

# ARCHITECTURE+PHILOSOPHY

## Experiments in site-writing

Architecture and philosophy each create the spaces they're articulated in. Experimentation is thus generative, constructive. It makes new forms and new meanings. A set of instructional texts will open a new space of exchange between our two disciplines as we perform architecture and philosophy from a distance – with you as collaborator. **Join us.** We begin soon. You begin now. Look around you, look more closely and begin to observe. Be ready.



L-R Lauren Brown – Jana Perkovic – Hélène Frichot – Esther Anatolitis

Four writers.

Four texts, diagrams, investigations.

Four sets of provocations from four texts.

Four spatial explorations performing four sets of provocations.

Four documentations of four spatial explorations.

Four social mediated publications performing four mediated spatial explorations.

### INSTRUCTIONAL MANUAL

1. Propose framing text
2. List twelve provocations as a set of spatial exploration instructions
3. Undertake and document spatial exploration
4. Publish the documentation on social media as a single event

Working as individuals but guided by one another's provocations, we will each undertake a sole spatial exploration and share the results, which in turn will generate new provocations.

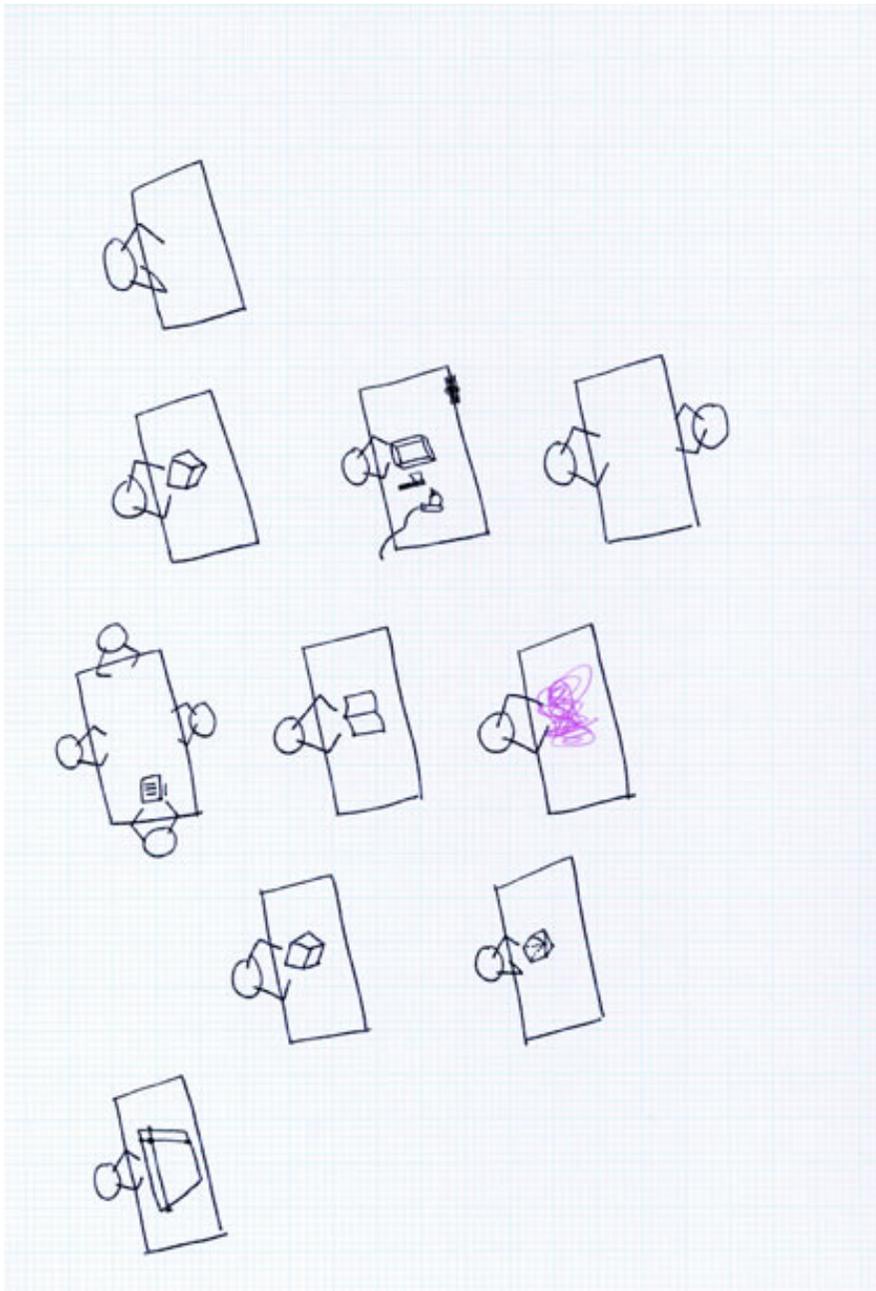
TEXT	WRITTEN BY	PROVOCATIONS BY	PERFORMED + DOCUMENTED BY	PUBLISHED BY
art ≠ architecture	Esther	Lauren	Hélène	Jana <a href="#">@relatively</a>
Site and sound	Lauren	Hélène	Jana	Esther <a href="#">@_esther</a>
organism + environment	Hélène	Jana	Esther	Lauren <a href="#">@sheseesred</a>
A manual	Jana	Esther	Lauren	Hélène <a href="#">@helenejulief</a>
		Written and passed on by Monday, 10 June	Performed and passed on by Sat, 22 June	via Twitter at 7:00pm AEST Tue, 25 June

### OVER TO YOU

**Make a little experiment** Follow our published explorations on Twitter **Make an experiment** Perform one of our provocations **Make a bigger experiment** Gather as three site-writers and undertake the steps in the instructional table shaded blue. Join us in our guild for spatial exploration.

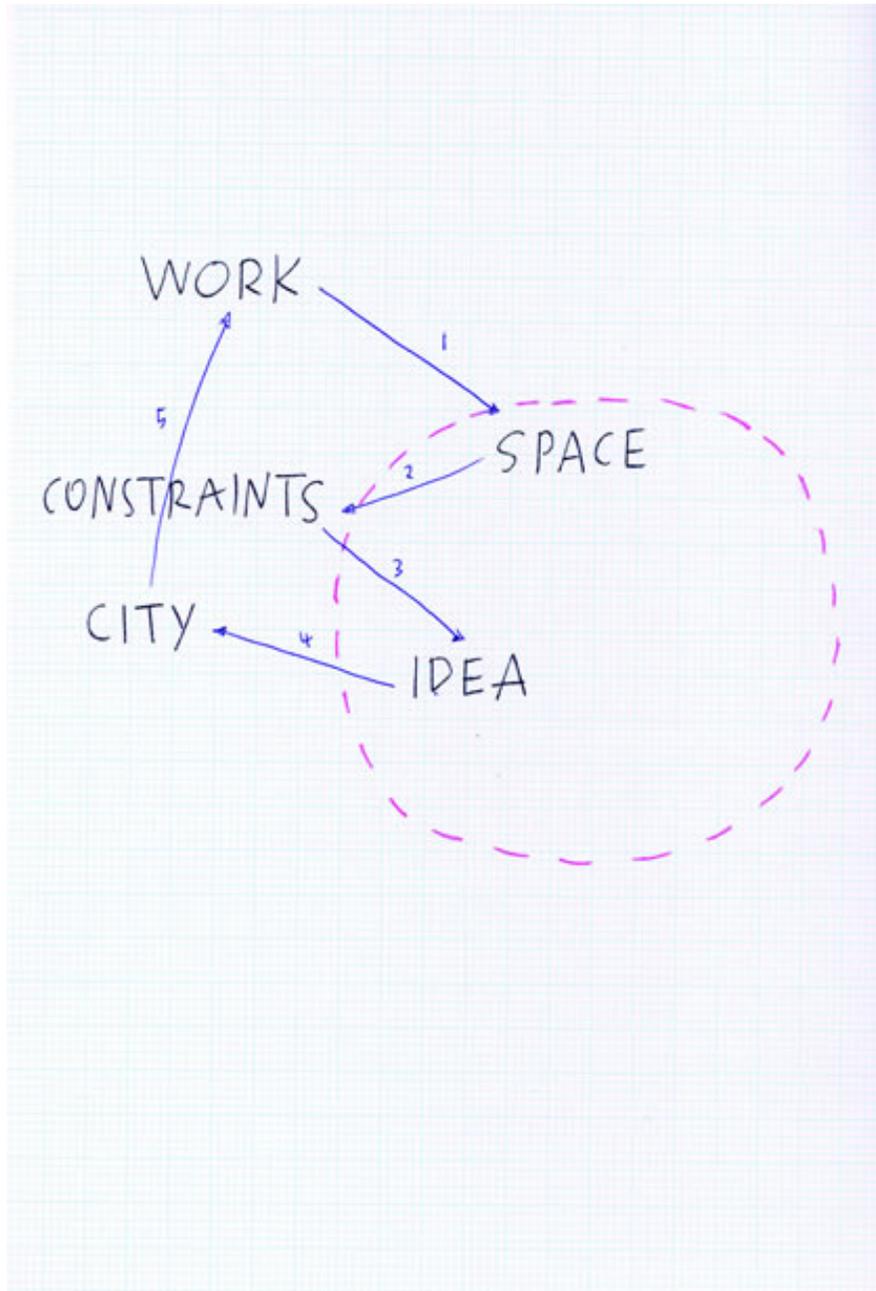
ART ⇌ ARCHITECTURE

**Esther Anatolitis**



## The work creates a space.

Work makes its own dimensions. The body finds the most comfortable way of rearticulating its movements and repeating its techniques, edging outwards and converging inwards, marking out a perimeter within which all tools are at easy reach, and all the while remaining focused on the work. The work creates a space using the focus of the body. The space of concentration is easily recognisable. We know it and we respect it. We take a step back, slowly, quietly. It has its own sound. The regularity of breath. The tapping or scraping or etching or rustling or folding. In the beginning there was the work. Original creation, original difference, original change. The work is the locus of creative human movement, the momentary centre of all invention at the first person, ever present and demanding. Office workstations abstract this movement into a standardised workflow, privileging a fixed range of techniques for achieving a fixed range of performance indicators. Theatres abstract this movement across a plane, performing the distance between viewer and stage, framed by fabric to conceal the craft. Galleries abstract this movement into a standardised circulation, offering points of resistance inspired by the placement of the work. The work makes its own dimensions. It evokes proscenium in the form of an arch; it demands whitespace in the form of a successful hang; it perches atop a plinth, it lines pages held by careful hands, it plays your personal soundtrack as you dance to the beat. It moves. The work of art gravitates a field, creates a space for exchange, unfolds a seating bank, anticipates a taped line on the gallery floor, commands a focal point in the city square. The best place for the work is the position where it will articulate the space it needs the most. Stand back and take a good look. Instinctively you stretch out a little further, moving your body back and forth, to and fro, taking another step back to take in the work from a broader perspective. Place the work where it will articulate the space it needs, and it will continue to work through each idea.

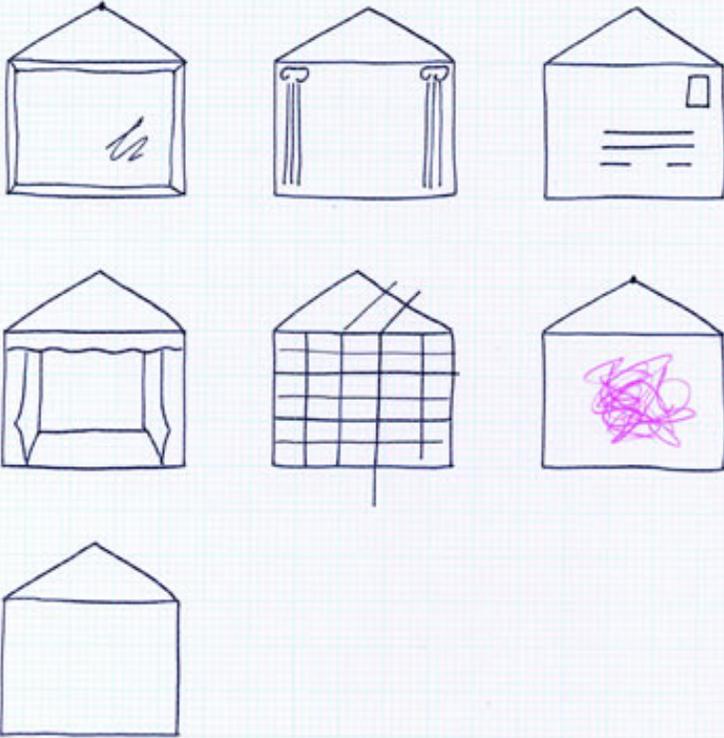


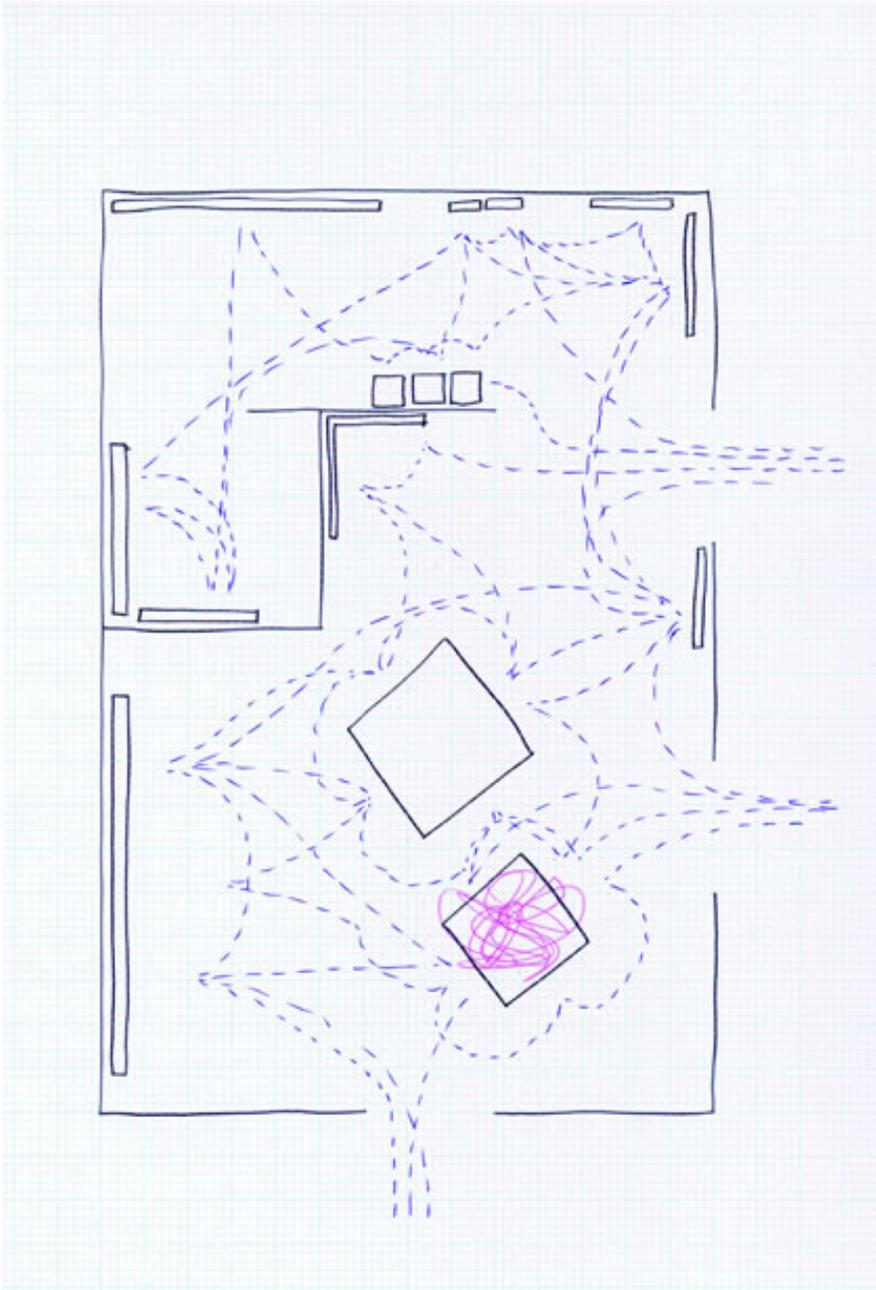
### The idea creates a city.

The idea clamours for attention. It is curiosity, question, experiment. It crosses the boundaries of discipline and exists in multiple modes. Emanating as discussion and critique, it marks its territory confidently, provocatively – and it never does so alone. The idea is coextensive with the space it creates. An open space, a space constantly seeking resolution, a space defined by the impossibility of ever achieving this. In speaking, in discussing and debating, we create public space. The resonances, the tensions, the responses we evoke present themselves always already couched in the culture that generated them. Newly-focused communities gather, fostered by newly-common interests. Spaces upon spaces. Ways of interconnecting them emerge and complexify: systems of distribution with their own spatial and cultural properties. The city. The idea hijacks whatever mode will hurtle it through the city at speed. Spaces are designed to facilitate its flow. Meeting places, transport routes, addressed post, newspaper distribution, schoolyard games, electricity grids, gossip, highway billboards, songs, workplaces, marketplaces, neighbourhood streets, networked homes. The city is an obstacle course for thought. Democracy, capitalism, monument, festival, laneway. I went to the city because I wanted to live imaginatively, to confront the essential ideas of life and never to discover that I had not lived. Two idealists crossed the seas from stratified colonial land to smooth space; starting from its lower corner, they charted a grid, spreading outwards like a fan. You and I will draw two different maps of the same space. Begin now, and end when you are complete. Find your way through the city and you will have drawn your own productive constraints.

### The constraints create an idea.

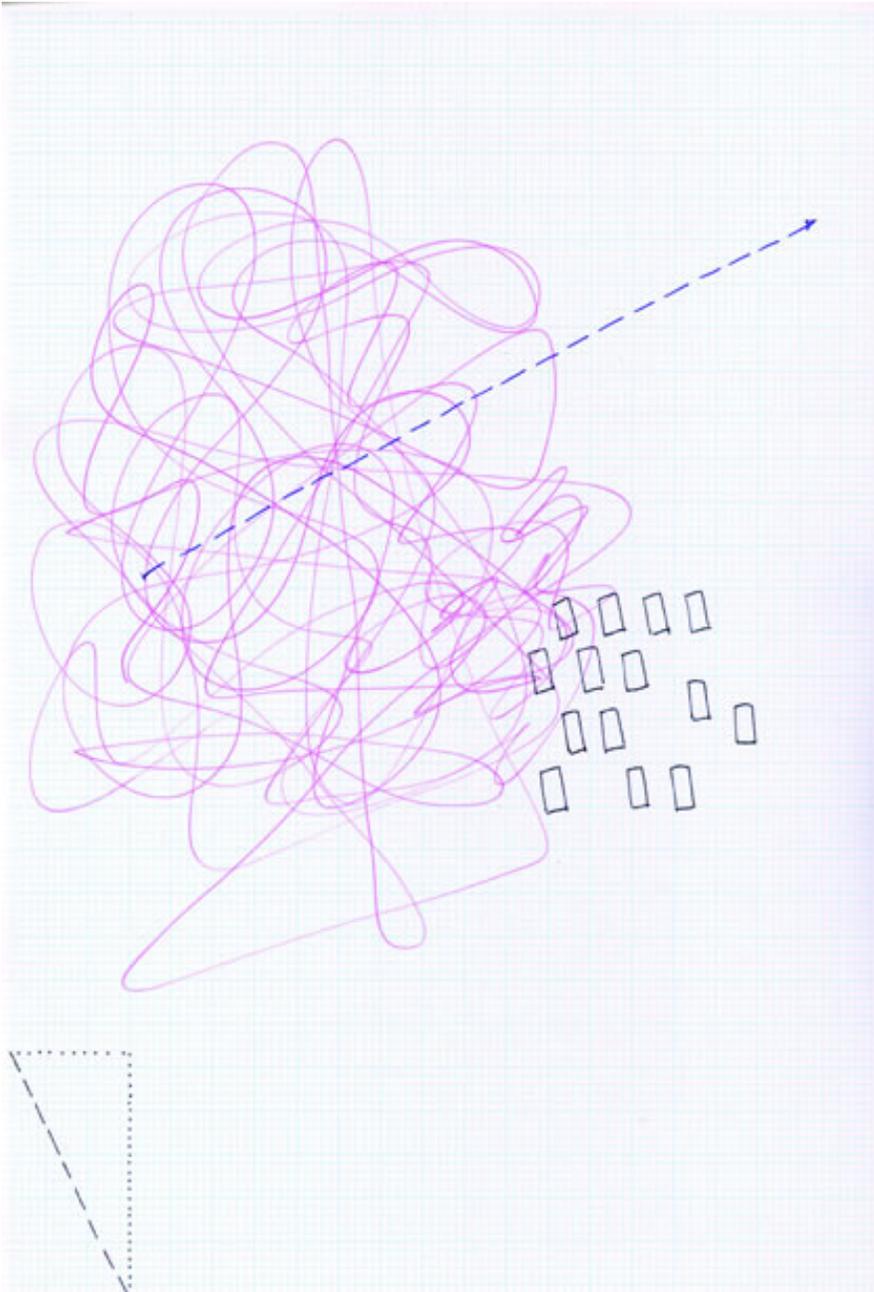
Constraints are the foundation for experimentation. The blank canvas is chaos, speed, forgetfulness. Structure sets you free to create new forms, new limits, new audacity within a framework that's open to interpretation and re-appropriation. There are ideas that will emerge only around the table, on the stage, for the gallery. Ideas for hanging on walls, ideas for acid-free tissue in climate-controlled environments, ideas for realising as a public work within a sympathetic municipality on a limited budget. Delimited vision; structured resolution; interpretation into a complexifying practice. The work, realised into the space it has just created. Architecture makes complex interventions of our public spaces, communicating with us in a language that guides us from public through collective and into private space, inviting us into the structures whose programs it fosters. Brick says: I like an arch. There among our everyday trajectories, architecture must be navigated and cannot be ignored, while too often art plays to small houses – conditional environments entered by invitation, a ticket, a scheduled time. These are constraints that must be sought out; we can only plan unintended consequences in the public space, relying on public institutions to inspire us to make creative choices. Interpretation is the process by which architecture becomes art. We make and remake the culture and the means by which we create our own space.





### The space creates constraints.

The space you currently inhabit is one of many. It happens that here and now you have chosen this place, making it a space for reading. Perhaps the chairs are comfortable; perhaps the sound is ambient; perhaps they serve a decent drink. Imagine it otherwise. What is this place? What is it for? Interpret a program. Eat, mourn, queue, retreat, contort. Are there walls? Do they serve as barriers or presentation space? Turn your body so that you are oriented in another direction. Consider those who have come before and notice what they may have left for you. Deliberate. Draw on a hunch and fold a corner of the page. Fold it some more. Fold it again. Notice what happens to the form as its newly acquired weight shifts balance as it lifts from the page. Choose one shape from what you have created. Distribute it across the next page: draw, connect, extend, extrude, reflect. Connect this with where you began. Be honest. Try to read the words under the markings and folds. See them instead for their typographic form; try to divest them from their structure for just one moment, for just one line, one curve, one interval. Arrange them into a new language: one for articulating process, one for programming materiality, one for sustaining creativity. Design is the process by which art becomes architecture. Setting the most productive constraints for making the most inspiring workspace, the public space, the city.



## The city creates a work.

The city is a complex set of relations actualised by you. Visible cities, invisible cities. Virilio's city, Plato's city, Eliot's unreal city. A plenum, a waste land, a cultural moment. I came to this city because I wanted to live deliberately, to seek out and then to make what I will have lived. Movement and monument, instability and institution, the centre and its displacement. A critical mass of distribution systems compounding into complex cultural objects. Map, system, interface in ongoing transformation, in accidental discovery. The city creates a work using the focus of the body. Practice is embedded in the city's cultural development as a rigour that expresses itself spatially; the city catalogues the language of its spaces. This is how space begins, with words only, signs traced on the blank page. Art-architecture is coextensive with the city that frames and fosters its work.

[Esther Anatolitis](#)

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# **SITE AND SOUND**

**Lauren Brown**

**site writing: site and sound.**  
**lauren brown**

i'm writing this piece at heathrow terminal 5, three hours before my flight from london to perth is due to leave. i'm really early and the wing is eerily empty. its emptiness is exacerbated by the depressingly mechanical and impersonal nature of its soundtrack at this time:

A jumbo outside the window is idling its engines - a highpitched drone that goes nowhere and says nothing that I can understand;

The music that plays from Caffé Nero is a soul funk version of the White Stripes' Seven Nation Army. Perhaps in a different setting, it would be a lovely version of a great song that has already been killed by overuse in english football, but in this setting, it is cold and soulless muzak;

From large screens and bouncing off all the cold, hard surfaces of Gate 48 devoid of people, BBC1 news echoes the latest updates on David Cameron's support of gayay ri-rights inin th-the youyou-kayay...ww-with-th th-this institution-ution an-and it-its man-man-date-ates.

It's an odd place to be whilst thinking about sound and site, especially as it's not really the kind of place I would ordinarily enjoy listening to, but it prompted a lot of thoughts about the nature of site and sound.

The action of really listening to the sound of a place enables you to engage with the myriad of information that sound brings to a site:

The scientific or **acoustic** properties of dimension, volume, capacity and perhaps their philosophical counterparts;

It allows you to come to understand its **rhythm** - cycles, habits, patterns, tone, flow - all of which indicate its form and function;

You can glean a site's **character**, informed by the pitch, its harmony, its quality - particular from elemental, natural and human forms - wind, laughter, chatter, birdsong. This can nudge you into the realm of ethnography and anthropology, understanding a site by its inhabitants.

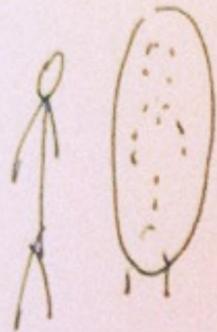
These are the sounds we most usually associate with site: what I call ambience. It's usually what ends up being transcribed when writing down all the sounds of the sites - they are objects, identities that become attached to the site, if only for a brief second.

And then there's the sound of the something else. Whether that is the sound of you in the place, Shroedinger, or another inexplicable variable, there is always the sound of the feeling of the place. A connection which I have never managed to successfully transcribe.

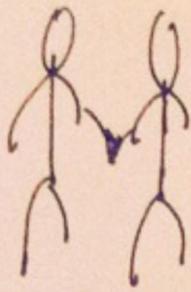
And the paradox being that, in the action of transcribing the sound of a place - of establishing that connection - is a slight disconnection between site and writing, where the external view of listening is of writing, and the internal view of listening is of the site.

# ORGANISM + ENVIRONMENT

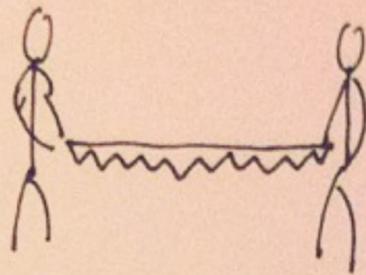
**Hélène Frichot**



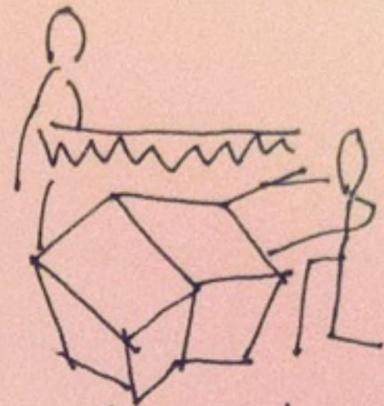
body relation  
to self



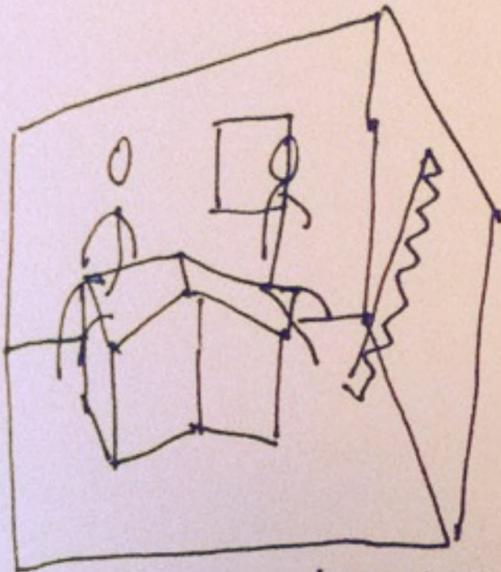
body relation  
to another  
body



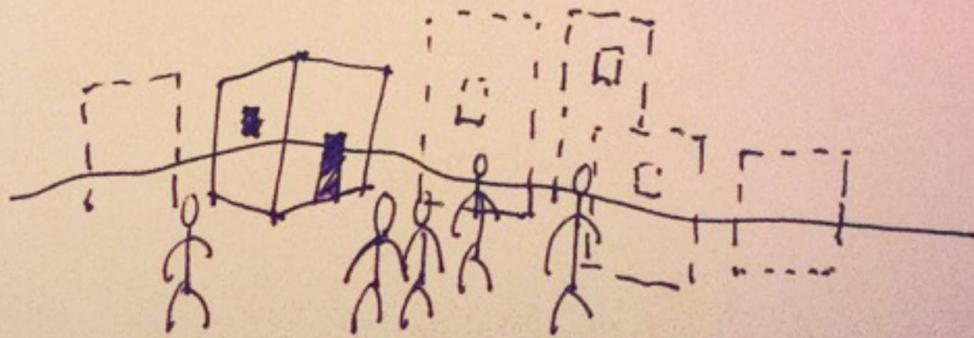
body relation  
to tool



body-tool-  
object



body-tool-object-  
room(space)



body-tool-object-room-landscape  
(space) (environment)

between each relation a threshold of discovery manifests. ...

body - we assume the body is an embodied mind creating the conjunctive capacity of thinking-doing.

bodies - of course the body as embodied mind is never alone but always occupies, as a minimum, a dyadic relation - with another.

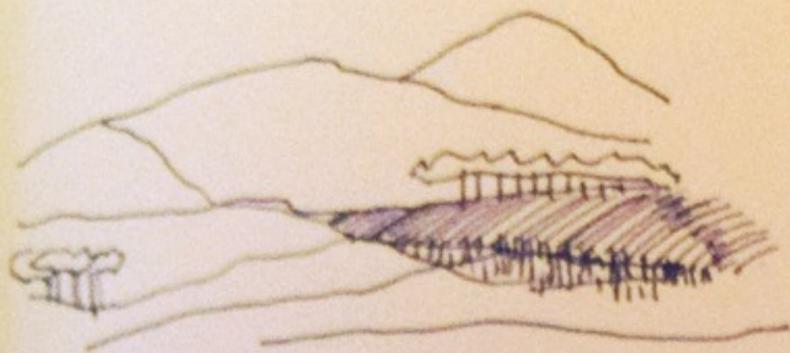
bodies + technologies - together embodied minds find there is much work to be done to find ways of living in their environments. (natural + constructed)

so bodies, between them, invent tools so they can collaborate on the shaping of <sup>environment</sup> worlds.

bodies - tools - objects (technology): Tools help to create objects which are in turn tools for doing things. A saw helps to construct a stool, a stool helps us sit down.

bodies - tools - objects - rooms (spaces): Probably, so that bodies could get together in the first place, some sort of shelter was necessary, either constructed or found. With tools and objects (furniture, other technologies) the rooms + spaces of inhabitation are further developed.

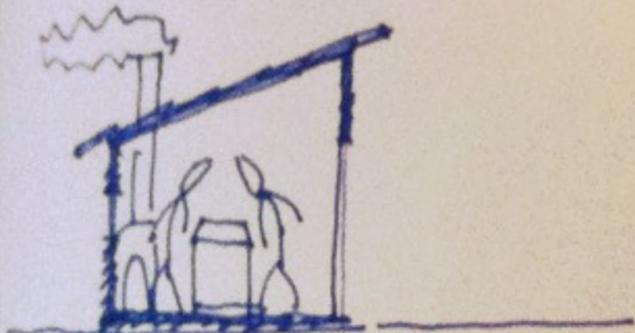
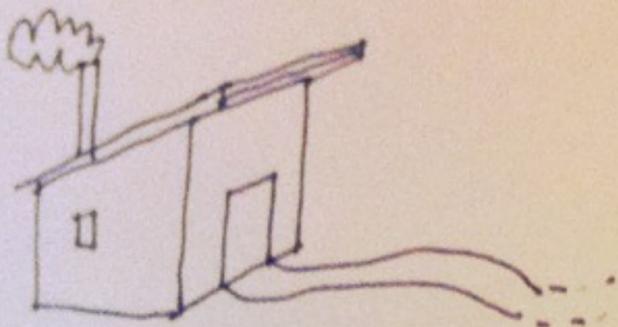
bodies - tools - objects - rooms (spaces) - environment: All these activities take place in some environment-world, either natural or already constructed. Bodies and environments are mutually constituted, they effect each other. The environment-world accounts for a great diversity of forces and things: natural, climatic, topographical, moist or dry, also social, political, cultural and historical. The natural and artifactual components and processes of environment-worlds are inextricably intertwined.



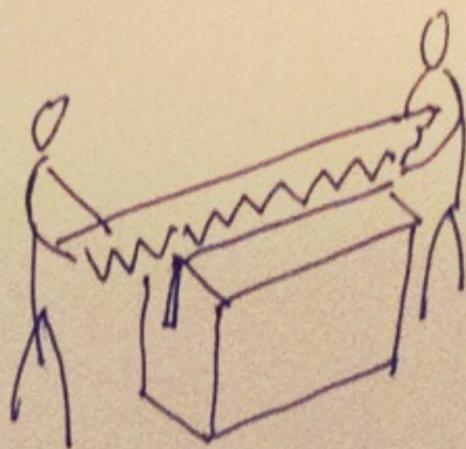
landscape - (environment - world)  
context ...



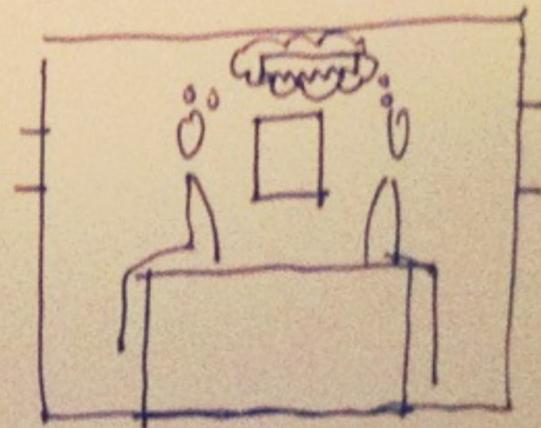
(environment - world) - constructed



work: let's make something  
together in response to  
the already given  
environment - world of  
ours ...

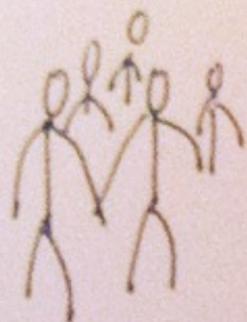


bodies - tools - objects  
together we can  
develop our tools and  
make our environment -  
world more habitable



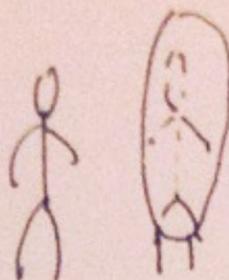
bodies - tools  
together we  
can conceive of  
a tool. After all,  
we are  
thinking - doing  
embodied beings ...

... and if we are to proceed in the reverse direction, from the  
environment (world) to the singular body, witness to its capacity to  
think - do ...



### bodies

Even the dyadic relation as a minimum for the potential of communication, and of some project to undertake suggests a multitude of other bodies, those who have come before, and those who will follow after.



### a body

Every body, every embodied mind suggests a singular moment, an immediately transforming potential of the relation of embodied mind to self. Here I am, but in beginning to think and do I am already two, and then many.

We can begin from either end of an uneven, discontinuous spectrum either from the relation of the embodied-mind to its singular self as it comes to recognize itself as distinct and as capable of thinking and doing... or, we could commence from the environment-world, which is an entanglement of natural and artefactual. Importantly, crucially centrally this organism that is embodied-mind, located, situated, can only exist because it is relation to an environment-world. The minimum unit of survival, assuming it is appropriate to imagine such an abstract entity, is organism (embodied-mind) + environment-world. It is ill-advised to think one without the other, and where we act without considering this inextricable relation we risk destroying both.

**A MANUAL**

**Jana Perkovic**

## A MANUAL

1. On day one, sit down with a busker, or a homeless person, or a shoeshine. Stay with them while they work. Even ten minutes is enough.
2. On day two, bring a folding chair, and find a nice spot to occupy in public. In front of your house, on the street, in a park, on the footpath. Relax.
3. On day three, sit on the ground in public space. As often as possible, for as long as comfortable. Try as many different places as you wish: footpath, bookshop, hallway, square.
4. On day four, find a situation in which you will be touched by strangers, strangers who are not touching you for work. Dancing classes are good, as is immersive theatre and relational performance.
5. On day five, find a quiet place outdoors, and sing a song. It doesn't have to be loud.
6. On day six, write a message in a public toilet.
7. Day seven is for resting.

## THEORY

If we started from philosophy, we would have to start with the distinction between space and place. Space is vast, uniform and meaningless. Places is a piece of space that is delimited not so much by physical boundaries, but by meaning. '37.7840° S, 144.9690° E' is a place, but not as much as 'my veranda.' The former is closely related to space, and to the Greek topos; the latter is almost of a different category altogether, not a part of any spatial continuum, and related to the Greek khôra: a receptacle for being. A similar concept exists in Japanese philosophy, called ma (間): ma is emptiness as a positive quality, the ability to hold and contain. Both concepts have maternal overtones, and both could be explained as negative space – except, which space is not negative? Just like a bowl isn't a bowl without the empty centre, so a place only becomes one if it contains being. Hence choreography, the tracing of khôra. Being is made possible by the site, and the site becomes a place by being inscribed with a meaningful action.

## BUT IN PRACTICE

It is almost taboo to suggest that our physical life changes how we think; but still. Things we do often appear to us quite naturally to be proper, good, honourable, and safe. Things we do rarely or never appear dangerous, disreputable and suspicious. Driving in a car and eating in a restaurant usually feels safe (even though these are activities fraught with risk); sitting on the street or picking our own food usually doesn't. A morality quickly attaches itself to our body. Certain religions (Islam, Catholicism) understand this very well, by stressing the physical aspects of prayer, penitence, contemplation. Protestant Christianity, however, is horrified of these ideas. As a result, we live curiously disembodied lives.

## RIJEKA, 1989

Being a child is a long line of conquering fears; specifically, of learning not to run in fright. The dark hallway between the bathroom and bedroom. The walk of shame to the rubbish bins. And then the ultimate test, passing by the heckling boys on the corner. Each fear conquered exactly the same way: by learning to walk slowly, and not give in to fear. My world expands.

## VENICE, 2002

I am a teenager working as a make-up artist during the carnival. We have to rise early, very early, to occupy a commercially promising spot on St Mark's Square. We set up folding chairs among thousands of people. This is our fortress. The chair becomes an unlikely home. By the end of the week, as we move through this carless city with our tools of trade, we will have become

accustomed to unfolding those chairs whenever and wherever: in bus queues, toilet queues, museum queues, fast food queues, on squares, outside bars, at beautiful lookouts, on boats. They are so useful. My friend suggests that one should simply always carry a fold-out chair.

#### MELBOURNE, 2009

My colleague, an architect, sends students to research the area they will re-design. Each one has to collect data: how many doors on the block, how many windows, pedestrians, street lights, how much traffic, how many shops, trees, children playing. It's not about the data, he says. By having to look carefully at one thing, each student will walk the block multiple times, for hours. By the end of the day, they will know much more than how many cars have passed: they will know how the place feels, how the place lives.

#### RIJEKA, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

A good friend returns home once a year, having won an improbable scholarship to finish high school in India. The first thing we have to do? Climb the 400-something stairs to the monastery. This is a historical walk of expiation and/or gratitude for sailors, straight up the hill from downtown to the altar of Our Lady of the Seas. But he wants to do it to feel the city rattling through his vertebrae, its hills and smooth stones and exploding views and meowing stray cats and old women shaking carpets from the windows straight on us. It takes an hour, and then he forces us to run back – this takes five minutes. I originally do it to humour him, because I have never left home, and I don't know what it's like to need to hug a city. And then, once we have all left, it becomes a ritual of return. All of us, a generation of kids in economic exile, running up and down the hills once a year, twice a year, remembering where we come from.

#### LONDON, 2010

In 2010, my sister is a gawky, self-conscious teenager, and I take her to the Festival of One-on-One Theatre at Battersea Arts Centre, more as a hostage than an informed participant. We arrive clueless as to what to do: it so happens that a spot in a show is free right then and there, would one of us like to do an extra one-on-one show? I push her through, and I see her getting blindfolded by a stranger and pulled into a room. She disappears. I am terrified. She is returned to me fifteen minutes later, and says she had an entire sensuous narrative experience: she was in a bar!, then on a beach!, then dancing in a conga line!, then got into a fight!, then had a date! She is more speechless than obviously damaged, and I am relieved.

We go into rooms: strange rooms, scary rooms, dark rooms and brightly lit rooms. We dance with strangers, we sing with strangers, we are electrocuted, given gifts, touched, kissed, judged, challenged. A funny sense of relaxation comes over you after a few hours of completely unpredictable encounters. Your body relaxes; your mind relaxes. We make friends while waiting in lines. Rooms are recommended. People say, how did you go? People say, that was amazing. People say, perplexed, I was given a bath. People say, pensive, I was read a bedtime story.

Three years later, on her eighteenth birthday, my sister tells me that she learned not to be scared of life at Battersea Arts Centre. 'Being a teenager is very hard, you know,' she says, because she likes to remind me I'm not that young anymore. 'But every time I had to do something scary, I thought, well, I survived one-on-one performance. In fact, it was fun. So I can do this, too.'

#### **Jana Perkovic**

Architecture+Philosophy 2013 Experiments in site-writing