the repetition of a particular set of pre-personal singularities. “I” is a machinic part. Its ‘habit’ crystallizes personal identity. Deleuze is very much the empiricist here. The principles of the mind are defined by what they do and what is their function. Personal identity is an effect, one effect of many possible effects. A subject does, to a degree, choose which effects to embody. For example, the ‘voice-effect’ is compelling and impersonal.

NOTES

1 See the article by jagodzinski “Between War and Edutainment: The Prosthetics of Video Games,” (2012a). This article was written in 2009 but only recently published in Cultural Formations after a three and a half year delay.
2 For a succinct exposé of the term dispositif as used in French theory see Agamben (2009)
3 The body is electronically tracked willing or not as when it was discovered that the i-phone user’s whereabouts and movement were automatically stored in the phone’s system.
4 Perhaps Godzich (1994) fingers this when he writes, “The problem is that a dissonance is now manifesting itself: images are scrambling the functions of language, which must operate out of the imaginary in order to function optimally. Images are parasitical noises on language at first—and then they supplant it: it must be recalled that the technology of images operates at the speed of light, as does the world. Language could slow down the world, thanks to its tremendous negative capability, but it cannot slow down images, for they operate out of the very imaginary that language would have to be able to organize in the first place”(370).
5 For a graspable introduction of Simondon’s thought into English, see the essays developed in the journal, Inflexions 5
6 See the essay by Didier Debase in Inflexions 5 (March 2012).
7 Zepke (2008) maintains that Deleuze/Guattari ‘ready-made’ is contra to Duchamp’s readymade. Deleuze and Guattari (1994, 198) reject Conceptual art as being devoid of affect and relying on ‘information’ within a capitalist system. This seems to us as being too harsh a judgment. Conceptual art, through its critique of aesthetics and skill or refinement provides plenty of affect, but in a form where irony and indifference can have impact.
8 We maintain that the ‘fundamental antagonism’ between them becomes firmly established during the eighteenth century when ‘art’ becomes a separate sphere (see jagodzinski, 2010a). The Royal Academy in England already blocked the entrance of engravers in the eighteenth century. It was reserved for
painting, drawing and sculpture only (Williams, 1976, 33), thus repeating what became well-established binaries: mind/body, creativity/repetition, art/artifact, freedom/determination, useless/useful and so forth.

For the contra side Claire Bishop (2004) convincingly shows the difficulty of making the gallery space work for transformative change, whether its for ‘shock’ political effects like Santiago Sierra or in the case of Rirkrit Tiravanija, for the creation of ‘microtopias’ that become little more than convivial practices for sociability. For a fairly comprehensive examination of relational art’s claims see Economy Artbiscuit (2010) where the genealogy of the term is traced to Conceptualism rather than to the Situationists as Bourriaud maintains. It seems that as a signifier ‘relational aesthetics’ is taken by many artists who assume a social interactive dimension to their art. The term thereby loses any specificity that Bourriaud has tried to sustain.

In jagodzinski (2010a) three such possibilities are developed within the post-Situationist context.

“The difference is not ‘between’ in the ordinary sense […] it is the Fold. Zweifalt. It is constitutive of Being and of the man in which Being constitutes being, in the double movement of the ‘clearing’ and ‘veiling’” (DR, 65). Deleuze clearly is referring to Heidegger here.

This is the humanist theological view advocated for instance by Thomas Berry (1999), who, in the tradition of the catholic cosmologist Teilhard de Chardin, advocates ‘ecospirituality’ along deep ecological lines.

“This sense of relational aliveness disappears into the living. The ‘uncanniness’ of the way in which the object appears as the object it is – as if it doubled itself with the aura of its own qualitative nature – disappears into a chain of action. We live out the perception, rather than living it in. We forget that a chair for example, isn’t just a chair. In addition to being one it looks like one. The “likeness” of an object to itself, its immediate doubleness, gives every perception a hint of déjà vu. That’s the uncanniness. […]Art brings that vitality affect to the fore” (Massumi, 2008, 6).


In DR-I Deleuze offers the Greek rather than the Latin roots: “It is not an aisthēton [aesthetics] but an aisthēteon” (176, 2004a). Deleuze calls it a sign.

This idea is glossed by Boundas (1996) who writes, “[Deleuze’s] project of difference and repetition is, with respect to Heidegger’s meditations on being and time, a completion and simultaneously a displacement” (90). We draw on the amazing, as yet unpublished thesis by Sholtz (2009) that develops this account in a rich and resourceful manner. Heidegger and Deleuze are placed in proximity through the figure of Nietzsche in order to resolve the question of a ‘people-to-come.’

Deleuze|Guattari are critical of Heidegger, although they recognize his contribution. “He got the wrong people, earth, and blood. For the race summoned forth by art or philosophy is not one that claims to be pure but oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic and irremediably minor race (WP, 109).

As Buchanan and Lambert (2005) point out, Heidegger’s Dasein is an example of this problematic. Mistakenly translated as ‘Man’ the “being-there” means that our species is a “place-being” and not a being in a place. This has consequences for arts-based research that continually plays up the specificity of place as the be all and end all of research where the influence of literature strongly infiltrates it as a text based endeavor.

To clarify, Deleuze’s in-between is a line that has its own existence apart from any two points that it joins. The in-between is a conjunction for Deleuze—the AND, which is a relation that is “becoming.”

Briefly, containment contains both subject and object. For Deleuze|Guattari this is a symbiotic heterogeneous coupling; contiguity- subject/object lie side by side not affecting one another, but sometimes they fuse and mix within certain limits; sincerity—refers to the absorption or fascination on the side of the subject side in relation to the object; connection— refers to a connection of real object in an indirect way, but this is partial interior intention (unlike containment which is a full intention) that is connected with other real objects; no relation at all is the usual state of things. Causation for Graham is always vicarious, asymmetrical and buffered as played out in one of these five relations. What Graham seems to be doing is working out relations of actualized objects in Deleuze’s sense, whereas Deleuze|Guatarri develop an ontogenesis rather than an ontology where we have only flows and intensities in the originary state of chaos. They do not present a dualism of virtual/actual but a tertiary structure: the original chaos forms the virtual.
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21 Perhaps it is important to note that Deleuze (C1-I, 238 n16) mentions the phenomenological writings of Mikel Dufrenne, especially his notion of the material or affective apriori as having infinitives with Peirce’s ‘firstness.’

22 Brott (2011) cites the contemporary designer Rem Koolhaus on the ‘psychological’ functions of his projects for Prada stores. “Museums are popular, not for their content, but for their lack of….you go, you look, you leave. No decisions, no pressure. Our ambition is to capture attention and the, once we have it, to hand it back to the consumer” (61). One should add that the exchange for the ‘attention’ is the seduction of surfaces that translate into profit.

23 There is no agreement as to what the status of Freud’s death drive as equated with capitalism as first developed by Nick Land amongst ‘speculative realist’ philosophers. Negarestani’s tortuous essay takes to task Ray Brassier’s ‘accelerated capitalism’ thesis as coined by Benjamin Noys and begun by Land, while Žižek (2011) will have no truck with any of them defending his particular brand of Hegelian/Lacanianism.


25 Apparently artists like Giorgio De Chirico suffered from such “spiritual fevers” (his term). Sacks footnotes a long list of creative artist and writers who are said to have had such seizures: van Gogh, Dostoevsky, Poe, Tennyson, Flaubert, Maupassant, Kierkegaard, Lewis Carol, and Phillip Dick.

26 This is extremely important for the psychoanalytic paradigm of Jacques Lacan, who reinterprets Freud’s fort/da game as the moment when the “being” of a child begins to separate from its m(other). This usually happens at 6 months when the child is weaned off the breast and liquid food is supplemented by solids.

27 See jagodzinski (2010b).

28 The movement–image is not part of the sphere of consciousness; it is not intentional in terms of subjective agency, yet it has no agency of its own. It not ‘representational,’ the image does not represent the characteristic of the material world as movement. As Deleuze (1986) writes the image is a “state of things that is constantly changing, a stream of material, in which no anchoring point or center of reference could be indicated” (86).

29 Simondon overcomes any intuition/intelligence dichotomy, which is still part of Bergson by positing the techno of ‘know how,’ which is close to Michael Polanyi’s “tacit knowing.” This is still ‘intelligence’ but intuitive intelligence in the sense that they are found in ‘technical operations’ and in ‘immanent intelligence.’

30 We engage in Deleuze’s notion that the ‘brain is a screen’ in other parts of this book.

31 The co-evolution of humans and plants as developed by Michael Polanyi (2001) offers a thought experiment, where corn for example is a “cultigen.” This is a plant incapable of seeding itself, and requires a relationship with humans to ‘survive.’ Their intra-dependency raises many questions regarding agency in relation to power and desire to sustain this dependency. Can any quantitative and qualitative account on either side settle the issue? The farm might be thought of as an interactive assemblage of co-dependency where the ampersand is certainly in conjunctive play holding the heterogeneous objects (animals, machines, technological apparatus, humans, plants and weather) together, but wouldn’t the ‘farmer’ have upper hand in the political and ethical (power and desire) differentiated distribution within this network, even when we recognize its decentering: the tractor breaks down, the weather does not ‘cooperate,’ the animals become sick, and so on? To ‘sustain’ the farm as a collectif (to use Latour’s word here) of humans, animals, plants, machines, still requires the ‘will to power’ of the farmer as a main object amongst these other objects that supplants them to some degree in terms of encephalized sapienization when it comes to the desire to hold the territory together. While the agency of action cannot be located in one particular source, it is distributed throughout the network, (i.e., the weather (drought) can initiate change, in that sense it is an agent of change), it is still he farmer who responds to the challenge. Or rather, must supplant them in terms of quantitative power in order to maintain ‘the’ farm. If this were not so then the question of agency is continually displaced into an infinite regression, another limitation of ANT. Certainly if there is a drought, even that ‘will’ can be broken and lost without the reassemblage of irrigation. But it is the farmer who produces the material ‘reality’ of the farm by desiring-production as a concept and as a territory to sustain a particular form of life that equally shapes the farmer’s body depending on the particular
The contemporary image of thought assemblage that is produced. The farm is not something that is desired as an object of lack, rather it is an object of affirmative production. But it is also an ontological object: a farm could not exist were it not a constituted relation within a given reality. The farm as a constituted object ‘makes’ the actors do what they do. So, it is at this institutional level that its deterritorialization would change ‘reality.’ Do we then call this ‘soft’ anthropomorphcentrism?