

UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA  
FACULDADE DE BELAS-ARTES



## **CONDITIONAL SCULPTURE**

**Balancing the real and the imagined through fictive objects in  
contemporary art practice**

Rajaa Khalife Paixão

Orientador: Prof. Doutor José Manuel da Silva Teixeira

Tese especialmente elaborada para a obtenção do grau de Doutor em Belas-  
Artes, na especialidade de Escultura

2025

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## DECLARAÇÃO DE AUTORIA

Eu Rajaa Khalife Paixão, declaro que a tese de doutoramento intitulada “CONDITIONAL SCULPTURE: Balancing the real and the imagined through fictive objects in contemporary art practice”, é o resultado da minha investigação pessoal e independente. O conteúdo é original e todas as fontes consultadas estão devidamente mencionadas na bibliografia ou outras listagens de fontes documentais, tal como todas as citações diretas ou indiretas têm devida indicação ao longo do trabalho segundo as normas académicas.

O Candidato

Lisboa, 30 de junho de 2025

## ABSTRACT

This practice-based research in Fine Arts—Sculpture investigates contemporary sculpture as a fictive object through subjectivity and its understanding in Metamodernism, using real and imagined narratives as a catalyst. It consists of created artworks and an exegesis. Questions are asked in two phases, respectively based on practice and theory with the primary objective to understand sculpture as a fictive object and its roles.

A reflective practice methodology is adopted with free methods and conceptual activities scrutinising sculptural creation under conditional spatiotemporal circumstances. Other methodologies borrowed from the Creative Arts and Humanities are action research, narrative inquiry, autoethnography, and qualitative research. Post-qualitative research is favoured for validating subjective perceptions and emotional decisions. Applied paradigms encompass *Postmodernism*, *Constructivism*, and *Constructionism*.

Literary devices explain theories, listing juxtaposition, analogy, parallelism, metaphors, allusion, imagery, symbolism, allegory, hypothesis and paradox. The exploration is *rhizomatic* beyond prescribed, linear and systematic practices.

*Conditional Sculpture* is coined noting that *conditional* has been associated with art and painting but not sculpture. *Autobiography*, *Autotopography*, *creating-in-the-feminine*, *creating-in-the-maternal*, and *creating-in-the-conditional* are determined as key terms.

Four practical case studies are analysed individually and collectively. The central concepts of *The Narrative and the Fictive*, *Imagination and Perception*, and *Objects* are elaborated in the theoretical discourse to support argumentation. Discovered rhizomes about Sculpture end with green asterisks. A comprehensive contextual compilation of artists and ultra-contemporary practitioners is built.

Two aspects of sculpture are distinguished: *Restrictive Conditional Sculpture* and *Liberating Conditional Sculpture*.

The inquiry construes conditional fictive sculpture as a unique artificial bodily extension of the mind, a conductible matter transporting overwhelm outgrowing the limited capacity of the physical body.

A sub-category dedicated to *Conditional Sculpture* is proposed, separate from the aesthetic-focused Fine Arts speciality of Sculpture. Investing in it and integrating it within branches of science could significantly contribute to consciousness expansion and human evolution.

Keywords:

Conditional Sculpture; Contemporary Art Practice; Real and Imagined; Narratives; Fictive Objects

## RESUMO

Esta investigação prática em Artes Plásticas na área da Escultura investiga a escultura contemporânea como um objeto fictício através da subjetividade e da sua compreensão na era do Metamodernismo, utilizando como catalisadores narrativas reais e imaginadas. O *Metamodernismo* é considerado um novo momento da filosofia após o *Pós-Modernismo* e o *Modernismo*. O termo *ultra-contemporâneo* que se refere aos artistas ‘extremamente contemporâneos’ com menos de quarenta e cinco anos está associado ao metamodernismo, ao contrário do termo *contemporâneo*. O título da tese lê a *prática da arte contemporânea* devido aos dados holísticos que informam a tese e o contributo dos artistas contemporâneos para a cena.

As questões surgem em duas fases, uma relacionada com o processo criativo de projetos individuais, e a segunda focada numa análise coletiva de todos os artefactos criados. Estas giram em torno da passagem das narrativas pessoais para os objetos públicos, da natureza e do papel das narrativas na construção de uma escultura e da coexistência do real e do ficcional na vida de uma escultura. Outras questões abordam a importância e o simbolismo dos objetos em função das condições de vida, a influência do género na interpretação dos temas, a implementação da sustentabilidade, o papel da escultura a nível pessoal e social e, por último, o interesse da investigação no âmbito do quadro contemporâneo.

O termo *Escultura Condicional* é cunhado. *Condicional* estava anteriormente associado apenas à arte e à pintura. Define-se como ‘(uma forma de verbo) que expressa a ideia de que uma coisa depende de outra’. Algumas das definições de *Condição* são ‘um fator restritivo ou modificador’, ‘um estado de ser’, ‘estatuto social’, ‘um estado de aptidão física ou de prontidão para o uso’, ‘temperamento mental’ e ‘o estado particular que algo ou alguém está dentro’.

Afirmou-se que a arte poderia ter origem na experiência pessoal e ainda abordar ideias artísticas, sociais e políticas universais. A vida como escultura social que pode ser moldada por todos sublinha o potencial da arte para transformar os indivíduos e a sociedade.

Os termos-chave do estado da arte são determinados. A *autobiografia* é empregue como fonte da narrativa traduzida em esculturas. A *autotopografia* é definida como uma forma espacial que representa relações importantes, acontecimentos passados e laços emocionais, enquanto a autobiografia é uma forma escrita que narra acontecimentos, identificações ou fantasias. O termo *autotopografia* é então mais adequado do que *autobiografia*.

A *criação-de-vida* pode compreender muitos tipos de obras de arte, ficcionais e não ficcionais. Culmina numa combinação de feminismo e narrativa conhecida como *escrita-no-feminino*, gradualmente adaptada aqui para *criar-no-feminino*, *criar-no-maternal* e *criar-no-condicional*.

Os objetivos da investigação são rastrear a metamorfose de histórias reais sob circunstâncias espaço-temporais e condições sociais para compreender a escultura como um objeto fictício. A investigação visa reforçar o contributo das mulheres e mães artistas e o seu impacto na sociedade, e nos seus dilemas éticos, e normalizar as mulheres e mães multiculturais que procuram a arte como carreira principal e não como hobby extracurricular. Esclarece como a fenomenologia feminista explora as consequências sócio-políticas da incorporação de género e a sua compreensão subjetiva do mundo dentro da cena artística.

A um nível secundário, a investigação oferece intuições sobre a intersecção dos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável definidos pelas Nações Unidas. Uma integração dos artistas e do seu trabalho é apresentada sob a forma de um monólogo em torno de uma percepção pessoal de um diálogo entre diferentes obras de arte. A pesquisa contribui para a área da escultura, os seus parâmetros estruturais e a sua compreensão no campo alargado. Revela influências subliminares e desmistifica estereótipos universais predefinidos.

A investigação levanta preocupações sobre o desaparecimento lento do objeto físico num mundo não físico. Além disso, aponta como os artistas se ajustam, adaptam e continuam

a criar em tempos desafiantes. Acredita-se que o artista tem o poder de parar o tempo e transformar a sua visão numa imagem. Assim sendo, pretende-se encontrar formas de tornar a escultura acessível, em vez de um luxo, e facilitar condições externas para que a mente artística concretize objetos imaginados.

A prática só é priorizada pela ordem de desenvolvimento, seguida da documentação escrita e do estudo teórico. A investigação adota uma metodologia de prática reflexiva e vai buscar as das Artes Criativas e Humanas, como a investigação-ação, a investigação narrativa, a autoetnografia e a investigação qualitativa. Baseia-se nos paradigmas do *Pós-modernismo*, do *Construtivismo* e do *Construcionismo*. As teorias são explicadas por meio de recursos literários como a justaposição, a analogia, o paralelismo, as metáforas, as alusões, as imagens, o simbolismo, a alegoria, a hipótese e o paradoxo. A exploração é *rizomática* transcendendo a ideia de um método que impõe aos alunos práticas e ordem de pensamento prescritas, lineares, sistemáticas. Isto evita limitar a exploração mapeando o processo artístico para responder a questões ou problemas pré-formulados exigidos por um discurso tradicional de investigação. Os métodos seguem a regra de não haver regras, conduzindo a investigação sem restrições, pois já é restrita por natureza.

A investigação baseada na prática na história do discurso académico facilitou métodos mais amplos de observação, análise ou análise pós-textual. Teóricas, conceptuais, dialéticas e contextuais caracterizam os tipos de atividades dos artistas-investigadores. Os alunos de Belas Artes seguem esta ordem de padrões cíclicos de atividades: *Geração*, *Seleção*, *Síntese*, *Articulação*, *Apresentação* e *Discussão Crítica*. O processo aplicado nesta investigação começa com uma parte considerável em falta neste esboço. Descrita como *Elaboração* de um pensamento/gatilho/inspiração via uma narrativa, é seguida de *Síntese* antes das restantes atividades. A metodologia utilizada não se enquadra na ‘arte da investigação’ de ler o processo de fabrico longitudinalmente, em vez de lateralmente e seguindo o fluxo e os fluxos dos materiais. Corresponde a ‘pensar através do fazer’ que começa com uma ideia em mente, definida por um ponto de partida e um ponto final. A última teoria do fazer é rotulada como ‘cultura material’, ou *bilomorfismo*, que significa matéria e forma.

A investigação começa a partir de um pensamento persistente, ou de um gatilho inspirador que pode ser uma perceção muito vaga. As intuições, a inspiração e a reflexão são usadas nos primeiros estágios incertos para atingir um ‘conhecimento-em-ação’. A ‘reflexão-na-ação’ é central na arte, principalmente em situações de incerteza e no registo de uma história heterogénea.

Concordando que a matéria e o significado estão inseparavelmente fundidos como um elemento, a pesquisa adota a investigação pós-qualitativa para validar pontos de vista subjetivos em torno de perceções e decisões decorrentes de emoções. Está demonstrado que o impreciso pode ser dominado e tornar-se um objeto coerente e rigoroso de ciência e conhecimento.

A etnografia, com a sua descrição objetiva, distingue-se da antropologia que visa a transformação. O termo *antropografia* une ambos os atos, como no exemplo do ato gráfico de uma linha traçada que é ao mesmo tempo, descritivo e transformador.

Considerando as pessoas como contadoras de histórias por natureza, os aspetos da identidade do escritor e da forma como este atua na escrita podem ter um aspeto do *eu autobiográfico*, um *eu discursivo* ou um *eu-como-autor*. O aspeto *Possibilidades de individualidade* foi introduzido posteriormente.

Os conceitos centrais de *A Narrativa e o Fictivo*, *Imaginação e Perceção* e *Objetos* foram desenvolvidos teoricamente.

Os estudos de caso mostram como o curso da prática artística é acidentado e irregular, nunca linear. O fictício e o real são, no final do dia, irreconhecíveis e intrinsecamente entrelaçados ao ponto de serem intercambiáveis. Quando a maioria das ficções são produtos subjetivos, é claro que também existem ficções coletivas que estão incorporadas há tanto tempo e que agora fazem parte da nossa convivência real.

Os textos reflexivos escritos apresentam diferenças drásticas na percepção da perspectiva feminina e da maternidade, caracterizada por uma noção de tempo e uma visão completamente diferente do mundo. As declarações individuais selecionadas são extraídas como rizomas assinalados no final por um asterisco verde. Estes definem a escultura e o seu papel no contexto da investigação.

Distinguem-se dois aspetos condicionais principais da escultura: *Escultura Condicional Restritiva* e *Escultura Condicional Libertadora*.

Quando a mente é ilimitada, o corpo parece ridiculamente limitativo, microscópico e demasiado condicional, como uma prisão. Para espalhar a nossa fisicalidade para acomodar mais a nossa mente, precisamos de cultivar matéria condutível para transportar parte da sobrecarga na nossa mente. A escultura é esse assunto.

A pesquisa interpreta a escultura fictícia como uma matéria condutora que o artista desenvolve para transportar um excesso de sobrecarga na nossa mente expandida, que o corpo físico condicional e restrito não consegue acomodar. A investigação defende que a escultura condicional é uma extensão corporal artificial única da nossa mente. Por conseguinte, a colaboração de artistas que trabalham com objetos fictícios e de cientistas em ramos multidisciplinares, incluindo a física, a astrofísica e as neurociências, desencadearia métodos éticos sem precedentes e descobertas originais inovadoras.

Com base no estudo, propõe-se a formação de uma subcategoria na escultura contemporânea dedicada à *Escultura Condicional*, separada da especialidade de Escultura em Belas Artes com um enfoque estético. Investir nele, salvaguardar as suas necessidades e garantir o seu crescimento contribuiria significativamente para a expansão da consciência e a evolução humana.

Palavras-Chave:

Escultura Condicional; Prática Artística Contemporânea; Real e Imaginado; Narrativas; Objetos Fictícios

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# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
<b>I REFLECTIVE PRACTICE METHODOLOGY AND PROCESSES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>II DEVELOPMENT: PRACTICAL PROJECTS AS CASE STUDIES.....</b>	<b>36</b>
Project 1: <i>The Water Tank</i> .....	42
Project 2: <i>Nurturing Sculpture-Time</i> .....	60
Project 3: <i>Too Tired to Sleep</i> .....	68
Project 4: <i>Rhizomatic Writing in Sculptural Terms</i> .....	89
<b>III COLLECTIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>93</b>
Central Concept 1: <b>The Narrative and the Fictive</b> .....	108
Central Concept 2: <b>Imagination and Perception</b> .....	114
Central Concept 3: <b>Objects</b> .....	121
<b>CONCLUSION AND RESULTS .....</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....</b>	<b>163</b>

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>182</b>
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<b>APPENDIX A: ILLUSTRATIONS.....</b>	<b>201</b>
---------------------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX B: REFLECTIVE TEXTS .....</b>	<b>346</b>
---	------------

i. Autoethnography: <i>Notes on the water tank</i> .....	347
ii. Publication: <i>Fatalism as a product of Motherhood in the context of Sculpture</i> .....	354
iii. Autoethnography: <i>Notes on fatigue</i> .....	369
iv. Autoethnography: <i>I would like to be baptised</i> .....	371
v. Autoethnography: <i>No Masks</i> .....	372
vi. Poem: Ithaka by C. P. Cavafy.....	373

<b>APPENDIX C: AUTHOR'S RHIZOMES .....</b>	<b>374</b>
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**ANNEX: VISUAL DOCUMENTATION**

# INTRODUCTION

*That is, a model represents any kind of event, fictional or real. In fact, one of the reasons to introduce the notion of model in the first place was that such models are constructed by people whether or not they believe or know that the events being talked about are true or false. (van Dijk, 1998, p. 250)*

## **Presentation and Context**

This document constitutes the culmination of practice-based research in Fine Arts with a specialisation in the area of Sculpture. Throughout the research, I investigate contemporary sculpture as a subjective fictive object and its understanding in the Metamodernist era. The inquiry is based on real and imagined narratives used as catalysts. The research is composed of two primary components:

- a. The creation of artefacts revolving around my studio work.
- b. A theoretical textualisation of the process, including reflective texts and publications represented by this dissertation.

The probe scrutinises the course of sculpture-making when created under specific spatiotemporal circumstances. Creators tend to sensibilise or even obsess with certain aspects of existence, very particular to a personal journey, background, and experience, all triggered by catalytic events manifesting at key stages of one's life. The result in art is an array of divergent reactions to the same trigger, betraying striking differences in perception and processes of making. In this practical exploration, I reflect on the relevance of a personal artistic process and experience in the contemporary sculpture framework, and how subjective perception of reality exposes aspects of the world we live in. Based on these concerns, the research considers questions relating to two phases as follows.

**a. Phase one**—during the creative process of individual projects:

- How does the passage from personal narratives to public/shared objects happen?
- To what extent can the perception of (real and fictive) narratives manipulate the becoming of a sculpture and its constituents, alluding to specific materials, and initiating juxtaposition with found objects?
- How can the real and the fictive coexist and how do they determine the creation of a sculptural work?

**b. Phase two**—collective analysis of the resulting artefacts:

- What is the importance of objects and what symbolisms do they represent to our condition?
- What influence does my status as a woman, a working mother with multicultural influences, hold in the designation and interpretation of themes of interest?
- How can I, as an independent individual artist, use my fieldwork to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals, adopted by all United Nations members in 2015?
- What can sculpture achieve with these roles on both personal and social levels?
- What is the interest of the research within the scope of the contemporary framework (theory and practice)?

The probe adopts an experimental approach in a personal, circumstantial, and cultural context. Several routes have been explored during the first year of the research, each leading to a more specific aspect of the project to look at.

1. The inquiry initially started by studying two practices in parallel: the artistic practice of sculpture; and the social practice of mothering.

(The ‘mothering practice’ term responds to feminist philosopher Sarah Ruddick’s (1935-2011) definition of the philosophical aspect of the mother’s nurturance emanating from the maternal practice of ‘doing mothering’ (Ruddick, 1980), and ‘mothering as a social practice’ elaborated by social anthropologist Lorena Valencia (2014, p. 1236)).

2. It then positioned motherhood as an influence within the sculpture practice to later treat motherhood as a condition to the art practice following intrusions and limitations.
3. And lastly, it focused on the sculpture-making process under biographical conditions, through the lens of the individual self.

Following this long development, only the last route has been expounded here. However, the previous comprehensive reading and research work including psychoanalysis theories – such as Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), Melanie Klein (1882-1960) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) – have been listed in the bibliography section.

The neologism of *Conditional Sculpture* was specifically attributed to this practical exploration. In this precise context, sculpture started being considered conditional after the creation process didn’t run freely without drastic interruptions relating to the early stages of motherhood, the global pandemic and its implications starting in 2019, and other major life events including treatments for a life-threatening illness. Sudden and frequent switches of priorities, all subject to unpredicted events, mark this period. The inquiry acknowledges these major intrusions to the art practice and investigates the course of sculpture-making accordingly. It echoes one of José Ortega y Gasset’s (1883-1955) most famous expressions ‘I am I and my circumstances’. Ortega y Gasset clarified that his philosophic thought does not only mean the doctrine that his work expounds and proposes, but that his work is an executive case of the same doctrine. Ergo, his work is ‘by its essence and its presence, circumstantial’ (Holmes, 2017).

## State-of-the-Art and Key Terms

The probe sits at an intersection of multiple themes which have served as objects of study for a large number of authors and artists; citing autobiography, subjectivity, narratives, fiction, and objects. I elaborate in this part on a cross-section of the most pertinent authors, theorists and artists. Throughout the text, I mention more authors/theorists and significant artists whose work and artistic processes have influenced my thinking and practice in one way or another. I note that the inclusion, or exclusion, of contextual artists is closely related to my unfolding line of reasoning rather than strictly relevance or importance.

The word or adjective ‘conditional’ has been previously associated with art, and painting, and reappropriated here in a separate association with sculpture. The terms ‘conditional art’ or ‘site-conditioned work’ have been formulated and used in another context by American installation artist, abstract painter, and theorist Robert Irwin (1928-2023). Irwin focused on exploring aesthetic perception as the fundamental feature of art. He positioned the grounds of phenomenal art in being and circumstance, considering that the phenomenal ‘exists in the dynamics of our perceiving (experiencing)’ [Fig. 1]. Irwin drew a working principle in which phenomenal art is a conditional art action, where the art act strictly occurs ‘in response to a set of specifics’. In his latest site-conditioned works and installations, he experimented with the effects of lights and their interventions in space and architecture (Irwin, 2012, p. 382).

*Conditional Art, according to Irwin, is not ‘site dominant’, like a Henry Moore statue plonked in a city plaza, nor even ‘site specific’, in the way a sculpture by Richard Serra, for example, might be made with a particular location in mind. Irwin’s Conditional Art is intended to be absolutely responsive to its environment, and its objective is to enhance a viewer’s perception of a space. (Griffin, 2015)*

Ada Rajszy’s (b. 1974) project *whe(a)ther / conditional paintings* stressed the importance of the canvas which absorbs the exterior conditions (Rajszy, 2008). Regarding the weather as a ‘mystical medium’, and nature as a media, the artist observed the evolution of their effect and how the process alters the physical aspect of the stretched canvas placed outdoors [Fig. 2].

*“CONDITIONAL PAINTING“ shows that a canvas can be more than just, well, a canvas. As the word has come to be synonymous with something that is utterly neutral until someone or something adds to it, the simple idea that the canvas itself can be a medium as relevant to a work as the painted surface itself, absorbing the exterior conditions comes as a pleasant surprise. (Rajszys)*

The adjective *Conditional* is defined as ‘(a form of a verb) expressing the idea that one thing depends on another thing’ (“conditional”, n.d.). Some of the definitions of *Condition* are ‘a restricting or modifying factor’, ‘a state of being’, ‘social status’, ‘a state of physical fitness or readiness for use’, ‘temper of mind’ (“condition”, n.d.-a), and ‘the particular state that something or someone is in’ (“condition”, n.d.-b).

The inquiry concerns the nature of the different themes and inspirations that fuel the creative development, emanating from autobiographical stories, both real and fictive. Ana Rosa Hopkins’ (b. 1969) practical research explored back-story and its function in contemporary sculptural art. Hopkins (2016) posited that reading the art work in conjunction with its back-story alters the experience of viewers as it offers a storied entry into the work itself. The viewer is situated at the right distance in terms of emotional connection, while the reading time allowing more complex meanings to emerge is extended. In my case, I look at an elaborated aspect of the back-story by investigating the metamorphosis my real back-stories undergo when they merge with the fictive and the narratives they jointly produce. Through his work and ideas, German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) often blurred the lines between fact and fiction, and art and life. Beuys demonstrated how art could originate from personal experience and still address universal artistic, social, and political ideas. He suggested that one’s perception of reality is crucial in matters of personal creativity, human action, and social or political behaviour. Crucial in being more important than any definition of everyday reality defining the traditional standards of normalcy, and social codes of what is accepted as proper conduct (Wolf, 2020). Furthermore, Beuys’ concept of life as a social sculpture that can be shaped by everyone (“Social sculpture”, n.d.), stresses the potential of art to transform individuals and society (“Joseph Beuys Learning Resource”, n.d.). It also highlights how artists indicate the traumas of a time and initiate a healing process (Tisdall, 1979). Titled *Imaginal Travel: political and ecological positioning as fine art practice*, the PhD research in Fine Art of Gayle Chong Kwan (b. 1973) explores the neologism ‘Imaginal

Travel' and how it might constitute a methodology in fine art practice. Kwan (2023) pairs Imaginal Travel with the notion of the imaginal as fluidity, a blurring of boundaries, and flux to demonstrate how each can inform and provide unique perspectives on the other. Previous authors have directly or indirectly highlighted the fictive factor in sculpture. Katrina Palmer (b. 1967) wrote her doctoral thesis in the form of a story with imagined sculptures, where sculpture is relocated in narrative writing. Palmer's (2011) thesis invents and describes its own form, and produces its own spaces to turn the writing itself into an artwork. For Palmer, the art school and the studio became a fictional site of production. This site, its institutional furniture, bureaucratic demands and idealised conceptual ideology feature in the story of the work. Ken Wilder's (2009) thesis argues that the pivotal role of visual imagination is to supplement perception in works where the spectator imagines away the threshold between the real and the fictive realms. In his essay on fictive narrative philosophy, Michael Boylan (b. 1952) stated that novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch (1919-1999) prioritised fiction before philosophical writings. Thus, there is a purer sense of allowing fiction itself to carry the author's message forward. In this case, fiction is used to illuminate non-fiction (Boylan, 2013, December, p. 69). *Turner Prize* 2019 collective winner Tai Shani (b. 1976) relies on forgotten sources and texts to take inspiration from disparate histories, narratives and characters. In the exhibitions she was nominated for, Shani adopted the structure of an allegorical city of women to examine feminine subjectivity and experience through a gothic/science-fiction lens ("Turner Prize 2019 Tai Shani", n.d.). Her images are described as violent, erotic and fantastical and alternate between familiar narrative tropes, structures and theoretical prose. They explore the construction of subjectivity, excess and affect and the epic as the ground for post-patriarchal realism ("Tai Shani", 2020). The sculptures of French-American artist Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) touch on autobiographical themes, which have occupied her throughout her career ("Louise Bourgeois Artworks", 2020). In Bourgeois' work, the narrative of viewing rivals the narrative of memory. The presence of the latter is sensed yet not grasped. The memories are not narrated, they just exist by being placed like found objects. Dutch cultural theorist and critic, and video artist Mieke Bal (b. 1946) compared memories to found objects that we routinely integrate into narrative frames sourced from the cultural stock available to us. Bal (1999, p. 110)

elaborated in her paper on Bourgeois' spider sculpture as a theoretical object and the narrative inside out.

Autobiography here is employed as the source of the narrative translated into sculptures. It is not considered a complete traditional life story and its timeline, but a critical debate. It is a type of memoir involving internal states of mind and subjective perception of collected memory and evanescent thoughts, clear or incoherent, unfolding in random order. It is a form of transmedial *authotheory*, taking shape across forms and describing an artist or a writer's way of working (Fournier, 2021). The term *authotheory* is appropriate for works where research and creation are entangled, such as in this research. It offers artists dominant approaches and epistemologies to theorising and philosophising and makes space for new ways of theorising and understanding their lives (p. 2). By becoming a physical object, autobiography transforms into a form of self-representation called *autotopography* (González, 1995). Autotopography is defined as a spatial form representing important relations, past events, and emotional ties, while an autobiography is a written form, which narrates events, identifications, or fantasies (p. 134). Bal (2002, p. 187) sees the process as an exteriorisation, unlike traditional psychoanalytical metaphors of depth, which makes the term *autotopography* more suitable than *autobiography*. Bal argued that memories inhabiting works cannot be read as narratives, and called objects and fragments 'traps'. When works are made public they are no longer uniquely bound to one person's history, so memories stop being personal (p. 182). Two assumptions establish autobiographical readings of works of art. The first one is where the work narrates elements from the artist's life. The second one is where it expresses her/his personality (p. 181). The concept of autotopography at once refers to and distinguishes itself from autobiography. It is a spatial, local, and situational writing of the *self's life in visual art* (p. 180). *Autobiographies* – hence *autotopographies* – are an important part of history, and are deemed significant because they can inspire other people in similar circumstances and make them realise that they are not alone. They allow the authors to grow or heal by expressing their feelings and opinions ("Autobiography", n.d.).

Marlene Kadar's (b. 1950) remarks on *Life-Writing* highlight the significance of biography (Kadar, 1992). They are here borrowed and applied to what I will call *Life-Creating*: Life-writing (/life-creating) can be a genre of documents, or fragments of

documents (/artefacts), written (/created) out of life, or a personal experience of the writer (/artist). Therefore, life creating can also comprise many types of art works, both fictional and non-fictional. Same as documents, these art works are also linked by a common thematic concern with the self or with a life. They transcend genre boundaries and disciplines concerning narrative unity, objective thinking, and ‘author/ity’. Similar to life writing, life creating would then perform the same important cultural task related to gender. It is mainly concerned with the documentation and the reconstruction of women’s lives and culminates in a combination of feminism and narrative known as ‘*Écriture féminine*’ (‘writing-in-the-feminine’). The *écriture féminine* has become a key concept in recent feminist literary criticism. I have gradually adapted it here to *Création féminine* (creating-in-the-feminine), or *Création maternelle* (creating-in-the-maternal), and finally to *Création conditionnelle* (creating-in-the-conditional), hence conditional creation/sculpture. (The term ‘creating’ was chosen over ‘making’ for its more adequate translation, noting that other types of work such as a text piece are creations too).

With the rise of feminism, several women and parents in the arts have been and are still voicing their rights and equal representation. Contemporary art historian Andrea Liss (b. 1955) pointed out that being a feminist mother continues to mean temporarily losing the soul connection to the work and the self, to give love and care to a new other. Oftentimes the mother’s desires and her artist self collide (Liss, 2009, pp. xv-xvii). British visual artist and mother Phyllida Barlow (1944-2023) shared that the demands of having children and being an artist are incompatible because the world of the studio requires an uncompromising focus. To Barlow, having children and making sculpture both involve similar emotions ranging from intense boredom to wild euphoria. She found doing both simultaneously extremely complicated mentally compared to oil and water (Barlow, 2017). English artist Rachel Whiteread (b. 1963) admitted she is sure motherhood has changed her. Journalist Lynn Barber (b. 1944) remarked that with motherhood there’s a new lightness to Whiteread’s work, with the artist agreeing that there is a playfulness in her work that didn’t exist before (Barber, 2005). English artist Tracey Emin (b. 1963) doesn’t think she’d be making work if she were a mother. She admitted that she would have been either 100% mother or 100% artist: ‘There are good artists that have children. Of course, there are. They are called men. It’s hard for women. It’s really difficult, they are emotionally torn. It’s hard enough for me with my cat’ (Groskop, 2015). Serbian

conceptual artist and performer Marina Abramović (b. 1946) revealed that she never wanted children and had aborted three times because she was convinced that it would be a disaster for her work (Neuendorf, 2016). Abramović believes that one only has limited energy in the body, and she would have had to divide it: ‘That’s the reason why women aren’t as successful as men in the art world. There’s plenty of talented women. Why do men take over the important positions? It’s simple. Love, family, children—a woman doesn’t want to sacrifice all of that.’ From personal experience, it is challenging to bring children to the studio, mostly when the work in progress is sculptural and requires hazardous tools and large-scale materials. There were exceptions at the Mother House Studios (MHS) (n.d.) in London. Founded in 2016 by cultural producer, artist, curator and mover Dyana Gravina (b. 1984), the model is part of the Procreate Project (PCP) (n.d.-a), a grassroots visionary arts organisation that supports the professional development of artists who are mothers and primary caregivers. On studio days, mothers can work and create while qualified animators entertain babies, toddlers and children near their parents. Women could indeed perform the same multitasking activities at home, though the motherhood journey would be an isolation from society at this vulnerable time of postpartum, and during motherhood in general. The initiative gathers a community of parents working together in a safe space where they can keep an eye on their newborn baby, toddler or child, where breastfeeding and changing nappies is a normal and natural routine that isn’t frowned upon in a workspace. The Mother House Studios promotes an ethos of inclusion by welcoming children into the mother’s artistic space and process. The approach is built on observations regarding childcare, which remains underfunded and scarce. Childcare models invariably separate children and mothers. Parents are excluded from care, and the child from the workplace. On top of that, childcare is costly and not suited to families and women with flexible work, and with low incomes. In concise words, a mother (Whitehead, 2023) summarised it by writing: “When someone says being a stay-at-home mom isn’t real work, but I’d have to pay someone else to watch my kids if I had a ‘real’ job”. The Mother House model secured its first public funding from the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, Lewisham Council.

*One of the most innovative civic initiatives in London in 2018...The Mother House Studios has the potential to inspire step change in various sectors and the project will*

*have a much bigger impact if spread around the city – Sadiq Khan Mayor of London*  
(Mother House Studios)

Dedicated to producing bold, interdisciplinary projects embracing the risk necessary to achieve a sea change in the perception and normalisation of women's artistic output as part of the cultural landscape, Procreate Project is also behind *The Mother Art Prize* (Procreate Project, n.d.-b). It is the only international open call for self-identifying women and non-binary visual artists with caring responsibilities. During a talk organised by Freelands Foundation (2021), chair art critic and campaigner Hettie Judah spoke to mothers in the arts about artists, parenting and institutions. During the online conversation artists Rana Begum (b. 1977), Laura Ford (b. 1961) and Cally Spooner (b. 1983), director of the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh Fiona Bradley, and curator at the Whitechapel Gallery in London Laura Smith cited tangible examples, elaborating on their experiences, the struggles, the support or the lack of it they have encountered during their art journeys as mothers (Freelands Foundation, 2021). These include art residency inclusion, speaking to galleries about pregnancy and maternity leave without discrimination, breastfeeding in the workplace, and financial support amongst other issues. Begum relatably remarked that, at the end of the day, parents still have to be able to put dinner on the table.

Receiving funding for academic study is restrictive and selective. It is in general narrowed down to classic studies considered to contribute to a country such as museum studies, public sculpture, restoration of artefacts, local production such as tiles studies, etc... Perhaps contemporary sculpture, with themes such as in this thesis, is perceived as less 'serious', and less likely falls into the chosen categories. Surely, these listed areas of study are highly important, but research such as this one is also key to truly understanding the minds and lives of the makers behind the works and the real struggles of these artists, mostly mothers at this time frame of history. Having said that, in September 2019, I took part in a six-month residency at *An Artist Residency in Motherhood (ARIM)*, a fully customisable residency programme founded by artist mother Lenka Clayton (b. 1977). The ARIM residency doesn't have a time limit, doesn't require travel, and can take place entirely inside the artist's home and everyday life. The project's platform provides a D.I.Y kit (Residency Kit, n.d.) to help the artist-in-residence-in-motherhood plan, structure and carry out their very own residence (Clayton, n.d.). The kit helped organise my autoethnography work for the research. Judah pertinently noted that it doesn't even occur

to some artist mothers to apply for a presential residency with their children, and that resonates strongly with me. To give a tangible example now that both my children are back in school after the pandemic, I was about to participate in a five-day workshop on speculative forms of collaborative space mapping directed at artists-researchers with practices across different media. Titled *Simultaneous Mapping Practices*, the workshop is organised by Simultaneous Arrivals, simularr in close collaboration with the Department of Communication Design, Department of Multimedia Art, and the Department of Sculpture at FBAUL, the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Lisbon (Belas-Artes ULisboa, 2023). simularr (n.d.) is an artistic research project on novel forms of collaborative practices within the PEEK framework of the Austrian Science Fund FWF (AR 714-G), running from 2022 until 2025. On the weekend before the workshop, my son showed symptoms of chickenpox following an outbreak at several local schools and had to isolate at home for over a week. Naturally, I withdrew my participation starting the email with another ‘It is with sadness’, or ‘with a heavy heart’... Similar to Google, mothers can provide all the adequate formulations. This might look like a coincidence, but the truth is, these incidents are so frequent that mothers are being doubted and believed to find excuses. Worse, mothers are at further risk of being excluded from future events to avoid such occurrences. Most male artists, on the other hand, rely on their female partners to fulfil the majority of the responsibility of being the main carers in these situations. Hence, male artists have more artistic activity and production happening resulting in further unequal exposure, representation and participation. In November 2023, prominent galleries including Mennour (2023) and Galerie Eva Presenhuber (2023) congratulated some of their represented artists for being selected among 2023’s Kunstkompass Top 100 contemporary artists rankings in Capital Magazin (Rohr-Bongard, 2023). The lists feature Anish Kapoor (b. 1954), Daniel Buren (b. 1938), Douglas Gordon (b. 1966), Ugo Rondinone (b. 1964), Philippe Parreno (b. 1964), Peter Fischli (b. 1952) David Weiss (1946-2012), Doug Aitken (b. 1968), Tschabalala Self (b. 1990) and Franz West (b. 1947). Except for Self, all the other artists are male. On which criteria was the selection made? ‘The artists were selected based on an evaluation of their recent activities, including participation in major international biennales, institutional exhibitions, public art installations, awards, and reviews in prominent press.’ In that case of a high probability of missing out, how can mother artists be supported and endorsed?

In 2022, Judah published *How Not to Exclude Artist Mothers (and other parents)*. In the polemical volume of interviews with artists internationally, Judah argued that for too long, artists have been told that they can't have both motherhood and a successful career. Therefore, a paradigm shift is needed within the art world to take account of the needs of artist mothers. Artist parents refer to artist mothers mainly, but also artist fathers, parents who don't identify with the term 'mother', and parents in other sectors of the art world. Based on highlights of success stories, the book proposes models for the future from alternative support networks and residency models to studio complexes with onsite childcare, and galleries with family-friendly policies. As much as there is left to be done around gender studies, I realise that we oscillate between a time that previous women artists viewed as a luxury, and at the bottom of a sky-high ladder of exposure for women artists. My time coincides with breakthroughs and acknowledgement of women as leading and prominent artists. Prominent because of their talent and not because of their famous male partners or connections. Our generation has known Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) as one of Artemisia Gentileschi's (1593-1653) lifelong friends and not the other way around, Camille Claudel (1864-1943) separately from Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) without a mention of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), de Kooning as a reference to Elaine (1918-1989) instead of Willem (1904-1997), or Alexandra Grant (b. 1973) accompanied by her partner, Keanu Reeves... to name a few. My contemporary scene features the acclaimed publication *The Story of Art Without Men* by the 'brilliant' curator and art historian Katy Hessel (b. 1994). A Sunday Times and New York Times Bestseller, and Waterstones Book of the Year 2022, The survey is a compendium of female artists and emergent voices spanning from 1500 through to those born in the 1990s. It covers all substantial movements from Dadaism to civil rights-era antiracist art. Hessel (2023) wrote the book after walking into an art fair in 2015 and realising that not a single artwork out of the thousands displayed was by a woman. The creation is described as a 'positive, beautifully written corrective, which should become a founding text in the history of art by women' (Mamata, 2022). Among several projects, Hessel is also behind *The Great Women Artists* podcast of interviews with prominent women artists ("Katy Hessel / The Great Women Artists", n.d.), and *Where are the Women Artists* (WATWA) (n.d.), a database and open directory helping create visibility and opportunity for all women artists.

This part of the literature embracing *Feminism* ((First Wave (1848-1920), Second Wave (1963-1980s), Third Wave (1990s-), Fourth Wave (Present Day)); and artists-parents has gotten so wide in the past years and requires further studies on its own. Only selected examples have been included here as this umbrella is relevant on considerable levels of the inquiry, and to draw a wider image of the current art scene.

### **Methodological Process Overview**

A considerable and decisive part of the research, the first chapter features the methodological problematisation and framing of the artistic process. Summarised as practice-related, the research focuses on the process of making as its primary source of self-reflection and findings. With its origins rooted in feelings, experiences and ideas, the inquiry is categorised as post-qualitative. Altogether the methodology adopted is established as a *reflective practice* (Schön, 1983).

The probe draws on multiple paradigms such as *Postmodernism* (1970-1990), *Constructivism* (1973), and *Constructionism* (1980). Hypotheses and theories are gradually constructed following a line of thought which unfolds and generates new ideas and examples. It has its own experimental needs and, in that respect, the exploration is *rhizomatic* (Deleuze, Guattari, & Massumi, 1987). Several practical projects with different themes are treated as case studies.

The methods follow the rule of no rules, by conducting the research without restrictions as it is already restricted by nature, and letting the practice run its course. The methodology corresponds to thinking through making, distinguished from the art of inquiry. The model of configurations it belongs to is a practice-based PhD characterised by equality and balance between the dissertation and the artwork. Despite prioritising art practice in terms of order, its importance is equal to the one of theory, both intertwined.

The type of activities undertaken is primarily conceptual aiming to understand the creative artefacts. The process involves several methods encompassing visual documentation, the creation of sculptures using real and fictive narratives, reflective texts, systematic written documentation of thoughts, and research for related theorists and theories.

Last but foremost, the methodology embodies a transition towards a less conventional format and a more experimental approach rooted in practice. Rather than elaborating on specific theories, I borrow selected theories from different fields or contrasting themes and apply them to the research topic and the visual realm, to explain my ideas and rhetorical thoughts in the art realm and subjective perception. This is executed through comparative studies at times, and employing several literary devices mostly including juxtaposition, analogy, parallelism, metaphors, allusion, imagery, symbolism, allegory, hypothesis and paradox. It might seem to the reader like suddenly changing the subject often, or what is literally translated from French to pass from the rooster to the donkey. But in reality, it constructs an interlinked web of thoughts throughout the research that makes sense to me as an investigator. It helps join the dots, and I tentatively attempt to make the transitions as smooth as Milan Kundera's narration.

In harmony with this elaboration method, the reader will encounter green asterisks (\*) after or within some specific sentences throughout the following development text. These represent discovered formulations, and results of assimilation of crystallised thoughts. Treated as rhizomes, they form new ideas that have budded during the inquiry, like several little light bulbs gathering for a delayed Eureka moment, or conclusion. The highlighted phrases are repeated in italics inside green outlined text boxes at the end of the section they feature in, but this time open with the asterisk reference. The format is a personalised footnote consisting of selecting and isolating the key phrases using repetition as the clarification itself (see Appendix C).

I invite the reader to use their objective reading and subjective perception to find new relevant rhizomes.

## Objectives

*The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is—it is to imagine what is possible.*  
(Hooks, 2006, p. 281)

The objectives of the research are to deepen the understanding and development of sculpture as an object, elaborately as a fictive object unfolding in a metamodernist era. It delineates the function of fictionality in our lives, validates further the importance of subjectivity in art, and frames the context of creating under specific spatiotemporal circumstances and social conditions. This is achieved through tracking the metamorphosis real back-stories undergo when they merge with imagined narratives; and the analysis of the fictive objects they jointly produce.

The term *Metamodernism* (1975) gained momentum and traction in recent years. It is seen as a means to articulate the developments of contemporary culture. Derived from the Greek, the prefix *meta* means ‘among, with, after’. It can be applied to a subject that has transcended its original limits. For example, theory about theory would be metatheory ("That's So Meta", 2019). Whilst the word *Metamodernism* is not in the dictionary yet, the paradigm is understood as the movement and the period following the *Postmodernism* cultural discourse. It features new forms of contemporary art and theory englobing *Modernism* (1960s) and *Postmodernism*. First used around 1970, the term *Postmodernism* is considered to begin in the 1960s with pop art and spanning onward conceptual art, neo-expressionism, feminist art, and the 1990s Young British Artists. The terms *Modernism* and *Modern Art* refer to the successive art movements identified by critics and historians since the realism of Gustav Courbet (1819-1877). It culminates in abstract art and its developments in the 1960s ("Art Terms", n.d.). In 1999, Nigerian art historian Moyo Okediji (b. 1956) posited metamodernism as the ‘extension of and challenge to modernism and post-modernism’. Okediji (2000) assigned the adjective ‘metamodern’ to diasporic artists who ‘willfully transcend, fracture, subvert, circumvent, interrogate and disrupt, hijack, and appropriate modernity and postmodernity at nearly every available opportunity’. Around a decade later, authors Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen (2010) wrote *Notes on Metamodernism*, adopting metamodernism as a notion to present and periodise the preferences of a range of aesthetic and cultural predilections. They carved the way for more authors to theorise and periodise cultural forms in religious studies that are neither categorised as modern nor postmodern.

This research reinforces van den Akker and Vermeulen’s description of the continuous action of metamodernism as a ‘constant repositioning’ and a ‘pendulum swinging’ between these polarities. Similar to metamodernism, the research naturally

includes elements of postmodernism and modernism movements, with an amalgam of their features. Dali Kadagishvili (2013) strongly distinguished metamodernism from its ‘playful, insincere, unsteady and ironic’ predecessor postmodernism. According to Kadagishvili, serious, sincere metamodernism oscillates from one polarity to another between diametrically opposed ideas. These ideas are like enthusiasm and irony, naivety and knowingness, totality and fragmentation, bright and plain and so on. British artist Luke Turner (b.1982) wrote his *Metamodernist Manifesto* for the arts in 2011, noting that our generation seems to ‘intuitively recognise’ a move beyond the postmodern mode of the late 20th century. Several writers followed, including political philosopher, historian and sociologist, and author Hanzi Freinacht (2017), and historian and philosopher of the Human Sciences Jason Ānanda Josephson Storm (2021) who materialised the paradigm shift through a set of novel theoretical positions and methodological approaches, in addition to an ongoing increasing amount of authors.

*In the wake of the myriad crises of the past two decades—of climate change, financial meltdown, and the escalation of global conflicts—we have witnessed the emergence of a palpable collective desire for change, for something beyond the prematurely proclaimed “End of History.” Ours is a generation raised in the ‘80s and ‘90s, on a diet of *The Simpsons* and *South Park*, for whom postmodern irony and cynicism is a default setting, something ingrained in us. (Turner, 2011)*

Such a study holds relevance for social and spatial experiences and maps the universal relatable similarities of struggles and anxieties behind our perceptual disparities. It serves as an indicator for analysis and the study of several beliefs in society depending on our condition, background, gender, and influences during this point in history, a present we consider contemporary. Every living generation thinks of its time as contemporary, occurring in the now, and not happening in the past. For this reason, in the art scene, the term *Contemporary* alone appears too generic. Thus, by situating it within early metamodernism, the thesis brings new knowledge to professionals, scholars, researchers, practitioners, and enthusiasts in this field. We are attending and witnessing the debut of the ultracontemporary, or as described in Merriam-Webster (n.d.), the ‘extremely contemporary’ artists. For instance, the term *Ultra-contemporary* (Schneider & Halperin, 2019), which refers to artists born from 1975 to the present day, and their art,

is easily associated with *Metamodernism*. This is not the case for *Contemporary* with its artists born from 1945 to 1974.

Even though metamodernism is relatively new, the metaverse world and social media have exposed a large amount of data related to this new moment of philosophy. Despite that, metamodernism is still far from being considerably documented as it is in the deep formation phase. Therefore, while technically being an ultra-contemporary artist, my own and my peers' generations are more exposed to the panoramic and holistic data from the contemporary art scene. Hence 'contemporary art practice' in the thesis subtitle. The research seeks to honour this valuable legacy of contemporary artists, their thoughts and creations. My generation grew up with it, inspired, empowered, influenced, and learned from it. It played a role in shaping us and our perceptions. The probe acknowledges the movements and the hard art activism work contemporary artists have started and are achieving for our generation and future generations, to practice and express themselves more freely and openly. Contemporary artists are the parents, guardians, and disciples of this legacy that opened the door to the metamodern era endorsing more profoundly themes of gender, equality, peace, displacement, Postcolonialism studies (1960-Present Day), and environment amongst several imminent issues. The thesis oscillates back and forth between these postmodern and metamodern times and endeavours to constitute a key link in this historically transitory and transformative chain. It aims to delimit existing functions and suggest new roles sculptures play in this precise context. It reinforces, firstly, the contribution of sculpture-making to individuals, artists, women, and mother artists. Secondly, the following contributions these individuals make, and the impact they leave by publicly sharing their personal perspective of making sense of life and its meaning. And last, the benefits of this impact on society and its pertinent ethical dilemmas within communities. The thesis contributes to the variety of mindsets, practices, forms and genres through which metamodernism is expressed.

*Creation is a sustained period of bliss, even though the subject can still be very sad. Because there's the triumph of coming through and understanding that you have, and that you did it the way only you could do it. You didn't do it the way somebody told you to do it. You did it just the way you had to do it, and that is what makes us us. (Walker, 2014)*

The work constitutes additional material and brings another female voice to the contemporary and academic art scene. It provides girls and women around the world with another story and example of normalising multicultural women and mothers pursuing art as a main career and not as an extracurricular hobby. Stemming from lived experience, the research work clarifies how gendered embodiment can impact the subjective understanding of the world in the art scene and the academic realm, and how feminist phenomenology can explore the related social-political consequences. The emerging research methodologies in education englobing intersections of feminist community building, theorising, learning, and activism are known as *PhEmaterialism* (Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2019). The prefix ‘ph’ stands for posthumanism, and ‘materialism’ for new materialisms. The following capital ‘E’ encloses the generation of new forms of educational research and equity. Referring to feminist, ‘phem’ emphasises a specific focus on activating the feminist implications encompassing all the theoretical approaches drawing on these broken-down elements. Pivotal conceptual contributors, or ‘feminals’ as opposed to seminals, include physicist-philosopher Karen Barad (b. 1956) (Barad, 2007), feminist philosophers Jane Bennett (b. 1957) (Bennett, 2010), Rosi Braidotti (b. 1954) (Braidotti, 2013), and Donna Haraway (b. 1944) (Haraway, 2016). Accordingly, the probe serves *PhEmaterialism* or feminist materialism documentation through imagining new research practices and equity and pushing the boundaries of formats within the education sector, and art scene.

Being a type of testimony, the thesis offers data on the female perspective and experience which can be used for studies of gender equality and helping empower all women and girls, in line with the fifth goal of the United Nations: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*; and tenth goal: *Reduce inequality within and among countries* ("The 17 Goals", n.d.). Make Mothers Matter (MMM) (n.d.), one of the few international NGOs benefitting from General Consultative Status with the United Nations, has been advocating for the recognition of mothers as changemakers. MMM argued that mothers are at the forefront of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Directly affected by the 2030 Agenda and most of its seventeen SDGs, mothers have the potential to be essential partners for their implementation. Adequately recognising, educating, supporting and empowering mothers can have major positive effects on many of these SDGs. MMM noted that mothers are agents for change in

creating a better world for their children and families and the wider community, and can be a powerful force for good as changemakers. If I, as an individual can't reduce inequality within and among countries, perhaps – as minimal as it might seem – this work can reduce inequality within the arts and the academic sectors, as every record counts. At a secondary level, the research offers through texts and artworks insights on additional intersecting goals, such as *3 Good Health and Well-Being* (mainly of mothers), *4 Quality Education*, *6 Clean Water and Sanitation*, *11 Sustainable Cities and Communities*, and *12 Responsible Consumption and Production*. Concretely, the practical course of the thesis features the implementation of methods and adaptations towards a more sustainable practice. It encloses an inclusive compilation and survey of key artists and works which serve as an updated directory or reference in the field, and help form a visual example of a discussed idea or thought. Furthermore, the incorporation of artists pertinent to the context with their thoughts, ideas and opinions sets out a new timeline and a distinct thematic bracket within the contemporary and ultra-contemporary art scene. The integration is also a form of monologue about a personal perception of a dialogue between works of art. The outcomes will help us understand the resulting artefacts and will fill existent gaps in both the scholarly and the professional fields, contributing to the area of sculpture, its structural parameters, and its understanding in the expanded field.

From a wider perspective, the inquiry seeks to uncover subliminal influences and demystify predefined universal stereotypes, rules and myths of no-nos in both the contemporary art scene and the social realm. The course of this thesis is highly pertinent. We are witnessing a major shift to the digital and virtual immersive worlds on all levels including assets and currencies. On one hand, this could be considered a threat to the existence of the physical object. On the other hand, the rarer physical art becomes, the more precious, and valuable it can potentially be. It is a decisive time for physical sculpture and the conditions around its creation and requirements to exist in a time of personal transformation, global pandemics, environmental disasters, wars, genocide, and displacement amongst other serious happenings. With social media access, people are witnessing it all at once, and getting exposed to upsetting and disturbing news. It is leading to individual and collective feelings of helplessness, and rising vicarious trauma. without enough ways and strategies to cope with it all. The course of a life is never smooth, it can rocket mountain high or plunge valley deep. Our patience and resilience

are tested, stretched, sometimes beyond their limits, break then are fused back again. This is the natural course of living and evolution. We learn to deal with it, adjust, adapt, and keep creating.

But what if these hiccups turn into a rupture or a succession of ruptures of this course? How do artists adapt and keep creating physical works in these intensified conditions? In the book *What World Is This? A Pandemic Phenomenology*, philosopher Judith Butler (b. 1956) noted that what is already compromised under the conditions of unbridled capitalism and climate change, such as air, water, shelter and food, was further acutely registered under pandemic conditions. Although different, these two conditions and structures don't disappear, but become linked together and intensify in the present (Butler, 2021).

*Creative work needs solitude. It needs concentration, without interruptions. It needs the whole sky to fly in, and no eye watching until it comes to that certainty which it aspires to, but does not necessarily have at once. Privacy, then. A place apart—to pace, to chew pencils, to scribble and erase and scribble again. (Oliver, 2016, p. 10)*

Such extreme events desperately call for action and expression, a need to voice internal sensitivity to how we feel and what we are subjected to. So how can we build, how can we create a medium like sculpture, necessitating to take up space in every sense and materialise, when hands are tied and the conditions to achieve these manifestations are not gathered? The root objective is to observe and experiment with sculpture-making in challenging times and study how to facilitate external conditions for the mind to manifest its internal designs and imagined objects. Furthermore, the aim is to think of ways to make sculpture more accessible and not a restricted luxury. Perhaps not everyone can afford to own a good work of art, but the rare beauty of art is that its luxury can be experienced by all. The format of sculpture makes it a generous medium that has so much to offer to the maker and the viewer, the experiencer and the experienced. In that sense, the maker becomes both the experiencer and the experienced, and a key writer of the art history of the future. In his Artforum review of the art of other artists, American painter Sam McKinniss (b. 1985) noted that an artist has the power to stop time, and fashion some view of it into an image. Therefore, art gives us this pause, and one of its most benevolent functions is to grant viewers this luxury (McKinniss, 2021).

# I

## **REFLECTIVE PRACTICE METHODOLOGY AND PROCESSES**

*No, I can't explain the dance to you; if I could tell you what it means, there would be no point in dancing it. (Duncan, n.d.)*

Practice-based Research is defined as the action of undertaking an original investigation to gain new knowledge partly through practice. The quality of the practice outcomes, or creative artefacts, demonstrates and points to claims of originality and contribution to knowledge (Candy, 2006). This research focuses on the process of making as its primary source of self-reflection and findings. It prioritises practice with regards to development order, and employs the written thesis as a following form of documentation, using theoretical study as a support to the practical phase. The inquiry borrows more methodologies from the Creative Arts and Humanities, citing action research, narrative inquiry, autoethnography, and qualitative research. Altogether the methodology consists of what philosopher Donald Schön defined as a *reflective practice*. The probe draws on multiple paradigms such as *Postmodernism*, including the philosophy of education *Constructivism*, and *Constructionism*.

Therefore, the inquiry steers away from the modernist philosophy equating truth with reality, and reality with existence. Despite basing many theories on scientific knowledge, it embraces a postmodernist approach built on phenomenological knowledge expressing the subjective truth of everyday experience (Dybicz & Hall, 2021). Taking from *postmodernism*, I seek to understand some scientifically unscrutinised aspects of human life and its everyday experiences. I question values embedded in social conventions and search for factors behind identity shaping. I weigh the role of free will, human action and character in decision-making versus fate as a grounding principle.

While comparing the differences in logic and thinking between children and adults, Swiss child psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) first introduced *cognitive constructivism* as a learning theory of knowledge. The non-traditional theory promotes ideas actively constructed in the mind of the learner, rather than taught by a teacher.

Guided with minimal intervention by the teacher, this constructivist method helps learners develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, experimenting with materials, in addition to independent initiative and motivation for discovery. After Piaget's (1968) cognitive approach, more constructivist theories emerged. One theory is *social constructivism* based on psychologist Lev S. Vygotsky's (1896-1934) focus on the social learning and community aspect and the key role of the more knowledgeable teacher (Vygotsky, 1978). (These theories have no ties with the *Constructivism* (1915) art movement associated with Soviet socialism, the Bolsheviks and the Russian avant-garde.) Another theory of knowledge is *radical constructivism* rooted in philosopher Ernst von Glasersfeld's (1917-2010) non-existent objective reality and subjective reality knowledge constructions (von Glasersfeld, 1995). The problem-based pedagogy is one of the constructivist learning methods which prepares students to navigate real-life problems. It introduces a subject through its problems, encouraging students to assimilate it through constructed solutions. In this research, constructivism lies in my pursuit as an individual, where I focus on my subjective cognitive process and mentally construct knowledge through various experiences and reflection. I gradually understand a subject deeper through various problems. This constructivist aspect doesn't necessarily require the construction of a product as a solution. Expanding on constructivism, mathematician, computer scientist, and learning theorist Seymour Papert's (1928-2016) constructionism theory proposes the generation of ideas through the activity of building or constructing an artefact and collectively reflecting upon it (Papert, 1980). In this scenario, the learner solves problems through making/creating processes which encourage collaboration. With the teacher filling the role of a facilitator, a project-based pedagogy replaces the constructivist problem-based one. Consequently, I borrow from constructionism to generate part of this knowledge and emphasise my learning by creating tangible artefacts, such as concretising ideas through projects of materialised sculptures, and physical objects.

The conceptual framework gradually evolves, takes shape and adjusts as the investigation progresses. Hypotheses and theories are gradually constructed following a line of thought which unfolds and generates new ideas and examples. I started by proposing generic questions deriving from practice, though there is a high chance of formulating targeted core questions at the end of the research and throughout. The

creation process is long and complex, outlined by a recurring pattern of successive steps. It has its own experimental needs and, in that respect, the exploration is *rhizomatic*. To understand it, I find it more natural and effective to go in line with practical thinking and let the process attend to its own methodological needs. This could mean proceeding backwards or swapping around the traditional thesis structure, which usually establishes the questions and key objectives at the beginning. In that respect, the research doesn't follow an outlined methodology but emerges as a process methodology responding to Professor Elizabeth Adams St.Pierre's (2014) philosophy of post-qualitative inquiry. Adams St.Pierre debated that studies don't have to fit into methodological containers no matter what the student's onto-epistemological commitments are. Furthermore, method is inadequate to the task at hand, as it proscribes and prohibits, controls and disciplines, comes too late, and then is immediately out-of-date. The very idea of method imposes on students prescribed, linear and systematic practices and order of thought. This prohibits the experimental nature of post-qualitative inquiry and its transcendental empiricism. Adams St.Pierre strongly recommended putting the concepts and theories of experimental ontology to work using the conceptual practices that are appropriate for the respective study. This means not forcing new empirical, new material, posthuman, or post-qualitative studies into the structure of conventional humanist qualitative methodology. I conduct the practical exploration and allow the following steps and thoughts to unfold naturally and gradually. Research by project is practice-based by nature. Unlike practice-led research, which focuses on advancing knowledge about practice and understanding it, the practice-based one results in new knowledge with operational and practical significance for the related area of practice (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 6). The practice-led research that is supported by critical reflection encourages working from the 'unknown to the known' and therefore can invert the research process (Sullivan, 2009, pp. 48-49). This inquiry still shares more of the conditions the practice-led process can be subject to, such as delaying the identification of the research question as the practice unfolds and identifying the problem in the final phase. And secondly, the articulation of a research methodology and methods might not serve the research purpose, due to trying to 'map' the artistic process, its techniques, nuances, and directions format. This process would need to stand up to methodological scrutiny and research outputs (Haseman and Mafe, 2009, p. 215). In my case, I would risk limiting my exploration by mapping my

artistic process in a way to answer pre-formulated questions or problems demanded by a traditional discourse of research. This type of arts-based inquiry that uses art making and doing as a means to understand experience doesn't only involve the artist, but also those who are involved in the art work in some way, including readers and other researchers (p. 7). The methods follow the rule of no rules, by conducting the research without restrictions as it is already restricted by nature, and letting the practice run its course. Anthropologist Tim Ingold (b. 1948) asserted that we learn by paying attention to what the world has to tell us, by watching, listening and feeling. Instead of being informed of what is there, we learn by being told how we might find out, what to look for and how to track things (Ingold, 2013, p. 1). Emanating entirely from sensory experience and observations, this approach in philosophy is called *Empiricism*. Together with *Rationalism*, which is based on accepted rational knowledge, the two opposing theories constitute the major branches of Epistemology around knowledge and truth studies. Philosophers Francis Bacon (1561-1626), John Locke (1632-1704), George Berkeley (1685-1783), and David Hume (1711-1776) are among key empiricist theorists (Woleński, 2004).

For Ingold, knowing is a 'process of active following, of going along'. In this text, I use the term practice-based research according to Linda Candy's (p. 1) definition, where the creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge. The terms to define practice-related research have taken different terminologies in the literature and might overlap, or confuse in some cases. 'Practice-led' has been the one used most consistently (Skains, 2018), in addition to other terms such as 'arts-based research', 'practice-based research', 'practice-centered research', 'studio-based research', which are more or less used synonymously (Kristina Niedderer & Seymour Roworth-Stokes, 2007, p. 7). Educationalist and writer Christopher Frayling (b. 1946) differentiated three ways of conducting academic art research, derived from art historian, poet, literary critic and philosopher Herbert Read (1893-1968):

1. *Research into art and design* (Historical Research, Aesthetic or Perceptual Research, Research into a variety of theoretical perspectives on art and design).

2. *Research through art and design* (materials research, development work, action research).
3. *Research for art and design* (the end product is an artefact) (Frayling, 1993, pp. 4-5).

Academic, design researcher and educator Nigel Cross' (b. 1942) taxonomy characterised the focus of the design research, falling into three main categories based on 'people, process and products' (Cross, 1999, p. 6). In most cases, practice-related research is composed of two elements interacting to tackle the research question: the creative work or artwork, and the critical text or dissertation, commonly known as exegesis. Art historian and art critic James Elkins (b. 1955) described the practice-based PhD as a 'kind of philosophic problem' also using different synonyms and acronyms of the degree interchangeably. He outlined three configurations of Practice-based PhDs:

1. *First model: the dissertation is research that informs the practice.*
2. *Second model: the dissertation is equal to the artwork.*
3. *Third model: the dissertation is the artwork, and vice versa.*

Despite the first two models being relatively common, Elkins (2005, pp. 5-16) found the rare second and the third one preferable. Frayling acknowledged artists and designers as rational researchers but didn't encourage research degrees equated with works of art that speak for themselves. Educational researcher Michael Schratz (b. 1952) and Rob Walker (1995, pp. 79-80) pointed out that because confusing layers surround our use of language, pictures can be useful. But these pictures should not replace words, but be used for the purpose of creating a context within which to talk and to write. The written exegesis is indispensable to my own research. It unfolds the complexity of my creation development – which cannot be read through the artefacts alone – and makes this determining phase accessible to the audience. The inquiry falls under Elkins' second model, as the emphasis on practice prioritises art making in terms of order rather than importance. The importance is equally divided between the two intertwined components. Practice and research are both deeply creative practices, messy and entangled. They are

*makingthinking* practices, and our willingness to engage the multiple ways where the ‘making’ is fundamentally situated is what matters (Loveless, 2012, p. 103).

*Those who are the world’s working artists are not trying to help the world go around, but forward. Which is something altogether different from the ordinary. Such work does not refute the ordinary. It is, simply, something else. Its labor requires a different outlook — a different set of priorities.* (Oliver, p. 14)

I make use of several practical projects as case studies where each project revolves around a different theme. Nevertheless, the creation process follows the same pattern of steps throughout the elaboration of all the sculptural bodies of work, outlined as seen in Table 1.

Table 1

*The creative process of all four practical projects*

<i>Catalytic event/inspirational trigger registered as a lingering idea and chosen to explore &gt; Documentation + Autoethnography texts (optional or throughout) &gt; Real back-story mixes with an imagined story &gt; A new narrative is generated &gt; Fictive objects pertaining to the unified narrative are imagined &gt; Sketching of the fictive objects &gt; Materials designated by the narrative &gt; Execution/creation of the fictive objects in the studio &gt; Installation/Individual documentation of each project &gt; Reflective/autoethnography texts (optional or throughout)</i>
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Note. Rajaa Paixão, 2020.

The process requires several methods encompassing visual documentation (photography, film, sketches) [Fig. 3], creating sculptures using real and fictive narratives, reflective texts, systematic written documentation of thoughts, and research for related theorists/theories.

American artist Sol LeWitt (1928-2007) noted that all intervening steps are of interest, listing scribbles, sketches, drawings, failed work, models, studies, thoughts, and conversations. Those that show the artist's thought process can be more interesting than the final product (LeWitt, 1967, p. 83). The practice-based research in the history of the academic discourse facilitated wider methods of observation and analysis, which have proven to be more effective than strictly a post-creation exegesis. Those methods include auto-ethnomethodology, cognitive analysis, and media-specific post-textual analysis (Skains). Artist, author, art theorist, and educator Graeme Sullivan (b. 1951) listed the

types of activities undertaken by artists-researchers as the following: *theoretical*, *conceptual*, *dialectical*, and *contextual*. Sullivan stated that borrowing methods from other fields of inquiry is no longer enough for artist-researchers to take up the challenge of theorising their practice (p. 62). Conceptual fits this research most with its primary attempt to understand the creative artefacts themselves. In several papers, Stroud Cornock (1938-2019) outlined cyclical patterns of activities effectuated by Fine Art students in this particular order: *Generation* (manipulation of materials in the studio), *Selection* (elements of form & pattern identified whilst engaged in the generation), *Synthesis* (conceptualisation and planning of a piece of work), *Articulation* (articulation of problems or concerns emerging the first three steps and contextualising these, where appropriate), *Presentation* (of synthesis and articulation to engage critical attention), and *Critical Discussion* (which may generate new ideas, and bring back to the first step of generation) [Fig. 4].

My process starts with a considerable part absent in Cornock's (1978, 1983, 1984) outline. I describe it here as *Elaboration* (elaboration of a thought/trigger/inspiration through a narrative), followed by *Synthesis* before the rest of the activities. This first elaborative phase assigns roles for the following activities, including the designation of materials, forms, colours and other sculptural elements, and does belong within the making process. In that respect, my methodology corresponds to thinking through making, yet doesn't fall under what Ingolds defined as the art of inquiry. Ingolds thought of making as a 'process of growth'. He proposed to read making longitudinally rather than laterally, by answering to the flux and flows of the materials we work with. This is opposed to starting with an idea in mind, and with a supply of the raw material needed to achieve it (pp. 20-22). He pointed out that we are accustomed to determining that a produced artefact is finished at the moment when the material takes its intended form. This theory of making is perfectly captured by the phrase 'material culture'. The theory is known in the literature as *hylomorphism*, from the Greek hyle and morphe (matter and form). My process matches biological anthropologist Ralph L. Holloways' (b. 1935) understanding of the process of making clearly defined by a starting point and an endpoint. Same as the maker in Holloway's (1969) eyes, I too begin with both a detailed plan and a finite set of components and operations culminating in implementing the final product. LeWitt thought that working with a preset plan was one

way to avoid subjectivity. These components are assembled bit by bit as the practice evolves, to constitute a totality that corresponds precisely to the original sketch and imagined sculpture. Starting from a lingering thought, or an inspirational trigger can be a very vague perception. In those early uncertain stages, I rely on intuition, inspiration, and reflexivity. It has been admitted that trying to identify specific methods first is a common misconception (Gray & Malins, p. 18). Schön (p. 49) stated that we don't always define what we know when we go about 'the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life'. We can find ourselves at a loss when trying to describe what we thought we knew. This 'ordinarily tacit' knowing is 'implicit in our patterns of action' and therefore 'knowing is in our action'. 'This knowing-in-action' applies to professionals too; though competent practitioners including medical practitioners, can also fail to provide a reasonable, accurate or complete description of the phenomena they recognise. They are dependent on those 'tacit recognitions, judgments, and skilful performances' despite a conscious usage of research-based theories and techniques. They think or question what they are doing even while doing it, which makes them reflect on the 'knowing-in-action'. This 'reflection-in-action' is "central to the 'art' presenting 'situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict'" (p. 50). Based on this thinking, and the understanding of how critical reflexivity can smoothly turn into reflection, the action of creating could be a more accurate reveal of our knowledge. Therefore, research conducted by project is deemed constructive. Reflective is then distorted and diffracted into a new narrative. Haraway (1997) suspected that similar to reflection, reflexivity only displaces the same elsewhere, generating worries about copy and original in the search for what is really authentic, and real. Therefore, diffraction optical metaphors are needed to represent the effort to make a difference in the world. Away from originals, diffraction is about heterogenous history, recording the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, and difference. Hence, diffraction is another kind of critical consciousness committed to making a difference instead of repeating the same or 'displacing that same elsewhere' in a more or less distorted form. Diffractions make consequential meanings through narrative, graphic, psychological, spiritual, and political technology. Inspired by this suggestion of differences, Barad used the notion of diffraction as a tool of analysis to attend to and respond to the effects of difference. To generate creative and unexpected outcomes, Barad called to diffractively engage with

texts and intellectual traditions dialogically read ‘through one another’. This technique opposes hierarchical methodology that puts different texts, theories, and strands of thought against one another. As it will be shown throughout the research, and following Barad’s thinking, matter and meaning are inextricably fused as one element. How can we construct and validate a subjective point of view of an artist, noting that the emotional side plays a major role in perception and decisions?

In his book, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (b. 1944) proposed that emotion plays diverse roles in the reasoning system’s process and the evolution of the reasoning system as an extension of the automatic emotional system. Emotion influences intuition in a rapid cognitive process and conclusions not based on any immediate logical steps. Damasio (1994) studied neurological patients with decision-making and emotional disorders. Based on the studies Damasio asserted that despite the lack of immediate awareness, there was a gut feeling-like response where emotions triggered covert signals such as dopamine or oxytocin, capable of changing neuron groups’ behaviour and consequently choices and decisions. Damasio argued that emotion doesn’t necessarily disturb the reasoning process, and could even assist it. In these studies, being or feeling happened first and thinking followed later showing that ‘we are, and then we think’. In Descartes’ notion, the mind is split from the brain and body. The mind is hosted by the brain and would not survive without its support. Descartes’ famous statement ‘I think therefore I am’ ordered thinking before being, where being is built on thinking and awareness of thinking. Adopted by biologists to this day, Descartes’ error influenced the course of Western sciences and humanities.

This is where post-qualitative takes over qualitative research. However, in some sections, the research allows an integration of qualitative characteristics. Professor Alan Bryman (1947-2017) suggested that preoccupations exhibited in both quantitative and qualitative research ‘reflect epistemologically grounded beliefs about what constitutes acceptable knowledge’. A natural science approach to what should count as acceptable knowledge profoundly influences quantitative research, whereas interpretivism influences qualitative researchers (Bryman, 2012, p. 399). In his book *Les sciences de l'imprécis*, pioneer in information science and communication studies Abraham A. Moles (1920-1992) drew an epistemological scientific methodology to measure non-

quantitative, vague or abstract concepts. Through various methods spanning experimentation, observation, and simulation, Moles (1990) tested how measurement tools considered precise in natural sciences can be used in the human sciences. These include statistical tools such as factor analysis, scaling, tables, charts, and matrix manipulation, in addition to subjective and perceptive semantic differential measurement tools. Moles demonstrated that the imprecise can be mastered and become a coherent and rigorous object of science and knowledge. For instance, while reading in his lab Marcel Proust's (1871-1922) fictive story *Swann's Way* (Proust, Scott Moncrieff, & Carter, 2013), American author and blogger Jonah Lehrer (b. 1981), a neuroscience lab technician at the time, had an astounding revelation. Lehrer (2007) saw in Proust's meandering prose a prediction for his lab experiments. Without employing scientific acronyms, Proust's vision of how memory works echoed that of neuroscience. Lehrer went on to write a book about artists, who without the need for scientific acronyms, anticipated neuroscientific discoveries and real, tangible truths about the human mind. The artists include renowned writers, painters and composers. Joseph A. Maxwell (2013, pp. 42-43) indicated that paradigms relevant to qualitative research include interpretivism and phenomenology. Maxwell noted that it is important to the research to make explicit which paradigms the work draws on, to explain and justify design decisions in a clear philosophical and methodological stance. For further validation, in her book *Visual, Narrative and Creative Research Methods: Application, Reflection and Ethics*, Dawn Mannay (2016) wrote that visual research methods have the potential to evoke an emphatic understanding of how other people experience their worlds. The methods are now widely recognised as such and are quickly becoming key topics of interest. Mannay elaborated on how creativity needs to be appreciated. We still need to be careful not to turn the social sciences into a 'discipline of pictures' as per William John Thomas Mitchell's (b. 1942) picture theory where pictures may take even more importance than words. That is mostly true in a time of oculo-centrism where images' form is a vital part of everyday worlds (Mitchell, 1994). Nonetheless, the created visual image can hold originality, imagination and inspiration, but is constantly subject to interpretation and re-interpretation. Furthermore, the narratives of its inception, reception, interpretation and impact still have to embed the visual. This part is very relatable to my own type of practice. It speaks to my process which demands carrying the narrative and its various

interpretations, regardless of the extent of its fictiveness, in order to become whole with the visual artefact itself. All the developed practical projects here explore their respective themes through narratives in a cognitive matter. R. Lyle Skains (p. 90) believed that ‘serendipity’ – an aspect lacking in Linda Flower (b. 1944) and John R. Hayes’ (1981) Cognitive Process Model of composition – is “the confluence of cognitive activity and external stimulation that most often leads to so-called ‘eureka moments’ for creators”. The creation of the sculptural works is followed by a subjective analysis translated into reflective critical texts. Laurel Richardson (b. 1936) described the ‘creative analytical processes (CAP) ethnography’, pointing out that the proliferation of creative analytical practice with ethnographic work nowadays includes autoethnography, fiction, writing stories, museum installations, and photographs, amongst other listed forms (Richardson, 1999, p. 660).

Ingold (p. 129) established the distinction, or perhaps the relation, between ethnography and anthropology. He argued that the objective of ethnography is description, and the one of anthropology is transformation. He coined the term *anthropography* by giving the example of the graphic act of a drawn line that is at once descriptive and transformative. The line describes nothing but itself, and at the same time transforms both the draughtsman, in making the work, and those who follow, in looking at it. Throughout the practical process, I used the fictive narrative as a tool and method of pre-creation, rather than a result to be read through obvious interpreted meanings or figurative stories. Literary theorist Gérard Genette (1930-2018) differentiated three types of narratives where the second one has narrative refers to the succession of events, real or fictitious (Genette, 1980, p. 25). This type is current today among analysts and theoreticians of narrative content. American artist Robert Smithson (1938-1973) observed that various fictional and real agents somehow trade places with each other (Smithson, 1968, p. 100). He considered the self a fiction and noted how many imagine it to be real (Flam, p. 361). Through the notion of reflexiveness, Richard Walsh (b. 1964) asserted that the fictional narrative is a communicative gesture and a rhetorical force that attaches to the process and not to the substance of a representational product. Walsh (2007, p. 146) added that acts of fiction are accounts of imaginings, rather than of imagined worlds. People are storytellers by nature, and ‘stories provide coherence and continuity to one’s experience’ (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 7). Amia Lieblich et al.

characterised four modes of reading narratives: *Holistic-Content*, *Categorical-Content*, *Holistic-Form*, and *Categorical-Form* (p. 13). They stated that readers in narrative research should rely on the personal wisdom, skills, and integrity of the researcher (p. 10). With an extensive work experience in reflective and therapeutic writing for personal and professional development, author Gillie Bolton (b. 1951) presented one way of writing as a 'self-illuminatory and exploratory' process of learning, instead of one focused upon the creation of a product. Bolton wrote (2010, p. 8) that we gain insight when we allow 'reflective and reflexive processes to light upon and enlighten that which most needs examination'. Erik W. Borg's (2009) thesis looked at the problems artists and designers face when writing a practice-based PhD, and the different writing genres they develop through their identity. He wrote that the opportunities existing in our societies and the choices we make shape our identities, and that the choices made in writing create the doctoral professional identity (p. 13). Linguist Roz Ivanič (b. 1949) and her collaborators extensively investigated how identities are performed in writing. In addition to the three aspects of the writer's identity including the *autobiographical self*, the *discoursal self*, and the *self-as-author*, Ivanič (1998, pp. 23-30) identified a fourth aspect, *possibilities for self-hood*. This fourth one reflects the possibilities within the constraints of society for new identities, instead of an existing aspect of identity. With the directions the practice-based research in the arts is shifting towards, I find it crucial to encourage the artist-author not to get intimidated by rigid formats of writing and literal expression to try and match the thesis requirements of the past. Development needs freedom, trial and error, and transparency... and the artist-author should be truthful to their artistic self with their voice as much as they are daring with their art. Furthermore, the artist-author should not be discouraged from doing so if their writing is not impeccable according to literature standards. The language of an artist is also a tool, down to the structure of their sentences, and the coherence of their thoughts. There is a danger in professional editing and proofreading in the context of the artist-writer where the language indicator of the artist is neutralised and erased to become normalised academically. The practice-related written thesis owns an essential identity anchored in testimony. Wiping off this testimonial identity would be like negating the humane from the human, the sentient from the being, or the mortal from the species. Perhaps the artist-writer can have their own writing contemporary style like a poem no longer needs to rhyme. The artistic self is often

sensitive. That sensitivity is a central reason why artists choose to dig in and shed light on sometimes disturbing or painful themes they cannot close their eyes nor turn their back to, and present those themes to their audience. This aspect is promising to be further embraced by art schools and academics. I have immensely appreciated that the jury members have encouraged me to use my voice further in the research and speak from my point of view. There was indeed a lot of impostor syndrome for me as an artist to write academically, but after trying to have my text proofread, or using software to correct it, I realised how much a voice or style risks being formatted to fit in the academic realm. However, this external help wasn't programmed for art writing and its jargon. Can you imagine that every sentence by Smithson, let's be honest, most two consecutive words by Smithson would then need corrections? Or prominent theorists and philosophers having their sentences shortened, and saccadic? This is where the academic sector needs to lose some of the traditional formats to serve its researchers. The genuine voice should not be seen as weak, unprofessional, or simply unfit for impersonal and impassionate reporting of any project undertaken. The candid, frank, direct, bold, timid, or intentionally silent voice is where the inspiration and innovation lie for the academic arts field of the future. One of the main purposes of many scientific events in the arts sector is to show that the artist has also the ability to convey a message through critical thinking and writing. This doesn't mean that the traditional voice should be dropped, it will always have its adequate fields, nature of research and contexts. These can be objective projects, data collecting, historical, chronological and scientific studies etc. In their research on *Re-imagining Doctoral Writing Through the Visual and Performing Arts*, Louise J. Ravelli (b. 1963), Sue Starfield, and Brian Paltridge (2021) conducted a study analysing doctoral theses in the visual and performing arts. Ravelli et al. looked at the nature of the writing employed in these disciplinary contexts. The authors found evidence in the variation of the written and the creative components of practice-based doctoral theses being explicitly related to each other, or not. They identified four recognisable variations where the two components were encountered as more or less separate or more or less connected.

1. In the first type, *parallelism*, both written and creative components share the same thematic concerns without explicit textual or visual reference to it.

2. In the *influence* type, despite little explicit connection, the written component refers to the creative component and asserts the same influences.
3. The third type, *incorporated*, sees the written component referring in multiple ways constantly to the creative component, perhaps to act as the object of theorisation or to describe or illustrate a point.
4. The fourth type is *intermingled* and features a high visualisation of the written component, yet the written and creative components are encountered together.

The variation in the written voice was striking as well. It ranged from an impersonal, formal, or technical traditional academic voice to a highly subjective and self-reflexive voice beyond the use of I in the first person to comment on the writer's experience, history, activity, and so on, applied in my research here. Be it a stream of consciousness, poetic or other, the voice might be consistent throughout a thesis and transform into different voices at different points (pp. 224-225). The typeface can accompany the used voice throughout the text, or be used systematically or randomly in specific sections. For example, the main writing font used can be a conventional Times New Roman complemented by conventional punctuation, or it can be a contemporary Avenir with little or no punctuation headings. The thesis might even include handwriting, and may or may not include actual images in the written component (p. 223). An example could be Palmer's doctoral thesis aforementioned, written in the form of a story with imagined sculptures. J. John Loughran (2002, p. 42) stated that the reflective practice is effective when it demonstrates an ability to frame and reframe the practice setting, to develop and respond to this framing through action in a way that enhances the practitioner's wisdom-in-action and encourages articulation of professional knowledge as a particular outcome. Carole Gray and Julian Malins (2004, p. 22) stressed the importance of Schön's (1983) concepts of 'reflective practitioner', 'reflective practice', and 'reflection in action'. They also confirmed that the methods of practice used in this methodology are all valid and effective (p. 30). These count observation, visualisation, drawing, lateral thinking, sketchbook/notebook, photography, video, experimentation with materials and processes, modeling/simulations, reflection-in-action, personal narrative, use of metaphor and analogy, organisational and analytical matrices, visual

narratives, critical writing. Regarding ethical considerations, all kinds of research involve ethical issues (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden., 2000, p. 93). The tension between the aims of research to make generalisations for the good of others and the rights of participants to maintain privacy results from the creative process itself. This inquiry is strictly based on my own experiences and reflections. Mary Carol Ramos' (b. 1948) paper *Some Ethical Implications of Qualitative Research* operates within the traditional values in nursing. Despite that, the initial attempts to set minimal ethical standards stemmed from the quantitative approaches. Using a human being to enlarge the knowledge base is the basic ethical conflict common to all experimentation with human subjects in general. Ramos (1989) outlined the ethical problems related to qualitative studies: the relationship between the researcher and the participant, the subjective interpretations of data of the researcher, and the design itself. The University of Melbourne (2018, p. 27-28) published that creative practice research could be inherently argued differently from other forms of research. The study shows that it depends on the methodologies employed, as they can be very similar to the ones used by other fields. For example, in the field of anthropology, ethical issues that arise are similar to those that were evident in some projects of community cultural development.

In a nutshell, this reflective practice research is established as practice-based, post-qualitative, that unlocks postmodernist, constructivist, and constructionist paradigms. Furthermore, the methodological process is experimental and rhizomatic. The conceptual activity champions thinking through making using a variety of methods. Symbolised by bold green asterisks, the generated rhizomes are extracted and separately presented as potential root ideas (see Appendix C).

## II

### DEVELOPMENT: PRACTICAL PROJECTS AS CASE STUDIES

*CHRONOS: Do you think those overturned rocks exist?*

*COATLIQUE: They exist in the same way that undiscovered moons orbiting an unknown planet exist.*

*CHRONOS: How can we talk about what exists, when we hardly exist ourselves?*

*COATLIQUE: You don't have to have existence to exist. (Smithson, 1969a)*

Before I start describing the new works developed for this research, I find it useful to go through a brief explanation of my artistic process in general and include some past works. In my practice, I tackle a multidisciplinary approach mainly encompassing sculpture and painting, at times complemented by drawing, audio sound, and film turned into assemblages or mise-en-scènes.

*All of Rajaa Paixão's work has a harsh ambiguity and an internal contradiction since it deals with sensitive issues such as place and non-place, communication and its impossibility, time and memory—possible interior constructions she organises in storytelling, using a very personal narrative and exegesis. (Marino Marcela Coelho, 2019)*

I have always been fascinated with fictive narratives and objects, their provenance, their history, and mainly their materials. It is only during the progress of this thesis that I have been able to truly understand how central the idea of the physical object, physical elements and fictive spaces are to my artistic process, to cut off all other distracting directions. Built on this concern with the nature of perception and narratives in relation to the physicality of materials, I redefine and reorder physical objects by examining divergent themes including time, space, and ubiquity. The creation process resembles a reverse visual digression from the mental to the physical, the real to the fictive, and vice-versa, and explores the boundaries of my memory and imagination. It sharpens abstract perceptions of blurry events through a dissected analysis of the subject

matter, to demystify the complexity of an event and minimalise thematic narratives by stripping it to its essentials. The choice of content is the result of an elimination procedure of any element that has no useful function to the work, betraying a strong influence by Minimalism [Figs. 5,6,7]. Once my understanding of what I'm actually doing has been formulated and in a way assimilated, the work has gradually become less minimalist, more colourful and detailed.

*Certain works seem to have codified contradictory meanings, often sculptural and pictorial statements of positions which, rather than complement each other, seem to exclude each other. Rajaa intends to convey a high degree of tension in the content of her work, to balance the formal rigidity of some of her most representative works, which she builds under a double codification: reduction and addition. (Marino Marcela Coelho)*

The assemblages combine unconventional materials designated by the needs of the elaborated narratives, juxtaposed with found objects, engaging with each other in relation to space. Bases play a role as primordial as the created object, both merging into one sculpture with an orchestrated correlation between all the displayed pieces.

*The figure does not appear in Rajaa's work but is always implied, on the same ontological basis as the other elements that are separated, frozen and timeless, allowing the viewer to take her place. (Marino Marcela Coelho)*

Motherhood hasn't caused the development of my practice to deviate from its primary themes, despite some exceptions such as the work I had developed at the Mother House Studios. At times during this postpartum phase, I held my baby with one arm or rocked him in the pram with one hand, and painted with the other [Fig. 8]. The paintings were then transformed along with sculptures into a body of work revolving around motherhood and the frustration of having unfinished pieces lying around. The project was shortlisted for the first *Mother Art Prize* in 2017, and selected for its exhibition at 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning Gallery in London [Figs. 9,10]. Titled *Left Overs*, the group show featured twenty shortlisted artists voicing the diversity of motherhood and womanhood.

However, as seen in this research, the presence of motherhood infiltrated through incorporated random objects and relevant concepts. Several artists directly and literally

address motherhood concepts, such as Camille Henrot (b. 1978) whose solo exhibition *Wet Job* partly refers to the labor of breastfeeding and breast pumping (Trudel & Bromberg, 2022) [Fig. 11]. For instance, following Emin and Abramović's subjective statements regarding Motherhood, Conceptual artist Hannah Cooke (b. 1986) responded by creating two slow-motion videos. The first video *Ada vs. Emin* (-a) [Fig. 12], shows Cooke (2018) breastfeeding her baby daughter while sitting on a recreated lookalike of Emin's work *My Bed* (1998) [Fig. 13]. The second video *Ada vs. Abramović* (-b) [Fig. 14] depicts Cooke holding her breastfeeding baby daughter in her arms, sitting in front of a woman in a red dress. The woman is turning her back to the camera, channelling Abramović in her performance *The Artist is Present* (2010) [Fig. 15] and staring intensely at the Abramović-pretend person.

It is important to note that my practice doesn't fall under *Motherhood Art* characterised by motherhood/mothering-related depictions [examples in Figs. 16,17], nor does it identify as such. I adopt motherhood in my practice by borrowing selected narratives under the main notion of past, present, and future. Motherhood, the pandemic, and a life-threatening illness have been the most notable life events during the thesis journey. However, in the future, my work will very likely see diverse infiltrations by more actual events and fresh random triggers.

*Rajaa is excellent at transporting the viewer to intermediate worlds of dream-inspiration, leading them to other realities that form their imaginary. The immersion in her assemblages, usually presented in a tripartite body, allows us to enjoy metaphorical and confusing experiences, in which some strangeness is evident.* (Marino Marcela Coelho)

Other previous practical projects include *Berlin 78 Days Backwards* (2013) [Fig. 18]. It encompasses three pieces tackling an impossible hypothetical yet actual attempt of a trip, using the power of physics and surrounding forces such as black holes, time and the speed of light. The story behind it stems from the frustrating experience of missing an important art trip to Berlin following a document mix-up by the German Embassy and deciding to play on the idea of a virtual trip and time travel. The title *Berlin 78 Days Backwards* refers to going back in time to the day I should have been in Berlin working on the project ideas, rather than being stuck in London.

*This work concentrates on the physicality of an imaginative, imprecise process under the humorous narrative of the impossibility of belonging to multiple space-time, and of being able to travel in time allowing to modify the events. The study explores a narrative based on a real fact, seeking to extract the aesthetic and spiritual essence, merging, interweaving and evolving through ideas, to find hidden connections between the nature of the materials and the transcended space-time. (Marino Marcela Coelho)*

The wood and leather straps sculpture *Travel machine* [Fig. 19] hints to a torture tool from the past allowing us to go back in time. It is made of a vertical wooden board and leather straps that would hold a standing person in place. *Premature relativity* [Fig. 20] consists of two clear Perspex incubators, one standing on a metal base with a small piece from a broken mirror lying inside of it; and the second one containing sand, placed on the floor. The incubators are theoretically meant to catch the light through the mirror and make the sand's level rise, accomplishing travel back to the recent past with these limited and ridiculous powers of physics. The title of the third sculpture *Memoirs of the Twenty-First Century (2014)* [Fig. 21] is borrowed and modified from the novel *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century (1733)* by Samuel Madden (1686-1765), an early speculative fiction story hinting at backwards time travel. The blackboard hints at a black hole and consists of a sound piece with headphones and a mobile phone playing a distorted recording of the unlimited calls made to the German Embassy [Fig. 22].

*In the minimalism of this piece, besides the formal reduction and containment as fundamental procedures, the use of low chromatic variation in the use of neutral colours: black, white and wood colour is also evident, as evidenced by a symbolic transformation of the territory, an evasion space which is full and simultaneously empty, an unnamed, abandoned and expectant space. (Marino Marcela Coelho)*

Another past project titled *I forgot your name* (2014), was exhibited as part of the *Pony* group show in Kingston Upon Thames, London. *I forgot your name* is an installation of sculptural work revolving around the theme of sleep and the possibility of unconscious activities through astral projection or astral travel. The assemblages are an interpretation of a hypothetical out-of-body experience. It adopts the existence of an astral body as separate from the physical body, capable of travelling outside of it. The theme of astral projection has been mentioned in most religions and ancient cultures, but has no scientific evidence, and therefore is perceived as fictive or theoretical. Although the definition insinuates the existence of the soul, the work focuses on the physicality of the

process, tackling the ubiquitous facet as pertaining to multiple spaces and time, rather than spirituality. It is presented in the form of a dissected object-based and moving image storytelling analysis, with the intention of depicting a sober – yet humourous – study of a solemn topic surrounded with vagueness and assumptions. The work was shown in three separate spaces: *Space a: the real* [Fig. 23] where real events hypothetically occur, *Space c: the fictitious* [Fig. 24] where the astral body is projected, and *Space b: in-between* [Fig. 25] a transition which links the first two spaces, and features a projected film exploring recollected memory and the oscillation between the real and the fictive [Fig. 26].

In the first location *Space a: the real*, the sculpture *Single bed* [Fig. 27] is characterised by a basic bed design that looks tailor-made, containing a mattress bent forward due to a sudden ascending movement suggesting an event. A waterproof mattress cover serves as a temperature regulator by absorbing the moisture from the shock between the warmth of the bed and the cold deserted body. Spilled water betrays a loss of sensory-motor control [Fig. 28]. *Kit* [Fig. 29] sculpture is made of stacked towel, jumper and glass cup. It represents items to use in extreme cases of abrupt pulling back to reality due to external factors inducing physical symptoms such as extreme thirst, shivering and cold sweat. *Enlarged Ouné* [Fig. 30] is a giant version of the Lebanese ‘Ouné’, a traditional hand-sewn fabric pocket gift passed on from the seniors to the younger generations of the family [Fig. 31]. It is a portable organic alternative to Christian religious icons of the saints or the cross pendant and is meant to protect its new owner. The *Oval Mirror* [Fig. 32] sculpture is intentionally hung high on the wall in the room to stress the elevation aspect in astral projection. It holds some humour about the risibility of needing to check one’s appearance during projection while sleeping. The titles of the sculptures are descriptive and self-explanatory.

*The angular forms and the geometric character of the pieces demonstrate a constructivist influence, in which the language of painting fuses with that of sculpture, in a metaphor for the construction of the artist’s sensitive intuition. The representation, in which the senses of touch, vision and hearing are thought, is conditioned by the structure of its mind and constructed automatically by her, in a conscious determination to reject the hypotheses of the object of knowledge itself.* (Marino Marcela Coelho)

In the location mid-way *Space c: the fictitious*, the sculpture *Black net* [Fig. 33] is a sort of humourous trampoline for safe landing on a high surface and sliding smoothly

to the ground of a fictive space. The *21g* [Fig. 34] work consists of an old television installation placed on the floor. The monitor shows a film playing a bland limbo reel, where one dark linear and descending movement manifests on a loop [Fig. 35]. The drop movement is subtle and is accompanied by a light sound of something hitting the ground gently after a fall. It symbolises the soul returning to the body and the extra weight inducing the feeling of falling from the bed, when one is still lying on it. It is inspired by the information that when a person dies, the body instantly loses a mysterious 21g nonaccountable in body waste. *4 walls* [Fig. 36] is made of a printed poster of a close-up texture of a wall, with half of the poster placed inside the frame and the other half hung outside the frame. Placed on a physical wall, it creates four walls and is a reminder of sharing two spaces at the same time. The catalogue page insertion *Minimal Ubiquity* [Fig. 37] is a conceptual illustration or drawing of two overlapping wall corners.

The brief descriptions of the selected previous projects above are included to show how each individual work holds hidden imaginative and reality-inspired narratives, influencing the choice of materials associated with it. The short texts also highlight the correlation between the pieces and their relation to space and time. They underline the pre-studied narration as a method or tool of creation, rather than a result to be read through obvious interpreted meanings or figurative stories. Unlike the constructed process of the sculptures in my artistic practice, the paintings I was creating at the time were a spontaneous expression of the abstract fictive holding residues from the real. Painting has been taking more and more importance lately to establish balance and has become an extension of the sculptural process.

In the following development section, I individually describe four practical projects specifically developed for this research and produced during its development period. I elaborate here on themes, triggers, and the sculptural description behind each work.

The visual documentation of all practical projects features in a separate portfolio document (see Annex).

## **Project I: *The water tank***

*There was this paradox: even in its darkness, it [water] has this picturesque element. It's something about the human condition—not the water itself—humanity's relationship to water. So, in the end, it doesn't make a difference what the water looks like. It will always have this kind of picturesque quality to it because that's almost a human need—that water be a positive force. (Horn, 2011)*

*The water tank (TWT)* (2018) body of work constitutes the first step of the practical exploration through project, and most importantly, is the starting point of the research. Since the inquiry didn't start as practice-led, and is not based on previously produced works, this first phase was very blurry and abstracted. What was predominant at the time was the centric platform of narratives and the overwhelming imaginative trait impacting it; and patently, the indissociable status of motherhood. When speaking of motherhood, it should be acknowledged that an experience is not exclusively derived from the mother alone, and admittedly counting the toddler and certain family members as passive contributors and unaware influencers calling attention to some perceptions, directions and decisions. The choice of the idea to develop was purely based on intuition and reoccurring empirical thoughts emanating from personal experience. The project is inspired by a familiar object from our daily life and its surroundings, an old water tank in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal [Fig. 38].

The tank is situated on the bucolic premises of the family's country house and is surrounded by fields and ruins in the back [Fig. 39]. With the research's first direction being routed in motherhood and fiction, this structure was chosen as the first theme to develop in practice for several reasons. Firstly, the idea of it kept recurring and was triggering mixed thoughts and visual inspirations. There is something so interesting about water tanks that is very sculptural, yet non-sculptural at all in real life. I can't decide if they are from the past, or the future. The fascination with utilitarian architecture has been widely manifested around the world. Considered the most influential German

photographers of the post-war period, the German artists Bernhard Becher (1931-2007) and Hilla Becher (1934-2015) – also known as the duo/couple Bernd & Hilla Becher – documented disappearing industrial facilities for over fifty years. Their concise and recognisable photographs of heavy and mining industries include winding towers, blast furnaces, industrial facades, gas tanks, cooling towers, mine heads, preparation plants, lime kilns, grain elevators, water towers, gravel plants, coal bunkers, and occasionally framework houses. The catalogued architectural shapes and structures or so-called ‘typologies’ underscore their essential contribution to the modernist aesthetic (Estate Bernd & Hilla Becher, n.d.) [Fig. 40].

Eva Rothschild’s (b. 1971) *Tombstones* (2021) minimalist sculpture could be easily inserted into the documented photograph of the facilities [Fig. 41]. The structure of Rothschild’s sculpture is composed of five vertically elongated trapezoids of various dimensions, stacked on each other. The bottom, middle and top polygons are wide at the bottom base and narrow at the top. The two other polygons fitted in between are placed invertedly, swapping the narrowness to the bottom. The materials feature Jesmonite, felt, aluminium, polystyrene and fibreglass and create brutalist neutral thresholds of grey. Some minor colour touches appear to be painted on the surfaces of the bases, nearly hidden by the consecutive block. Besides these little colour-saturated details, the minimalist sculpture is completely stripped of extra accessories, placing the weight of the aesthetics on the geometrical composition. These details push the work a step forward from the Bechers’ documented structures towards a transformation into sculptural constructions. However, aesthetics don’t necessarily make a sculpture. If displaced and presented in an exhibition space or intentional artistic environment, any of the Bechers’ structures can become as legitimately sculptural as any highly aesthetic object. It can claim its sculptural title the same way Cildo Meireles’ (b. 1948) highly aesthetic *Babel* (2021) tower claims its sculpturality [Fig. 42].

Meireles’ circular large-scale installation also features stacked layers. However, these multiple layers are made from hundreds of second-hand analogue radios that are tuned to a multitude of different stations and adjusted to the lowest audible volume ("Cildo Meireles", 2001). Their little lights are reminiscent of a cheerful fusion between a disco ball and a Christmas tree at night. A highly aesthetic work would then be Olafur Eliasson’s (b. 1967) *Power tower* (2006) sculpture. The construction is inspired by the

*Zometools* children's toy and the fivefold spatial possibilities it offers, despite appearing to be based on one underlying geometric principle (Eliasson, 2023). Made of stainless steel, plywood, light bulbs, and coloured glass, the sculpture would certainly work as a festive celebration artefact [Fig. 43]. If that were the case, then Lee Bul's (b. 1964) casted steel tower would be a celebratory artefact too, but destined to land on an exoplanet [Fig. 44]. Inspired by elements from modernist architecture, the structure is made from barbed wire debris collected from a demolished guard's post in the Korean Demilitarized Zone. It features English text in LED lights, and flickering light signals symbolising a failure to communicate the message to an audience of which most are unable to recognise and decode Morse Code ("[RDP 2023 / Artist] Lee Bul", 2023). A passage from non-aesthetical to aesthetical sculpture can be gradually seen in Sabine Mirlesse's (b. 1986) winter project *Crystalline Thresholds | Les Portes de Givre* (2022-2023) [Fig. 45]. Stemming from the idea of thresholds, atmospheric, mythological, architectural and geological, the series of the seven frozen passageways is made in collaboration with the meteorological station and oldest observatory in France. Mirlesse installed monumental ephemeral sculptures at the top of the Puy de Dôme volcano in France, in the form of passageways positioned for the Pleiades constellation [Fig. 46]. Each sculpture starts getting shaped by the Atlantic winds and atmospheric conditions. The structures surrender to specific frost phenomena which eventually disappear with the arrival of spring [Fig. 47]. The location is a Unesco world heritage and the site of a unique microclimate in Europe. It is known for its unique and pure atmosphere, and its recurring frost and ice storms based on Mirlesse's grandfather's 1930s research for the Ministry of Air. A doorway still stands among the ruins from the times the summit used to be a Gallo-Roman destination for pilgrimage and home to the Temple of Mercury. This type of condition shares the same umbrella with Rajszy's weather-conditioned canvases mentioned earlier. I realise that similar to these sculptures, artists also go through drastic changes, and contradicting experiences in their lives, practices, and thinking, except that the mental transformation is not as obvious, even to the artists themselves. The visible effects of the exterior conditions have turned the sculptures from monumental public structures to aesthetical non-natural/natural wonders. Echoing a human/nature collaboration similar to Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) [Fig. 48] land art, Mirlesse's sculptures don't stop at turning into air art but revert to nearly their initial state of public art [Fig. 49]. The

transformation keeps the viewer riveted and curious, anticipating change, as if seeing the work for the first time at every encounter. Most importantly, it keeps the passenger aware of the sculptural entropy of the work. In this case, what can differentiate contemporary public sculpture from classic public sculpture with its roles as a monument, a statue, or a memorial, is its blending threshold with its location. Therefore, we can attribute the quality of lasting delimitation from the surrounding scenery, background and foreground depth, to contemporary sculpture.\* The value can be determined through the number of encounters in relation to the duration of time passing, and how noticeable the work continues to be perceived as art, as opposed to gradually dissolving and relocating to the pictorial scenery background. According to these factors, the function of the work can then shift back and forth between the qualities and definitions it holds. British writer, critic, and curator Tom Morton (2020) poetically wrote that this invisibility is not necessarily a ‘glitch’, and in some cases appears to be a feature: ‘It’s a paradox of public sculptures that the more accustomed to them we are, the more they slip from our conscious sight, becoming the backdrop to the chip-shop lunches of truanting schoolkids, or landmarks where we await a Tinder date, checking our reflections in their dulled, verdigrised bronze’.

Writing about the Grândola water tank structure helped me discern some points in perception. In the autoethnography text *Notes on the water tank, 2018-2019* (see Appendix B), I reflect on the tank, questioning why some objects are mesmerising more than others, and why they activate some obsession-like behaviours. What types of characteristics do these physical objects – such as the tank – pertain to, and how is a personal relatability established between the object and the subject? To understand my attention to the tank, I analysed it from two crucial analogical points of view, the first one from my point of view as an artist, and the second one as a mother.

My perception as a visual artist perceived the tank as an outdoor artwork forgotten in a field, left without maintenance, exposed to the visible effects of time, nature, and weather conditions. Most of the white paint has peeled off, revealing a rough concrete surface. Rogue leaves have grown around it and some climbing plants are now wrapped around the bases up to the top, blooming each season in a striking contrast of

lilac and green natural aesthetic beauty and brutal industrialism. The further aesthetics interfered, the less of an artwork the tank represented [Fig. 50].

Beauty has stopped being the essence of art, replaced by the effect it has on a viewer, and how it makes them feel and react. My focus on the tank as an artwork is highly influenced by minimalist art, therefore I wouldn't have been surprised to see it freshly painted, isolated, and placed in a park or an exhibition space as a public art or a monument. American art critic and art theorist Rosalind E. Krauss (b. 1941) pointed out that 'over the last ten years rather surprising things have come to be called sculpture' (Krauss, 1979). That was decades ago. In that sense, anything could be introduced as art, if the creator decides it is, and intends it to be. For instance, Michael Craig-Martin's (b. 1941) work *An Oak Tree* (1974) is composed of a glass of water on a clear glass shelf. The sculptural work is accompanied by a written red serif text laid out in two columns on a pale background [Fig. 51]. A form of discourse, the text features a dialogue between two voices, *Q* and *A*, in which the artist claims to have turned the glass of water into an oak tree without altering its appearance. In the video *changing a glass of water into an oak tree* (2024) by the Royal Academy of Arts, Craig-Martin elaborated about how he wanted to convey the essence of art rooted in transformation, thinking that the most extreme proposition would be a lack of transformation.

Here, the power of imagination materialises through a clear textual narrative, explicitly owning a definition for a work of art aesthetically understood as something completely different. Narration is used as a translation device, transcribing a physical work of art into a literary entry of what this glass of water is, or what an oak tree could look like. Both elements of water and glass have crystalline, reflective, or mirroring properties. The thoughts of the artists are diluated and infiltrated in it, refracted and projected onto a wall under a radical linear distortion of the notion of physicality and its ontology. The text ends with *Q* asking 'How long will it continue to be an oak tree?' and *A* answering 'Until I change it'. Therefore, the *work* is defined as *art*, or the *glass* as a *tree*, only if the artist intends it to be so. The artist is not responsible here for what the viewer sees or understands. Only his own perception rules out and is entitled to convey the message behind his fictive and his imaginary, making *A* an alias, pseudonym, or pen name for Michael Craig-Martin.

The tank project also started with a mental projection. I looked at the tank and imagined a collaboration between sculptor, conceptual artist and writer Robert Morris (1931-2018) and architect and designer Le Corbusier (1887-1965), a sculpture titled *Untitled sur pilotis*, when for most people it is, ironically, a reserve of water. The title is inspired by Morris' works titled *Untitled*, such as his mirrored cubes sculptures (1965) [Fig. 52], and Le Corbusier's (1927) recommendation of the usage of pilotis or pillars in his manifesto, *The Five Points of a New Architecture* [Fig. 53].

*The qualities of scale, proportion, shape, and mass, are physical. Each of these qualities is made visible by the adjustment of an obdurate, literal mass [...] The objection is raised against the use of color that emphasizes the optical and in so doing subverts the physical. The more neutral hues, which do not call attention to themselves, allow for the maximum focus on those essential physical decisions that inform sculptural works.* (Morris, 1966)

In that sense, the questions I raised in the autoethnography text concerned the role of the tank, its story, what it is aesthetically and what it could have been. How can visual narratives portray this thinking? What happens when the narrative is not a clear post-creation reading, and when the viewer is unaware of the thinking behind it? Does the work need to be explained? Some artists chose not to explain their work, or even write a statement about their practice. Speaking to Arts and Culture Editor Aaina Bhargava (2024), artist Haegue Yang (b. 1971) pointed out that people try to define the work of artists and 'put it in a box'. Yang displays a 'passive-aggressive' resistance to her work being categorised or explained. The artist purposefully makes unrecognisable work that is hard to pin down and define. Considering that the material has the power to dictate, the sculpture and installation artist simply follows the material's potential, feeling that it's her job as a sculptor to make it as demanding as possible, be it a method or a material [Fig. 54].

My perception as a mother was completely different. The presence of my son – who was two years old at the time – running around it and playing underneath it, certainly altered my views. The tank, which was nearly five meters high looked endlessly high compared to his small stature. It seemed threatening in its deplorable condition, unsteady, on the verge of collapsing at any wind blow. I was thinking of balance, proportions, and function. Where the artist in me focused on the outside aspect of the tank, the motherly

mind included the inside. I was wondering in what state the tank was on the inside. We have seen sculpture casts presented as the final sculpture, something like Irene Schubiger's (b. 1948) works [Fig. 55]; or inverted shapes sculpted on the inside like Alejandro Monge's (b. 1988) sculptural portraits [Fig. 56]. There is also the filled and sealed inside seen in Mark Manders' (b. 1968) sliced self-portrait of an imaginary artist [Fig. 57].

Nevertheless, across three-dimensional shapes, the inside of a sculpture has seldom interested viewers or been given any considerably major curatorial importance. It is only natural that the outside aspect of a work has more impact and holds more interest. Doesn't the same applies to people in society? The outside is the first thing we see, and the quality of the inside is explored through time and experience. The added strength of a sculptural space is its inside, it is a space, it is a room. If and when we hear 'inside the painting', 'inside the movie', or 'inside the performance'... the quality is an endured descriptive perception rather than literal spatiality. Unless the gallery is considered the sculpture itself with the art constituting merely components inside of it, equivalent to the mind and the interest in what's in it what's or on it. We go back to the confusion in the literature on the concept of place, to which Marxist urban theorist Andrew Merrifield (1960) suggested a solution through a dialectical mode of argumentation. Merrifield (1993) offered a reconciliation to the space-place dilemma by defining place as a 'practiced space'. He drew upon philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre's (1901-1991) fruitful conceptualisation of physical and social place as distinguishable but not separable from the realms of perception, symbolism and imagination (Lefebvre, 1991). Inhabitants of a space, such as a house, experience this space through complex symbols and images. It is the space of everyday life, a representational space, or a lived space. It is alive, directional, situational or relational and does not need to be consistent or cohesive. That said, a lived situation requires action, passion, and consequently time. The lived space is then dynamic, fluid, and essentially qualitative. Hence, the lived space is conceived in thought and expresses a specific representation of space or dematerialised space. But to actualise this space materially, a place is needed. Furthermore, place stops flow, shapes material flows into things and has the resources and the capacity to transform space. Therefore, place constitutes a grounding and solid base for fluid space. For this reason, the theoretical and political analysis of the place or actual daily life must precede

the one of the space. By applying these theories, we can consider here the material and qualitative brain—or gallery—as the place; and the thoughts—or the experience—as the space. A concrete example would be the voided gallery space-place (1974) of conceptual artist and professor of art Michael Asher (1943-2012) [Fig. 58]. In his Frieze feature, curator James Rondeau (b. 1969) wrote that mistaking Asher's addition or removal of walls for 'empty' is a facile and erroneous assumption (Rondeau, 2008). The actively modified spaces are full of thought and express their own physical materiality. They fall under the category of sculpture shaped by ideas rather than by physical gestures and objects made by the artist. Asher's influence pushed museums and art galleries to question the logic of their architectural and organisational structures. The New York Times positioned Asher 'among the patron saints of the Conceptual Art phylum known as Institutional Critique, an often esoteric dissection of the assumptions that govern how we perceive art.' ("Michael Asher", n.d.). The artist's work is based on direct, deliberate and highly site-specific interventions. These feature alterations in environments such as subtracting space divisions, and even removing doors and windows, as seen in *The Clocktower* work of the New York City municipal three-level tower building (Foote, 1976) [Fig. 59].

In the photographs, the spaces look overwhelmingly void. The space must seem bigger and floating to the visitor. Other properties come into the picture such as temperature, it must feel colder with its bare walls. Nancy Foote reviewed that the windowless and doorless tower is left 'wide open to the early spring chill'. The floor and the ceiling are prominent too. The experience must be pure time enduring, lost in magnified emotion. I imagine echo, the silence must be loud too, and the space feels like it is going through the same mental states as we are. A fact that philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) undoubtedly posits, is that we are not alone in enduring, external objects endure the same as we do, which is why we struggle to think about duration in its original purity (2008, pp. 106-107). In this case, it is the experience of validating the argument of a philosophical concept rather than the other way around. I will use the theories of practitioner, drama theorist, and political activist Augusto Boal (1931-2009) to elaborate on the spectator's gaze. Boal (1995) presented a oneiric dimension and concept of space as theatre, describing it as the first human invention that paved the way for all discoveries and inventions. Theatre starts when the human observes itself in the act of seeing and

acting, feels itself feeling, and thinks itself thinking. Therefore, theatre is not a building nor a physical construction. It is a natural human property for theatricality through the capacity to observe oneself in action. It makes the human capable of imagining variations of, and alternatives to these actions. The human can then start drawing differences between what/where is, what/where is not, and what it could become or where it could go. Same as any three-dimensional space, the stage or empty space can be perceived as big or small by various people, but the measures in square metreage are always the same. The notion of subjective time works the same with an interval of time seeming longer or shorter within the same number of minutes. Consequently, spaces possess subjective dimensions including an affective dimension introducing memory into an aesthetic space, and a oneiric one belonging to dreams and bringing imagination into play. A physical platform or any objects are not needed to determine a space as an aesthetic space. Once we designate a restricted space as an aesthetic one, it automatically acquires all the concomitant properties needed, real or imagined. It then becomes a superposition of spaces, of a space within a space, a smaller space within an already existing larger physical space. Created by the gaze of the spectator, the aesthetic space itself is the interpenetration of these two overlaid spaces. To concretise the idea, I elaborate on works by visual artist Joan Jonas (b. 1936). Jonas made a series called *My New Theater* (2002-2005) to present an original angle of the concept of ‘performances in miniature’ (MoMA Highlights, 1999). A performance filmed in a certain place is seen inside a sculptural volume space placed inside a larger space for viewers to see through it [Fig. 60]. Based on Boal, I reason that if the artist is the one to perform in the film, then Jonas would feel herself standing in that outer space, seeing herself dancing inside a sculpture on a film in another place. With that theory in mind, the perception of the empty gallery is interchangeably both physical and mental, though confusingly internal, floating in space, inside the mind, inside the place. This helps elucidate what characterises a sculptor. The starting point of the sculptor is the inside, the space, and it goes on to be shaped as a place.\* My process too, goes backwards opposing the space-place dilemma reconciliation theory. In my case, the narrative, the fictive and the imagination are the space. Subsequently, the resulting sculptures are each a physical space-place, placed inside a larger place.\* The majority of sculptors shape, explore the inside before the outside, live with a work in progress, and know its weaknesses and its beautiful surprises. On the other

hand, the majority of viewers see the outside, judge, assume, jump to conclusions, evaluate, and then move on to the next work. If the artist doesn't reveal much of the process, the experience of the viewer is only superficial in every sense of the term. Superficial not necessarily in the sense of vain, but literally related to superficies, to a surface, to an outward appearance or an external aspect. But isn't that only natural? After all, isn't how we live on our planet, on its perimeter when the sculptor owns the periphery and the core? That's how knowledge can be generated, by learning about our world from the inside, and the surrounding space or universe. This is where the role of the sculptural process is most informative.\* I think here of the photograph of the artist, furniture designer and landscape architect Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) sitting inside the heart of his sculpture, inside its 'peach pit' [Fig. 61]. The sculptor aimed to know the stone inside out and wanted to find the stone within the stone, and he succeeded. Noguchi understood the nature of the circle. He saw in it a chance for introspection, to examine both the interior and the exterior of a sculpture up close. He saw an opportunity to understand the material and how it reacts not only with itself but also with the environment it occupies ("Isamu Noguchi", 2013).

*The essence of sculpture is for me the perception of space, the continuum of our existence...All dimensions are but measures of it, as in relative perspective of our vision lay volume, line, point, giving shape, distance, proportion. Movement, light, and time itself are also qualities of space. Space is otherwise inconceivable. These are the essences of sculpture and as our concepts of them change, so must our sculpture change (Noguchi as cited in Hunter, 1978, p. 85)*

In this case study project, the artist in me rushed to alter the outside of the tank, though the inside of the volume is an aspect introduced by the mother. As a mother, the tank was strictly what it was built for, a structure that stores water. The questions that arose were about whether the tank was empty, whether there was humidity inside, mold, and little creatures crawling... And in case there was water in it, there was the thought of its current condition. The tank is supposedly built as a reserve of a natural element. For a mother, not being able to see what's inside this threatening structure makes it even more intriguing. Does it contain water? Is the water clean? Has the water dried out, will it freeze in the winter? Looking at the outer condition of the structure, one wonders in what state the water currently is. Am I being paranoid? Is my reaction a natural or a bad one?

Professor of Philosophy Thomas Leddy (1995) introduced a new notion of aesthetics in a set of items found in everyday life and which are excluded in the literature of aesthetics. The adjectives of these items are ‘neat’, ‘messy’, ‘clean/unclean’, ‘dirty’, ‘sloppy’, ‘filthy’, ‘ordered/disordered’, ‘cluttered/uncluttered’, ‘cleared/not cleared’, ‘blemished/unblemished’, and ‘attractive/unattractive’. This notion is concerned with surface properties rather than the underlying structure or substance of things. Thinkers usually base their aesthetic discussions on the arts, which might explain why aesthetics properties from every day life are neglected. Another reason might be related to social ideals and stereotypes of gender roles associating these surface properties to the domain of the housewife and servant, mainly women and mothers. Leddy noted that the 1950s culture saw women obsessed with neatness and cleanness, and men encouraged to ignore them and focus on professional business matters leading to success.

Following my concerns around the tank, I couldn’t help but think about how mothers are supposed to be in the eyes of society: strong, solid, in control; when a tsunami might be taking place inside their mind. Water is free in its fluid nature, malleable, adaptable, a vital and powerful element that sustains living creatures and could in extreme conditions bury cities. It can be admired, but also feared. In the case of the water tank, the water is tamed, controlled, powerless, reduced, and more prone to condition deterioration. Time plays a role in the ageing process and the quality of the water. Mothers are expected to keep their composure, without betraying any internal turmoil, at the risk of being labelled ‘aggressive’ or even ‘crazy’. Does society reduce mothers to water tanks where the ageing process is a sign of degradation? Mothers might not be aiming to go out of control to destroy or harm, but to break the walls of oppression, confinement inside their thoughts, and judgment, and from being expected to reform under one rigid model. Would it help if the tank were transparent? Would it be enough to see through mothers, facilitate communication to better understand them, and interact without misconception? Or must mothers break out of all pre-existing misconceptions and build their tailor-made guidelines? Despite knowing that the notion of crazy is a socially manipulated judgment, the notion still affected and shamed the mother in me. In the quest to distinguish apperception from perception, paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott (1896-1971) (1971) studied the substance of illusion. Winnicott (1971) stakingly claimed that both inner reality and external life contribute to an intermediate area of experiencing,

an intermediate state, unfolding between the baby's inability and growing ability to recognise and accept reality. Despite being inherent in art and religion in adult life, the substance of illusion is allowed to the infant but is considered a hallmark of madness in adults (pp. 2-3). The adult would be forcing others to acknowledge a sharing of illusion that is not their own and putting a strong claim on their credulity. Wouldn't that make tagging a mother as crazy more related to other's insecurities than to her actual abilities? Perhaps people feel threatened when their blindly followed beliefs are questioned or shaken because such as in religion, their whole social support system is built on them. The quote attributed to philosopher and critic of culture Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) 'Sometimes people don't want to hear the truth because they don't want their illusions destroyed' epitomises it convincingly. The origin of the popular saying is uncertain without a tangible and accurate published mention. It might be a result of a paraphrase that has been widely reshared, yet remains a helpful formulation in this connection. In *The New Organon* – originally *Novum Organum*, written in Latin and published in 1620 – Bacon (Bacon, Jardine, & Silverthorne, 2000) expounded that emotion marks and stains human understanding in countless ways and can be impossible to perceive. Thus fanciful knowledge results from the influence of will and emotions where humans prefer to believe what they want to be true. Humans are too impatient to make investigations, don't want to limit their hopes, and are superstitious, arrogant, fastidious, and sensible to common opinion. As a result, humans reject what is difficult, sensible ideas, deeper truths of nature, the light of experience and anything unorthodox. The belief that the mind should not be seen spending its time on mean and unstable things is imperious. The own nature of human understanding is what carries it away to abstractions. It carries it to distortion until it draws everything and supports and agrees with it. If the understanding encounters any other powerful countervailing examples, it completely disregards them or simply fails to notice them by dismissing and rejecting those ideas to preserve the authority of its first conceptions. In conclusion, forms are not real, they only exist in the imagination and are 'figments' of the human mind. This is why it is important to study matter and its structure or *schematismus*, structural change (*meta-schematismus*), pure act, and the law of act or motion. What is even more dangerous is that this display of prejudice arises by agreement and from men's associations with each other through talk, and chosen words that suit the understanding of the common people. The unskillful code of words incredibly obstructs

the human understanding and creates confusion, violence, empty disputes and fictions (pp. 41-45). In other words, it is a collective agreement, a collective fiction based on a deceitful societal fear. It is an untruthful cooperative language based on a vain dogma articulated to justify the rejection of what feels or looks different. How does this oblivion or distortion work in our modern society? What transformations from the difficult, denied and rejected to the pleasant, acknowledged and accepted does it impose? Or is it the other way around? Is the 'crazy' mother the social equivalent to the 'difficult' woman, and the 'witch' female artist? The most known case is calling Abramović a witch and a black magic performer, to which she responded that she is an artist, not a Satanist (Marshall, 2020). This is an extensive theme of its own, featuring female artists called witches, and the representation of women as witches in art history and literature. Isn't it after all how Kathleen Duffy (2020) demonstrated in her book that despite his great achievements, Freud's nineteenth-century inquisitorial practice had a devastating effect and destructive consequences and was consequently untrustworthy? Freud used the literature of accused women in the witch trials to compare his 'hysterical' patients and develop supposed parallels. Tagging, separating, and marginalising and so, are then red flags pointing to this constructed collective language of insecurities and threats to beliefs. This is where we can attribute another role to the form, to the matter and sculpture. It is an act of rejection of the collective fake and a testimony of the individual transparency.\* Every artist who materialises an internal thought and moulds a personal world is removing a brick from the wall of lies society has erected over the centuries. The more the sculpture becomes unusual, original, different, and specifically unfamiliar, the more the artist is helping build an authentic space of free ideas, a safe space for the inclusion of all communities and individuals.\* And that is not despite their difference, but as a celebration of their uniqueness, as richer sources of knowledge, as an exchange of habits and customs and ultimately growing instead of barricading.

*The principal mark of genius is not perfection but originality, the opening of new frontiers (Koestler, n.d.)*

The artistic documentation and study of the tank comprised several sketches [Fig. 61], photography, videos of the surroundings [Fig. 62], and written notes and texts.

These methods gradually resulted in the creation of four sculptural works in the project using the narrative as a method rather than a result. Fictive narratives were created based on an imagined 'life' of the tank, leading to the creation of new sculptures. The process has helped locate where the fictive infiltrated, and how close it can be to the real, at the point of intersecting and being perceived as one. The first main sculpture reimagines the tank, followed by three supporting sculptures rethinking the tank and its surroundings. This first project gives a solid role to motherhood by considering the influence of the mothering practice equal to the art practice. It places both practices as identical vertical parallel structures. In the latter, common themes found in both practices emanate from their respective path or base, and form several bridges between the two bases. Visually it looks like a ladder or holds a certain resemblance to a DNA structure seen from a specific angle where the bases don't coil around each other [Figs. 63,64]. This new graphic interface served as a visual aid summarising some ideas to adopt and some others to take out. It also helped me realise that the fictive object is much more prominent and has the need to transcend occurrential events and imminent status to grow. Sculpture and Motherhood are two disparate sectors that can be associated, though, within my practice, they cannot be significantly merged on a long-term basis [Fig. 65]. On some level, it is like the DNA molecule, where the two backbones from a certain point of view could look like two parallel straight lines but they don't and would never overlap, being a matter of perspective and angle.

The dual analysis of the artefacts determined intersecting dominant themes, such as *Influence and movement*, *The good and the bad*, *The mother of the mother*, *Extendable properties*, *Criticism*, *Freedom*, *Fear*, *Crazy*, *Play*, *Time*, *Depth*, *The tactile and the sensorial*, and *Control*. It pointed to concerns of social nature and myths around the image of the artist in the art scene, and the image of the mother in society. According to therapist and psychologist Paul Watzlawick (1921-2007), many of these myths are based on disinformation and confusion in communication. Watzlawick (1977) distinguished four types of communication paradoxes with high practical importance. The first variation is where an individual is punished for perceiving the outside and himself correctly (such as a child confused between his accurate perception and the one the parent defines and perceives). The second one involves an individual experiencing certain feelings but is expected by a significant other to feel differently, resulting in a feeling of guilt. The third

variation is when an individual is faced with paradoxical injunctions demanding and prohibiting certain actions at the same time. A fourth variation is when an individual is told to demonstrate a spontaneous behaviour but feels blocked and unable to adopt the behaviour as it is spontaneous by its very nature. This scenario is the most frequent in human interaction. With these paradoxes, Watzlawick aimed to show how communication is behind what we perceive as reality. Moreover, to assume that there is only one reality is a dangerous delusion in itself.

By metaphorically comparing the tank to a mother moulded by society, it demonstrated how the fictive narrative behind the sculptures recreated a fictive space where the mother was free from judgement and stereotypes, and how the choice of materials was made to materialise the ideas behind the narrative. From the actual tank, imagined objects have materialised. The real became fictive through a narrative, and then the fictive became real through the existence of the new artefacts. Considering that the latter version of the real is widely spread, and theories are built on top of the new real, which was built on fiction, from fiction built on the real... How many false ideas have we inherited from our mothers, who inherited them from their own mothers, and so on? It goes back to indefinite generations. What mutated versions of paradigms have emanated from societies and are embedded in us?

### ***TWT: the water and the tank***

When the real water tank is an opaque hermetic structure built to store water inside of it, the imagined fictive sculpture only holds certain traits from it. Made of nude wood, the structure of the new tank has been significantly downsized [Fig. 66]. The imperfect cube and the long base structures have been accentuated, eliminating the dominant stature of the original tank. The compressed cube has become transparent through clear glass and reveals its inside. The water has overflowed outside the tank taking the shape of a long bumpy bright blue silicone mass, which has been hand-modelled, resting on the top of the tank and dangling from it. Small edgy abstract sculptures painted glossy white rest inside the box, representing calcified water residues. Instead of being threatening, the water lies calmly and peacefully on the tank, looking very vivid, free – yet composed – healthy, and doesn't appear to be affecting the balance of the tank. Residues have remained inside the tank, pure white, clean, and harmonious, retaining a shine betraying the former presence of the water [Fig. 67] (see Annex).

### ***TWT: dripping and leakage***

Some water drops have escaped outside the tank, and are leaking on the tank's bases/pilotis [Fig. 68]. Invisible to the eye, light can reveal their presence and crystalline properties. The narrative of this light sculpture is based on the interminable concrete bases of the original country house tank. It imagines the base's journey and experiences, and how leaked water from the container could affect it, or replenish it. The main structure is composed of a vertical nude wood frame, joined by a metal bar on the top. Glued to the bar, a translucent plastic sheet hangs straight in between the wood sides, nearly touching the ground. Facing the vertical structure, a blue light bulb with a light grey ceramic holder screwed to a nude wood block rests on the floor. The exposure of light sends blue refractions across the room through the oval patterned translucent sheet sparkling like small white crystals. A played sound of water drops complements the physical sculpture, bringing a poetic ambience to the ensemble (see Annex).

### ***TWT: the ruins and the frozen puddle***

*My mother always said my sister, Satsu was like wood. As rooted to the earth as a sakura tree... But she told me I was like water... Water can carve its way through stone. And when trapped, water makes a new path. (Rob Marshall, 2005)*

External factors surrounding the tank play a role in its existence. Autumn leaves contribute an organic and ephemeral look, softening its threatening aspect [Fig. 69]. The water drops have fallen on the surrounding elements, gathering and reshaping in a frozen state, affecting the texture and the matt aspect of the surfaces it gets in contact with.

The destroyed structure in ruins is located right behind the real water tank. Remains of its borders, broken rocks and roof tiles inside and outside of it, are hidden under herbs forming a shelter for insects and even small reptiles. The installation inspired by it consists of two main sculptures, one vertical and the other horizontal. The sculptures are composed of rocks and destroyed ruins, mounted or joined by industrial and construction materials such as metal, aluminium, and wood. Some site-collected rocks were painted with a variant of textures. Mat and shiny finishes channel the look and feel of dry surfaces, or wet surfaces due to the presence of water, be it from the tank, from the irrigation system, or simply the rain during other seasons. A skin of off-white silicone rolled by hand dangles from the horizontal aluminium bar onto the floor, echoing frozen water mixed with other residues. Scattered around, on the floor and the base of the vertical sculpture, are a few leaves with earthy autumn colours, both muddy mat or shiny bronze (see Annex).

### ***TWT: post-play happy socks***

A dynamic activity made the tank look even more static and prominent. The enthusiastic children played and ran loudly near it, sometimes leaving their colourful socks lying around before heading to the pool. On some days, clothing items were hung around to dry on metallic strings or bars. The sculpture plays the role of a stand for two socks from a different pair [Fig. 70]. Made of dry clay, one sock is painted with acrylic lemon yellow, and the second is a bright blue-green tint. The matching sock of each pair

is missing, having disappeared in some invisible vortex inside the washing machine. The yellow sock sits high, perched on a heavy marble base. Roughly cut, the white marble block has grey veins, characterising some of the natural classic stones seen in residential buildings in Portugal. The block represents the residence duality and the process of switching from the marbled entrances of city homes to the large mahogany-coloured floor tiles of the Portuguese countryside houses. A galvanised grey metal base with parallel legs supports the ensemble, holding the bent-hung sock on one of its horizontal bars. The sculpture is accompanied by a playful socks sketch referring to academic recommendations to use diagrams in a methodology. The sketch is at once a diagram and a non-diagram conveying that the process has its own rules and interpretations of scholarly methods (see Annex).

## **Project 2: *Nurturing sculpture-time***

This following project was inspired by the dominant theme of *Time* determined in Project I. It explored the subjective notion of time perceived by the mother and the artist. The project focused on the shape of time and the existing theories around it in the literature. The notion of the shape of time was translated into a visual perception, in the creation of *Nurturing sculpture-time (NST)* (2019) consisting of *wormholes & space cashews* [Figs. 71,72] followed by *space skins* [Figs. 73,74] sculptures.

The exploration culminated in a publication titled *Fatalism as a Product of Motherhood in the Context of Sculpture*, 2020 (see Appendix B). The paper theoretically demonstrated how subjective perception can differ not only from one artist to another but for the same artist from one day to another, depending on real-life occurrences, biographical circumstances and conditions. This project also underlined the passage from real to fictive narratives, and the functions of materials. The subjective study was developed to elucidate how I perceive time as an artist who is also a mother, currently working with the medium of static sculpture. To understand if, and how, the status of early motherhood can influence artistic creation, the notion of time presented in the publication was used as a catalyst to analyse the creation process of a particular project. With the theory about the philosophy of time initially informing practice, this section adopts a practice-led approach. I created a sculptural project specifically taking into consideration existent philosophical, and scientific concepts and figures [Figs. 75,76,77,78,79] studying the shape of time. The shape of time involves five different views and models of time and its connection to change articulated throughout history. The models include The *Presentist* model (*Presentism*) in which only present objects exist; The *Eternalist* model (*Eternalism*) [Fig. 80] where all objects from the past, present, and future simultaneously exist; The *Growing block* model in which the past exists and is fixed, continually adding new facts to reality; The *Moving spotlight* model [Fig. 81] where all objects in time exist, but with the present moment moving through it; and finally the *Shrinking tree* model [Fig. 82] where all future possibilities start being eliminated by performing different actions (Tallant, 2014). *Eternalism* is the model that has been more widely adopted as the most plausible view according to Physics. It is also pertinent to the

sculpture theme as it presents the dimension of time like the one of space. It highlights the importance of the far future, based on the eternalist picture in which all beings that will ever exist do exist but in a different part of spacetime (Tomasik, 2014). In other words, contemporary artists coexist with the artists of the past and the artists of the future. Post-creation texts were written to analyse the sculptures, employing the same technique from the first project with one text developed from my point of view as an artist, and the other from my point of view as a mother.

### ***NST: wormholes & space cashews***

Thinking of a starting point to create the first three-dimensional work *wormholes & space cashews*, as an artist I didn't perceive one specific linear direction and decided to create many. Time might consist of multiple isolated time streams instead of a single line, and the topology of time hasn't been decisively visually formulated in the philosophy of time. The notion of a three-dimensional, defined as volume, is not given by direct visual perception (Read, 1956, p. 27). An imaginative or mental effort is required to pass beyond the memory image and construct a three-dimensional image. Although we see objects from several points of view, we retain one particular and significant aspect as a memory image. In this work, a thin perforated metal platform is partly vertically inserted into a solid, grainy stucco base. Twelve metal bars pierce through its holes, creating a separation of two new spaces, with twelve before and twelve after, intersecting at the perforated points. The dense structure resides in inorganic time and presents matter within this time's solid-state (Smithson, 1996a, p. 11). Theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking (1942-2018) claimed that everything has holes and wrinkles when looked at closely. 'Nothing is flat or solid', a basic physical principle that applies to time.

*There are tiny crevices, wrinkles and voids in time. Down at the smallest of scales, smaller even than molecules, smaller than atoms, we get to a place called the quantum foam. This is where wormholes exist. (Hawking, 2010)*

The shape of the platform has been altered to 'escape the primacy of the rectangle' (Smithson, 1996b, p. 190). The platform, the bars, and the base are grey,

blending in non-colour and reflecting light. The sculptor has control over the choice of material and the impact of light on it. The source of light reflects on the surface of polished metal producing 'areas of high light and of deep shade that profoundly modify our perception of the form'. No matter how we move around the sculpture, the light remains a moving and fluctuating element, playing over the smooth surface of a solid object and distorting 'the plastic impression of that object on our senses.' (Read, 1956, pp. 108-109). In that sense, light can (partially) turn them black or white, while they are still grey. If Bergson (1912, p. 88) had never seen grey (*gray*), he would have never been able to imagine how black and white, or two points of view interpenetrate. Art historian Benjamin H. D. Buchloh (b. 1941) revealed that grey carries a special significance for Gerhard Richter (b. 1932) and isn't merely monochrome.

*Grey is the non-color par excellence, the sum of all colors in which various positions come to expression. Grey is the color of negation, of resistance, of an inability to unify, to reconcile.* (Buchloh, n.d.)

The platform disrupted the divergent directions of the bars and divided the continuous lines into two sides. It simultaneously multiplied their number too, halting the growth of the past. Simultaneity is one casualty of the theory of relativity and holds the property of two events happening at the same time in a particular frame of reference. According to relativistic physics, what is simultaneous in one frame of reference will not necessarily be simultaneous in another (Mastin, n.d.). But can change be halted? *Reductionism with Respect to Time* opposes the view of *Platonism with Respect to Time* on whether time can exist without change, and mostly whether time exists independently of the events that occur in time ("Time", n.d.). The grey assemblage is static, yet the bars betray a motion of an event that just happened. This causes the crossing with the platform to create an invisible grid, where the directional timely bars become the space itself. Sculpture, with its static nature, is the medium that least represents time unfolding through motion (Krauss, 1977, p. 41). Nonetheless, it can relate to the passage of time through the notion of causality and the connection between effects and their causes (p. 10).

As a mother, I was concerned as well with the dynamics of space but stayed alert and aware of the physical and periodic time. The most overpowering influential factor, which was the emotional health anxiety linked to severe food and skin allergies in the

child, was isolated and scrutinised. The erratic and exploratory artistic thoughts were often interrupted by exterior interferences, inducing worries and a need to rush. There's an intrusive tense on the guard, the irrational dread of unfortunate events, by not having control over what is going to happen in the future, the inevitable and the unavoidable, or *Fatalism*. Fatalism is a worry that has generated a good deal of work in the philosophy of time ("Time", n.d.). Finding it hard to neutralise a possible threat of an accidental and reoccurring anaphylaxis from a nut allergy, I decided to confront the object of fear and integrate it into the assemblage. Many little opalescent silicone and worm-looking cashew nuts are sparsely inserted on both sides of the bars. They establish balance to keep the platform straight but generate asymmetry. The silicone is manually coloured and produces a variation of tones as if subjected to sudden changes in temperature or conditions. The first trial of cashews was flashy and shiny [Fig. 83]. It looked fresh though it didn't really work with the overall idea and I wanted a more space-related finish.

Every technique illustrates and amplifies the metaphysical structure of our flesh, and is 'a technique of the body' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 168). The soft feature of the coloured silicone alleviates the harshness of the metallic elements, which can be very specific, and 'usually aggressive' like most industrial materials (Judd, 1965, p. 5). The materials of a work are closely related to its form, and the 'obdurate identity' of a material is characterised by an objectivity: 'the qualities of materials—hard mass, soft mass, thickness of 1/32, 1/16, 1/8 inch, pliability, slickness, translucency, dullness—have unobjective uses'. Echoing the elastic aspect of the skin, their visceral marbled effect is a pastel version of the dark cosmic texture, and their organic attribute is closer to the idea of nature (Smithson, 1996c, p. 250). Those sculptural facts of space, light, and materials always function concretely and literally (Morris, 1968, p. 223). Time as biological evolution or decay has been reinstated (Smithson, 1996a, p. 11). The four-dimensional notion of time and space has been drastically zoomed on, focusing on limited saccadic periods of time happening in the basic linear direction of time. Krauss (1977, p. 5) noted how sculpture allows the maker to gradually become aware of its location 'at the juncture between stillness and motion, time arrested and time passing'. This tension brings 'enormous expressive power'. The psychological and subjective time remembering terrifying events is stretched compared to physical time, and a higher density of data makes them seem to last longer than the actual time the events unfolded (Eagleman,

2009). The stretched property is translated into the silicone material. The one reality we seize from within is our own personality in its flowing through time and our enduring self. This is achieved by intuition rather than by simple analysis (Bergson, 1912, p. 9). The notion of simultaneity previously portrayed in the minimalist grey structure is now disrupted by the little silicone sculptures successive on individual bars, but side by side on multiple ones. Following Bergson's (1913) thoughts on succession, we validate time as alloyed to space and avoid confusion between succession and simultaneity, and quality with quantity. In pure duration, the states of consciousness happen as a whole without distinction, melting into one another. The moment we place them side by side, we'd be projecting time into space. Given the example of an unlimited straight line on which a point – here a cashew sculpture – is moving, this point cannot feel itself moving except by taking consciousness of itself. And by doing so, it might perceive a succession in the movement but will not assume a succession in the form of a line, unless it can rise above the traversed line and see juxtaposed points of it. It is only then that space will be acknowledged. The skewered skin sculptures might at first seem to 'timidly' resist gravity, the same as objects hung on walls. One of the conditions of understanding them is supplied by the sensing of the gravitational force acting upon them in actual space. By becoming part of a whole assemblage that imposes its own autonomous and literal space, of three coordinates instead of two, their awareness is maximised (Morris, 1968, p. 224). Rather than timid, they are defiantly challenging gravity, firmly embarked on bridges to eternalism, oblivious to their earthly properties. The fused sculptural body is no longer defined by organic structure, simple materiality, or its occupying space, but by the relations of its parts, and by its actions and reactions in relation to both its surrounding and internal milieus (Baugh, 2010, p. 35) (see Annex).

### ***NST: space skins***

The second sculpture of the project *space skins* follows the thinking and the creating process of *wormholes & space cashews*. It echoes the theme of the shape of time exposed to elements relating to food allergy. Whereas the first sculpture tackled the cause of the allergy, which is the cashew nut, this sculpture focuses on the effect and reaction

involving the skin. Despite having different visual results, there are several elements in common. Here again, the same materials including metal, silicone, paint and stucco are used. Four grey metal bars pierce through three silicone skins. Each skin holds on both top and bottom ends on a different thin and flat horizontal bar and at the same time shares one bar with a second skin. The thin bendable bars are inserted in two identical vertical octagonal tubes, horizontally aligned. Each tube is cast into a different shape and sprayed with the same shiny grey colour and finish. One base looks like a slice cut from a grainy moon-surface-like sphere. The second one appears roughly cut off an octagonal prism. Asymmetry is here again introduced to break the mirroring of the identical bars, using the different shapes of the bases they are immobilised in and the diversity of the three skins. Each of the skins has a different earthy colour ranging between white, pink and brown, with textures similar to the ones of the Milky Way and cosmic effects. The three flat skins are placed vertically and are made of silicone mixed with different paint colours to achieve their marbled effect and specific tones. Their shapes are based on an imperfect oval with an earthy brown tone distorted into an arched oval. The final works evoke more of space, planet alignments and fiction, than it reminds of earthly beings and their physiological properties.

The practical work behind the critical text has pointed to a specific aspect of time to explore, switching the approach from practice-led to practice-based. The reflections highlighted that the artist working with sculpture was concerned with the physical nature of time, its shape and topology, time pertaining to an eternalist and elaborated dimension interchangeable with space or spacetime; and was inspired by fictive narratives. It also showed that the mother was influenced by the fatalist and the conscious nature of time, and approached it through the perception of details based on subjective experiences by adopting real narratives. The thinking of the mother was marked with the tense factor, and an irrational dread of unfortunate events by not having control over what is going to happen in the future, the inevitable and the unavoidable.

The text including the heuristic exploration of the artist and the mother experiment helped answer several questions such as: How can an artist perceive time? How can a mother perceive time? How does this notion operate on both? How can fictive narratives allude to specific materials? It denoted an internal conflict in perception where the artist was concerned with the physical nature of time pertaining to an eternalist and

elaborated dimension interchangeable with spacetime, and where the mother was concerned with fatalism. It indicated that the artist favoured fictive narratives when the mother adopted real ones and that the fictive and the real featured interchangeably and facilitated the designation of materials. Throughout the text, the notion of time and its possible topology(ies) was key to demonstrating how motherhood with its sense of control can interfere and disrupt the free course of the art practice.

As aforementioned, my work in general deals with real and imagined narratives around various themes leading to fictive objects, and doesn't fall under *Motherhood Art*. The motherhood-related elements are occasionally incorporated following rare associated occurrences and, therefore, are occurrential. Although this study specifically focuses on my perception of time as an artist who is also a mother, it is highly probable that most artists dealing with a recent marking event could experience the infiltration of fatalism triggered by a catalyst. This type of disruption of the artistic perception would then be a temporary and intermittent manifestation, rather than a categorical opinion on the compatibility of art and motherhood. Furthermore, it would fundamentally depend on personal spatiotemporal circumstances instead of a generalised one.

However, to objectively reflect on how sculpture and motherhood in this particular framework relate and what they can learn from each other, it is essential to reobserve that the sculptor's eternalist approach needs the far future to grow\*, but logical fatalism holding the mother back imposes the necessity of the past. The *Master Argument* of philosopher and dialectician Diodorus Cronus (d. circa 284 BCE) is that everything past and true is necessary, the impossible does not follow from the possible, and we do not know the intermediate steps (Rice, 2002). I conclude that despite potential internal conflicts, balance and reconciliation can be achieved in the making of sculpture.\* Sculpture with its four-dimensional vision involving time could highly benefit all mothers, even as a recreational activity.\* It can help them rise above weighting factors, and train them to perceive a promising bigger picture, away from details that facilitate obsessive tendencies. By challenging the artist, motherhood can demand balance and add unexpected and unusual touches to the sculptural work.

In a wider perspective, the project including the published paper, moreover, serves as one example of the relationship between art theory and art practice and how the artistic order of thinking might unfold. It demonstrates how the process of methodologies

can switch from practice-led to practice-based, or vice versa, and how reflectivity and reflexivity feature together. On one hand, it highlights the risks imposed by theory overriding a considerable intuitive and reflexive aspect of the artistic process. On the other hand, it validates the importance of the role of art practice in generating new knowledge and brings us back to the methodology with Schön's knowing in action and reflection-in-action central to the art (p. 50). In that respect, the action of creating would be a more accurate, and more targeted source of original knowledge, here narrowed down from the generic notion of time to the pertinence of fatalism in this precise context (see Annex).

### **Project 3: *Too tired to sleep***

The concept of this project revolves around the theme of sleep in the context of fatigue. It was inspired by the phosphenes entoptic phenomenon characterised by experiencing flashes of light, or photopsia I was experiencing. The reflective text *Notes on fatigue*, 2019 (see Appendix B), clarifies further the phenomenon experience and explains what they are and how I subjectively perceived it as an artist. Ideas of sculptures and sketches started taking shape next to define this new body of work. The project *Too tired to sleep (TTTS)* consists of a main sculpture *Eyelids* [Figs. 84,85,86], a supporting sculpture titled *Refractions* [Figs. 87,88] and additional materials such as *Masks* [Fig. 89].

The title of the project holds a bit of irony as tiredness and lack of sleep had already been the status quo before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) happened before the pandemic kicked off, with the birth of my second child amid the pandemic peak and at this stage of my thesis development. The thesis was already investigating conditional sculpture practice development relating to motherhood, and the pandemic factor, unfortunately for the world, reinforced the purpose and the pertinence of the research. As tragic as it was on the global front, it did help put more perspective on the challenges of conditional work in progress, pending projects, changes of plans, changes of situations, changes of locations, budgets, and all sorts of unprecedented and unpredictable changes. It is highly important here, as this conditional status is now felt and understood by all, and not only endured by women and mothers who are expected by society and most male perspectives to naturally fill in by default the role of the conditioned. After this global event, the theme spread and expanded to a wider audience of artists, makers, and workers... who have and perhaps are still enduring the mental, physical, financial and other tolls of the rules and conditions that have been applied during these challenging times. We go back here to the fatalist aspect of time from the second project, elaborated in its respective publication.

This project was all thought of and planned with several outlines and sketches. Not only the execution has changed, but I also found myself a different person from the one who started this research and visualised this third project. I felt more and more steering away from Holloways' structured and constructive method of creating and was

further drawn to Ingold's impulsive, adaptive and resourceful ways of creating with what is available to us. The lockdown rules, the isolation, and the lack of access to materials, studio, time, and creation... all of it and what it includes, are simply too many rules to create. With my hands tied, my mind was my virtual studio, and the fictive sculptures were filling up in my imagination, though not stacked up or ordered, but mixed and matched randomly all together. My initial process didn't feel like art anymore. It now felt like a construction site, which had lost its licence to be concluded. It felt like those abandoned houses in Portugal with so many owners, of which none of them can claim exclusivity, take charge of the maintenance of the space and restore the vandalised façades sprayed with graffiti. My sculptural process felt like a slice of architecture where no risk is taken, and where everything is studied and planned. This made me question again what contemporary sculpture is, should be, and become. Free, instinctive, random under the material property or the physical object.\* I started longing for painting again, for the unpredictability of wet paint, the grain of the surface, or the interlocking of the fabric. I loved the fluid nature of the medium, mostly acrylics and other water-based paints. Water was the starting point and theme of the thesis. It is the anchor and the glue that holds the flow of the process together. It symbolises the blank space, the decluttered one, the empty box, freedom, and adaptation, where all wavy thoughts and emotions can get regrouped or shaped. It is also featured in the autoethnographic and reflective writings amidst these uncertain times, namely, *I would like to be baptised* (2020) (see Appendix B).

Paintings materialised ramifications of the sculptures, especially when the process kept being interrupted. These extensions filled the transitional phases in between sculpture-making, inside and outside the studio. I saw painting as 'debris' from a shattered narrative waiting to be fused back together like a delicate mental kintsugi process. Despite not belonging to the sculptural medium within its traditional understanding as a category, the moment the paintings took space and shape, they were sculptural by nature regardless of their numeric level of flatness.\* They form subliminal abstract perceptions, such as in the *out of this world* (2020) watercolour work [Fig. 90]. The painting was inspired by photographer and composer Gordon Parks' (1912-2006) photograph for Life Magazine of painter Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011) in her studio, in 1956 [Fig. 91] which represented to me a source of self-motivation on tough days. Another painting, *Legged*

(2019) [Fig. 92], echoes some shapes and colours of the sculptures, like the neon cashews, or once again, the purple touch. The painting features a still horse leg and a bent knee, perhaps betraying the need for freedom, the outdoors and feeling held back by the restrictions of the pandemic. Another painted drawing, *Plié Chassé Jeté* (2023), shows a leg with a foot tied with a green string [Fig. 93]. A white checkered grid overlays an abstract purple mass on the left, similar to the squares on the sculptural eyelids' shells. Some of these complementary works are digital finger drawings including *baleia do sol* (2020) [Fig. 94] created during a long pregnancy hospital stay. Feeling confined on all levels, I drew the shapes on my mobile phone, reminiscent of some elements of the sculptures and triangular shapes I couldn't materialise. All these supporting artefacts are sections of sculptures.

Despite producing a wide collection of two-dimensional works with diverse themes during the research course, only these four pieces have been included in the collective documentation for their visual relevance and expanded role in sculpture. In addition to painting, I found myself missing the tactile modelling of clay. This is a key point where my art practice shifts to adapt to the situations and break free of all rules, to be art, for art needs to be free. There was a lot of control in my previous projects, and I feel that materials need to be given a chance to surprise us.\* But then again, all the control perspective is subjective. Some mediums demand control and technical precision such as photography, and others like painting can't be always controlled due to the fluid nature of paint. For example, photographer Richard Avedon (1923-2004) considered that all art is about control and described it as the encounter between control and the uncontrollable (Avedon, n.d.). Frankenthaler, on the other hand, called to lose the rules.

*There are no rules. That is how art is born, how breakthroughs happen. Go against the rules or ignore the rules. That is what invention is about.* ("Helen Frankenthaler Approach", 1962)

Known for what she termed 'soak-stain' painting, the artist picked up the technique from her childhood. As a kid, she used to pour her mother's drip red nail polish into a cold water-filled bathroom sink. The water freely dispersed into the stark white porcelain, shaping into contrasting abstract forms (Greenberger, 2021). The image of her little performance transforming the sink seems very sculptural. The sink has sides, and

limiting curves. Like a sculpture, it is physically restrictive with a distinct outline. This fact accentuates the wider horizons of painting large canvases [Fig. 95].

Could the urge to control be a way of healing, answering those needs to control to let them all out, feel the freedom and lightness of that need-free space within to create for the joy of making? The feeling of this relationship and freedom is described in the autoethnography text *No Masks*, 2019 (see Appendix B). My fascination with Barlow's work perhaps lies in her randomness of creating, and the way her work manages to hold together and look homogeneous on such a giant scale. I remember being visibly, and perhaps audibly surprised during a talk by Frieze Academy at the Asylum Chapel in London back in 2017, where Barlow, in conversation with novelist, screenwriter and art critic Jennifer Higgie (b. 1962) admitted packing sculptures with her team for the Venice Biennale's British pavilion without being sure whether the works would hold together in balance (Barlow & Higgie, 2017) [Fig. 96].

Both Sheila Hicks' (b. 1934) and Barlow's processes challenge the idea of control over the material, over the outcome of the sculpture. They both include the factor of play, of letting go, of letting the material be. The forms of visual artist Nairy Baghramian's (b. 1971) playful sculptures materialise in response to contextual conditions or the premises of a given medium [Fig. 97]. They address temporal, spatial and social relationships to language, history, and the present ("Nairy Baghramian", n.d.). In a written interview, Baghramian said that objects have their own 'raison d'être'. The artist elaborated on the malleable property of the sculptures thinking that maybe the meaning of the organic has to do with losing control and simultaneously being aware of a certain loss of decency (Vistrup Madsen & Baghramian, 2023). 2023 *Turner Prize* winner Jesse Darling (b. 1981) also let go of full control over his works. Darling intentionally designs sculptures that may eventually alter or even collapse (Greenberger, 2023). Despite their durability, based on the idea that nothing should live forever, the artworks are durable, though precariously assembled. The sculptures are imbued with entropy with the tendency to collapse and break down over time (Budd, 2022) [Fig. 98]. In his performance, *Performing Nature* (2024) at the Museo Helga de Alvear in Spain, artist Carlos Bunga (b. 1976) is filmed wandering around his sculptural installation of cuboid columns. Bunga (2024) is seen shaking the structure of columns held through horizontal ones at the top making the long shapes shake and wobble. He randomly stops

to slash some columns at the base using what looks like a small knife. The video then shows the artist using his body to push and pull the structure down in a destructive gesture, where it collapses at the full mercy and control of the maker. During this performative action, visitors are watching, standing at the entrance, or shall we say at the exit of the space [Fig. 99]. The exhibition explores the temporalities of nature, its shelters and its living and organic qualities. Marked by a poetic approach to forms, Bunga's work is made of everyday materials including cardboard sheets, adhesive tape and branches and leaves. The scene is dramatic as if the artist is anticipating by speeding up an inevitable event, which only he knows is going to happen. He acted like someone knowing that the work will not hold on, will not last, and will finally collapse be it intentionally or by the laws of physics. As written in the aforementioned paper of Project II about control and fatalism, philosopher and polymath Aristotle's (384 BC-322 BC) *Logical fatalism* argument responds to logical laws and metaphysical necessities. The argument implies that everything happens by necessity, or the inevitable, an event that can't be prevented by anyone and needs to happen (Rice, 2002). As opposed to this argument, the concept of *Determinism* is built on the idea that everything can be explained and that behind every event there's a cause. This cause is partly determined by our actions, with the help of the laws of nature (Hoefer, 2003). In any case of the notion of time we endure, I seek living in the minimum essential rules possible, and if we can spare art of any rules, then I would like to apply this experiment in continuing the execution of this project and inform my future works.

*To introduce the conscious weight of fatalism characterised by an absolute lack of control – not over 'crazy' daily mothering tasks, but over one's whole destiny itself – would mean to raise the intensity of loss of control to an unfathomable level of possible anxiety. It is widely known that ignorance sparks fear and panic, the fear of the unknown, when very little or practically nothing of what we fear might ever happen. What type of knowledge around the philosophy of fatalism can bring comfort to mothers, outside the theological and the spiritual or Theological fatalism (Rice, 2002)? To what extent can we control events? (Paixão, 2020)*

I am at the point in my practice where I need less rigidity and planning, and more fluidity. I am starting to look at different artists, including textile artists, such as Hicks. The American artist celebrates the fibre material and her fascination with its aspects including structure, form, and colour and their inextricable link [Fig. 100].

*I think that is important, the wanting: the desire to hold it in your hands, to befriend it, to see if it bites, or if it's compatible to your existence, and in what way ("Pillar of Inquiry/Supple Column by Sheila Hicks", 2020)*

There are so many inspiring fibre artists to look at including Sandra Mujinga (b. 1989) [Fig. 101], Chiharu Shiota (b. 1972) [Fig. 102], Christo (1935-2020) and Jeanne-Claude (1935-2009) [Fig. 103], Agnes Hansella (b. 1992) [Fig. 104], Nnenna Okore (b. 1975) [Fig. 105], Andra Kehayoglou (b. 1981) [Fig. 106], Ana Maria Hernando (b. 1959) [Fig. 107], Tau Lewis (b. 1993) [Fig. 108], Joana Vasconcelos (b. 1971) [Fig. 109], Vanessa Barragão (b. 1992) [Fig. 110] and Cecilia Vicuña (b. 1948) [Fig. 111] amongst several innovative international artists. I am particularly stressing Hicks because of her passionate fascination with the raw material and her process, more than the final textile work and its intricate finished look. Hicks' yearning to discover a new experience with sculpture-making has a deep powerful message to makers: 'I don't want to go do something I know how to do. I want to go do something I *don't* know how to do,' she stated. 'I don't want a legacy. I just want to have fun while I'm here.' ("Sheila Hicks", n.d.) [Fig. 112].

My resurfaced interest in textiles has also something to do with their domesticity in the sense that they can be brought inside the house around children, its lack of toxicity linked with casting and setting time. Nevertheless, as art historian Gill Perry (b. 1950) noted in her book *Playing at Home: The House in Contemporary Art*, the idea of home and therefore domesticity has been diversely defined and expressed by artists, philosophers and cultural theorists. The book elaborates on the works of numerous artists exploring the idea of home. Perry (2013) remarked that the works may be inspired by a spatial imaginary, but are re-imagined as three-dimensional objects revealing that a house is not necessarily a home. The embodied experience of material objects enhances the special potential of visual art, specifically the three-dimensional forms of installation art, to stimulate ideas and memories. Pioneer of the movement *Arte Povera* (1967-1972), Marisa Merz's (1926-2019) sculptures unsurprisingly grew out of circumstance. Merz didn't have access to a studio and created many of her works at home. She made the large *Living Sculpture* (1966) in her Turin kitchen [Fig. 113]. When it was meal time, Merz used to put the long snaking tubes of looped and coiled strips of aluminium away around the

house. It redefined her domestic space turning it into a multifunctional one (Basciano, 2020).

On top of the accessible aspect of textiles in relation to my own idea of home, I enjoyed not having to wear a protective mask in the studio. At some point, the measures felt unbearable after the integration of the medical mask outside the workspace for so long due to the pandemic. Mostly after I had to keep it on during a whole night's sleep, for the entire hospital stay and the birth of my son. The symbol of the mask negatively changed and I felt reticent to link it to the comfort my art practice brought. The survival of the idea of play is important in the work and keeps the creative process flowing for me. The route forward of the art practice would be, like a good addictive board game, to combine the play rules with the play fun. Even better, breaking the rules in materialising a narrative would make the practice more interesting, and the artefacts more unusual. A good example to look at would be the process of Ursula von Rydingsvard (b. 1942). The artist only draws the bottom of the sculpture which she considers consequential in what happens as she goes. She then builds it piece by piece and the pieces start to grow together but never come out the way she originally thought [Fig. 114].

*If you draw exactly what you're going to make, you're putting yourself in jail. It's so boring. (von Rydingsvard, 2020)*

von Rydingsvard went on to explain that the process doesn't happen this way. What comes out instead, is whatever is churning in the deepest part of her. It is impossible to ever expect to know what's going to come, so the artist gropes around and listens to what's already there almost tentatively, gradually aggrandising what looks interesting and has a potency to her [Fig. 115].

## ***TTS: Eyelids***

### *I'LL SLEEP UNDER THE STARS TOO*

In 2019, I woke up one day in the middle of the night from a dream with the sentence ‘I’ll sleep under the stars too’ floating in my head in big capital letters. Like the rest of the dreams I remember, I typed the clear and distant title of the dream down on my phone notes. A few days later this project started taking shape after a few sleepless nights where I was failing to fall asleep. In 2022, the French pavilion at the 59th edition of the Venice Biennale presented Zineb Sedira’s (b. 1963) multidisciplinary exhibition titled *Dreams Have No Titles* (Institut français). Sedira’s immersive installation consisted of film, sculpture, photography, sound and collage. Even though Sedira’s work aims to shed light on past and present international solidarities related to historical liberation struggles, the artist uses documentary but also autobiographical narrative and fiction to do so. I found the title of the exhibition brilliant as it perfectly depicts our different perceptions and thoughts within similar methods of artistic practice. It shows how art helps us not only to respect someone else’s angle but to also experience it. That’s the importance of art, and mostly contemporary art, as viewers don’t need to understand it or think of it as ‘rubbish’. What art does is that it teaches us to tolerate something different in our eyes and learn to live with it or with others without violence or force. Without forcing an idea, forcing a belief, or forcing a perception. This is where art succeeded when other established peace organisations failed to reunite communities. Sedira’s contribution serves as a cautionary tale about the failure of an emancipatory promise and the unfulfilled dream of many people.

*I woke up from a dream this morning that my clay had seeds in it. [...] The metaphor is interesting. I really like listening to my dreams. Lots and lots of journeys, like walking this path, that's like a familiar place. (Simpson, 2024)*

How do unconscious dreams differ from conscious ones? How often and how far do our dreams manifest in our work and creativity? How impactful is a manifested vision – imagined or real – of invisible energy? Some people call ghosts what they

imagine as a white shape compared to wearing a white sheet with two round holes at the place of the eyes. My imagined paranormal energy or ‘ghost’ doesn’t float, nor does it fly. In my vision, that energy is not the typical white cloudy smoke that hovers or flies around enjoying scaring the living. In my vision, this energy is pumping to move itself. It could look like flying jellyfish-like energy. Jellyfish don’t appear to be swimming in the water, they seem to be transported by a sort of jumping, like energy-pumping. How to explain this complex idea of pumping, or flying paranormal presence? Anicka Yi (b. 1971) perfectly materialised it in her Hyundai Commission *In Love With The World* (2021) for the Turbine Hall large post-industrial space at the heart of Tate Modern in London [Fig. 116].

Yi re-imagines artificial intelligence and based her floating machines, or *aerobes*, on ocean life forms and mushrooms. The artist encourages the audience to think about new ways machines might inhabit the world, and about further understanding ourselves as humans and the ecosystems we live in. When I saw the work, I wondered then, what if artists have similar perceptions of invisible things non-creative people don’t imagine, see or feel? Seeing this work was accompanied by a sense of relatability, of being understood, of validation of my thinking and perception that people around artists might misinterpret as mad or judge us by doubting our sanity. Sanity (n.d.) is defined as ‘normal or sound powers of mind’. How does the morphology of the creative brain differ from the usual brain and manifest its activities in the making of sculpture? Scientists used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to scan the brains of exceptionally creative visual artists, and scientists with a highly educated group during their performance of tasks testing creative thinking. Compared to the other control group, the latest research shows that exceptionally creative participants have a unique brain connectivity pattern and their brains work differently (Watts, 2022). Why is this important to stress? Because what social norms project on communities is what trains the brain to accept more and move towards it. Psychiatrist Iain McGilchrist (b. 1953) argued that the right and left brains perform the same basic functions but in very different ways by prioritising different things. The evidence shows that the right hemisphere and the left one actually amount to two brains. The right hemisphere hosts our more creative, artistic, and intuitive lives, while the left one is logical and analytical. Even though connected by the corpus callosum, both brain hemispheres are involved in everything we do and are

both needed. However, the left hemisphere's activity is more culturally contagious than the one of the right hemisphere. This means that the perspective of the left hemisphere is what shapes our culture, and in return, culture starts slowly responding to it as the dominant one. With evolution, this doesn't mean that the left hemisphere will get bigger or denser, but it will increasingly get better connected than the right one (Mcgilchrist & Rowson, 2013). If society heroes a certain image and standards, we will all try to reach that goal and become less unique, and more cloned in thinking, looking and living. Art institutions and art professionals must keep pushing for authenticity, individualism, and the exposure of the genuine and the diverse. Not only because it is a matter of acceptance and learning to live together, but because it is essential for the survival of creativity and imagination in the future, at risk of being increasingly eclipsed and our experience gradually colonised.

The dream-inspired project started with an autoethnography text. The first characteristic I feel is interesting to open the description of these two semi-identical sculptures with, is weight. It might not be a feature that the viewer can directly experience but only guess. To me as an artist, these twin sculptures have managed to nail the main feeling and trigger behind it, which was the constant tiredness I had been feeling, so intense to the point of being too tired to sleep. My eyelids felt so heavy and the sculptures' elliptic double volumes ended up representing this loaded aspect. The initial plan was to recreate the sketch with large twin round-edged plates looking forms, each topped with a convex lid. The lids' surfaces are pierced with imperfect squares, following an oblique pattern. Chicken wire was the first material I used, cut, bent and shaped to form the wanted shape. Its interlaced wires helped create the alignment of the faux squares on the top surfaces. Once the shapes of the double lower and top lids were ready, a lengthy process of material rendering was done slowly, bit by bit. At this point, the lids reminded me more of turtle shells with their geometric patterns and structures. As opposed to the thin and fragile aspect of the skin of the lids, these sculptures are more like carapaces in terms of thickness and strength. This also made them more prone to cracking due to the lack of elasticity and stretching properties of the human skin. However, in that respect, they convey the internal feeling and state of the maker way more than recreating or mimicking the real texture of the skin could ever do. And for this, they are truthful to the

unseen, to the felt journey of the experience. The gradual steps of covering the chicken wire structures consisted of paper mâché covered with resin plaster and plaster layers. It was followed by fibre layers to seal it properly and hold it together since no mesh was used on the inside. The melange worked well together, creating sturdy and solid shells that were still thin enough for their diametric dimensions. I then painted the surfaces with mat grey paint on both the inside and the outside. A grey silicone sealant layer was applied next, directly squeezed out of the tubes with a caulking gun. The finishing is intentionally bumpy and uneven for the same purpose of recreating an internal feeling. It echoes noticeably sensing my own eyelids, hence adding a more organic and rubbery effect that is less rigid, and with more viscous and elastic properties. The neutrality of the mat grey tone hits here once again to enhance the enduring effect of the shiny phosphenes phenomenon, which is materialised next. The beauty of sculpture is that the contrast of black and white in photography and its printing techniques, or the neon and the neutral in painting, can be experimented with through various methods with just a finishing choice such as glossiness and mattness.\* Even varnish cannot achieve this level of depth on voluminous materials. This is not to undermine the two mediums of photography and painting which each have their unique advantages and properties – far from it – but to express what sculpture fulfils for me as an artist and my need for it. It is during these phases of exploring which medium is succeeding at translating my narratives best, that my need to paint again resurfaced. It is then that I came to the conclusion that my sculptures alone are not complete and will not feel fluid enough without the integration of other mediums such as paintings, photographs, sketches and other elements. These latter integrations give the viewers an idea of the emotional creative path of the artist and what they cannot see but only intercept. The inside of the bottom and top shells underwent the exact steps and process even if the viewer cannot see their finishing. In the first trial, I coated the inside of the faux squares with a transparent purple film. I then tested the effect by inserting light inside to see how it shines through. Lit light strings irradiated throughout the squares, the same as the uncontrollable phosphenes taking over, with their light overriding every other material and phenomenon around them. The result was truthful to the initial sketch, but didn't feel 'it' yet. Since this was the last practical case study, I then decided to drift away from the initial sketch and add spontaneity by applying Ingold's thoughts. I was now in my 'process of growth' making phase, practising reading

the making process longitudinally and not laterally. The process started answering to the flux and flows of the materials I was working with. I had started with an idea in mind and had the supply of the raw materials needed to achieve it, ready for assembling and installation. How can I make the sculpture more sculptural? How can I make it more sculptural in its physical materiality? The light rays were beautiful, perhaps too theatrical for me. Because of all the narratives they embedded, the lids demanded to be excluded from the Light and Space movement and the works associated with it by the likes of Irwin aforementioned [Fig. 117], Dan Flavin (1933-1996) [Fig. 118], James Turrell (b. 1943) [Fig. 119], and other prominent light artists.

This is where *Conditional Sculpture* demonstrates its divergence from Irwin's perceptual *Conditional Art* and why the term *Conditional Sculpture* can be here coined and not just reappropriated. Perceptual light art conveys limpid, pure, crystal-clear feelings or non-feelings when every particle of my multi-coated, opaque, conditional sculptures is soaked with entangled and complex emotions. Purely sensorial light brings speed into the picture when the loaded narratives here slow the material form down, immobilising and pinning the static volume to the ground. This is why the lightness of light didn't feel like a right fit for these specific lids. The latter needed heavy light if that's a thing. How can I turn light from a warmth or heat sensation and reflections to palpable materialised light? How can I add depth and weight to light? I went on the hunt for a specific purple fabric roll with the right amount of glitter I felt the sculpture could take. I managed to find what I was looking for at a fabric store in Lisbon. The fabric replaced the light equipment and translated the element of light into a sculptural physical component with a deeper dimension. It pushed its sculptural and physical properties through more organic, sustainable and environment-friendly materials [Figs. 120,121]. Both versions of light and fabric answered the brief but with the latter fabric one, the combinations of materials felt complete to me, perhaps similar to the way Richter described the feeling of the painting feeling finished. To finalise it with an Ingold touch, I placed the fabric intuitively and spontaneously to test a satisfying outcome (see Annex).

### ***TTS: Refractions***

*I don't know anything about spirits, I just live in my dreams, that's what you noticed. Other people live in dreams too, but they're not their own dreams, that's the difference.*  
(Hesse, 2013, p. 93)

This second sculpture plays a complementary role to the first one. Reminiscing on light as well, it is inspired by refracted rays of light. Its main structure is formed of eight flat galvanised grey metal bars. The ends of the bars are linked to each other, overlapping, held by grey metal screws. The shapes are mainly triangular, echoing a deconstructed prism. Two randomly cut pieces of fabric hang on different bars. The fabric has a shiny texture with multiple colours creating a psychedelic effect with an adapted visual translation of phosphenes. The ensemble is a wall sculpture hung with one angle on top, and two bars at the bottom at a wide angle, nearly horizontal (see Annex).

### ***TTS: Masks***

Because the sculptures are based on some narrative, there always seems to be more to the work than the central sculpture which here is the eyelids. Sometimes there are loose ends, secondary elements, or collateral pieces essential to complete the story. Some are produced and others stay in the sketchbook to be revisited. *Masks* sculpture is one of these 'extras', a lid to a rebel rhizoma in the plot. The initial idea was to use light required a complementary sculpture that had more substance to it. The masks would be made out of velvet fabric in various hues of purple. Each mask would have cutouts symbolising the light rays piercing through closed eyelids, cutting through the velvet to signal a morning of their own. Displayed in a wide box frame, the masks would be held by sewing pins like complementary visual fragments on a mood board. However, after replacing light with fabric on the eyelids sculpture, I felt that the interpretation was too explicit and the fabric no longer needed to counterbalance the main piece.

## Exhibition Thoughts

*Since our experiences of space are, however, limited to momentary segments of time, growth must be the core of existence*  
(Noguchi in Herrera, 2015, p. 228)

What is a gallery space without a visitor? What is a work of art without a viewer? Without a crowd, a dialogue, discussion, debate? These exchanges and interactions cannot happen without the viewer, but can still be achieved without the gallery space. However, with the museum and gallery visiting pandemic restrictions, the space didn't feel the same anymore. The experience had been altered. How important is it to see other people's fascination with certain works, or disinterest in other works? Isn't that witnessed intimate immersion with the artwork and its viewer contagious and a source of interest to revisit viewing this work? The gaze of others makes a work more valuable, more noticeable, and as with humans, more desirable. What happens to that symbolic image of the visitor sitting on a bench, soaked in a ray of light, lost in their bubble staring blandly or in awe at a piece of art? All these questions arose while we witnessed the museum and gallery times getting reset, and then renewed. Therefore, our experiences in physical art spaces might not go back to the same feel they had, for a while. Even after everything went back to what we used to consider 'normal', did our perception of these spaces, curating, presenting, and choosing art, remain the same? For me, it didn't. Weirdly enough, my thesis same as England with Brexit, is now split into two parts: pre-coronavirus and post-coronavirus, in addition to other pres and posts. How can we turn this situation into knowledge in a way that informs us further about art? Perhaps we can detect new angles we have been too accustomed to, to notice before. These potential angles deserve to be revisited, expanded, or adapted. It might not be 'sculpture in the expanded field' but it is primordial not to make it sculpture in the restricted field.\*

A fresh perspective would be the practice of artist duo Charlotte Cullinan and Jeanine Richards, working collaboratively since 1998. Cullinan Richards' approach deploys the very act of exhibition-making as the medium itself. The duo expand the

understanding of the idea of exhibiting, the politics of display and the production of art in a post-studio context of display. The studio is transformed into a social space of display, the art becomes the site, stage, or platform where the engagement in social acts of reading, imagination, conversation and exchange takes place.

Their large-scale installations revolve around themes that include history, family, and shared social and cultural experiences. A mix of documentation melding with fiction and narratives of lived personal histories, the resulting works question the position of the artwork and the structure of an exhibition [Fig. 122]. Furthermore, Cullinan Richards draw a wider contemporary conversation around expanded painting. Through their joint paintings, they explore a synthesis between painting as image and painting as object [Fig. 123]. What on first sight appears as sculptural objects and paintings, is an 'experience-albeit' with a tempo similar to that of cinema with its slowed and immersive flow of time: 'imagine a movie house relocated to an abandoned petrol station: a cinema en plein air configured as social sculpture' ("Cullinan Richards", 2024).

Where should the case studies' practical artefacts be exhibited? What space would be best to highlight them? To move forward with the choice of space, I need to choose by intuition, as only I, as the maker will just know if the space 'works' or not. I go back here to Boal's aesthetic space and what it really means in this section of the research. My fictive sculptural inventions are now out in the physical real world. They carry rooms of mental space within\* and will be exhibited in a surrounding space. Adding the brain and the human body as another layer of physical space, we now have an overlapping of several spaces, some infinite and some limited. Except that unlike a Russian doll, these spaces don't necessarily perfectly fit into each other but vary in perception within finities and infinities. I was the actor performing the sculptural process, and now that the sculptures are surrounding props, they are the centre of the stage. In a way, they became the acting factor, the performer, by just being.\* Space, be it physically seen, or mentally endured, separated me from the actor artist. It is now placing me as the spectator observing the play unravel, seeing myself seeing my work, seeing myself separating and switching roles to the observer, and from the curator to the choreographer. According to Boal, this is where the aesthetic place lies, in that dissociation of two times, in that separation between the actor's space and the spectator's. When I integrated my memory of the past and my imagination of the future into my lived present, I finally

coincided with myself, I became two in one, like I was on stage, both actor and spectator, both performer and observer.\* If I negate the physical stage and the physical spectator and even the actor, which here are the gallery space, the visitors and myself as the maker, theatre would still exist. In Boal's theory, even professional actors in a full-time sense are not necessary for theatre, and therefore, for aesthetic activity to exist. This is because aesthetic activity emanates from the aesthetic space and is then 'vocational'. It is vocational in the sense that it belongs to all human beings, constantly manifesting itself not only in our relations with others but also, and most importantly here, with other objects. The aesthetic activity is heavily concentrated and a thousandfold more intense than the well-known performance and theatre. This means that even, I, as the maker, don't need to physically perform sculpture for the aesthetic activity to exist, because it already exists in my intense subjectivity.\* Furthermore, the division here between gallery and visitors is not only spatial and architectural but intensely subjective too. It dissolves the audience and turns the gallery into two subjective dimensions of affective and oneiric. The resulting affective space is both dichotomic and asynchronous. It features the observer as an independent subject seeing the past or simulating the future juxtaposed with current perceptions in the present. On the other, the oneiric space is not dichotomic and features the observer submerged in the dream, losing contact with the concrete and physically real space, and losing consciousness of the surrounding physical space in which the dreamer is dreaming. In other words, inside the affective dimension, the subject sees the physical space and projects his memories and his sensibility onto it. Whereas, inside the oneiric one the dreamer doesn't see the physical space but lives inside these projections. What does the gallery space modify then and what characteristics and properties does it hold? Can we call the gallery the home of the aesthetic space? If aesthetic space possesses properties that by experience, stimulate the process of learning or 'gnoseological' properties, and theatre is thus, a form of knowledge, would that make the gallery space a type of school? Here too I reintergrate the eternalist shape of time from the second practical project, in which we now coexist with the artists of the past and the artists of the future. In Boal's aesthetic space, the being is not mandatory, the deceased live in it, and the past, present, and future are now, today. As also seen in the second project featuring Bergson's pure duration dissociated from time, Boal posited that in that dissociation everything is possible in the 'here-and-now', and significantly, fiction and

reality become interchangeable: 'fiction is pure reality, and reality is fiction'. In that aesthetic space which 'is but *doesn't exist*', time can flow forward and can easily flow backwards. In the aesthetic space, time stops being measured and only duration is counted. Time and space can be either willingly condensed or stretched. Imagination would then rule and any combination is possible. People, locations and objects can be flexibly controlled, warped, eliminated, cloned, or any scenario that comes to mind. Control comes back into the picture once again. Imagination drags memory in the same psychic process where one can't exist without the other. Together, both imagination and memory liberated by the aesthetic space project these non-physically existing, perhaps fictive, subjective dimensions into the aesthetic space. There lies the power of the sculptor because the sculptor not only performs but spatially projects this mental aesthetic space in the physical world for others to see what otherwise, they can't physically see.\* The sculptor facilitates the transit of the affective and oneiric dimensions to live exclusively in the mind of the subject.\* That power and faculty of creating an aesthetic space is human, animals don't possess it and I wonder here if artificial intelligence will ever do. Animals are led to the stage, and placed on the stage, in a gallery space. In Beuys' performance work, *I Like America and America Likes Me*, the artist locked himself in a room with a live coyote co-living and co-communing eight hours a day for three consecutive days [Fig. 124]. Pierre Huyghe's (b. 1962) dog with a leg painted pink wandered freely in the gallery as part of the exhibition [Fig. 125], even napping by the wall of the Ludwig Museum in Cologne in 2014.

Certainly, these works created controversy and expressed sensitive issues. The latter included works regarded as cruel to animals at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, featured in a 2017-2018 show titled *Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World* (Boucher, 2017). Although these exhibitions raised concerns about rights and protection, they also highlighted censorship in modern society and politics. These animals can't recognise the aesthetic space, they only know physical space and move from one to another. Because of all the combinations related to that unique human faculty, the viewers or visitors are free to recreate their own mental scenario(s). Hence, the role of the acting sculptures in the gallery or exhibiting space is not for the visitor to see it as the artist meant it to be, or as imposed upon, but as a catalyst, as a shortcut, a bullet train leading the affective dimension to the station of the aesthetic space.\* It is about allowing the

viewer to freely feel intense emotions, learn new symbols, discover new significations and meanings, experience new awakenings, allow thoughts to overflow, saturated reactions to burst and wonder with sensations, or vehemently and openly disagree with a preposterous perception.\* Talmudic words ‘we don’t see things as they are; we see them as we are’, a quote also attributed to diarist and essayist Anaïs Nin (1903-1977), express it beautifully (Nin, 1961, p. 124). This is where true immersion happens without needing a physical immersive installation. It happens through triggering that mode of accepting the new to enter our mind, to flip the switch on to enlightenment, to legitimately absorb things and ideas that are blocked and screened outside the gallery space, outside the presence of art. Taboos, discriminations, denials, egos, differences... Everything that dissociates, splits, and divides on the outside, not only reconciliates and fuses in the presence of art, but is null, idle, inactive and utterly obsolete. These blocking boundaries crumble and disappear, only for humans to realise that these walls and divisions never really existed, but were only a societal product and a political construct. This is what I wish to perform with the research sculptures, to create another intersecting space between practice and theory, between artefacts and exegeses.\* The purpose is not to show the works to be merely observed, but to show them to create a declic or release mechanism, where viewers get exposed further to the subjective aesthetic space I live in. To remind them of their own aesthetic space, that they have one too, and that it is ok if it is different from mine. To normalise strangeness in perception, as strangeness same as a stranger, once we meet it, it stops existing and becomes an acquaintance.\* Again, this is where art succeeds where every other reconciling work fails. Boundaries, bodies, physical world cease here, there is willingness for growth, for expansion, for immersion, and connection can then be established. Abramović and Ulay (1943-2020) found closure in the gallery space, in one minute of silence, in the negation of the outside world, of the conflicts, legalities, courts, and households. All these divisions were left at the doors of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, year 2010. Ulay was willing to immerse in reconciliation and the gallery space facilitated the process. He was willing to meet Abramović halfway and stretched his arms to hold her stretched arms and open palms, and negate the outside gap between them [Fig. 126]. A gap of twenty years of discord. Formalities are misfits in the breath-held mood in the gallery. Even writing the surname ‘Abramović’ feels awkward as it should be just Marina in this humane closeness which as witnesses, we feel

entitled to own. Each viewer and experiencer is teleported to that aesthetic scene where other crowded witnesses cease to exist. Abramović and Ulay started a breakup spiritual journey at opposite ends of the Great Wall of China [Fig. 127], but where they finally met was around that small museum table instead of at Erlang Shen, Shenmu, the Buddhist temple in Shaanxi province.

A subheadline (Nguyen, 2022) described it as a ‘valuable lesson on love and creativity’, validating the gallery here as a school of life, of our views of the world and relations with others, with objects, and with ourselves. Space, with us in it, is no longer linear or cartographic, but overlapping as one. Everything, everyone is one. The more minimal and neutral the space is, the more decluttered the exterior world becomes, and the more connections we can initiate in this case. It answers Barad’s ‘agential realism’ in *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* and the idea of a unified world as a whole and where everything is entangled with everything else in a deep connection and not as separate entities.

My role as a maker turned spectator, turned theatre choreographer or curator in the art scene is now a unified one exploring the junction of roles of a multidisciplinary researcher by staging a potential exhibition. Maria Lind (b. 1966) the director of the graduate program at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, wondered about specific terms or ‘something’ to designate ‘the curatorial’. Lind (2009, p. 103) inferred that commissioning new work, working beyond the walls of an institution, programming and education critique in its traditional definition, editing, education, and fundraising, are all part of the curating process. Thus, curating goes far beyond making an exhibition. It needs a multidimensional role and thinking about curation in the expanded field. It necessitates a new name to be called by truthful to the activities of the curator whether independent or employed, trained as an artist or an art historian. For this reason, it is important to keep renegotiating the conventions of curating towards a way that gathers and links objects, images, processes, people, locations, histories, and discourses in physical space.

I started making sketches, imagining the ideal space. White surrounding walls did not feel harmonious within the visualisation. To channel the simulation of the works inside the mind, the space calls for an entirely grey wall, ceiling and floor. The studio became the gallery and the now-stored pieces started claiming their favourite rooms and

spots in an imagined space. Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory Terry Smith (2012) found that artists tend to curate uniquely and distinctively and apply certain qualities from the works of art that they usually make. Curators, on the other hand, act as quasi-artists and envision museum spaces as studios, or stage places and environments housing alternative and parallel worlds as museums from another time and place, past or future. Once the propice space was mentally curated and simulated, I designed a flyer for a future opportunity to physically recreate my fictive gallery (see Annex).

*The primary means for “explaining” an artist’s work is to let it reveal itself. Showing is telling. Space is the medium in which ideas are visually phrased. Installation is both presentation and commentary, documentation and interpretation. Galleries are paragraphs, the walls and formal subdivisions of the floors are sentences, clusters of works are the clauses, and individual works, in varying degrees, operate as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and often as more than one of these functions according to their context. (Storr, 2006, p. 23)*

Would the viewer detect the intertwined embedment of narratives in the works? Perhaps the space can feature an audio interpretation played on headphones, or through a speaker. Narrated by the artist with a light echo, it would transmit that fiction better. Sometimes reading a piece of poetry or a marking story travels with the viewer back home and hovers there until acknowledged. For instance, looking at sculptor, professor and researcher José Teixeira’s (b. 1960) *Gravity* (2017-2018) casted feet installation, there is a sense of pause, a stopping momentum. Truncated just above the ankle or mid-calf, a multitude of determined pairs of feet of different shoe sizes are placed on assembled mats facing the same direction. Seventy-seven people of which men, women and children between ten and eighty years old participated as models [Fig. 128].

*Rain, hail and snowfall. A freezing, diluvian rain. I can’t feel my feet. Soaked clothes stick to the body. If only I could change the socks and dry the boots. It’s been raining for months. The trench accumulates water. We live in a nauseating quagmire. It rains and the icy cold rises from the phalanges to the back of the neck. Sometimes we are submerged up to our shins. When the rain stops and the water drains, it is mud. The trench is a swamp that, when we move, glues us to the ground. We take off our boots. We wring out the holey socks. We put on our boots that were worn out and torn from waiting so long. (Teixeira, de Albuquerque, & Salteiro, 2020)*

Teixeira's project represents and evokes one-hundredth of the Portuguese victims of the great war who died a hundred years ago. It serves to remember in the present the thousands of migrants, war zone refugees, and child soldiers recruited by extremist groups, and at the same time celebrate the life of the symbolically represented seventy-seven participants. As startling as the visual of the work is, it is the above-quoted words about it in the voice of the victims written by the artist that made it deeply poignant.

#### **Project 4: *Rhizomatic Writing in Sculptural Terms***

This section of the thesis including its practical works was the last one to be developed in 2024. While visiting with my advisor the ISEG Lisbon School of Economics and Management campus, one of the areas left an impression on me. Located inside the *Convento das Inglesinhas* building, the large and bright space comprises two juxtaposed inclined planes. The slopes were built at an angle of five degrees with one space higher than the other, each forming a levelled U shape [Figs. 129,130]. The space inspired me immensely and seemed like a conditional platform and place complementing the research, and precisely the methodology part. The proposal for the exhibition was born, approved, executed and exhibited from 15th May and extended throughout 25th June 2024.

The solo exhibition is titled *Rhizomatic Writing in Sculptural Terms (RWIST)* and encompasses two contemporary sculptures and a series of Art & Language drawings. The concept revolves around the methodology the research is based on. In line with the methodology's above-developed reasoning, the theme is about doctoral art inquiry including practice-related research with its various terminologies and how it has evolved drastically in the last decade and continues to steer away from models borrowed from other fields of knowledge. Despite some universities offering courses culminating in artefacts that speak for themselves without a mandatory exegesis, written documentation is compulsory at the majority of academic institutions around the world. With post-qualitative research stemming from feelings, experiences and ideas, the voice of the artist-writer is still required to conform to the rigid format of the traditional dissertation structure, template, and development order. Oftentimes, as described, constructing a probe around (a) specific theorist(s), or arguing to answer pre-formulated questions or 'problems' demanded by the discourse of research maps the artistic process and limits the originality of the exploration. The exhibition questions what the written thesis looks like for authors such as myself, whose dissertation is essential to the research. It explores the shape of the written thesis when hypotheses and theories are gradually constructed following unfolding lines of thought that generate new ideas. The exhibition provides a missing link between the development of artworks in the studio and the written text. While developing my inquiry, I felt a gap between these two major aspects, which

complement each other. The exhibition established this transition by presenting a visual interpretation of this research as an example of a possible methodology in the arts. Each of the two sculptures in the exhibition claims its own experimental needs by exploring the passage from linear to rhizomatic writing based on philosophers Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Félix Guattari's (1930-1992) concept of a network of rhizomes connecting any point to another [Fig. 131]. The visual forms in the works are meant to extract the horizontal underground plant stem known as the rhizome [Fig. 132] overground to be seen. The sculptural interventions join Holloway's and Ingold's respective understandings of the making process. The pre-planned structures match Holloway's process clearly defined by a starting point and an endpoint. The final sculptures are, to a certain extent, faithful representations of the proposed sketches and materials [Figs. 133-141].

### ***RWIST: Upper Slope***

Titled *Upper Slope*, the top sculpture is made of a long green metal garden grid elevated by four squarish green metal tubes. The tubes stand on a wooden base in the shape of a rectangular prism. The short sides constituting the depth at the beginning and the end of the horizontal base are placed at the same five-degree angle of the plane it lies on. Except for one additional identical wooden sheet reinforcing the shape, the nude base is void. Tied to the horizontal and vertical bars of the grid, several ribbons are tied and cut at their edges with zig-zag scissors. The ribbons are of different green tints and hues, textures, widths, and lengths. Some longer ones continue on the wooden base and intrude on the space around where students pass by. Despite the ground being diagonal or conditional – unlike solid materials – the soft ribbons obey the gravitational force on the inclined plane and remain straight [Fig. 142] (see Annex).

### ***RWIST: Lower Slope***

The bottom sculpture *Lower Slope* is wider and higher than the top one. It is made of the same structural components of a green metal grid, square tubes and a cuboid base with sides at an angle. Unlike the first sculpture where the ribbons were preinstalled and planned, rebellious fabrics were installed on site intuitively and spontaneously. Only a small trial was tested during the work in progress [Fig. 143]. Previously trimmed and shaped with a rolling blade, these flowing textiles also vary in tints and hues and have random unique curves of diverse dimensions. Their placement follows Ingold's thoughts on making as a 'process of growth' by answering to the flux and flows of the materials at hand (see Annex).

### ***RWIST: Stroll Scroll***

Strolling through the long inclined slopes reminded me of the gesture of scrolling down through the interminable pages of the thesis document. The latter idea is represented by twenty-two consecutive tilted framed drawings placed on the higher wall of the lower slope. Each drawing features one or more outlined shapes of key sentences in the thesis. These sentences are the ones followed by green asterisk marks at their end, scattered throughout this text. These point to certain discovered rhizomes or new ideas about what sculpture and its role is or can be. The marks are made with emerald green and red felt pens directly drawn on the acetate sheets of the frames. I superposed each sheet on a printed page from this text and drew the discovered rhizomes. On some drawings, a short red line is coloured. It echoes underlined words to edit, as proposed by the Grammarly typing assistant and editing tool.

All three works are site-specific and developed to respond to the bright space at ISEG. The sculptures channel the natural colour in which rhizomes thrive. They extend the surrounding exterior greenery and trees at the end of each slope visible from the inside through glass panels and doors. The abstracted green of the works regulates spatial energy for circulating students, slowing the rush, and alleviating the stress of a long and intense academic journey. Furthermore, showing qualitative practice in a quantitative study-

based space reinforces the long-time collaboration between art and economics campuses. The exhibition was accompanied by a press kit enclosing press releases, flyers and posters in English and Portuguese.

The Press Kit material and installation view images are documented in a separate portfolio document (see Annex).

### III

## COLLECTIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

*Artists can choose to focus on singular themes that are often associated with historical moments or identities, or they may choose to take a more directly narrative approach to fully exploring the possibility of entirely new worlds. (A.I.R., 2020)*

In this chapter, I start with an overall description of the individual works as one big body of work and elaborate on common and key factors linking them together and to a potential space. The section puts three central concepts under the spotlights, which are looked at from an angle directly relevant to the practical works developed: *The Narrative and the Fictive*, *Imagination and Perception*, and *Objects*. I end the chapter with a subjective synthesis of final thoughts.

### **Description through Critical Thinking**

*The condition of art is unknowable.*  
(Smithson, 1996, p. 58)

The individual practical projects might differ in themes and visual outcomes, though share the same creation process and generic properties as seen in Table 2.

Table 2

PRACTICAL PROCESS	Real Trigger	Fictive Narrative	Sketches (Before and/or after Supporting Sculptures)	Supporting Sculptures	Assigning Materials	Execution In the Studio	Installation + Documentation	Reflective Texts Throughout the process
Project I	Ordinary old concrete tank in Grândola	The water in the tank is freed from the tank and is healthy/pure/ in good condition	Imagined sculptures and possible structures	- Leakage around tank - Frozen puddle - Play and human presence	Accessible materials answering the narrative's need	Uncontrollable and unpredictable work conditions. Pieces finished on time.	Main piece with correlating sculptures around it at a reasonable distance	Autoethnography
Project II	Subjective perception of the notion of time	Cashew nuts become non-allergic with time	Imagined sculptures and possible structures	- Skin becomes allergy-free with time	Accessible materials answering the narrative's need	Uncontrollable and unpredictable work conditions. Pieces finished on time.	Main piece with correlating sculptures around it at a reasonable distance	Publication in journal including autoethnography
Project III	Seeing phosphenes before sleep	Closed heavy eyelids have square-shaped holes irradiating light	Imagined sculptures and possible structures	- Psychedelic light refractions on the wall - Useless perforated sleep masks	Accessible materials answering the narrative's need	Uncontrollable and unpredictable work conditions. Pieces finished on time.	Main piece with correlating sculptures around it at a reasonable distance	Autoethnography

Note. Rajaa Paixão, 2020.

All the produced contemporary sculptures are created for the indoor space, possibly the white cube or maybe a light grey one. Without being site-specific, they need to be displayed collectively, with reasonable space between them to safeguard each piece's identity as an independent sculpture, yet still correlate with each other. The smaller the sculpture is, the less space it includes around itself, and has correspondingly less of a spatial field in which to exist for the viewer. This distance of the object in space from our bodies structures the quality of 'publicness' or 'privateness' imposed on things. It also determines the quality of intimacy attached to an object in a fairly direct proportion as its size diminishes in relation to oneself (Morris, 1968, pp. 230-231). Artist Victoria Adam's (b. 1983) sculptures are specifically intended to be experienced up close to draw people into their intimacy. Using tactile or sensual appeal to mark out ideas of personal space, chance connection, desire or derision, the works borrow from contemporary anxieties, the world of the health and beauty aisle ("Victoria Adam (b. 1983)", n.d.) [Fig. 144].

In general, my sculptures are abstract and hint at an unclear narrative. Only a few items denote a figurative representation, such as leaves or socks, which steer away from hyperrealism and merge with the abstracted whole. In his book *Seeing the Invisible*:

*On Kandinsky*, philosopher, phenomenologist and novelist Michel Henry (1922-2002) clarified that the meaning of abstraction for painter Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) is not to drain a work of content for the mere purpose of leaving a pure geometrical form or an empty outline. It means revealing the 'inner necessity' of things, by eliminating all the figurative elements that only refer to their externalities and outward appearances (Henry & Davidson, 2009). Even in the case of figurative representations and clear stories such as pictorial art, for art historian Paul Barolsky (b. 1941) there would still be no such thing as narrative art. Art is spatial while literature is temporal. We read a text through a prescribed activity, word by word, line by line, scrolling through pages, but we look at pictures in various directions and a multiplicity of ways, led by the form, shape, perspective and other properties of things (Barolsky, n.d.). This duality is shown above in the titled thesis paintings of the methodology exhibition. Painters and sculptors do not 'tell', they 'show', so the idea of them as storytellers is 'a figure of speech'. Hidden narratives can be literally represented. For instance, Andra Ursuța's (b. 1979) sculpture selected for London's Fourth Plinth Prize portrays a wrapped shape resembling a ghostly equestrian figure [Fig. 145].

There is a shrouded narrative hidden underneath the visible translucent light-green resin surface which represents an outer narrative itself. The work questions the meaning of contemporary public sculpture by symbolising forgotten or hidden histories. The sculpture will be presented on the plinth in Trafalgar Square in 2028 (Rabb, 2024). Titles can provide further hints for the elements the sculptures and hidden narratives represent. At times, the reading of a hidden narrative can occur based on the title of a work, such as some of Lourdes Castro's (1930-2022) incognito minimalist subject matters which can only be identified through their title: *Ombre portée de René Bertholo* (Paixão, 2019b, p. 81) [Fig. 146].

Art critic Jerry Saltz (b. 1951) elaborated on the titles of works of art, stating that being too directive in a title is unproductive. The purpose of a title for Saltz (2022) is to create more space, not less. Pointing right at the thing or making lame puns limits the work and gives the artist away.

*The space between art and its title is immensely charged "material," alchemical lightning material that can be used to the maximum. (Saltz)*

The works of the thesis projects are accessible to the human scale with their variable sizes, where the entirety of the biggest sculpture can be looked at in detail. Bal (1999, p. 108) stated that Bourgeois' *Spider* [Fig. 147] loses its wholeness when we stand so close to it, for the smallness of some objects entices us to come closer. Sculptor, conceptual artist and writer Robert Morris (1931-2018) posited that the smaller an object is, the closer one approaches it (p. 231). The human body enters into the total continuum of sizes in the perception of relative size and establishes itself as a constant on that scale (p. 230).

The sculptures are static, and feature various materials responding to their correspondent narrative. The materials present an organic and industrial combination. They feature traditional art materials, construction materials, and occasionally found objects and ready-mades. In this context, ready-mades are employed as a complementing structural object or supporting base, unlike Bourgeois' selection of objects rooted in memory and biography holding a personal meaning, or Marcel Duchamp's (1887-1968) selection of objects as the idea of the object ("The Art of Louise Bourgeois", n.d.) [Fig. 148]. A painter, sculptor, chess player, and writer, Duchamp's work is closely associated with *Conceptual Art* (1960s), in addition to *Cubism* (1907-1914), and *Dada* (1910s).

Bases play a crucial role in the presentation of these sculptures. They are neutral in terms of colours and texture; vary from nude wood to untreated industrial metal, or neutral casted materials and found objects, most of them grey. They function like a sturdy stage that puts colourful and conceptual elements under the spotlight. In his book *Remarks on Colour*, philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) (2005) called for grey to be recognised as a primary colour (Wittgenstein, 2005). We don't see black when our eyes adapt to the neutrality of darkness what we see in fact, is grey. Black is only experienced by perceiving something darker than this grey, 'also called *eigengrau*, characteristic *gray*, or *brain gray*' (Hardin, 1993). As sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) declared there are now functional substitutes like plastic and polymorphous substances for organic and natural materials. Nylon and its variants can replace wool, cotton, silk and linen, and concrete and polystyrene can replace wood, stone and metal. The new substances change the meaning of the materials we use, and the distinction between natural and synthetic substances is similar to that between traditional and bright colours in terms of value judgment. For example, shifting to warm, cold or intermediate

shades means stripping colours of their symbolic and moral status to favour an abstract quality that makes their interplay and systematisation possible. Similarly, manufacturing synthetics means that materials become polymorphous and lose their symbolic naturalness, and so achieve a higher degree of abstractness. A universal play of associations among materials, and a ‘transcendence of the formal antithesis between natural and artificial materials’ become then possible (Baudrillard, 1996, pp. 38-39). Inês Norton (b. 1982) researches the contemporary tension between the concepts of natural and synthetic. Her work emphasises the omnipresence of artificiality and stresses the importance of physical presence and touch (Ginga & Ferreira, 2019) [Fig. 149].

Most sculpture is composed by addition, part by part, subject to hierarchies of strength and clarity, and of proximity to a main idea or two. The natural monochrome features with minimal contrast or colours, and materials such as wood and metal, unify these fairly discrete parts (Judd, 1965, p. 3). Lee Ufan’s (b. 1936) sculptures made out of untreated materials such as stone and iron explore emptiness and the void, and the relationship between the made and the unmade, the painted and the unpainted, the interior and the exterior (“Lee Ufan”, 2008). The untreated materials in Ufan’s work emphasise the ‘resonant space’ rather than the artist’s intervention (Mun-Delsalle, 2016), whereas the untreated or neutral bases here emphasise the sculpture parts featuring the artist’s intervention [Fig. 150].

*Color, surface, texture, and shape only emphasize the physical aspects of the work. Anything that calls attention to and interests the viewer in this physicality is a deterrent to our understanding of the idea and is used as an expressive device. (LeWitt)*

Ufan’s works devoid of a specific narrative preserve their minimalism focused on the technical properties of the sculpture and its relation with space. They portray the sense of theatricality that characterises what modernist art critic and art historian Michael Fried (b. 1939) calls ‘literalist art’ (Fried, 1967, p.12). The condition under which literalist art expresses itself pertains to a general and pervasive nature directly responding to sensibility. The theatrical aspect of literalist sensibility emanates from the actual circumstances in which the beholder encounters minimal work (p. 16). Ufan’s works are still read as art, and in that respect automatically steer away from Fried’s definition of ‘objecthood’ attached to the condition of non-art. Judd and Morris (p. 2) are both opposed

to the additive part by part form of sculpture called ‘anthropomorphism’ by Judd. The sculptures of this project have a specific and narrow condition, as opposed to the general and pervasive condition of Fried’s literal art. They belong to this anthropomorphic form where specific elements are separated from the whole by their implications and set up relationships within the work. Those elements are the ones that directly point to a hidden narrative and hold symbolic representations. They betray the structure as a whole and point to a hierarchical importance. Therefore, they screen the values of indivisibility, wholeness, and singleness of a ‘one thing’ work, or ‘Specific Object’ (Judd, 1965) [Fig. 151] distinguished by the unitary form or shape essential to creating the pure ‘gestalt’ sensation Morris (1968) talked about. This gestalt characterises minimalist sculpture, including the usage of the reflective or crystal surface such as mirrors explored in the 1960s, including the aforementioned mirrored cubes, of which several works are titled *Untitled*, emphasising unity and the deliberate omission of a hierarchical narrative. In *The Nature of Aesthetic Qualities*, philosopher Göran Hermerén (b. 1938) named *gestalt quality* as one of five aesthetic qualities, the four others being *emotion qualities*, *behavior qualities*, *taste qualities*, and *affective qualities*. Hermerén (1988, p. 106) listed the gestalt qualities as ‘unified’, ‘coherent’, ‘tightly knit’, ‘complete’, ‘simple’, ‘balanced’, ‘harmonious’, ‘integrated’, ‘chaotic’, and ‘consonant’. Leddy noted that most of the qualities in Hermerén’s gestalt list relate to structure, but then ‘neatness’, and ‘cleanness’ reveal underlying form or structure too. Leddy argued that his everyday surface aesthetic qualities can then fall under Hermerén’s gestalt quality category too.

*There is not one condition of the artist in the sixties, but ten conditions.*

1. *The condition of reinterpreting the misinterpreted.*
2. *The condition of the nonentity.*
3. *The condition of isolated systems at the dead level.*
4. *The condition of unkempt bathrooms.*
5. *The condition of provisional opacity ordered by The Grand Horizontal.*
6. *The condition of smiling faces.*
7. *The condition of One Hundred Mass-Mediae.*
8. *The condition of Standardization.*
9. *The condition of historical blind spots.*
10. *The condition of codified nullity.* (Smithson, 1996, p. 330)

In the research projects, the gestalt is diluted by the diversity of materials, shapes, textures, and symbolism. The identity of the narrative, and consequently the one

of the maker, overrides the identity of the work as a unified whole. Art historian Rex Butler (b. 1960) associated Fried's thoughts with Lacan's (1988, p. 29) symbolic order: 'As soon as the symbol arrives, there is a universe of symbols' (Butler, 2017). Art enters the Symbolic when it is not 'constituted bit by bit', as in Judd and Morris' idea of wholeness. In this regard, the symbolism in that section refers to selected elements in the projects. Due to the merging of the real narratives with the imagined ones, most of the representations are unrealistic, and fictive, with a touch of familiarity. They are at the same time part of reality and detached from it. The sculptures consist of incepted and materialised objects with their own separate identity, therefore, are autonomous. They share a tempo-spatial dimension where the real and the fictive intersect within a possible multiverse. But how can the idea of a multiverse be possible when it is not real? The evidence supporting the idea of a multiverse is purely theoretical, sometimes philosophical. According to one of the many interpretations around it, if versions of us could be living many different possible lives respective to making different decisions, the only reality that's perceptible to us is the one we inhabit (Drake, 2023). Wouldn't that make reality subjective? In that case, an experienced metaverse doesn't need to be scientifically proven to be real in our fictive realm. That fictive imaginary is an unlimited space, an infinite realm. Writing about parallel universes, physicist Max Tegmark (b. 1967) described other universes as a direct implication of cosmological observations and not just a staple of science fiction. The key question Tegmark (2003) stated, 'is not whether the multiverse exists but rather how many levels it has'. He outlined the four distinct types of parallel universes discussed by scientists. These are differentiated by levels as follows. *Level I: Beyond Our Cosmic Horizon*, *Level II: Other Postinflation Bubbles*, *Level III: Quantum Many Worlds*, and *Level IV: Other Mathematical Structures* [Fig. 152]. The figure of the latter is oddly very sculptural and evocative of abstract works such as Mariko Mori's (b. 1967) sculptures [Figs. 153,154,155] and their rendered hues [Fig. 156]. Mori explores the universal, the fantastic, and otherness, and creates artworks combining ideas and imagery from pop culture, religion, and technology. In the 1990s, she portrayed herself as a cyborg or alien-like heroine in an urban environment. Recurring preoccupations in her work include interplanetary space and the cycle of life, death, and rebirth, with astrophysical theories inspiring some of her sculptures. The article's main image [Fig. 157] is also a reminder of Jean-Michel Othoniel's (b. 1964) beaded and

clustered sculptures [Fig. 158]. Through his large-scale glass sculptures, Othoniel explores themes of fragility, transformation, and ephemerality below their shiny surfaces. The artist wants to seduce the viewers with their beauty and then lead them to other themes ("Jean-Michel Othoniel", n.d.). For his *Multiverse* (2008) installation work, Leo Villareal (b. 1967) customised codes himself to create shifting light patterns in each installation [Fig. 159]. The contemporary American artist is best known for his installations in which he employs LED lights and computer technology. He explained: 'Art is a distillation of ideas into material through which artists communicate. For me, art has always served as a portal—something that takes the viewer to another place,' ("Leo Villareal", n.d.).

*Have we any right to infer -- let us say, rather, to imagine -- an interminable succession of the "clusters of clusters," or of "Universes" more or less similar? [...] the "right," in a case such as this, depends absolutely upon the hardihood of that imagination which ventures to claim the right. I myself feel impelled to the fancy [...] that there does exist a limitless succession of Universes, more or less similar to that of which we have cognizance -- to that of which we shall ever have cognizance -- at the very least until the return of our own particular Universe into Unity. (Poe, 1848, pp. 102-103)*

The sculptures in this research hypothetically belong to an alternate reality, and simultaneously exist in the maker's and the viewers' real one.\* Duchamps' door (1927) is a ubiquitous example of an object simultaneously existing in two physical spaces [Fig. 160].

If the eye does not perceive a space, it doesn't mean the mind can't imagine it, hence perceiving it. The theories of fiction of 'possible worlds' present the fictional world as an alternative and individual counterfactual world, separate from the world we live in. According to modal fictionalism, the real world is also a possible world, though it differs from other possible worlds (which are as real), by being the only one that is also actual, and distinguished by the contingent fact that we happen to live in it (Schaeffer, 2012). Walsh (2016, pp. 4-10) thinks of narratives, and fictions in particular, as acts of representation, away from the meaning that they correlate with objects of representation. He sees acts of representation are real acts, discursive and ontologically continuous with other acts such as real, communicative, or representational. Fictionality is culturally and cognitively an extremely pervasive and discrete rhetoric, a rhetorical set, within that discursive continuity. By becoming real fictive objects, the sculptures here are separated,

freed, distanced from the artist's mind, and given a life, or biography of their own. Stranger and somehow familiar to the viewer, they are orchestrated and related objects, sibling-like, where the first imagined work is the central piece, and the rest are supporting sculptures that complete the narrative. In each project, the lingering initial triggering thought was acknowledged, faced, dissected, understood, demystified, externalised, and controlled, and its perception was manipulated. The tackled themes flag common concerns such as social pressure, health anxiety, fatigue, political incompetence, social upheavals, and concerns for the future and the environment. The thoughts are relatable, yet, they are materialised under a new angle, and an unrelatable perception.

Sculptures are here called objects in their physical function of materialising a fictive, perhaps domestic, object pertaining to a new reality. Philosophers Michael Hardt (b. 1960) and Antonio Negri (1933-2023) asserted that even in the realm of political theory, there is pressure to continue with the same with very few possibilities open to us in times of crisis. Those who think beyond these narrow options are overlooked as naive and those responsible for the collapses are the ones assigned to fix them. As a result, the cause of the crisis becomes the solution. To overcome the limiting barriers of this alleged realism, politics today need the powers of imagination and creation to find real alternatives to this order of things (Hardt & Negri, 2009, pp. vii-xiv).

*The search for alternative realities beyond the politicized spaces of earthly existence led artists not only underground but also to spatial dimensions previously unknown.*  
(Snodgrass, 2024)

The case study sculptures could also play the role of mock-ups or test samples. Even though they are not miniatures, many of them are small enough to retain a domestic aspect and can be prototypes to be revisited and recreated on a larger scale in the future. As impressive as it is to see Christo's colossal surfaces wrapped, such as islands and landmarks [Fig. 161], it is interesting to see how the artist started small, wrapping objects and barrel structures in a maid's room in Paris as a studio. Christo started by incorporating conventional art materials such as paint cans and pigment bottles, swathed in resin-soaked canvas. He altered the contours and surfaces of everyday objects by enveloping them with fabric or polyethene sheets and binding them with rope, playing with their identities, sometimes revealed and at other times concealed. These early artworks from 1958 to

1963, including more of the artist's rarely shown key works, were shown at Gagosian Paris [Fig. 162]. According to art dealer Larry Gagosian (b. 1945), these pieces were pivotal in both the development of Christo's vision and the history of art ("Christo: Early Works, 1958–1963", 2022). Looking at some of Vasconcelos's earlier works such as the *Urinals* sculpture from 2005 [Fig. 163], the scale range difference with her latest installations like the Dior stage set immersive commission at the 2023 Paris Fashion Week [Fig. 164] is simply mesmerising.

In a sense, the sculptures developed for this research are not exactly domestic objects with their fictive unfamiliar looks. They are not functional either, though many familiar works can be turned into non-functional objects of art or twisted around to become something else. An example would be some of Cecília Costa's (b. 1971) modified, lifted, or inclined furniture namely her *Closer* [Fig. 165] work, nominated for the *Portuguese Art Prize 2022*. The piece is composed of two artsy wooden chairs placed in front of each other. The left one inclines towards the right one, and the latter inclines backwards in a nonexisting synchronised event. The artist's interest in geometrical principles, particularly in symmetry, gravity and space dimensions is emphasised by her studies in mathematics ("cecília costa" n.d.). An extensive visual exploration features Doris Salcedo's (b. 1958) wooden furniture and fabric sculptures [Fig. 166]. The Columbian-born artist's work stems from specific historical events and is linked to personal and political history. Salcedo uses domestic materials accumulated over years of use in everyday life and that are impregnated with significance and meanings, to make sculptures and installations that function as political and mental archaeology ("Doris Salcedo", n.d.).

*My work is based on experiences I lack [...] Therefore, it is made from an unfamiliar, unstable place, simultaneously strange and proper. It is made from an indirect perspective, and place of insufficiency from which a fragmentary, incomplete history is precariously told and retold.* (Salcedo as cited in Turner, n.d.)

What the practical projects here have in common with Salcedo's sculptures, is that personal narratives are not immediately decipherable in the final artworks but inform the ways in which the artist approaches each project. Salcedo centres her process on the memories of others (Murphy Turner, n.d.), and my process here is centred on my own collected memory of life events thrown into the merciless 'hands' of imagination. An

example from my previous work would be *Pirilampo Walk* (2018) [Figs. 167,168,169], where I dismantled some furniture pieces and reassembled them differently or combined them with found objects and materials. I had produced elements including paintings to recreate a recollection of the trajectory by foot and itinerary encounters to go and collect my son from nursery in Cascais, Portugal.

Analysed together, the research works function to mimic a dislocated installation, an installation of fictive objects in the real world, thus they become real fictive objects from a fictive space in a real space. Installations do own the literal and material presence of the 'real' world, and despite that, Perry (p. i) wrote that they still often manage to invite viewers to engage with 'metaphor, metonym and synecdoche'. Perry thought that everyday objects that are removed from their original 'homes' have the potential to stand for and evoke broader themes and abstract ideas, social histories and memories. Everyday spaces and their familiar objects mediated in artistic practices call for further critical reflection on the aspects of everyday life taken for granted. If these familiar objects provoke irreverence, laughter and most of all, curiosity, then what effect would fictive objects placed in everyday spaces have and what reflections can they trigger?

To understand what the sculptures as fictive objects suggest it is important to first establish sculpture as a fictive object theoretically. Philosopher of art Monroe C. Beardsley (1915-1985) stated that the nature of fiction is representation involving *selective similarity*, so if X represents Y then X refers to Y. Given the example of a painting depicting a smiling face in the pictorial context, we know that the painting is a representation of a smiling face because its content exhibits selective respects distinctive of a real smiling face. Visual, verbal, and dramatic representations all work the same: 'an illocutionary-act representation obtains when the conditions present are not sufficient for the act in question actually to occur'. This means that the content of representation can correspond to what one intends to represent, though the represented act does not occur. In the case of the smiling face, the smile is represented, though the act of smiling is absent, only its representation is registered. Verbally, if someone claims 'you stole my wallet!', they would be representing an illocutionary act of accusation instead of performing one, and therefore producing a fiction or imitation. In that sense, the drawing of the smiling fact is a fictional smiling face, and representation or imitation is essentially a fiction

(Beardsley, 1981, p. 191). Words, texts, paintings, or sculptures are all representations in the broad sense defining a representation as a symbolic vehicle standing for something else (Lin, 2016). If representational sculpture is fiction, then sculpture representing fictive perception is definitely fictive. Noting that ‘every rigid body is an object’ (Morris, 1968, p.230), sculpture as a fictive object can be established. Whilst the thought of the fictive generally promises unlimited possibilities, it is here employed in the imaginative generation of narratives, in the pre-process of the practical execution. Yet, the sculptures are fictive by being a product of the fictive, for they are predetermined and greatly controlled by obeying the fictive narrative. Cornelia Parker’s (b. 1956) concerns are with formalising things beyond our control. The British artist tries to contain the volatile and transforms it into something contemplative, quiet and often tragi-comic. Her work triggers cultural metaphors and personal associations through a combination of visual and verbal allusions ("Cornelia Parker", n.d.) [Fig. 170]. Parker is fascinated with taking objects and materials loaded with associations and juxtaposing them with one another. In her attempt to rationalise things beyond our control, she takes this literally in some of her works and eerie and provocative installations forcing the viewer to observe the transformation of ordinary objects into something ethereal, playing on private and public meaning and value. In art critic Iwona Blazwick’s (b. 1955) comprehensive book about the artist’s career, Parker talked about how sculpture, with its connection to the earth, has established a historical link to a sense of stability when her work is fragile, constantly unstable and in flux, hovering on the verge of collapsing (Blazwick, 2014).

*Perhaps that’s what I feel about my own relationship to the world. It is a universal condition, that of vulnerability. We don’t have solid, fixed lives; we’re consistently dealing with what life throws at us. (Parker)*

Even though best known for her large-scale installations, Parker also alters smaller-scale ‘ordinary’ objects into something extraordinary by transforming mundane objects to challenge what we attribute value. She extracts these objects from their current, or expected, existence and manipulates them into something new, working not only with the malleable scale and substance of things but also with the meaning conveyed by objects [Fig. 171].

All these various modes of destruction and construction investigate the vulnerability of human existence and the fragility of meaning (Chorley, 2018).

Barlow's approach to sculpture, on the other hand, allows freedom to the material being modelled by chance [Fig. 172]. In a video, the artist spoke about the role of chance in her work, and how her relationship with making sculpture 'has to be adventurous', almost on the edge of being beyond her control (Royal Academy of Arts, 2019). The video shows the artist randomly drilling in what looks like a beautiful mass of rubbly elements cast together with paint, on top of an intertwined metallic structure. Barlow is heard saying 'I like to use chance, to allow accidents or mistakes to become part of what I'm doing', just before she is filmed intentionally pushing the mass off the work table, watching it heavily crash onto the studio floor in an induced accident [Fig. 173]. Bourgeois had been filmed performing several acts of destruction in her studio, throwing sculptures and a wine glass, sending it crashing on the floor, then vehemently stomping further on the shattered pieces on the floor [Fig. 174]. In a video on *Breakability: The essential quality of pottery for Louise Bourgeois* (n.d.), the artist remembered how her mother, wary of Bourgeois' father's sudden fits of anger, always had stacked pottery saucers nearby to slip to her husband to smash instead of raising his voice.

Returning to Barlow's gesture, this type of abstraction and freedom in sculpture making heroes materials and impulsivity. It probably makes the process more exciting, prone to discoveries and happy accidents, unlike the rigidity of the mapping of a sculpture's architecture. This 'freedom of expression' of the material features heavily in abstract painting and abstract expressionism. Richter's painting process 'by design, leaves much to chance, resulting in risks and rewards for the works that emerge'. According to the artist, each step forward is more difficult and he feels less and less free, until he concludes there's nothing left to do ("Gerhard Richter: Painting After All", 2020) [Fig. 175].

In the *Gerhard Richter Painting* entrancing documentary (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2020), Richter keeps taking breaks from his dark paintings, then goes back inside the studio and makes further changes to them. He then admits having planned something totally different and pretty colourful for them, saying 'that's the thing: they do what they want'. In my case, the control solely belongs to the artist. Watching both

Richter and Barlow is intense and somehow transferrable, there's a sort of satisfaction not only in seeing but also in hearing the manifestation of the materials. The mass crashing on the floor, the screeching of the large wooden plank scratching and scrapping paint away, the paint mixed in a big bucket, and moments of silence in the videos after certain events, all of these elements are way more likely to give goosebumps than admiring a finished work hung or installed in a room. These actions along with the artist's gestures and expressions create a living work under transformation, breathing and in motion, rather than still objects pinned in a space like fossils, or mounted butterflies under glass which only hint at the happening of metamorphosed volumes. The final results, regardless of the excess of its value, will trigger memories from the past or generate new lines of thought. Though watching a creation process focuses on a presence, or a moment more electrifying for it is lived, endured and witnessed during its happening and not after it has happened sometime in the past. Art collector Roy Ockers's (2022) image of a text handwritten in red on a grainy thick paper reads: 'The act of creating something is always more important than the result!!!' [Fig. 176].

It also gives more enlightenment into collectors' interest in visiting an artist's studio before the gallery visit and the enhanced experience they could get out of it. But above all, this expanded experience is firstly consumed by the maker, in a direct exchange between the artist and the material before being conducted to the viewer.

*For me, art and art-making isn't about arriving to art. It's about the journey to get there, which is constantly shifting because it's an imaginary journey. I'm on a journey to art. I'm a traveler to art. (Grant, 2020)*

Grant's quote above refers to a poem that she treasures, *Ithaka*, by C. P. Cavafy (1863-1933). Cavafy's (2020, pp. 36-37) full poem is inserted in Appendix B for its significance. Its last paragraph can be understood that even if the final destination is less than what you have hoped for or 'poor', the journey to reach it has enriched you with the wisdom and experience needed to understand the end result. The poem is highly relatable and applicable to the art-making journey, precisely one entangled around fiction and narratives. It can speak directly to makers, artists, and creators.

Throughout the whole creation process in the practical research here, only restricted materials, such as the blue silicone in the water tank sculpture, have reclaimed a tiny fraction of control. The sticky silicone decided on its own bumpy texture despite

being modelled in a more or less specific shape. On a philosophical level, everything can ontologically be argued as conditional, and yet, practically, not all freedoms and conditions are equal. As Smithson noted (Smithson & Flam, p. 60), non-figurative sculpture is also conditioned by architectural details. The process of these case studies is conditioned on many – if not all – levels and steps, so there isn't much chance for chance or materials to interfere. It is pre-conditioned due to the circumstances and freedom restrictions surrounding the artist, who herself subjects the making process to more conditions, resulting in absolute post-conditional works, pinning condition as the fulcrum of the project. The concepts of the following section shape the conditional attributes of the sculptures and their role in this context.

### **The Theorisation of Central Concepts**

Determined as central concepts, *The Narrative and the Fictive*, *Imagination and Perception*, and *Objects* are looked at closely in this sub-section. The three concepts are developed within the theoretical discourse and the literature to a certain extent as each theme is extensively debated in several diverse contexts. The selection is a curated compilation of theoretical thoughts flowing, in line with the description. The concepts were then filtered to serve the purpose of understanding the practical projects, proposing potential meanings, or shedding light on triggers and results throughout the creation process.

## Central Concept 1: The Narrative and the Fictive

*The artist deals with what cannot be said in words.*

*The artist whose medium is fiction does this in words. The novelist says in words what cannot be said in words. (Le Guin, 2000, p. xx)*

The narrative in these projects plays the role of a bridge between the real and the fictive, the before and the after. The analysis of narrative discourse, specifically the written one, constantly implies a study of relationships, the relationship between discourse and the events it recounts, and the relationship between the same discourse and the act that produces it, actually, or fictively (Genette, p.27). To differentiate factual and fictional narratives, the term *fiction* should be clarified. The validity of the distinction between fact and fiction has been questioned in the literature and was contended in a Nietzschean vein that fact itself is a mode of fiction. The approach fictionalises the nature of narrative where ‘every narrative constructs a world’. The definition most current today of the term ‘fiction’, is equivalent to a representation of an imaginary/invented universe/world. Author Ursula K. Le Guin (1929-2018) stated that all fiction is metaphor, science fiction is metaphor, and the future, in fiction, is metaphor. These metaphors include space travel, an alternative society, and an alternative biology. What sets fiction apart from older forms of fiction is seemingly its use of new metaphors drawn from certain great dominants of our contemporary life, such as all the sciences, technology, and the relativistic and historical outlook. Hence, words can be used paradoxically because of their semiotic, symbolic or metaphoric usage. Often described as ‘extrapolative’, science fiction is not predictive, but descriptive. Le Guin linked novelists and artists to lying. She wrote that a novelist’s business is lying, and the business of prophets, clairvoyants, and futurologists is prediction. Fiction writers go about the truth in a peculiar and devious way by inventing persons, places, and events which never did and will never occur, describing them as the truth, in detail and at length, with a great deal of emotion. In a speech of acceptance, Le Guin shared her reward with her ‘fellow

authors of fantasy and science fiction, writers of the imagination, who for fifty years have watched the beautiful rewards go to the so-called realists'. The author noted that we are living now with obsessive technologies of a stricken society, where the profit motive conflict with the aims of art. When hard times come, the voices of writers will be needed to find living alternatives and imagine real grounds for hope. These writers would be able to differentiate between production of a market commodity and the practice of an art.

*We live in capitalism, its power seems inescapable — but then, so did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art. Very often in our art, the art of words. (Le Guin, 2014)*

In science, the term *fiction* can be applied to theoretical entities 'postulated to account for observational regularities which otherwise would be unexplainable' (Schaeffer, 2012). *Fictio* (Latin) can refer both to giving a form to something or modelling it as in the art of the sculptor; and to acts of hypothesising, pretending, or supposing. Fiction according to Smithson is confined to literary categories by rationalism to protect its own interests or systems of knowledge. Most of us think of literature and practically never of fictions in a general sense when the word fiction is used. The artist seeks fiction that 'reality will sooner or later imitate', coherence and order, and not 'truth', proofs, or correct statements. When focusing on the 'art object', critics deprive the artist of any existence in the world of both mind and matter. They disown the artist's mental process taking place in time to maintain a commodity value by a system independent of the artist, where art is separated from the artist's mind and from the 'primary process'. Ergo, separate 'objects', 'things', 'forms', or 'shapes' with beginnings and endings are 'mere convenient fictions'. Consequently, Smithson didn't believe in objects and totems, and instead believed in fiction and its integrity, the integrity of the writing. He declared that 'mythology is a believed fiction' and that his writings are not mythological. They tend to communicate graphically because they are translated in terms of his own psychic perceptions so that they come out as fiction rather than myth, and so that their materiality emerges [Fig. 177].

This differentiation between myth and fiction Smithson alludes to is based on literary critic Frank Kermode's (1919-2010) definition in which fictions that are not

consciously held to be fictive can degenerate into myths. Myths call for absolute, are the agents of stability and operate within the diagrams of ritual. Whereas fictions call for conditional assent, are the agents of change, for finding things out, and change ‘as the needs of sense-making change’ (Kermode, 1967, p. 39). Hume (2009) stated that the type of fiction in the artistic field is different from the classical philosophy of ‘fiction’ designating what we nowadays call a cognitive (aesthetic) illusion. The term ‘aesthetic’ implies an awareness typical to the reception of art. Its etymology derives from a seemingly perceptual quality of this aware, or cognitive, imaginative experience. Hence, reality is not what triggers that illusion, but the artefact itself (Wolf, 2011). Cognitive illusion is *not* experienced as a fiction, as opposed to artistic fiction experienced as a fiction. Artistic fictional entities are not linked to real-world *existential* propositions, nor do they operate in real-world commitments. On the other hand, theoretical fictions are postulated entities with an unclear/undetermined ontological status operating in real-world cognitive commitments. Moreover, the differentiation lies in the mental experience they both induce and its validation. The artistic fiction is ‘lived’, and is activated in an immersive way. It invites the reader/spectator to immerse in an invented universe and engage on an affective level with what is depicted or described. Its validation is then determined by the quality of experiencing its ‘mimetic’ and ‘artifactual’ properties, and whether the experience is aesthetically and hermeneutically successful, effective in terms of immersion, rich, satisfying or not. A thought experiment, by contrast, is an experimental device of a logical nature that adopts an attitude of logical discrimination, by verifying its formal validity, and determining if it is conclusive or faulty, instead of successful or not (Schaeffer). Rather than confirming whether Shani’s *Tragodia* piece [Fig. 178] works or not, visual arts critic Aidan Dunne (2020) described an intense immersive experience: ‘there’s a blossoming of sensations, memories, descriptions, around which we accumulate clues and possibilities. What emerges is a swirl of feeling and recollections’. Shani’s work is then far more complex than it looks, for the artist reconciles the written narrative/texts with the artistic one, and by merging, the written narrative is freed of its ‘conditional’ or ‘instrumental’ temporality [Fig. 179]. Furthermore, the written narrative for Genette (p. 34) “exists in space and as space, and the time needed for ‘consuming’ it is the time needed for crossing or traversing it, like a road or field”. Dunne also indicated that Shani’s aim is not a ‘conventional narrative with

neat closure'. In Mike Nelson's (b. 1967) fictive installations, and labyrinths [Fig. 180], the visitor 'passes uncertain how the story will end' (Cumming, 2019).

Unlike real life, art seems to grant the viewers a satisfactory closure, for it invites them to imagine their own from an open possibility of scenarios, offering solutions for a better ending. The weaving of fact and fiction is fundamental to Nelson's practice entailing constructs steeped in literary and cinematic references drawing upon the geography, history and cultural context of their location. The viewer is immersed in his large-scale sculptural installations in 'an unfolding narrative that develops through a sequence of meticulously realised spatial structures' ("Mike Nelson (1967 – )", n.d.) [Fig. 181].

Science fiction is inherently queer in Rafał Zajko's (b. 1988) work. Based on this belief, the artist imagines and explores alternate futures and belief systems in an arena of otherness. Zajko's 2022 solo exhibition *Song to the Siren* at Cooke Latham Gallery presented a series of intricate individual works which are united within the space [Fig. 182].

Betraying lurking humour, the works are an act of speculative fiction, a laboratory of tomorrow, and a conduit for the frustrations and anxiety of living through an Anthropocene epoch. The sensorial sculptures have a machine-like design. Some exude light and others emit steam and smoke literally symbolising the expression 'letting off of steam'. The evoked nostalgic familiarity leads the viewer to assume an easy reading of their function. However, the closer the viewer gets, the more 'alien' the narrative becomes ("Rafał Zajko: Song to the Siren"). Tatiana Trouvé's (b. 1968) sculptures, installations and drawings explore the uncertain boundaries of fiction and reality, the mental and the physical, notions of time, space and memory [Fig. 183].

Trouvé's most interesting writers are Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) with his extensive invention of characters, Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), Italo Calvino (1923-1985), and Dino Buzzati (1906-1972), a choice betraying an influence by fictive narratives in literature. Her work has been described as enigmatic, conjuring an inner space despite the presence of a strong dialogue between inside and outside, with some installations consisting of 'familiar and yet somehow cryptic objects'. Trouvé associated this inner space, or mental space with intimacy. She spoke about mingling the rational with the irrational and giving life to multiple possibilities by structuring opposites together. She

mentioned attempting to show the existence and concreteness of other spaces, pointing out the dimension of control that pervades daily life, and enjoying a ‘perceptual shift’ from working and freedom to responding to reality again. The mirrors in her work serve as a passage to another space inviting the viewer to go beyond and hold the capacity to create other worlds rather than reflecting something (Pietropaolo & Trouvé, 2010).

*I begin with certain items that trigger my imagination. Some objects resist a degree of abstraction that sets them free from their narrative—and by abstraction I mean what results from my formal manipulation, which allows me to pull them into a dimension of my own making. (Trouvé)*

Trouvé strives to bring art together with planetary geology, rather than thinking of it ‘as the imaginative activity of the world’s lost infancy’ (“Tatiana Trouvé”, n.d.) [Fig. 184].

The interaction between the interior free-flowing consciousness and the exterior world of objects is strongly and concretely sensed, yet the artist seems to want to distance her thinking from limiting perceptions by creating an expanded world. Another example of an artist exploring the nebulous realm in which the real and the imagined blur and combine is Paris-based artist Philippe Parreno (b. 1964). Parreno works in a diverse range of media including sculpture, drawing, film, and performance, creating artworks that question the boundaries between reality and fiction. The quest for an ultimate form of communication capable of transcending language is central to the French artist’s practice. Parreno seeks to expand our understanding of duration and invites us to radically re-evaluate the nature of reality, memory, and the passage of time (“Philippe Parreno”, n.d.) [Fig. 185].

This results in examining the ways in which meaning can be made through non-linguistic methods of storytelling. He creates site-specific installations that transform their environments based on the guiding principle that ‘a project is more important than the object’ (Mullin, 2019). Huyghe’s created situations ‘examine the boundary between reality and fantasy’. The artist described the art object as a ‘hysterical thing that needs the gaze of a viewer in order to live’. He tries to maintain the ‘dynamic process’ of the ‘medium between an art object and a subject—a viewer’ (“Pierre Huyghe”, n.d.). By building worlds and watching them play out, Huyghe plays the role of conceiving the conditions in which things happen instead of inventing for the sake of it [Fig. 186].

Through unconventional narratives, he cedes a degree of control over his created scenarios encouraging the viewers to give up any illusion of fully understanding their place within and influence upon the works. The aim is to question how our experience of the world is constructed by stepping beyond the mere confusion of fact and fiction (Eastham, 2019) [Fig. 187]. Artist Tanner Mothershead's depiction of inner worlds is completely abstracted and looks like three-dimensional paintings. His work focuses on the relationship between physical and perceived reality created for idle pleasure or to escape traumatic experiences ("Inner Worlds: Interview with Tanner Mothershead", 2019) [Fig. 188].

An electrical brain activity study demonstrated how real and fictive events are utilised to enable adaptive behaviour where the adaptation is based on a general mechanism employed by experienced and fictive outcomes. Adaptation behaviour based on purely fictive events through counterfactual thinking is possibly a human ability that allows learning from abstract information in the absence of any actor. The results show that real and fictive outcomes converge on a common adaptive mechanism despite being processed differently (Fischer & Ullsperger, 2013). With that in mind, the role of the fictive can play the role of a valid method of coping with reality. Therefore, the sculptures could be an adaptive physical form of a real occurrence pertaining to conditional factors.\* Fantasy and historical fictions author Christopher M. Cevasco (b. 1972) voiced that the best science fiction and fantasy, and the best historical fiction are not just a period costume drama, but also something that resonates with our world, the modern world, and comments on it somehow. Thus, exploring those sorts of issues in an unconventional setting would be an interesting way (Cevasco & Barr Kirtley, 2022).

Following these thoughts, I ask what if this is applied to fiction art? This leads to these new questions: How would fictive sculptures look in an unconventional setting? What could be an unconventional setting? And what would it look or appear like? If, as per Cevasco, 'historical fiction and fantasy both allow readers to step outside their everyday reality and view it from a new angle', then fictive sculpture would too, be a portal for both makers and viewers, to step outside their every day and view it from a new angle. This would then help us comment on our world and our modern issues.\*

## Central Concept 2: Imagination and Perception

*What one imagines generates conditional beliefs, and pre-tense occurs when one desires to behave as if the antecedent of the conditional belief were true. (Neil Van Leeuwen, 2011, p. 58)*

As we have seen in the practical process, condition controls most steps. Or is it I, the artist, who holds the control? The latter idea is an illusion as control had subliminally infiltrated before through conditions surrounding me and triggering my themes of interest and perception of reality. However, the one factor that seemed immune to conditions and control and ran completely free, is my imagination transcending from real back-stories.\* What does this imagination entail? Is it a result of repression? Or is it a wish to create a wider and materialised reality where everything is possible? Maybe both? Maya Heller's (2017) existentialist reading of William Faulkner's early fiction 're-examines the way the artist's sense of reality hinges on the interaction between human consciousness and the world of objects'. The ideas were based on Sartre's concepts of consciousness and the duality of being. Heller focused on ideas of aesthetics to present Faulkner's (1897-1962) writing as an investigation into a universal metaphysical state of being situating the individual as the core subject through choice and human freedom. This freedom is part of a universal and aesthetic exploration of the human condition. Faulkner showed a need to create a new reality. His important attention to the art object questions how imagination operates. It presents imagination as a form of freedom that is key to the dissipation of existential anxiety. Freedom is achieved through the imaginative process of making, and perceiving an artistic work: 'man casts off the burden of existence' by creating an art piece (p. 156). According to Sartre, human 'existence precedes essence' and begins with the subjective. This existentialist notion rejects a pre-determined essence such as God's existence. Sartre's (1943) argument or example is that objects, such as a book, have an essence before existing because their definite purpose and conception have been planned and made by an artist. This subjective view of reality is dependent on the battle of being as the interaction between the interior free-flowing consciousness of a

human being (*being-for-itself*), and the exterior world of objects relating to a non-conscious being (*being-in-itself*). Being-for-itself 'is what it is not and is not what it is' when being-in-itself 'is what it is'. Being-for-itself is a double nihilation constituting 'the essential structure of consciousness of freedom' (p. 71) as our consciousness' nihilative structure is irreducible and perpetually secretes a nothingness. This process incessantly inserts nothingness into being, not only into the world but also into its own self. Being-in-itself opposes this non-coincidental fundamental nihilative structure and is characterised by *absolute coincidence*, brute contingency, and full positivity (p. 29). The imaginary is then possible through consciousness' astounding capacities of experiencing absence and invoking an imaginary state that irrealises reality. This freedom is explicated as becoming equally concretely engaged in both the real and the unreal. The analysis makes the imaginary magical in the eyes of Sartre, an 'imaginary as magic' able to 'lead to the most insane, as well as the most artistic, incantations'. Thus, the normal perception of the world and its objects is different from the invocation of an image triggered by a kind of *force* relating to the magical (O'Shiel, 2011, pp. 28-36). The objects that are a product of the imaging consciousness are posited as a *nothingness*.

Therefore, we should not confuse the act of imagination with the passive act of perception, nor an image with a thing. It is important to note that in Sartre's contested theory, the mere perception of real things is not regarded as an aesthetic experience either: '[T]he work of art is an irreality', '[T]he aesthetic object is an *irreality*'. When experiencing an artwork, consciousness uses imagination to aim towards the appreciated object through a reflective intuition in a non-passive perceptive act (Norihide, 2012, pp. 11-13). How valid is then imagination in the scientific realm and how can it be taken more seriously, mostly when associated with art?

*Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.*  
(Einstein & Shaw, 2009, p. 97)

Imagination for theoretical physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955) is, strictly speaking, a real factor in scientific research. Einstein believed in intuitions and inspirations and used his imagination in his hypotheses to experiment through thinking. Based on the previously established success of his theory, he believed that he knew how

an experimental or observational result would turn out before it was conducted. He predicted without surprise some events following this physical intuition and the ability to imagine what would happen in various physical circumstances. He even went on to say that he would have been astonished if his intuition wasn't accurate and stated that he is enough of the artist to draw freely upon his imagination (Einstein & Sylvester Viereck, 1929, p. 117). Throughout his life and writings, Einstein often spoke about art, using it within the realms of science, treating it with as much respect and importance [Fig. 189].

The exploration of the imaginary represents a sea of interpretations in the art scene throughout art history and is the core of every creation. I narrowed it down here to specific contemporary artists whose work I find more central to the research. For instance, Laure Prouvost's (b. 1978) artistic output consistently revolves around themes of escape into unfamiliar worlds or imaginings of unexpected alternative environments. The French artist steps away from traditional linear narratives. Prouvost crafts sensual environments laden with playful mistranslation that open a space for the viewer to grapple with the unstable relationship between imagination and reality. Following a strong narrative impulse that propels her practice, her immersive and transmedial installations with interwoven storylines combine fiction and reality. The 2013 *Turner Prize* winner creates videos, installations, paintings and tapestries that unhinge commonplace and expected connections between language, image, and perception. ("Laure Prouvost", n.d.) [Fig. 190].

Mind exercises are at the centre of Alicja Kwade's (b. 1979) practice. These comprise jumps into parallel worlds and infinite possibilities, thought experiments with space and time, and wildly imaginative explorations of the real and the nonreal. The artist shared that she tries to see what the structure of reality could be, what reality is for her, and what it is for all of us. Her confounding objects highlight themes such as the laws of physics, the mysterious natures of time, space and light, and social conventions (Bradley, 2014). Viewers are urged to question their perception of reality through her immersive experiences of discovery ("Alicja Kwade", n.d.) [Fig. 191].

Lacan distinguished three heterogeneous aspects of subjective psychoanalytic experiences sharing common properties: *the imaginary*, *the symbolic* and *the real*, known as the 'three orders' (Evans, 1996, p. 135). The imaginary is associated with consciousness and self-awareness. It is closely linked to our experience of a 'non-

psychoanalytic quotidian reality', who and what we imagine ourselves and other persons to be, and imagining what others mean when they communicatively interact. It is central to Lacan's theories of the mirror stage and ego-formation presenting the ego as object instead of subject, when the child starts identifying their own image in a reflective surface as a unified whole (Johnston, 2018). Through the process of identification of the internal self with the external image, we can make sense of the world and our place in it as complete subjects. The imaginary becomes this internalised image of coherence and wholeness constituting the ego, a non-fragmented image of ideal provided by the 'ego ideal'. The symbolic, on the other hand, is associated with language, words and writing, involving the formation of signifiers and associations in which the entire system of the unconscious/conscious manifests. The real for Lacan refers to what cannot be symbolised and loses its reality once made conscious and symbolised through language. It entails the experience before the mirror, the imaginary and the symbolic, rather than the conventional conception of objective and collective experience (Loos, 2002). This absolute resistance to symbolisation positions the real outside language, within the impossible, as unassimilable, unknowable, unimaginable and completely unattainable. The real tends to get confused with Freudian reality denoting subjective representations resulting from imaginary and symbolic articulations. It is also linked to the physicality of the body relating the imaginary and the symbolic to matter (Evans, pp. 162-163). Gilbert Durand's (1921-2012) study reinstates the psychological function of the imagination and the ontological status of the image devaluated by French philosophy and Western thought (Durand, 1999). Sartre succeeded in distinguishing imagination from perceptual or mnemonic behaviour. However, he failed to understand its nature and to describe a psychological model of it by not attempting to explore a wider application of the phenomenological method (pp. 26-28). Durand established imagination as the origin of a release of tensions, rather than being the product of repression. In reality, imagination generally manifests itself as a harmonious and dynamic agreement between the objects of the social and natural environment, and the desires. For psychoanalysts, imagination results in a conflict between the drives and their social repression. The study also confirms Piaget's theory showing that the previous adaptations of the subject to the objective milieu influence subjective representations (pp. 40-42). The dignity of the human ontological vocation and genuine freedom depends on the field of the imaginary constituted of the

creative expression and the spiritual spontaneity. Furthermore, the imaginary's capacity to give life to representation and to demand fulfilment, to give ontological reality to the semiological void of phenomena, makes us think of imagination as the faculty of the possible (pp. 410-413).

*And, as corny as it seems, the work is really sincere and genuine. If it looks like a cliché, or too much, or over the top, it's me – and that freedom makes me feel whole. Art is one of the only things left you can do for its own sake. It's a pure thing that comes from a realm which we're not completely sure about. That's why we like artists, why we think it's special. The Turin shroud wouldn't be the Turin shroud if people didn't go and see it, and art is like that, it has an alchemy for those who take part by looking at it. So if you are going to be responsible for that you have to be totally honest. ((Emin & Carey-Kent, 2024)*

In contrast to more authors who analyse imagination in cognitive terms, Vygotsky (1974) thought of imagination as an expansion of human experience, and the relatively conscious and reflexive capacity to take distance from our awareness of the unfolding reality. This approach involves the disjuncture of imagination from the normal flow of experience through triggers such as fiction and poems. This theory strikes a chord in this exploration. Semiotic modes such as the visual arts and music and internalised semiotic means, such as language, make this distancing possible. It allows 'playing' with these means, decomposing associations and links from the social and cultural reality, and exploring alternative associations and ways of hierarchising. Consequently, imagination as an expansion of experience is a complex thinking process necessarily social and cultural, and a key process in human development. It radically allows new perspectives and ways to find creative solutions to artistic, scientific, or revolutionary problems, and satisfies our need for daydreaming (Zittoun & Cerchia, 2013). Perhaps it might point to us, those who imagine, as the solution itself. Like the title of Beuys' major exhibition of social sculptures and works, *We are the Revolution* (2010-2011) [Fig. 192]. The work of Adriano Amaral (b. 1982) examines the nature of things, the stuff of the world, its substance, value, materiality and mutability. The artist blurs the boundaries between object and space, and composition and dispersion ("Adriano Amaral", n.d.) [Fig. 193].

Dwelling further into the sculptural concept of imagination in the current art scene, Japanese artist Nobuko Tsuchiya (b. 1972) creates imaginative sculptures that evoke an arresting narrative quality. The artist uses a variety of media in her work and

incorporates found household objects such as mop buckets, table legs, rags and plastic tubing. Tsuchiya uses intuition to collect materials she is attracted to and combines them into polymer-like structures, which are then cast. She approaches her materials as repositories of memory and experience, and signifiers of the future. Tsuchiya stated that she treats these physical and imaginative aspects equally, and combines and recombines them until she's able to construct a story embedded within an object. The sculptures look enigmatic and resemble minimalist mechanisms devoid of function, primitive robots, or curious experiments ("Nobuko Tsuchiya", n.d.) [Fig. 194].

The imaginary of Teresa Solar (b. 1985) is based on the morphology of speech and, by extension, of thought. The Spanish artist develops concepts such as resistance, insulation, tightness and immunity through a multidisciplinary production focused on sculpture and drawing and based on the creation of multi-layered narratives ("Teresa Solar", n.d.). Her art alludes to material entities in states of transformation, suspended between the biological and the industrially produced, the tangible and the mythical. Solar's work spans sculpture, drawing, and video, presenting a hybrid world inflected by fiction and storytelling, natural history, ecology, and anatomy. Her sculptural practice includes both large-scale installations and smaller objects made from contrasting materials that frequently appear in families of sister sculptures. As a primordial geological substance and constituent part of the built environment, clay, in particular, takes on consequential meaning for her for being naturally suffused with stories of self-protection, isolation, and states of transformation (Weisburg, n.d.) [Fig. 195].

Conceptual artist Mel Bochner (b. 1940) interpreted imagination as the exteriorising of ideas about the nature of things seen. It is a projection that reproduces that which is initially without product. We are actually imagining a good deal of what we are 'seeing'. Since we cannot see what we cannot imagine, these two dissimilar activities are overlapped in the mind. Bochner (1970) wrote that there's a general preconception that the perception of objects takes place within a point-by-point time, a disconnected time, which restricts how we experience the conjunction between object and observation. Then, how truly fictive is our imagination when it starts manifesting in the real world? An imagined object or invention would then be as real in our mind as it is materialised. Poet, potter, and writer Mary Caroline Richards (1916-1999) believed that imagination equips us to perceive reality when it is not fully materialised (Richards, 1989). This idea

reinforces the existence of internal reality and validates our subjective worlds, even when others can not see them. Using imagination as a tool, sculpture is the tangible materialisation of our singular minds.\* In that sense, the further we dare to dream and imagine away from social stereotypes, the closer we get to our pure selves and share this unprocessed world with each other through sculpture.\*

### Central Concept 3: Objects

*Art is a human-made organic memory/thought transfer system imbedded in material, that travels telepathically & by osmosis, between maker, object & viewer. Inscribed in material, this transmits experience & memories, that replicate & mutate culturally, changing culture & people. (Saltz, 2022)*

In philosophy, the subject has been repeatedly positioned at the centre of the universe, separate, and hierarchically superior and privileged. In his book *Critique of Pure Reason*, philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) displayed an ambivalent reasoning to the concept. Kant's (1881) initial formalist a priori approach was rooted in sole subjectivity. For Kant, we only receive objective representations or perceive objects, including space, through our subjective sensibility and empirical intuition, and no other way. However, throughout the theorisation of his concept, Kant started distinguishing another type of object isolated from its surroundings by its aesthetic properties. Taking a modernist stance, Kant went on to differentiate the sensuous intuitive object from the intelligible object that excludes the senses. Therefore, the object transitioned from an object of intuition or *phenomenon* to an object of experience or *noumenon*. In other words, if we encounter the same object several times, and each time the object remains the same with the same form and qualities, then it is a non-human object of the pure human understanding. German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) transcended Kant's theory and levelled the hierarchy by focusing on *being*. In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger (1959) questioned the essence of being, asking 'Why are there essents rather than nothing?' (p. 32). This means that if anything is determined as 'not nothing', as something, an idea or 'whatness', as opposed to being determined as nothing, then it just *is*. Heidegger defined *being* as standing in the light, appearing, or entering in unconcealment. Then being naturally lies in simply existing, or not existing. Therefore, all existing beings equally count by the mere appearance of existing. Everything that exists and participates in this state of being, non-arbitrarily shares the same importance,

only differently. In that sense, the human for the anthropologist exists as much as the animal exists for the zoologist, or in this research case, the work of art exists for the artist. They all equally are/exist in diverse ways through the question of *being*. The Heideggerian realist philosophy was maintained in the 21st-century literature of *Object Oriented Ontology* (OOO) (Harman, 2002). American philosopher Graham Harman (b. 1968) coined the term while studying digital tools in architectural production and its connection with Object Oriented Programming (OOP). Harman (2019) also cited writers Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), Dante (1265-1321), and Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) as key OOO figures. The authors are known to invest their readers and characters in sincere relations with objects in a theatrical way. This point is important here as it reinforces the implication of the fictive/real narrative to both the subject and the object. Philosopher Levi Bryant (2008) introduced the term OOO again, leading to it becoming the name of the movement. OOO highlights the singularity of the object without reducing it to its relations and determinate parts. It stresses the existence of objects independently of human perception and their relations with humans and with other objects. Introducing the object as equal with the same significance and quality has been heavily refuted by many, but also adopted by theorists influential in our modern understanding of ontology. Philosopher, cultural theorist and public intellectual Slavoj Žižek (b. 1949) questioned the order of flat ontology and our subjectivity and which comes first, concluding that both should shape each other (Žižek, 2016).

Currently dominant in the humanities and social sciences, the emerging field of new materialism (and new materialisms) is a transdisciplinary area of scholarship comprising numerous intellectual crosscurrents (Benson, 2019). It calls for a paradigm shift toward a more material(ist) understanding of social and cultural life and entails new approaches, methods, methodologies and objects of study (Plate, 2020). In contemporary philosophy, the term *neo-materialism* or *new materialism* was introduced separately by post-Deleuzian philosophers Braidotti (1991) and Manuel DeLanda (b. 1952). DeLanda (1996) applied different concepts to map the real and its morphogenetic flows. He omitted linguist Louis Hjelmslev's (1899-1965) (1970) semiotic model of language (Hjelmslev, 1970) on which Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) based their theories of geological movement and concepts of trees and rhizomes or strata and self-consistent aggregates (what DeLanda preferred calling

‘meshworks’). DeLanda thought of his interpretation as a ‘pidginization’ of Deleuze and Guattari’s complex ideas, followed by a ‘creolization’ along original lines. Nonetheless, his interpretation maintains the basic geological spirit and the philosophical stance rejecting ideas of progress in human history and natural history in which living creatures are not better than rocks. Therefore, rocks might help us understand sedimentary humanity, igneous humanity and all their mixtures in a nonlinear world featuring the same basic processes of self-organisation in the mineral, organic and cultural spheres. Braidotti’s stance on new materialism is also nonlinear calling to embody subjectivity and dissolving the thinking subject into the elements the subject is composed of.

The *new materialism* realist movement focuses on the object, the thing, expression and material processes, relative to the posthumanist approach in the research. Resulting of feminism, philosophy, science studies, and cultural theory, new materialism recognises and explores the power of matter and materialist culture by adopting an interdisciplinary approach to theory and research pertinent to research in the fields of contemporary arts. The artists’ statements and subjective experiences featured in the research are translated in varied ways, with distinctive materialised perceptions of the visual object. Philosopher and mathematician Edmund Husserl’s (1859-1938) constitutive phenomenology is concerned with this correlation between experiencing and the experienced, perceiving and the perceived, the subject and the object. Husserl (1983) critiqued the presupposed tradition that ties the mind to the material body, which assumes that the subject with its physical body and spatiality can be taken as a thing (Behnke, n.d.). Several artists use the physical body as a medium or surface for artistic expression, such as Abramović [Fig. 196].

Same as non-living things or ‘inanimate’ objects, organisms in natural sciences (anatomy and physiology) as living things or ‘animate’ objects, are taken for granted to belong to the realm of real, spatially extended entities. Such a presupposition excludes the experience from within. Instead, it takes the body of embodiment physically, essential to the *lived* body experienced by the concerned embodied experiencer in a unique way. The physical body is experienced as a thing by one’s own or someone’s perception, and at the same time internally perceives external inanimate things. Husserl gave the example of tactile contact to show a double way of both experiencing a thing and retrieving the ‘bodily’ side of our embodied commerce with it. We can start by exploring a sculpture

by touching it with our fingers, and feel its contours, textures, and variations in temperature. After a certain time of palpating the object, we can shift to an experiential attitude focused on sensing ourselves in contact with it precisely *here* in this exact way. If we now touch our hand with the other, our own body is then given to us both as the organ and as the object of touch. This thinking of duality shows how consciousness and subjectivity play a key role in how we encounter other embodied agents, or objects in the shared space of an ever-explorable and coherent world. When it comes to the inner reality of the individual, Winnicott (1953) stressed the non-challenged intermediate area of experiencing, inner reality and external life's contribution to it. He introduced the term 'transitional object' to designate the intermediate area of experiencing starting during infancy, as a manifestation of the journey from pure subjectivity to objectivity and its progress towards experiencing. The transitional object is a possession related to symbolism and belongs to the realm of illusion. It is different from Klein's ("Internal objects", n.d.) mental concept of the internal object, and emotional image of an external object taken inside the self, yet is not an external object either. Throughout life, the intermediate area of experiencing is retained in the intense experiencing belonging to the arts, imaginative living, creative scientific work and religion. Conceptual artist Ian Wilson (b. 1941) made his last physical object artworks in early 1968, realising that making an object is not necessary to visualise a concept. He transitioned from visual abstraction to non-visual abstraction and let go of material creations. Wilson started his artistic exploration of spoken language-based creations or what he called 'oral communication', and later on 'discussion'. The non-tangible art form only exists when the discussion takes place and would live on afterwards in the memories of the participants, or visitors. Wilson wished to preserve the transient nature of the spoken word and requested not to record the works as film or audio ("Ian Wilson", 2009). Historian and philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) called for the substitution of a traditional and regular formation of objects with the "enigmatic treasure of 'things' anterior to discourse", and defining objects by their dispersion. Foucault (1972) proposed to seek the unity of discourses on ideas and groups of statements in the simultaneous or successive emergence of concepts, in the distance that separates them and, in their incompatibility, rather than their coherence. The principles of the individualisation of discourse should be sought after in the dispersion of the points of choice. The analysis would describe *systems*

*of dispersions* between conditioned elements, instead of reconstituting *chains of inference* particular to the history of the sciences or philosophy or drawing up a *table of differences* like linguists do. The conditioned elements include objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices, and are subjected to conditions called *rules of formation* by Foucault. These conditions are many and imposing. They are necessary for the appearance of a discursive object, and its existence in relation to other objects in terms of proximity, distance, resemblance, difference, and transformation. They are also historically necessary whether someone says anything about it, or many say different things about it (pp. 35-48).

*A thing has in the first place its size and its shape throughout variations of perspective which are merely apparent. We do not attribute these appearances to the object itself, but regard them as an accidental feature of our relations with it, and not as being of it.* (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 348)

Philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883) separated the relationship between the subject and the one, between consciousness and being, which can not be treated as identical (Marx, 1994). The subject is a real and acting person, and not simply consciousness. The object is the target of the cognitive and practical activity of the subject in objective reality, and not simply objective reality itself. The subject and object are unified by practice and the act of doing something with objective reality. It is what defines the starting point of man's relationship with the world, not cognition. Unlike the animal, practice is a specific feature of the social man active in the face of external nature and treating it as the object of his activity. Therefore, practice leads to the creation of new forms of life activity, the change of the social and natural environment, and the change of the subject himself (Lektorsky, n.d.). These historically determined material relations including the relationships among people and their relations to nature, constitute Marx's concept of the real concrete distinct from the concrete produced by thought or conceptual thinking (Resnick & Wolff, 1982). The man is more than *homo sapiens* or *homo lude*, he is *homo faber* with the intriguing characteristic of making and using objects, which in return make and use him. The things we as humans/makers/users interact with, shape our identities. They allow us to manifest our skills and embody goals. Hence, they cannot be reduced to tools for survival to make survival more comfortable and easier. Unlike natural objects, man-made objects are characterised by intentionality for they are shaped by the

maker's investment of psychic energy. Their physical existence then depends on the intention and attention of the maker. They constitute meaningful and patterned information with a highly important role in human affairs, so how we interact with them makes a considerable difference. The transaction between person and object realises the meaning of cherished objects or possessions, and its nature is firstly assessed through its aesthetic quality. From an aesthetic perspective, art objects produce new visual experiences, feelings, and ideas. This unique ability gives them a purpose of their own: 'If a picture drawn by a child is cherished for this reason and not for what it looks like, the object is valued as a symbol of love or personal relationship, but not as art'. Imbued with qualities of the self, the object becomes an objectified form of consciousness part of the social self, expressing the being of that person. It also indicates the goal of the personal self and creates an environment filled with personal meanings (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, pp. 1-190). Artist Eva Fàbregas (b. 1988) tests the limitations of desire through large-scale installations of flesh-like sculptures often reminiscent of body organs and voluptuous glands. Made of malleable materials, the sculptures are soft and open for tactile engagement and physical intimacy. Viewers are allowed to touch them and experience their slight vibrations and vitality. Challenging traditional perceptions of sculpture, representation and human interaction, Fàbregas questions how objects can transmit feelings. The immersive works test the profound ability of emotions to find expression through inanimate objects (Mohan, 2023) [Fig. 197].

In her collection of writings, sociologist Sherry Turkle (b. 1948) highlighted how physical objects engender intimacy. The collection features autobiographical essays by artists, designers, scientists and humanists tracing objects that connect them to ideas and people, and the power of these objects in their lives. The objects vary between natural objects, artifacts, and ready-mades. Turkle (2007) noted that in each essay, the evoked objects brought together intellect and emotion and that the author's focus was on the object 'as a companion of life experience' rather than on the object's instrumental power. Juxtaposed and reassembled in essential compositions, Adriano Costa's (b. 1975) elements are composed of domestic, common and leftover objects. Rooted in the narrative potential of everyday life, Costa's research investigates the 'moment in which the object is no longer defined as a work', and the different aspects of the visible and the nature of materials ("Adriano Costa", n.d.) [Fig. 198].

Whiteread casts everyday objects, settings and surfaces, transforming them into 'ghostly replicas that are eerily familiar'. Her subject matters include beds, tables, boxes, water towers, and even entire houses, all freed from practical use and imbued with memories ("Rachel Whiteread", n.d.-a). Her cast sculptures of domestic elements explore the 'negative space present between humans and the places they inhabit' ("Rachel Whiteread", n.d.-b) [Figs. 199,200].

Jenna Ashton's (2014) doctorate thesis employs Klein's theories around absence, bereavement and the loss of the first object, i.e. the mother, to analyse Whiteread's works, and her 'both creative and destructive' process. Memories and objects from the artist's childhood are 'turned in upon themselves'. There's a competition between the cast and the object, the artwork and the original. But what exactly is a materialised or physical object and how does it relate to sculpture, precisely static sculpture?

The dictionary entry ("physical object", n.d.) defines a *physical object* as 'a tangible and visible entity; an entity that can cast a shadow'. In other words, 'an entity that has physical existence'. There have been several accounts in metaphysics and widely in philosophy of what a physical object is, and its concept remains vague and elusive. According to philosopher Ned Markosian (n.d.), the concept of the physical object as having a surface or a mass, being made of matter, being located in space or able to move about in it, having a special extension, or persisting in time, is imprecise. It is imprecise because the extent to which an object is a physical one depends on the extent of its association with this list. Nevertheless, space is the one thing that will certainly be in any world with physical objects.

*Does not the fiction of an isolated material object imply a kind of absurdity, since this object borrows its physical properties from the relations which it maintains with all others, and owes each of its determinations, and consequently its very existence, to the place which it occupies in the universe as a whole? (Bergson, 1911)*

In astrophysics, we know that the wider the space is between two entities, the more expansion and distortion are possible in between. This can apply to sculptures exhibited in a room as much as it applies to planets in space. In their ontological theory of physical objects, Stefano Borgo, Nicola Guarino, and Claudio Masolo (1997) used the term *substrates* to define the space physical objects occupy and the matter they are made

of. Substrates have to exist for the physical object to exist. The object's identity criteria are different from those of space and matter, and as an entity, the object relates to space and matter by means of dependence relations.

- *Physical objects are located in space, can move across space; when an object moves, it occupies a different region of space. So the space occupied by an object is different from the object itself.*
- *Most physical objects are made of matter, but this matter is different from the object itself: when a gold ring is melted to form a kettle, a new object is created out of the same matter, and the previous object is destroyed.*
- *Some physical objects are immaterial (like a hole), but still they do not coincide with the space they occupy [Casati and Varzi 1994]. (Borgo, Guarino & Masolo)*

Having said that, what kind of object is a work of art? The claim that some artworks such as uncast sculptures, paintings, and drawings are physical objects has been argued (Stecker, 2005). One of the objections is based on the idea that these types of artworks have structural features, are structures, or structures-in-use. Though there are different ways of defining structure as with literature and music. Another objection is that, unlike physical objects, such works have 'intentional properties'. Human beings have intentional psychological states such as ideas, thoughts, beliefs, desires and intentions. By expressing these psychological states, objects have these intentional properties. An example of another objection is that a piece of clay had already existed before it has been moulded into a sculpture of a certain shape like a man, and will then survive another change in shape. In both cases, before and after the modelling of the sculpture, the piece of clay is a 'shapeless lump' and not a sculpture of a man. This makes the sculpture a different physical object than the piece of clay. It implicates that either the sculpture is not a physical object, or if it is, two physical objects are occupying the exact same space at the same time where one would survive a change in shape and one wouldn't. Since there can't be simultaneously two objects of the same kind in the same place, a solution would be to claim that sculptures and paintings are 'culturally emergent, materially embodied objects' rather than physical objects (pp. 121-123). What can intentional cultural sculpture look like? Maria Trabulo (b. 1989) explores geopolitical issues within the fields of History, Anthropology and Science amongst others. Trabulo's materialised reality portrays, represents and even constitutes cultural heritage that builds a large part of the collective memory of a community and country. Stressing the importance of legacy

and heritage, it contributes to the sense of identity and belonging becoming a testimony of time and history (Babo, 2023) [Fig. 201].

Contemporary art practices point to further transdisciplinary explorations, spanning multiple fields of knowledge. It is an indicator of the art scene of the future and how art will become an embedded reality. Marguerite Humeau's (b. 1986) enquiry process is based on meticulous research in collaboration with science, history, anthropology, palaeontology, zoology, exploration, linguistics and engineering experts. Some more recent and inclusive sources of knowledge can be marginal and include foragers, keepers of oral history and local mythologies. Humeau creates new mythologies for the contemporary era by pursuing the mysteries of human existence. Spanning great distances in space and time, the sculptor fills gaps in knowledge with speculation and imagined scenarios. Humeau explained that all the worlds she creates are based on real facts and mysteries she tries to understand by extracting real things and then expanding into 'what if?' scenarios. This results in prototyping parallel worlds, or ones that are extinct or invisible that might exist but which are not really known to us ("Marguerite Humeau", n.d.) [Fig. 202].

*Reality is becoming increasingly opaque, and could be seen as a 'permanent fiction'.*  
(Humeau, 2011)

In another instance, Elena Damiani's (b. 1979) reinterpretation of documented scientifically rationalised geology, archaeology and cartography are materialised through a variety of media. In Damiani's works, natural elements and processes are incomplete, ambiguous spaces merging here multiple times and topographies. Her materials are stripped from their initial context and recomposed in a way that points out the manipulability of cultural items and information. The materials consist of collected found materials such as books, photographs, video footage and public records. Oscillating between past and present, they all embed a narrative with staged fictions ("Elena Damiani", n.d.) [Fig. 203].

Archaeological objects are one of the most precious artefacts informing a culture about a previous or ancient one. When contemporary sculptural work is inspired and heavily influenced by these artefacts, an added layer of significance joins past, present and future culture unearthing these newly inspired works from today. It is like a real-

fictive city built on buried ancient ruins. Will these works turn into sculptural fossils? Will they merge with organic rocks the way Czech artist Klára Hosnedlová (b. 1990) builds her growth sculptures from embroidered fragments [Fig. 204]? What can future civilisations deduct from contemporary sculpture as a materialised cultural object? Will they see fallen rods, columns, and traces of textiles? Perhaps these works would look like some of Esther Kläs' (b. 1981) archaic, yet contemporary, sculptures and megaliths [Fig. 205] compared to 'fragment of an ancient colossus' in Murtaza Vali's (2012) Artforum review. Or will they see a post-apocalyptic artistic setting? Something similar to Anselm Kiefer's (b. 1945) works? I'm picturing some of his exhibition installations such as *For Madame de Staël*, 2015 [Fig. 206], *Winterreise*, 2015-2020 [Fig. 207], or his seven towers in *The Seven Heavenly Palaces* 2004-2015 [Fig. 208]. It could be something like Nelson's *Triple Bluff Canyon (the woodshed)*, 2004 [Fig. 209], Thomas Hirschhorn's (b. 1957) *Collapse*, 2018 [Fig. 210], or Tadashi Kawamata's (b. 1953) *Over Flow*, 2018 [Fig. 211], or the bodily carnage-looking and fleshy visceral sculptures of Mire Lee (b. 1988) [Fig. 212]? Could they look like unintentionally curated results like Kader Attia's (b. 1970) *The Museum of Emotion*, 2019 [Fig. 213], or Mandy El-Sayegh's (b. 1985) *Cite Your Sources*, 2019 [Fig. 214] exhibition views?

The amount of images and artists that come to mind is overwhelming, what does this say about our generational anxieties? Claire Barclay (b. 1968) is one of the contemporary artists fascinated with historical and anthropological artefacts. Barclay's hybrid sculptures toy with formal associations to act as a surreal reflection of the world around us. At once recognisable and foreign, the sculptures focus on the physical and psychological tensions that exist between contrasting materials ("Claire Barclay", n.d.). Barclay's work *Suspect Collapse*, 2017 is another interpretation of the theme of 'collapse'. Looking at its installation view [Fig. 215], the question of what remnants of a constructed space like it would look like to future cultures comes to mind. What will stay of the erected steel structures with abstract organic nude-coloured rubber shapes hanging down – or perhaps holding up – on its piercing hooks? What will happen to it? What do their ruins say about us and the maker, their life?

After witnessing the demolition of public housing complexes in Glasgow and visiting the debris pile, artist Cyprien Gaillard (b. 1980) innocently asked: 'Where does the rubble go?' The answer was that contractors crunch on site the concrete wreckage to

small rocks and then sell it to contractors of new constructions to be recycled. The Gaillard (2009) was amazed by how the monumental can end up displaced or relocated. It is harder to imagine the displacement of a monument than dismissing smaller structures. Teixeira (2018) wrote that colossal scale carries an aesthetic characteristic of the sublime by provoking a sense of spatial immersion allowing the spectator to delve into a feeling of wholeness. *Colossal* and *monumental* are the first words linked to the thought of scale in sculptural terms. Monument, the commemorative or evocative public sculpture of a hero or event is distinct from monumentality designating the sculpture and surrounding space ensemble and/or majestic scale of the monument. Teixeira elaborated that for this reason, monumentality has more sculptural value related to the plastic quality of a sculpture whose space, large or smaller, creates an illusion of grandiosity. This experience is normally attained by volume reduction and the equilibrium between scale and proportion. A year after watching the voluminous complex crumble, Gaillard created public sculptures made of concrete recycled from modernist housing projects [Fig. 216].

In Ângela Ferreira's (b. 1958) 2022 exhibition *Realistic Manifesto*, the idea of recycling is complexly presented in an intertwined set of ways. The artist recycled elements from her daily life that were out of good working order and turned them into assembled abstract sculptures. These include machinery, furniture, architectural structures, wood workshop tools, home gas appliances, laboratory support tables and burglar bars ("Ângela Ferreira. *Realistic Manifesto* (Gabo's Fundamental Principles of Constructivist Practice)", n.d.) [Fig. 217]. Even though Ferreira's extensive work and practice occupy themselves with Modern architecture, the artist's choice of architecture stems from her earlier years as a young art graduate in turbulent South Africa nearing the end of apartheid. Ferreira consciously developed a critical practice that engaged the political debates that were important to her. She echoed her voice against apartheid and featured popular visual references that most people understand [Fig. 218].

Architecture has several qualities for the artist. It is rooted in the ground and considers the scale of the human body and ergonomics issues. Choosing a building or any kind of built structure immediately gave Ferreira a righteousness of place (Abudu & Ferreira, n.d.). The practice of Fernanda

(b. 1962) and her continuous research with material from archives, documents and objects also highlights an archaeological approach to the social, political and aesthetic history of modernism. Fragateiro's work challenges the tension between architecture and sculpture. It enhances the relationship with each place placing the spectator in a performative position. The artist intervenes architecturally in unexpected spaces, making subtle changes to existing landscapes. The minimal sculptures, installations and modifications reveal buried stories of construction and transformation and underline the interest in rethinking and probing modernist practices ("Fernanda Fragateiro", n.d.) [Fig. 219]. The work of Ian Kiaer (b.1971) is centred on repurposing; the waste, recovery and reconstitution of meaning. The artist uses found materials as a means to explore themes indebted to histories of painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature. These include the latent legacies of lost ideas, the memories that physical objects preserve and the often-unseen relationships between material things. Presented as quiet, propositional and, in some cases, temporary, Kiaer's work is the result of a long-standing inquiry into how artworks contain and convey both contingent and fragmentary information ("Ian Kiaer", n.d.) [Fig. 220].

These reinterpretations of the physical objects are full of meaning beyond the artist, the maker, the viewer, and the other. The attachment to the object is primarily sending the spectator to a secondary role or only an external witness of a private world between the maker and a space-time of their own. Such concerns acknowledge the other perhaps as a living accessory to the work, conditionally invited to step into that space-time. It diverges from representation or defined and direct symbolism like Jeff Koons' (b. 1955) idealised vision of objects as metaphors for people. Rooted in humanism with an interest in banality, Koons' work is characterised by recurring themes such as flowers [Fig. 221], always turning out to be about others. His work is more about accepting these others than accepting the object and high-low culture (Goldstein, 2022). In a film by Art21, Koons (2024) spoke about how from a very young age he learned to take care of himself and be self-reliant. He has always loved providing and sought communication and interaction with others. To him, the studio and working with a team are an extension of this sense of community. Art school experience taught him how art can be a type of 'reservoir' that connects us through human history.

*I think the way art comes into the world is through a metaphysical process. If you try to create art, it's a decorative process. You're just wasting time, spinning gears until you get so bored with yourself that you just stop the process and say, "okay, what do I really want to do? What am I interested in?" And you focus on it, and before you know it, you're in that metaphysical place. (Koons)*

This prioritisation of the other dissolves in an archaeological and architectural terrain of deep associations and disassociations with the concept of culture. It brings a new meaning of cancel culture to the table, raising the platform of material culture to the one of materialised culture. Therefore the other is absent, as the contemporary other might be material-oriented, and the artist site-oriented and heritage-oriented. For instance, Lubaina Himid's (b. 1954) figures and sculptures juxtaposed with performative elements are imbued with symbolism, though this symbolism addresses the artist's own heritage through a figurative portrayal. A member of the Black Arts Movement of the 1980s and the first Black woman and oldest person to win the *Turner Prize* in 2017 [Fig. 222], Himid is engaged with uncovering marginalised and silenced histories, figures, and cultural moments through politically critical work tackling questions of race, gender and class ("Lubaina Himid", n.d.).

*If the sculptural object acts as a carrier of movement or vibration conducted through it, then it doesn't really have a singular fixed materiality of its own, as it relies on a flexible relation to an immaterial circularity that is equally sculptural. You know what I mean? In a way, sculpture is sensitive to a condition, or perhaps sculpture is a condition? Something that can be conditioned that can, in turn, condition things. (Canell et al., 2016)*

Nina Canell's (b. 1979) practice is centred on combining unrelated or found materials. The artist aims to activate an intersection between humans, objects and events which potentially articulate a certain kind of material imagination ("Nina Canell", n.d.). Canell sees sculpture as a condition and her approach displays an understanding of matter as process. Placed in proximity, material forms and immaterial forces shape the other and allow dynamic relations to emerge [Fig. 223]. Some of it transmutes physical form by employing thermodynamics and the alchemical, and some others 'physicalize the intangible' (Canell et al.) [Fig. 224].

Stemming from personal life events and as written earlier, durability, Darling's work revolves around the artist's bodily condition. Objects including his sculptures, are

bodily and complicated. After becoming ill from a neurological disease that left him paralysed on one side and in great pain for over a year, the artist started exploring the themes of disabled bodies, injured bodies, fragile bodies, and dissenting bodies culminating in exhibitions around the concept. In the artist's solo show at Triangle France, La Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille, nothing was standing upright. Stranded steel paper planes covered the floor, while flowers trapped in glass cases were left to wither under public scrutiny [Fig. 225]. The show was titled *Crevé*, a French word that translates as 'punctured' or 'exhausted' reflecting on Darling's own subjective experience (Luquet-Gad, 2019).

*I do see the sculptures as mortal and vulnerable, just as we all are [...]. This is a politics of care as well as a way to remember that nothing is too big to fail.* (Darling as cited in Luquet-Gad)

Darling's sculptures, drawings and objects reflect the vulnerability of the human body and express the desire to resist the constraints imposed on our lives by social and political forces. In addition to disability, the artist also explores identity through gender, sexuality, love and companionship. In his first major institutional solo show, *The Ballad of Saint Jerome* at Tate Britain in London in 2018, Darling revisited the story of Saint Jerome and the lion which he tamed when he understood it was wounded and needed help, and that it was not a dangerous beast to be tamed. The show featured works made from everyday objects and materials, taking on the appearance of both wounded and liberated shapes [Fig. 226].

Populating the gallery, they are scrutinised from unexpected angles to reveal their frailty and the need for care and healing. Darling subverts the conventions of museum display and uses an approach which questions how we perceive objects, and how meaning and value are assigned through the authority of institutions ("Art Now: Jesse Darling: The Ballad of Saint Jerome", 2018). Philosopher, dramatist, and art critic Gotthold E. Lessing (1729-1781) questioned the difference between a static object and a temporal event (Lessing & Frothingham, 2005). He asserted that sculpture is concerned with how bodies lie in space noting that all bodies exist in both space and time (p. 91). Nonetheless, the spatial character of sculpture places it separately from other art forms employing time as a medium, namely poetry. Unlike poetry, visual arts are static, so the

depiction of actions in time is unnatural to sculpture or painting. If sculpture is made from inert matter, as seen by art historian Carola Giedion-Welcker (1893-1979), it then involves an extension through space rather than time (Krauss).

*Objects, unlike other forms of contemporary art, do not fall under any art rules or regulations, since in their core these pieces have spontaneity and complete freedom of artistic expression. Their foremost idea is to force the viewer to look at every-day things from a different, unexpected angle. In this case the audience has a chance to 'teleport' to a different location – a small town in Crime, a where time flows slowly and everything around speaks of relaxation and contemplation of the beautiful nature around (Ralko as cited in Voloshyn Gallery, 2020)*

To question what sculpture is implicates thinking about the physicality, materiality, spatiality, and tactility of art, its 'object-nature'. The materials and matter used to make art also have histories of functions and effects leading to questioning what matter is, and how we as thinking-bodies relate to sculpture and experience the concrete material world (Hogan, 2015).

## Final Thoughts Synthesis

*An artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times. I think that is true of painters, sculptors, poets, musicians. As far as I'm concerned, it's their choice, but I CHOOSE to reflect the times and situations in which I find myself. That, to me, is my duty. [...] How can you be an artist and NOT reflect the times? That to me is the definition of an artist. (Simone as cited in Dionne-Krosnick, 2020)*

Looking back at the development of each previous section, I validate here that the practical case studies are incomplete without the written dissertation and vice versa. The adaptable methodology process allowed the elaboration of free thinking and writing leading to new ideas. As seen in my case and in the statements and works of the included artists, when it comes to studies revolving around understanding practical works and the motivation behind them, subjectivity and individualism are key informants. Not only subjectivity is validated in metamodernism, but it is also the starting point of any construct leading to collectivity. Every point of view is based on personal spatiotemporal experiences and circumstances and particular conditions specific to each maker, before the shared common social conditions. Every manifested sculptural autotopography carries a system of woven narratives stemming from a life, biography, and a testimony of a reality lived in this period of history. The case studies show how the course of the art practice is bumpy and irregular, never linear. The fictive and the real are in the end unrecognisable and intricately meshed together to the point of being interchangeable. When most fictions are subjective products, it is clear that there are also collective fictions that have been embedded for so long and are now part of our real coexistence. The texts brought out the drastic difference in perception of the female perspective and the motherhood one characterised by a completely different sense of time and view of the world. It is a reminder to validate the diverse opinions and thinking of girls around the world and reinforce their confidence, voice and presence. They need to be seen and feel seen to share

their potential with the world. In the end, behind every human being, there is a mother, and therefore a little girl. Empowering the girl is empowering the entire human race. Fictive narratives were essential for accepting and coping with reality and brought a new meaning to the object and how it can be a real physical proof of an imagined mental thinking process. The urgency of scrutinising the physical artefact is more pressing than ever in this transitional part of digitalised history. We mustn't take it for granted, and acknowledge how decisive our era and actions are for physical sculpture. As the artist Sarah Sze (b. 1969) said during her artist talk with Nasher Sculpture Center (*Artist Talk: Sarah Sze*, 2024), 'the material and the digital are confused all the time', noting that opting for the digital has accelerated during the pandemic [Fig. 227]. Sze questioned what sculpture is, what it becomes, and the nature of the object in an age of her own lifetime. Her concerns about the disappearing physical object 'amalgamated with the non-physical world in a slow dance' resonate deeply.

Times are changing at an unprecedented rate and the conditions around the creation of sculpture and its requirements to exist are getting more and more restricted in times of personal transformation, global pandemics, environmental disasters, wars and displacement amongst other serious happenings. With its striking title *manifesto of fragility* (2022), the 16th Lyon Biennale acknowledged fragility as 'one of few universally felt truths in our divided world'. Curated by independent curators duo Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, it was conceived as a collective statement inviting a community of resilient voices to draft a manifesto for a world 'that is blamelessly fragile'. This feeling of fragility, or vulnerability is expressed differently, though in unison. It is associated with physical sculpture which risks being eclipsed. Under such conditions, if sculpture can't materially exist in a physical place, then it must fictively exist to preserve the imaginary space. A paper by Pdraig Murphy, Pat Brereton and Fiachra O'Brolchain on new directions in energy posits that cocreation work in energy research featuring assemblages of the Anthropocene is centred on the ontology of objects and non-human worlds (Murphy et al., 2021). The authors argue that fictive imaginaries are crucial to the development of the link between an ethically engaged OOO and public engagement with energy challenges. Furthermore, fictive and personal testimony imaginaries such as dystopian tales of climate disasters help shape our perceptions of real-world places.

The conclusion of what fictive sculpture is, what conditions surround it, and what its roles can be is a reflection on what felt most accurate to my reason for making sculpture in the first place, and its importance as a priority in some makers' lives. Perhaps the framed green statements in Appendix C are self-explanatory. Some ideas were more obvious and prominent than others. For instance, I now argue that through fictive narratives, the developed practical projects have the purpose of materialising another reality and dimensions full of possibilities, where tensions dissipate allowing the expansion of experience.\* Assembled, the imagined sculptures help visualise a new intimate space floating in undefined time, and independent from alienating personal and social associations.\* Individually, each sculpture plays the role of a domestic object which makes this new spatial experience concrete and accessible.\* Even though the fictive narrative makes way for imagination to run absolutely free, conditional sculpture still ends up being conditioned in every case. Though the post-narrative works symbolise a freedom of the mind invisible to the eye. This assertion leads to distinguishing two main conditional aspects of sculpture:

1. *Restrictive Conditional Sculpture*
2. *Liberating Conditional Sculpture.\**

The end question is how to push conditional sculpture further towards the latter aspect, to a liberating realm full of potential. Future works might experiment with Ingold's process of growth further and see how it can be featured together with the mapping of a sculpture's architecture and narrative. There are no failures in art and sculpture. The mere role of sculpture of shielding, of creating a safe intimate space for the maker, an independent dimension for expression, is already on its own a major contribution to humanity.\* Contemporary sculpture might never be understood nor accepted by some audiences. It doesn't need to be. It can still invite to be seen, acknowledged and respected. It might not always be taken seriously either, or valued enough. Mostly if it doesn't have a selling potential like ceramics or other forms of art with decorative or functional properties. In that respect, Sculpture is not for everyone but is accessible to everyone.\* Some piles of installation will still be taken for rubbish by cleaners, or taping a fruit on a wall making headlines. Nevertheless, every contemporary

sculpture is a tool with benefits towards evolution, development, and mind and consciousness expansion.\* It started with a little carved hunting tool and the object evolved with us and we evolved with the object. To expand, we need to visualise expansion, in order to approach it and understand the power of the mind and our abilities as humans and intelligent species. Sculptures can perform this visual.\* All inventions started with trial and error and physical experiments tested on objects. Objects help advancement, and sculpture, with its potential or physical expansion of matter, helps us as humans to guess further the greatness of the human mind and our abilities.\* Sculpture is a quantitative palpable post-qualitative form born from the cognitive practice of the human mind. It has its own rules, autonomy and agency and transports us to a future beyond posthumanism breaking free from the control of the artist.\* It is a hybrid extension of our physical self\*, or very close to Saltz's description of art as a 'prosthetic limb'. Perhaps not as much of an artificial extension for me, nor like one of Haraway's (2006) cyborgs, but more of an existing invisible extension made visible.\* It is like solidifying invisible roots which spring out of our entire being and extend to synthesise with grounds we need as anchors. It's like the imagined ones used in energy healing, extensions of feet rooted in the ground, drinking wellness and restorative magic.

*Art is a prosthetic limb, artificial organ, memory theater, magic carpter, set of wings, weapon, protector, conduit to another world, pleasure unit, and way to examine consciousness. (Saltz, 2021)*

When the mind is limitless, the body feels ridiculously limiting, microscopic, and too conditional like a prison. To spread our physicality to accommodate more of our mind, we need to grow conductible matter to transport some of the overwhelm in our mind. Sculpture is that matter.\* Neutralising fears and acknowledging the excess of feelings and thoughts doesn't happen at once. It gradually unravels during the process of making specifically and precisely material sculpture. The process includes the internal preconception phase until the external physical post-creation one. For this reason, artificial intelligence will never be able to comprehend these human interior/exterior world relations, let alone perform these consecutive chain roles.\* When we sit under a tree and lean our back and spine against the trunk, the tree absorbs all negative energy or recharges us with negative ions. The same energy regulation happens when we connect

to the electrical energy of the Earth or grounding. If the mere gesture of walking barefoot on soil establishes balance with outer magnetic forces and electromagnetic waves, what other materials can facilitate this electrically conductive contact? We have the capacity to extend our physical roots in a material, in an organic physical element that carries energy and grows. And to grow we need to make space, on the inside and the outside. Same as we learned in chemistry that nothing is lost, nothing is created, and everything is transformed, energy transforms and converts from one form into another too. These forms can be kinetic, potential, thermal, or electromagnetic. Energy in physics is defined as the capacity to do work at its most fundamental level due to protons, neutrons, and electrons making up atoms vibrating. The subset of modal vibrational phenomena called *Cymatics*, or *kyma* from ancient Greek, means ‘wave’. It is the study of visible sound and vibration made visible, typically performed on the surface of a plate, diaphragm or membrane (Jenny, 1969). Cymatics can be a powerful example in the field of sculpture. For example, Japanese artist Kenichi Kanazawa (b. 1956) creates geometric patterns by rubbing a metal surface with a small mallet. Kanazawa performs the cymatics experiment using sound vibrations and different vibrational frequencies. What is even more interesting is that the formed shapes are not random and can be recreated. Influenced by environmental conditions and the size of the medium under vibration, the characteristics of the resulting shapes are ultimately governed by the general resonance between the sound vibrations and the conditions of all matter involved in the experiment (Taggart, 2020) [Fig. 228].

The geometric forms are reminiscent of complex fractal patterns. Riveting, all the more hypnotising, these experiments open doors of possibilities for the artist’s imaginative and curious mind. At the atomic level, these vibrations consist of particles naturally moving and creating oscillating patterns of waves, generating energy. Like everything else in the universe, the biological constituents of emotions are also composed of atoms that vibrate and generate energy. Scientific findings show that strong negative emotions such as fear and anger have lower frequencies, whereas positive emotions like love and joy have higher frequencies. The findings are behind the science of energy healing processes and modalities such as Reiki and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) (Connor-Savarda, 2023). Because of these vibrations, emotional energy is transmitted through our thoughts, feelings, and actions, therefore

creations, or sculptures.\* Emotions create a synchronised harmony between our heart and brain frequencies palpably affecting and influencing us and those around us. According to the research, the heart generates the strongest electromagnetic field in the human body and is one of the organs influenced most by emotions. If negative emotions cause erratic and unsynchronised heart and brain frequency patterns and negatively impact our environment, then the potential of positive emotions is immense. In his book, *The Sense of Beauty*, writer, poet and novelist George Santayana (1863-1952) questioned the ontology of beauty, where it lies, the relation between the constitution of an object and the excitement of our susceptibility to it and many other related concerns. Santayana (1995) attributed the sensing and judging of beauty to the five human senses and to the three powers of the soul, intellect, will and feeling. Based on these factors, beauty is to Santayana a value rather than a perception of matter, fact, or relation. It is a positive emotion, a sense of the presence of something good or the feeling of having experienced something good. It applies to ugliness in the absence of the sense of something good. Beauty is never a negative value, and can never lie in the perception of a 'positive evil' (pp. 31, 32). In November 2023, the MAAT – Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology organised the *International Conference on Art and Health* (2023) at the EDP Headquarters in Lisbon. The conference questioned if art can be an ally of the medical sciences, how museums and other cultural actors can contribute to health and well-being, and how creativity can contribute to innovation in health. Keynote lecturer neurobiologist Semir Zeki (b. 1940) elaborated on *The Science of Beauty*. In the publication *The experience of mathematical beauty and its neural correlates*, Zeki, John Paul Romaya, Dionigi M. T. Benincasa, and Michael F. Atiyah (2014) explored further the comparison between the experience of mathematical beauty to the one derived from the greatest art. Through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), Zeki et al. imaged the activity in the brains of fifteen mathematicians while viewing mathematical formulae they had individually rated as beautiful, indifferent or ugly. The experience of mathematical beauty correlated parametrically with activity in the same part of the emotional brain as the experience of beauty derived from other sources. In the results, the beauty of mathematical formulations was found in abstracting, simple equations, and truths that have universal validity. Aesthetically it meant that the visually simpler equation [Fig. 229] was judged more beautiful than the

complex one [Fig. 230]. Philosopher Alan H. Goldman (b. 1945) defended a view of beauty anchored in expressive qualities and cognitive challenge that prompt a rich and intense feeling when experiencing an artwork. Goldman (2006, p. 337) posited that even if a work is formally beautiful, if it lacks these expressive qualities it will fail to produce the intense feelings and the experience will be shallow. In that sense, the beauty of an object and its value would then depend on the value of the experience of it. Therefore, beauty can contribute to the value of an artwork if the experience of it carries this feeling of attraction and connection to its cognitive and emotional aspects. If the viewer's attention is distracted from these values, beauty detracts from the value of the experience of the work, and then from the work itself.

While looking for ways to work with a curved volume and join or weld forms together, abstract sculptor Richard Deacon (b. 1949) chose to experiment with polycarbonate sheets for its lack of toxic fumes during the heating process, and its thermoformable and durable properties. When uncovering the arrived material, Deacon was surprisingly delighted that it was crystal clear and thought the material was in itself beautiful. He compared it to clean water with its crystalline light, which describes the volume and the silvery zinc colour of the galvanised bucket around it. When the processes of cutting, drilling, heating, bending and welding the plastic started, some of that crystal quality was lost. A new meaning attached to the works arose in that phase defined by a gap developed between what the material was and what it became. It is in that precise gap, only discovered during the process of making, that Deacon found a new meaning for the beautiful, the beautiful of what an initially beautiful material became. It made the artist pause for thought and reflect on the existential gap between being and becoming and the new notion of the beautiful lying in between. That moment also validated Deacon's ongoing interest in the material ("The Strangeness of Beauty: Contribution by Richard Deacon", 2021) [Fig. 231].

This means that beauty could lie in the intents, gestures and transformations of making sculpture when the maker feels that something good happened, or is happening. Or even something good about to happen when the artist imagines the unlimited and feels the exciting anticipation of starting the making process. This feeling of goodness manifests when an artist steps into an art materials shop, a fashion designer into a fabric shop, a chef into a grocery store, or any maker in a tool shop. It can suddenly feel like

Christmas any time or any day of the year. In beauty can be, and In contemporary sculpture, this good feeling of beauty is not always a result product to judge as beautiful or not. It is a process of making something good, and better, like the predisposed feeling of right or wrong and morality that characterises the human species.\* The viewer might *see* beauty in a painting but perhaps can *feel* the beauty around a sculpture if the process of making it transported, carried and embedded that positive feeling. Ultimately, the epitome of beauty would be if the viewer *feels* and *sees* beauty in a sculpture.\* Sometimes the making urge stems from anger, injustice or a negative feeling, but the act of doing something about that feeling can bring this good feeling of active action, of not being passive, of actively making. And that action alone is a catalyst of goodness and a potential for beauty and positive results like the light at the end of a tunnel. Since creating brings artists this state of positive awareness and continuous discoveries towards the better and the best, I can deduct, a priori, that the emotional energy generated not only creates a ripple effect in our immediate surroundings but possibly extends outwards and ultimately influences collective human consciousness. Because art encourages us to lead a self-aware existence and emphasise our interconnectedness with the world that surrounds us, making art will help us understand the power of our emotional energy, and tap into these unique frequencies and vibrations to use this knowledge for personal growth and greater collective harmony. Because sculpture has physical spatial room for emotional and physical growth, it would constitute the ultimate spacetime medium with the highest power in terms of conduction and frequency which can be augmented or restricted by the nature of the materials it features.\* In a video about her creative process in the studio, Danish artist Tove Storch (b. 1981) spoke about how creativity rises from raw, spontaneous and unregulated freedom. The artist has always struggled with gaining control. She noted how wrong it is to be both creative and controlled. Instead of using words or a manifesto text, the artist tries to express herself using things and gravity for which there is no language. Her ideas arise amidst creating physical work, trying to solve a problem and coming across something else while investigating [Fig. 232].

*I have captured my thoughts in something very concrete which I don't know where else to put. When I look at this and know that it exists, I know I've made a statement on which I based a conversation. It could be: What is a sculpture? What are the laws of the universe? [...] In a way it's based on total stubbornness and a fight against reality and physical reality. (Storch, 2024)*

Other mediums can represent a concept and portray it under different lights. For instance, a digital or virtual reality representation of an image can be presented in a three-dimensional real-like simulation. We can move around it and step inside of it virtually, even mimic touching it. I give the example of a multidimensional simulation of a diamond or a collector choosing an NFT (non-fungible token) gem over a physical one. The creator or artificial generator can recreate the diamond, and simulate the changing lights and effects but the diamond simulation would still reside in numeral time. If the diamond is physical, no matter how the collector moves in that precise point and reference of spacetime, the diamond catches this unique real-time event, this one-off happening with its frequency, light, prism reflections and refractions, and all other elements including temperature absorption. This moment can be imitated, copied, replicated, replayed or looped but all these productions would still be copies of the original. Even an exact physical replica of the diamond would still fail not only its physical properties and entropy but also its momentum. The physical diamond sympathises with the subject holding it by sharing, absorbing and enduring some of the outer forces the subject is subjected to. Wouldn't that make physical sculpture a conductor of energy? A mediator of emotions, a tool for emotional regulation, or insulation? Does this make sculpture a sentient object? Maybe a sentient post-object?\* If stones and other inanimate objects are considered to be 'sentient' in some cultures such as some forms of Buddhism, then perhaps sculpture would be too.\* If the sculpture drank or transferred the maker's emotions, their empathetic side and the human need for connection and symbolism, wouldn't that make sculpture anthropomorphist phenomena? A nonhuman entity with human characteristics?\* This means that waiting for the intense conditional event and associated feelings in the tense state to pass to start creating would mean missing out on the moment where the emotions are most conveyed and embedded. Creation then needs to happen at the culprit of emotions to create the strongest ripples.\* The wise words of novelist Doris Lessing (1919-2013) resonate now more than ever: 'Whatever you're meant to do, do it now. The conditions are always impossible.' At age eighty-eight, Lessing was the recipient of the 2007 *Nobel Prize* in Literature, becoming the oldest laureate to receive the award, and continuing to be until today (The Nobel Prize, 2020). Why don't we learn from history and from wise achievers who lived before us? Perhaps our human nature

pushes us to have our own personal experiences, which makes every experience valid. And because artists and thinkers are communicators, every thought manifested in the physical world, is a lesson to be learnt, making the arts a pool for knowledge. As for sculpture, not only does it draw worlds for us to picture, but it literally builds it for us to step into it and around it, conveying a physically palpable energy and vibe.\* After all, several materials have a shape memory function such as some metals, ceramics, gels and polymers. When warmed or triggered, shape-memory alloys can revert from one shape to another. Unlike metal, the recent engineers' discovery of a new category of shape-memory materials made of ceramic signifies a potential for wider applications mostly for high-temperature settings (Chandler, 2022). If materials potentially and most probably hold properties that haven't been discovered yet, this means that sculptures with their varied materials and found objects are one of the media that are most prone to this memory effect.\* Perhaps under specific conditions, they would partly revert to a memorised stage of the creation process. This would hold a non-written history of the techniques of some artists/makers, their ways of living, the tools and technologies available to them, and other pointers of the archaeology of an object and its respective civilisation. It is a testimony of being alive in a physical body.\* This means that sculpture is a proof of living, of the present, of the now, the very primitive gesture of simply being able to make, being in a human form, being a human, simply being and no other reason is required.\* The mind is the space to the brain-place and will always imagine placing the brain inside the mind and not the other way around. The mind is wide and unstoppable. But to have the ability and capacity to make, to touch our thoughts is a precious human quality. Mostly we don't know how often our physical birth happens, if it's a one-time occurrence, and whether we'll be lucky enough to be born with a passion to create to materialise in the first place. Making sculpture is a celebration of the format of my birth in the human body for it might be my last time as a human.\* For that, I want to touch materials, mix and create all I can do with the material as an imprint on my soul, and vice versa, to keep that feeling as real as possible and as alive as possible in eternity. As for us, humans, it might be the most basic and automatic gesture, but for a soul waiting an eternity to be hosted in a human shape it would not be the opportunity of a lifetime to touch, but the opportunity of an eternal time to touch. And for that alone I am grateful for the body and the material that responds, to make this tactile memory possible. I have not only lived in human form but

I have been blessed with the love of art and being an artist. For all free souls dying to touch, we human artists are living to touch. We need to know the gift we were blessed with and not long longer as it is here in our hands and we are immortal. For if we had the tools and technology to bend space the way we bend sculpture, we could travel in time, and have one more opportunity to materialise in every sense of the word. Our existence is primarily conditional because of our physicality. Using physical elements in sculpture is a way of creating a concretely imagined world that is better, fairer, and kinder.\* Sculpture is also adaptive and born from a place of displacement out of a comfort zone. The gallery model itself serves displacement and is a blank refuge and shelter that sheds light on the subject matter. However, to understand the making of the initial displacement, the studio would be the place where the transformation happens and that needs to be scrutinised most.\* As published by the Water Science School (2019), we are made between 45–75% water with an average percentage of 60% water in a person's body. Aren't we then reflective in the sense of reflecting others' feelings? *Agua salada organizada* (2014) or in English Organised salt water is the title of one of Delcy Morelos' (b. 1967) works. It directly alludes to the composition of our bodies consisting of 65% water. The sculpture features six vertical elements made up of several layers of burlap superimposed on each other and painted in different variations of brown representing our own materiality [Fig. 233]. Morelos is influenced and inspired by Andean ancestral traditions which see the human being as living earth, so she is a body and she is earth. In the exhibition space, the earth expresses itself as the centre and mirror of what we are. The artist uses textiles as both medium and metaphor and transmits her vision of the world where plants, the soil, meteorological phenomena and living beings are all interconnected and form the common fabric in which we cohabit. Morelos expressed her liking of synesthesia and being moved by the alchemy that awakens different emotions in each person ("Delcy Morelos: El oscuro de abajo", 2023). There is palpable energy emanating from both the artist's words and work.

If we are a collective consciousness, then our energy mixes together and as children, we get fusional with people we depend on and mirror feelings, personalities, and energies that might not necessarily be ours. As we grow up we start building our own personality and try to understand our oneness as separate from others but part of the community and circle of others. What is hard for us as humans is to set boundaries, and

know when to screen others' feelings by understanding that they are not our own. For example, we are driving peacefully playing music we love, feeling good, and hopeful. We are immersed in our bubble of well-being. Suddenly a grumpy driver horns and makes us jump and snap out of our 'alert reverie' while we are driving safely and responsibly. The mindfulness we experience at that moment is brutal. Instead of being aware of the car, its pace and the driver in it, we are now aware of the facial expression of the driver, their anger, and their moody hand gestures. We immediately feel angry and have the urge to do the same, yell back at the driver for being mean and nasty and wave our arm in a displeased or mimicked way. Though what we are feeling is not ours, we are emphatically mirroring the driver's emotions and taking it in, reflecting it. But not without consequences as our energies have encountered each other when we were vulnerable in our oneness. The earlier happy energy is now polluted and has shifted to grumpiness. It makes the fall from a high to a low brutal. If we had been nostalgic, sad, or also grumpy on that day before the encounter with the other driver, the escalation from a low to lower mood can lead to a bigger altercation. What we need to learn is to recognise and distinguish our feelings from the ones of others. When mirroring, we need to realise it is not ours and send it back, refracting it instead of letting the heat of the energy burn us. How does this relate to sculpture? It relates in every sense. Other mediums like paintings, release us from our emotions. We put these emotions down on the canvas and see that they're not as accurate as we had pictured them in our minds. Movies are consecutive emotions which take us on a trip where we lose ourselves in the frames and flowing narrative featuring our flowing feelings and perceptions. Photography is still and is a mirrored linear image, so another flat mirror object. The sculpture-making process – mostly when narratives are involved – facilitates mental metamorphosis and therefore the crystallisation of events where they are broken down to become acceptable, assimilable, domestic, and safe.\* Sculpture is spatial, meaning it projects what is in our head and creates a multidimensional space. Even though that space might be inspired by or include others, it remains our own space. It has our energy and most of all our walls and boundaries. So not only do we live in the present while creating it but we project onto this space outside our head where no one can reach our vulnerability.\* The walls and multidimensions of sculpture help us create the boundaries we sometimes find hard to apply between us and others. It makes us understand our coordinates in life, where we

stand in terms of our situation and helps us distance ourselves and think clearly without our thoughts being polluted by others.\* Like a foreign language, we look at letters as shapes and can only guess their meaning. It is similar to the artist or the sculptor who creates a language only they can fully read and can teach others the significance of it.\* We can understand it more when we look at logographic Egyptian hieroglyphs [Fig. 234], Peruvian Nazca Lines [Fig. 235], or the new language tablet uncovered in 2023 at the archaeological site at Turkey's Boğazköy-Hattushaduring [Fig. 236], amongst several precious artefacts. The tablet's new language is confirmed as a member of the Anatolian Indo-European language family despite experts not being sure what the specific idiom says. The Turkish site is the former capital of the Bronze Age Hittite empire and is known as a hotbed of ancient languages (Orf, 2023). Seeing what ancient civilisations left us, we can understand what artists are leaving for the future ones. We can leave works reminiscent of these languages, something like Huma Bhabha's (b. 1962) impressively monographic sculptures [Fig. 237], or sculpt a very personal, internal, vague and abstract language that doesn't always need to be read or understood, even by the maker themselves.

The future will excavate remnants of a deeply personal language and communication system weaved by the sculptor.\* This sculptural system is not only carved but also elevated or erected as artefacts, monuments, ritual sites, worshipped artistic practices, materialised beliefs and higher powers that only the artist can tap into. It informs the future of the tools and earthly materials we have access to. It doesn't need to be understood, it doesn't need to be liked, but it needs to be assimilated solemnly as a timeless concrete humanmade meteorite, telling a feeling, an experience, and the anguishes of the times we live and have lived in.\* In the end, because of its fictitious nature and perceptual effect, the understanding of the fictive sculpture's ontology – what it is, what it can be, or what it ought to be – lies in between the practical and the philosophical realms.\* The practical realm hosts the artist, whereas the philosophical one hosts everyone and everything, including the artist. So the meaning of the physical manifestation of the work is a closed property of the artist offered to the world for open perception and readings. As for the philosophical meaning of fictive sculpture, in order to simplify it, I will talk here about lecturer and doctor in Philosophy Maria Balaska's (n.d.) two-sided definition of philosophy, or halves of a story. The first half of the story is that, because it stems from questions, philosophy carries with it a sense of amazement

at the world, at language, at our own selves and others. It demands and cultivates the ability to wonder at things regardless of whether they are simple or obvious, something Balaska regards as extremely precious. The second half of what philosophy is about is committing to thinking these asked questions and not merely asking them and being amazed. These two definitions are useful to apply to the understanding of fictive sculpture. They present philosophy as an activity that presupposes a deep and active involvement with things. Thus, they allow us to lead a fuller life, far from promoting an abstract, theoretical and disengaged understanding. In addition to trying and serving reason, committing to thinking also means being receptive and responsive to the world. So artists make sculptures to understand narratives and sometimes find answers to questions about themselves, about others and the world around them. Hence, the answer to an anxious question might be in the form of a feeling or experience. The process might not only carry the promise of the answer but also the discovery, thrill and peace of being actively doing something about the questions.\* All of these steps are part of the amazement phase, with the result of the work often bringing an aha moment of everything falling into place. The second understanding of fictive sculpture lies in the commitment to the activity of making, turning the abstract and theoretical into a concrete material. This activity bathes in gratification and joy of accepting and adapting to change, interacting with an outside to which we become receptive and responsive, therefore more tolerant and patient with our surroundings.\* The exploration of the sculptor is a step towards peace, an understanding between the artist and the materials, and an arrangement between the artist and the space.\* These sculptural elements of materials and space don't judge, don't condemn, don't retribute, don't punish, don't censure, don't denounce, don't reprehend, don't reprobate, don't marginalise, don't prosecute, don't discriminate, don't criticise and don't argue. On the other hand, viewers, visitors, societies and communities do.\* And so as long as the artist is free to think, that fictive space and imagined sculpture are the only remaining constant no one can take away, and for that the conditions are always favourable, auspicious, even nonexistent.\* This leaves us with the truth that fictive sculpture is never conditional until the moment it is born in the physical world. Until it is materially real.\* Sculpture is then interchangeable with imagination, and conditional sculpture is interchangeable with matter.\* On account of this, I conclude here hat

sculpture doesn't need to be seen, touched, or experienced to exist.\* We touch therefore we condition, but we imagine therefore we sculpt.\*

*My advice to young artists would be that they should be lucky enough in their young art life that everything they thought was art was stripped from them and that they were left only with what they could do and that was the path that they should have the courage to take. That it's through their limitations that the life becomes expansive and that they grow into a greater sense and a greater connection to the outside but it has to begin with being stripped of everything that you had bought as what art is. And I will also warn them that should they be so lucky as to have that moment happen, it will be profoundly painful, and profoundly disorienting, and deeply terrifying because they, for a short period of time, hopefully, they will be stripped bare. (Fischl, 2024)*

In the end, as I see it, sculpture is about control. It is about control over our mind, over our physical world. And even if the sculpture is falling apart, it would be intentionally controlled by the artist.\* The narratives might vary, but in the end, it results in fictive objects in the real world, differentiating fictive and real through space, the internal mental space and the collective physical space. Sculpture might be conditional, but the condition to create is that it is exclusively under the conditions of the maker and the fictive control of their own reality, of life.\* What distinguishes sculpture from the object is then the loss of control, of abdicating to creating without rules, under any condition.\* Sculpture is spatial acceptance and learning to let go of rules and social ideals.\* The object is never fictive. Hence a sculpture is never fictive. If it is materialised in our perceived reality, it is real whatever its provenance is. On the other hand, the pre-object or pre-sculpture is fictive, the sculpture is real. The narrative is never real, but fictive in its essence.\* As elaborated earlier, the academic voice demands the monotony of dissolved affective demonstrations. It demands a voice devoid of sentiment implying that the objective, dispassionate voice is the professional and knowledgeable one to be taken to the highest levels of seriousness. Sculpture is literally a volume of sentiments, and art is a well of feelings and emotions that were too powerful to lock in. This clash needs to be addressed in academic research to find balance amidst both, without compromising on the empathic aspect of sculpture, as square and minimalist as it might be shaped into.\* That notion of sentiment-related property is rooted in the cultural traditional representation of gender, female or male. *Male* is expected to be less effusive, boys not to cry, and the elderly to stand erect and look austere. However, these demonstrations would be accepted in a 'manly' environment such as in sports. On the

other hand, *Female* is pushed to be more masculine in the workplace and display no emotions or outbursts in order to be taken seriously. As a woman artist, I have found a strong correlation between the juxtapositions of sculpture with society, and art practice with academic research. These are rigid and limiting margins that need to be revisited to get the best out of knowledge of art practice as art practice is rooted in materialised outbursts. Artists speaking about their own work, what it is about, what it represents, what it means or what it makes them feel is utterly intimate. Describing the entropy of a work of art, and its physical characteristics is one thing, but revealing narratives behind it is a personal reflection of the maker's vulnerability. The artist is courageously and willingly sharing it with the public as a piece of their most profound thoughts, placing it on a plate for the criticism of others. It comes from a place of transparency and intuition about our human nature. Readers who come across the writings of artists might be establishing a closer connection and knowing the artist-author far better than peers, close relatives, and acquaintances do. By making contemporary sculptures, the maker is physically projecting a transparent place of worship in a concrete space, trusting the visitor with it.\* To invest so much thinking, planning and time in creating a work that does not constitute an ultimate product to sell, doesn't necessarily provide a practical function, and will most likely spend most of its life span in storage, is a commitment to be true to a passion and respect for the art that others don't always perceive or comprehend. There is a reverence in the process that somehow, despite the directions the gallery and museum space are heading towards, silence and the pace of circulation still reside. Stepping into the exhibition space evokes stepping into a church, staring at spatial iconographies where the end of the altar is everywhere, and invisible benches are placed in all directions. Creating sculptural work that doesn't replicate reality through a faithful illustration represents a mission to show the unseen, surprising others and at times, surprising ourselves as makers.\* It is excavating a buried city and worlds hidden from others and from one's mind. These are sites which artists can intuitively sense the existence of, but won't discover the extent of their scale and depth unless they keep excavating, that is making.

*I believe that today, more than ever, the artist has a para-religious mission to fulfil: to keep lit the flame of an inner vision, of which the work of art seems the closest translation for the layman...I think that art is the only form of activity through which man shows himself to be a real individual. Through it alone, he can move beyond the*

*animal stage because art opens onto regions dominated by neither time nor space.*  
("Marcel Duchamp: Painting, Even", 2014)

This is why the arts need to be well funded, as the artist can not always explain hidden underground layers of what looks like a desert to others, or articulate a twenty-seventh letter of the alphabet that others can't hear.\* Contemporary sculpture is the lens to this invisible inner core and can't be situated along with the same functionality of historical sculpture and statues, or evaluated in financial currency or quantitative value.\* Its role is quite opposite to what the object and the material serve in modern life.\* Fictive sculpture is only material in its peripheries, but centrally transcendental into everything that is non-object, non-material, and non-physical, but remains real in all its fictitiousness.\* Its role is to lead us to the unlimited potential of the human mind and alternate realities beyond our bodily experience.\* Therefore, fictive real or real fictive sculptures are pathways to fictional time slips, portals to a non-linear time, where past, present and future don't only coexist such as in eternalism, but are redundant in a non-sequential, non-peripheral real fictive spacetime, as others don't need to see for it to be real.\* As clearly and real neoclassical clay sculpture spun on a rotating platform appears, fictive sculptures constantly rotate in a three-dimensional simulation in the artist's mind longing to bilocate.\* They are presented here as a closure of the internal personal real imaginary, bodily projected as a fictive real object, constituting a collective social real fictive conditional sculpture.\*

## CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

In this final section, I compile findings and answers to the research questions and objectives identified throughout the probe. I summarise key points that have emerged in each part of the inquiry. I also discuss the contribution of these findings and the methodology and methods applied, pointing to limitations that need to be addressed in the future. In some cases, I propose suggestions and opportunities for future research.

In the introduction, I established the theme and context of the probe, describing it as practice-based research. The final work consisted of a practical body of work enclosing sculptures along with complementary works of art; this text document or exegesis with both enclosed and attached supporting files.

The research study revolved around the area of Sculpture, precisely Contemporary and Ultra-Contemporary Sculpture. I have deeply scrutinised the process of making and reflected on it in the theoretical realm. The period timeline I considered spans Metamodernism, Postmodernism and a smaller part of Modernism.

Questions were explicitly determined under two umbrellas, the first one being the creation of individual projects, and the second a collective analysis.

I stated my intent to employ practice as a starting point and treat it with the same importance as theory. The experimentation and the generated knowledge emerged first in the mind as a trigger and thought, started taking shape on a sketchbook, or through a reflective text, turned into a material in the studio and laid the first stone of this elaborate conversation.

I investigated contemporary sculpture as a subjective fictive object based on real and imagined narratives and systematically scrutinised the course of sculpture-making in conditioned situations and scenarios.

In the State-of-the-Art segment, I introduced the neologism of *Conditional Sculpture* attributed to the research. Going through the origins of the term *conditional*, I distanced it from phenomenal conditional art. Consequently, I argue that the term

conditional has never been associated with sculpture in this meaning and context and believe that I can coin the term association *Conditional Sculpture*.

After presenting the main themes of autobiography, subjectivity, narratives, fiction, and objects, I identified key terms that defined my approach.

*Authotheory* replaced *autobiography*, and *life-writing* in classic literature gradually transformed into what I have called *creating-in-the-conditional* or *conditional-creating*. Within the transformation steps, I introduced *life-creating*, *creating-in-the-feminine*, and *creating-in-the-maternal*.

The Methodology section was the part that held the whole research together. It served as a toolkit and validation to proceed with the methods I felt were appropriate. Constituting a chapter on its own, the methodology development clarified all the concerns of an academic nature and traced the free exploratory itinerary to navigate the research with confidence. It provided the foundation to recognise hidden social values.

The inquiry was categorised as post-qualitative championing feelings, experiences and ideas. Through *Reflective Practice*, the paradigms of *Postmodernism*, *Constructivism*, and *Constructionism* were applied. The structure of ideas and thinking was deeply rhizomatic, which has helped meet the objectives. Otherwise, the results would have been more generic. The methods were not restricted and were open to experimentation.

I pinned down the methodology to *thinking through making* with conceptual activities and distinguished it from the *art of inquiry*. The implemented methods blended visual documentation, developing real and fictive narratives, creating sculptures, writing reflective texts, documenting thoughts, and constantly looking into relevant theorists and theories. Despite feeling that the route was traditional, it was considered unconventional in some parts of the literature. I would have liked to push the formatting rules and limits further to observe how the audience might receive such changes. I was also constrained by the required page count, which prevented me from integrating the referenced figures directly within the text. Furthermore, I felt restricted by academic conventions that demand a voice devoid of sentiment, characterised by the monotony of dissolved affective expression. The requirements imply that the objective, dispassionate voice is the professional and knowledgeable one to be taken to the highest levels of seriousness.

Therefore, I invite universities to revisit, or when applicable, rectify this pedagogic misconception through a guided teaching approach.

An intricate and interlinked web of thoughts took shape and facilitated the identification of subjective ideas, discovered formulations, and results of the assimilation of crystallised thoughts. Upon observation, the selected rhizomatic sentences started scarcely during the unfolding of theory and the available literature and gradually intensified with increasing reasoning. The ideas were dominant in the synthesis of the final thoughts.

The same steps were followed to develop all practical projects, despite each revolving around a different theme. They all started with a different trigger, followed by a documentation of the topic, autoethnography texts, and merging real and fictive narratives into one new story. The newly generated story embedded descriptions and sketches of potential sculptures to create in the studio. These were then installed and photographed. During this phase, I noticed that my process didn't match the cyclical patterns of activities effectuated by Fine Art students in this order: *Generation, Selection, Synthesis, Articulation, Presentation, and Critical Discussion*. I updated the elements and order of the pattern to fit this research as follows: *Elaboration, Synthesis, Generation, Selection, Articulation, Presentation, and Critical Discussion*.

This new format mapped the methodology more accurately within thinking through making. It situated my initial approach under the 'process of making', instead of the 'art of inquiry'. Intuition, inspiration, and reflexivity were key drives throughout the probe and shaped my identity as the author. The methodology encouraged me to lose rigid formats where applicable and embrace trial, error, and transparency. It walked me through putting together passionate and genuine reporting under a professional voice and ethical approaches.

I dissected individual projects in the second development chapter, describing and analysing them. It led to underlining and understanding scientifically unscrutinised aspects of human life and everyday experiences. The overview of my previous work disassociated my practice from Motherhood and *Maternal Art* in general and reinforced the preexisting role of the fictive narrative, calling the related interventions *occurential*.

The reality-inspired narratives of the practical work developed for the thesis preserved an imaginative aspect. The individual analyses of this section provided the

answers to the first batch of questions. In each project, we saw the influence of reflexive triggers, the framing of space and time, the transformation of back-stories, and the hybrid formation of the real-fictive narratives. The influence of reflective and autoethnographic texts was detected through drawing sketches, shaping the sculptures, and choosing their materials.

The first practical project introduced the artist and the mother separately for the first time, showing the divergent perceptions of each. Furthermore, each facet explained factors invisible to the other. The artist in me answered questions unknown to the mother, and the mother in me generated new questions oblivious to the artist. More precisely, the artist unveiled how visual narratives carry fragments of mixed narratives, and how the narrative becomes abstracted in the final sculptures, unclear to the viewer without the text and the explanation. The process explicitly demonstrated a profoundly personal reflective text about concerns or triggers turning into a physical sculpture accessible to the public, like a story of a book adapted to a movie. The forms and materials used served the story as a solution settlement to the concerns. The final physical artworks embedded both the real and the fictive coexisting under the shared roof of sculpture. The mother contributed to this section by pointing to a recessive interest in the inside of a sculpture and the limited literature around it.

Often used interchangeably, this project distinguished space from place. It presented the brain, gallery or outer structure as a place, and the internal thoughts or experience as a space. I concluded here that the practical work on its own only provided a spatially superficial format to the viewer, and fell short in conveying the layers of narrative to the viewer. I argue that this type of contemporary sculpture needs supporting elements such as audio or visual narration in the voice and personality of the maker.

The study of this individual project determined underlying themes betraying concerns of social nature and myths around the image of the artist in the art scene, and the image of the mother in society. These myths are impactful and need to be openly addressed in both the artistic and the academic realms without prejudice.

The second practical project led me to conclude that as an artist-mother, I have a conflicting perception of reality only surfacing under the pressures of real-life occurrences, biographical circumstances and restricting conditions. The passage from real to fictive narratives, and the choice of materials filled the same functions as in the first

project, reinforcing the validity of the answers. Within the theory reasoning and its publication, I argue that my approach as an artist and perception of time-space was Eternalist, inspired by fiction, and longing for freedom. Whereas my approach as a mother was Fatalist, affected by reality, and driven by control. This constation only emerged through the reflective texts and journaling and dissipated when I created the sculptures. I affirm that the spatial nature of sculpture reconciles different points of view, mainly for the mother or carer, and suggest that members of communities with different views should attend activities or residencies where they can co-write a new joint narrative and then transform it into a co-created sculpture. This could benefit NGOs and organisations working for peace in conflicted zones, or within social cases of marginalisation and discrimination. I can posit that even though this activity might not be a long-term solution, I am confident that it will establish a communication bridge between two opposing sides through a new common ground and a shared sculptural language.

On an academic level, this case study provided a tangible example to researchers and academics of the relationship between art theory and art practice. It demonstrated that a flexible methodology can co-feature reflectivity and reflexivity, or switch from practice-led to practice-based and vice versa without compromising the generation of reliable knowledge. I deduct that ‘knowing in action’ and ‘reflection-in-action’ led to my findings, which wouldn’t have been discovered through theory or practice alone.

The third practical case study saw a pandemic crisis, which made the theme of conditionality spread universally beyond motherhood and personal situations to a wider audience of artists, makers, and workers. The conditions around making physical sculptures in non-domestic spaces were increased and toughened, and were described in the project. In this part, I showed how sculpture in extreme and strict conditions faces being eclipsed by more accessible or domestic mediums such as painting and textiles. I introduced paintings as materialised ramifications of sculptures and reminisced on the tactile feel of clay. There were further associations between a facilitated-making process and the fluidity of the water element, as an example of adaptability, redirection, flexibility and mostly freedom, or lack of control. I called to bring more fun into the making process, and break rules to materialise a more imaginative narrative and further unusual artefacts.

This project also outlined the importance of dreams and how speaking of them maps more similarities in thinking and the unique morphology of the creative brain. In

this section, I used scientific theories to show how cultural influence and social image affect our hemispheres and make us more cloned with a gradually colonised experience. I stress that art institutions and professionals should prioritise authenticity, genuineness, and individualism to preserve the survival of creativity and imagination in the future.

The conditional theme was firmly determined after these practical projects were subjected to conditional circumstances, lack of freedom, and restrictions pinning condition as the fulcrum of the research.

At the end of the presentation of the individual practical projects, I reflected on the role of gallery space and whether the created works needed a viewer to fulfil their purpose. Due to the pandemic restrictions and further personal limitations, there wasn't an available and adequate space to exhibit all the artworks created. Furthermore, the institutions and venues approached didn't seem too keen on favouring this less traditional type of art. Local entities and scholarship organisations opted for a selection of projects with more obvious themes. I found it challenging to pitch the concept of the research in a nutshell and convey its important implications. Or build the case in applications with very little word count limit, that non-obvious is not necessarily less important, and deserves funding, scholarships and endorsement too. In different instances, there were space size limitations, and the minimalism needed to present these works. In the future, the plan would be to organise a collective exhibition encompassing a projection or texts featuring some key parts and rhizomes, sketches and complementary paintings. I deduce that the research exhibition should entail much more than only showing the artworks. It is a holistic work that goes hand in hand. When the artist-author is also the curator, I echo the idea that the conventions of curating need to be expanded to facilitate unorthodox formats of art research and the less traditional direction it is moving towards.

Despite following the sketches throughout execution, the last practical project with its sculptures and methodology exhibition doesn't belong to the category of fictive objects or fictive sculptures. First of all, the process was practice-led starting with methodology theory and planning, leading to the creation of the works of art. Secondly, the fictive factor and narrative trigger were absent. The show perfectly performed its role to test and visualise the methodology spatially, serving the thesis, and being accessible to an audience. The control-free spontaneous gestures of placing the fabric on the larger sculpture were calming, therapeutic maybe, or what I would describe as enjoyable. They

hit near or around the target, but not the core. Notably, it didn't serve the need of the artist to exteriorise a personal world and webbed emotions. It only served the methodology needs using the artist as a collaborator and a technician. The consecutive tilted frames held some humour seen in previous projects, which was a small window in common into the maker's personality. In this project, I showed how an artist can perceive surrounding spaces differently, like finding inspiration and motivation in an inclined plane when others might consider it a disadvantage. The choice of venue shed light on the creative brain activity, and how everything is interconnected in an automatic mix-and-match exercise, a constant signal to connect the dots, and mentally weave an internal network of spatial interrelations.

The conditional inclined *place* was chosen to complement a set of schemes, whereas the first three projects were already born conditioned out of a conditional *space*. This directed me to proclaim that the main role of real fictive sculptures is to assist the artist as a continuation. It doesn't need to look familiar, be clear or understandable to viewers. If anything, fictive objects or sculptures don't even require a viewer. They don't fall under the same umbrella of the traditional understanding of sculpture, the verb 'sculpting', or more traditionally 'carving'. I infer that the *theatre* agency is closely linked to the oneiric dimension of fictive sculpture and narrative, and the association of both needs to be scrutinised more profoundly in future research. Therefore, the case study's example amplified the role of real fictive sculpture as a ramification of my imagination and thoughts. I also posit that aesthetics are not mandatory characteristics of real fictive sculpture. But, the feeling of achievement after creating it, and the energy emanating from it while experiencing are key features. I posit that real fictive sculpture reaches its maximal potential when it performs on both personal and social levels. To meet that completion, the real fictive sculpture must feel good to the artist, but as a plus, feel and look good to the viewer to satisfy the art scene and its audience. Overall, through personal experience, I illustrate how the art practice course is bumpy, irregular, and never linear, especially for mothers. In fictive sculpture, I contend that the fictive and the real end up unrecognisable and so intricately meshed together to the point of being interchangeable.

The third chapter drew an extensive collective description and theorisation. It indicated that the mentioned artists in the scene created sculptures out of urgency, necessity, and even an obligation to voice their experiences, feelings and thoughts through

spatial art. Despite the goal of these artists not primarily being to create a ‘beautiful’ esthetic piece for the likes of all, producing a contemporary sculpture that was also attractive to the eye, was a plus. The themes adopted linked contemporary sculpture and the materialised object to ideologies, politics and activism. The section defined the research sculptures as restricted domestic mockups or prototypes waiting for favourable conditions to be revisited in a larger format. The collective description highlighted the importance of the artist’s process and the influence of their character. Based on central concepts, I propound that fictive narratives are a method of approaching and coping with a situation as an adaptive mechanism. I declare that fictive narratives bring a new meaning to the object as a real physical proof of an imagined mental thinking process and alternate reality. Imagination allows us to identify and make sense of the world, or events we struggle to accept or apprehend. Making sculpture is a personal language transcribed into symbols. This resumes fictive sculptures as symbols of intense feelings and unsilencable preoccupations. It led to explaining fictive sculpture as a manifestation of the possible, as ‘magic’, answering the fundamental question about the symbolism of objects depending on our condition.

The elaboration presented fictive sculpture as a complex thinking process of social and cultural experience contributing to human development. Fictive sculptures opened the eyes to new perspectives and creative ways of solving problems in artistic, scientific and social fields. I argue that the collaboration of artists working with fictive objects and scientists in multidisciplinary branches including physics, astrophysics, and neurosciences, would trigger unprecedented ethical methods and groundbreaking original discoveries. Therefore, these collaborations should be facilitated and funded to help accelerate a much-needed evolution and a better sustainable world.

The theories around the object’s ontology drew the contribution of new materialism to posthumanist investigations. It answered that my status as a woman, mother and artist with several influences was essential to gathering subjective data for this minor, limited and scarce segment of the literature. There was an identification process with the movement englobing feminism, philosophy, science studies, and cultural theory proving that new materialism validated the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to theory and provided me with tools to explore the power of matter and materialist culture through intimate fictive objects. I assert that subjectivity and

individualism, mostly from the female perspective, are key informants in metamodernist creation and research opening a collective dialogue and interaction. The reflective texts brought out the drastic difference in perception of the female perspective and the motherhood one characterised by a completely different sense of time and view of the world. These factors proved that even though fiction is a subjective product, there are undeniably collective fictions that have been embedded for so long and are now part of our real coexistence. The female and maternal intuition and instinct played a considerable role in deterring dormant myths. I insist that professors, teachers, and professionals with leading roles in institutions must validate the diverse opinions and thinking of girls around the world and reinforce their confidence, voice and presence. Empowering the girl, future woman, and potentially future mother would mean empowering the entire human race. Many parents rely on teachers' opinions and actions. On that account, normalising multicultural women and mothers pursuing art as a main career and not only a hobby starts at school and home. This applies to education, tolerance and respect around gender equality, race, ethnicity, and individual diversity. Therefore, it is our duty as adults, mentors, or sensible artists to ensure this implementation and integration in our professional, and academic activities, in addition to our personal life.

The urgency of scrutinising the physical artefact is more pressing than ever in this transitional part of digitalised history and virtual reality. It is imperative that we don't take it for granted and acknowledge how decisive our era and actions are for physical sculpture. I note that the conditions around the creation of sculpture and its requirements to exist are getting more and more restricted in times of virtual interactions, personal transformation, crisis, global pandemics, environmental disasters, wars and displacement amongst other serious happenings.

Last but not least, following these deductions, the objectives set at the beginning of the research were met with some unexpected findings about the understanding of sculpture as a fictive object situated in metamodernism. The rhizomes provided clear statements about the function of sculpture and what roles it can perform. In the future, the statements could be published in a small book similar to the format of poem collections and contemporary guides.

I validate here that reflective practice is characterised by a feeling of accuracy, a certainty that only the researcher feels when encountering an answer to questions and

concerns, an aha or eureka moment, and these are not always sourced out of concrete data. The rapidly increasing amount of information and imagery we are exposed to is unprecedented and too overwhelming to keep in order at all times. It needs to be channelled and transferred into a larger physical body, or body-object. Consequently, in this research case, my findings construe fictive sculpture as a conductible matter the artist grows to transport an overflow of overwhelm in our expanded mind, which the restricted conditional physical body does not have the capacity to accommodate. This is why the studies of conductible matter and potential sentient inanimate objects must be as closely linked to conditional fictive sculpture, as legitimately as robotics, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and motion-sensing technologies for prosthetics.

That being so, I end with the assertion that conditional sculpture is a unique artificial bodily extension of our mind. I suggest the adoption of conditional and real fictive sculpture beyond the art scene, in art therapies, motor disabilities research environments, communal activities, and various centres and facilities. It would benefit a wider audience, including individuals not connected to art, and therefore, the wellbeing of a better, happier, more tolerant and more peaceful, communities and societies.

Based on this study, I propose the formation of a sub-category under contemporary sculpture not centred on aesthetics, dedicated to *Conditional Sculpture*. Investing in it, safeguarding its needs, and securing its growth would significantly contribute to consciousness expansion and human evolution.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Table 1	26
Table 2	94
Figure 1. <i>Robert Irwin: All the Rules Will Change</i> , Apr 07–Sep 05, 2016. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Source: <a href="https://hirshhorn.si.edu/exhibitions/robert-irwin/">https://hirshhorn.si.edu/exhibitions/robert-irwin/</a>	201
Figure 2. Ada Rajszyś, <i>whe(a)ther / conditional paintings</i> , 2008, 50X50, 100% cotton stretched canvas, acrylic double primed, outside. Ada Rajszyś. Source: <a href="https://adarajszyś.com/conditional-painting/">https://adarajszyś.com/conditional-painting/</a>	201
Figure 3. Rajaa Paixão, sketches, 2019. Photos: author.	202
Figure 4. Reprinted from "Research procedures / methodology for artists & designers" by C. Gray & J. Malins, 1993, p. 7. The Centre for Research in Art & Design, Gray's School of Art, Faculty of Design, The Robert Gordon University. Carole Gray. Source: <a href="http://carolegray.net/Papers%20PDFs/epgad.pdf">http://carolegray.net/Papers%20PDFs/epgad.pdf</a>	202
Figure 5. Rajaa Paixão, <i>Gregor Samsa: Window</i> , 2014, glass, paint, 165 x 45 x 5 cm, a sculpture imagining the window from the room of cockroach-metamorphosed Gregor Samsa. Photo: author.	203
Figure 6. Rajaa Paixão, <i>Toc 1969: Chronos</i> , 2014, perspex, sand, glue, nails. Photo: author.	204
Figure 7. Rajaa Paixão, <i>Toc 1969: Coatlique</i> , 2014, metal, perspex, sand, glue. Photo: author.	204
Figure 8. Painting with one hand while holding my son in my other arm at the Mother House Studios, London, June 2017. Photo: Mother House Studios.	205
Figure 9. Rajaa Paixão, <i>Left Overs</i> , <i>Mother Art Prize</i> group exhibition installation view, November 2017, 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning Gallery, London. Photo: Mother House Studios.	205
Figure 10. Rajaa Paixão, <i>Left Overs</i> , <i>Mother Art Prize</i> group exhibition, Catalogue, November 2017. Photo: author.	206
Figure 11. Camille Henrot, <i>3, 2, 1...</i> , 2021. © ADAGP Camille Henrot. Courtesy of the artist and Kunstgiesserei St. Gallen. Photo: Annik Wetter. e-flux. Source: <a href="https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/466643/camille-henrotwet-job/">https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/466643/camille-henrotwet-job/</a>	207
Figure 12. Hannah Cooke, <i>Ada vs Emin</i> , 2018. Hannah Cooke. Source: <a href="https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/17/ada-vs-emin/">https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/17/ada-vs-emin/</a>	208
Figure 13. Tracey Emin, <i>My Bed</i> , 1998, Box frame, mattress, linens, pillows and various objects, Overall display dimensions variable. Tate. Source: <a href="https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/emin-my-bed-103662">https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/emin-my-bed-103662</a>	208

- Figure 14. Hannah Cooke, *Ada vs Abramović*, 2018. Hannah Cooke. Source: <https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/18/ada-vs-abramovic/> 209
- Figure 15. Marina Abramović, *The Artist Is Present*, 2010, Performance. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Source: [https://www.moma.org/learn/moma\\_learning/marina-abramovic-marina-abramovic-the-artist-is-present-2010/](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/marina-abramovic-marina-abramovic-the-artist-is-present-2010/) 209
- Figure 16. Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document*, 1973-1979, Generali Foundation | Werner Kaligofsky. Public Media Group of Southern California. Source: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/the-10-most-powerful-artworks-on-motherhood-from-the-20th-century> 210
- Figure 17. Judy Chicago, *The Creation from the Birth Project*, 1984, Modified Aubusson tapestry 42 x 163 inches. Executed by Audrey Cowan Collection of the Museum of Arts and Design, NY; gift of the Robert and Audrey Cowan Family Trust. KCET. Source: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/the-10-most-powerful-artworks-on-motherhood-from-the-20th-century> 210
- Figure 18. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards*, 2014, a sculptural work about an impossible, hypothetical yet actual attempt of a trip, using the power of physics and surrounding forces such as black holes, time and the speed of light. Photo: author. 211
- Figure 19. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards - Travel Machine*, 2014, wood, leather, nails, metal, 192 x 56 x 3 cm. Photo: author. 212
- Figure 20. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards - Premature Relativity*, 2014, metal, perspex, mirror, sand, 115 x 90 x 40 cm. Photo: author. 213
- Figure 21. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards - Memoirs of the Twenty-First Century (2014)*, 2014, wood, plastic, nail, electronics with audio sound, 165 x 50 x 8 cm. Photo: author. 214
- Figure 22. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards - Memoirs of the Twenty-First Century (2014)*, 2014, audio sound, 2'59''. SoundCloud. Source: <https://on.soundcloud.com/5CFNN> 214
- Figure 23. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Space a: the real*, 2014, installation view of sculptural work about ubiquity and astral projection. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. 215
- Figure 24. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Space c: the fictitious*, 2014, installation view of a sculptural work about ubiquity and astral projection. The Project Space, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. 215
- Figure 25. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Space b: in-between*, 2014, installation view of the projection of the film *I forgot your name*, part of a sculptural project about ubiquity and astral projection. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. 216
- Figure 26. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name*, 2014, film 4':04'' projection. Music composition by Miguel Paixao, produced by Rajaa Paixão. Vimeo. Source: <https://vimeo.com/107407600> 216

- Figure 27. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Single bed*, 2014, wood, dye, steel, screws, mattress, waterproof cover, water. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 217
- Figure 28. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Single bed* (detail), 2014, wood, dye, steel, screws, mattress, waterproof cover, water. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 217
- Figure 29. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Kit*, 2014, towel, wool, glass, water drops, a sculptural work about ubiquity and astral projection. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 218
- Figure 30. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Enlarged Ouné*, 2014, fabric, string, nail, a sculptural work about ubiquity and astral projection. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 219
- Figure 31. An example of a Lebanese *Ouné*. 2017. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 220
- Figure 32. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Oval mirror*, 2014, wood, mirror, glue, paint, staples, nail. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 221
- Figure 33. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Black net*, 2014, mesh, pine wood, varnish, glue, screws, staples, metal paint. The Project Space, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 222
- Figure 34. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - 2lg*, 2014, film 6'' looped. The Project Space, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 222
- Figure 35. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - 2lg*, 2014, film 6'' looped. Vimeo. Source: <https://vimeo.com/107407601> \_\_\_\_\_ 223
- Figure 36. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - 4 walls*, 2014, found glass frame, digital print photography on adhesive paper, carpet tape, hooks, nails. The Project Space, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 223
- Figure 37. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Minimalist ubiquity* catalogue insertion, 2014, inkjet print on 350gsm A4 mat paper. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 224
- Figure 38. A water tank during September in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, 2018. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 225
- Figure 39. Ruins surrounding a water tank during September in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, 2018. Photos: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 225
- Figure 40. Bernd & Hilla Becher, *Water Towers*, 1970 – 2010, 15 silver-gelatin prints, 30 × 40 cm, 11 7/8 × 15 3/4 inches. Sprüth Magers. Source: <https://spruethmagers.com/artists/bernd-hilla-becher/> \_\_\_\_\_ 226
- Figure 41. Eva Rothschild, *Tombstones*, 2011, Jesmonite, felt, aluminum, polystyrene and fiberglass. 137 x 15 x 15 1/4 inches (348 x 38 x 38.5 cm), Edition of 3, ER 90. 303 Gallery. Source: <https://www.303gallery.com/gallery-exhibitions/eva-rothschild> \_\_\_\_\_ 227
- Figure 42. Cildo Meireles *Babel* (detail) 2001 Photo: Tate Photography. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern/display/media-networks/cildo-meireles> \_\_\_\_\_ 228

- Figure 43. Olafur Eliasson, *Power tower*, 2006. Belvedere Museum, Vienna. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/olafur-eliasson-power-tower> \_\_\_\_\_ 229
- Figure 44. Lee Bul. *Aubade V*, 2019. Installation View, *Forms of the Shadow*, Secession, Vienna, 2024. BB&M. Source: <https://www.gallerybbm.com/news/54-lee-bul-minouk-lim-forms-of-the-shadow-vienna-secession/> \_\_\_\_\_ 230
- Figure 45. Sabine Mirlesse. *Taygeta (10.22)*, aluminum, patina, 2022. Sabine Mirlesse. Source: <https://sabinemirlesse.com/Crystalline-Thresholds-Les-Portes-de-Givre231>
- Figure 46. Sabine Mirlesse. *Crystalline Thresholds | Les Portes de Givre*, 2022-2023. Sabine Mirlesse. Source: <https://sabinemirlesse.com/Crystalline-Thresholds-Les-Portes-de-Givre> \_\_\_\_\_ 231
- Figure 47. Sabine Mirlesse. *Maia and Taygeta (12.22)*, 2022. Sabine Mirlesse. Source: <https://sabinemirlesse.com/Crystalline-Thresholds-Les-Portes-de-Givre> \_\_\_\_\_ 232
- Figure 48. Robert Smithson. *Spiral Jetty*. 1970. Great Salt Lake, Utah. Mud, precipitated salt crystals, rocks, water. 1,500 ft. (457.2 m) long and 15 ft. (4.6 m) wide. Dia Art Foundation. © Holt/Smithson Foundation and Dia Art Foundation / Licensed by Artists Rights Society, New York. Holt/Smithson Foundation. Source: <https://holtsmithsonfoundation.org/spiral-jetty> \_\_\_\_\_ 232
- Figure 49. Sabine Mirlesse. *Crystalline Thresholds | Les Portes de Givre*, 2022-2023. Sabine Mirlesse. Source: <https://sabinemirlesse.com/Crystalline-Thresholds-Les-Portes-de-Givre> \_\_\_\_\_ 233
- Figure 50. A water tank in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, ca. January-April 2019. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 234
- Figure 51. Michael Craig-Martin, *An Oak tree*, 1974. Michael Craig-Martin. Source: <https://www.michaelcraigmartin.co.uk/artworks/11-an-oak-tree/> \_\_\_\_\_ 234
- Figure 52. Robert Morris, *Untitled (Mirrored Cubes)*, 1965-1971. Inhotim. Source: <https://www.inhotim.org.br/en/inhotim/arte-contemporanea/obras/untitled-mirrored-cubes/> \_\_\_\_\_ 235
- Figure 53. Le Corbusier, *Maison Dom-Ino, Sans lieu, 1914. Ossature de béton armé*. Le Corbusier - World Heritage. Source: <https://lecorbusier-worldheritage.org/en/1887-1917/> \_\_\_\_\_ 236
- Figure 54. Installation view of *Haegue Yang: Leap Year*, 2024. Photo: Mark Blower. Courtesy the artist and the Hayward Gallery. Southbank Centre. Source: [https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/haegue-yang-leap-year/?gad\\_source=1&gbraid=0AAAAADRLRXu8UCOMIZKYT4S9IU9HGJV0n&gclid=Cj0KCQjwveK4BhD4ARIsAKy6pMJIgG7AjNwk-pFOJtf3a2I8ssWrMZOWrZ0p\\_4WQC1O7JbLMvOFkZF8aAkXAEALw\\_wcB](https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/haegue-yang-leap-year/?gad_source=1&gbraid=0AAAAADRLRXu8UCOMIZKYT4S9IU9HGJV0n&gclid=Cj0KCQjwveK4BhD4ARIsAKy6pMJIgG7AjNwk-pFOJtf3a2I8ssWrMZOWrZ0p_4WQC1O7JbLMvOFkZF8aAkXAEALw_wcB) 237
- Figure 55. Irene Schubiger (\*1948), *o. T.*, 2016. Gips, Silikon, 23 x 40 x 20 cm, Courtesy Galerie annex 14, Zürich © Foto: Kunstmuseum Olten, Ausstellungsansicht Kunstmuseum Olten, 2019. Kunstmuseum Olten. Source: <https://kunstmuseumolten.ch/programm/ausstellungen/linck-reloaded#&gid=1&pid=14> \_\_\_\_\_ 238

- Figure 56. Alejandro Monge. *I.S.*, 2024. Fiberglass, concrete and pigments. 40 x 25 x 20 cm. 15 3/4 x 9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in. HOFA Gallery (House of Fine Art). Source: <https://thehouseoffineart.com/artists/278-alejandro-monge/works/5824/> 239
- Figure 57. Mark Manders. Installation view, 2015. Tanya Bonakdar Gallery. Source: <https://www.tanyabonakdargallery.com/exhibitions/34-mark-manders-tanya-bonakdar-gallery-new-york/> 239
- Figure 58. Michael Asher, Claire S. Copley Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA, September 21–October 12, 1974, view through the gallery toward the office and storage areas. For this work, Asher removed the partition wall dividing the office and gallery space, revealing the day-to-day activities of the gallery to the public. Photograph by Gary Krueger. © Michael Asher Foundation. Michael Asher Foundation. Source: <https://michaelasherfoundation.org> 240
- Figure 59. Michael Asher, installation view, *The Clocktower*, 1976. Artforum. Source: <https://www.artforum.com/events/michael-asher-5-231728/> 241
- Figure 60. Joan Jonas. *My New Theater V, Moving In Place (Dog Dance)*, 2002 - 2005. Painted wooden box, painted wooden trestles, video on DVD (colour/sound), DVD player, LCD monitor, speakers. 169 x 38 x 79 cm, duration 6 min 11 sec looped. Edition of 3 + 2 AP. Amanda Wilkinson. Source: <https://amandawilkinsongallery.com/artists/32-joan-jonas/works/2495-joan-jonas-my-new-theater-v-moving-in-place-dog-2002-2005/>. Additional source: <https://vimeo.com/93617388/a94aa62568> 242
- Figure 61. Isamu Noguchi inside the "peach pit" of his sculpture, *Momo Taro*, during the Storm King Art Center 25th Anniversary Luncheon, April 1985. Photo by Helaine Messer. Storm King Art Center. Source: <https://collections.stormking.org/Detail/entities/180> 243
- Figure 62. Rajaa Paixão, a selection of sketches of the water tank in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, 2018. Photos: author. 243
- Figure 63. Rajaa Paixão, *ladder and bridges*, 2018, modeling clay on paper, variable dimensions. Photo: author. 244
- Figure 64. DNA Structure. Source: [http://www2.nau.edu/lrm22/lessons/dna\\_notes/dna\\_notes.html](http://www2.nau.edu/lrm22/lessons/dna_notes/dna_notes.html) 245
- Figure 65. *Simulation: a hint to an Interface under creation*, 2018, modeling clay on paper, variable dimensions. Photo: author. 246
- Figure 66. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: the water and the tank*, 2018, silicone, wood, glass, clay, wall paint, varnish, 106 x 35 x 35 cm. Photo: author. 247
- Figure 67. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: the water and the tank (detail)*, 2018, silicone, wood, glass, clay, wall paint, varnish, 106 x 35 x 35 cm. Photo: author. 247
- Figure 68. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: dripping and leakage*, 2018, wood, metal, translucent plastic sheet, glue, ceramic holder, screws, bulb, lighting electrical accessories, 110 x 25 x 80 cm. Photo: author. 248

- Figure 69. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: the ruins and the frozen puddle*, 2018, silicone, metal paint, rock, roof tile, metal, wood, metal wire, indoor paint, variable dimensions. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 249
- Figure 70. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: post-play happy socks*, 2018, clay, acrylic paint, varnish, marble, metal, 80 x 73 x 20 cm. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 250
- Figure 71. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Wormholes & Space Cashews*, 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, plaster, spray paint, 90 x 90 x 100 cm. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 251
- Figure 72. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Wormholes & Space Cashews* (detail), 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, plaster, spray paint, 90 x 90 x 100 cm. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 251
- Figure 73. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Space Skins*, 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, plaster, spray paint, 101 x 120 x 22 cm. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 252
- Figure 74. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Space Skins* (detail), 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, plaster, spray paint, 101 x 120 x 22 cm. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 253
- Figure 75. Brian Tomasik, *Eternalist block universe (with only 2 spatial dimensions)*. Reducing Suffering. Source: <https://reducing-suffering.org/eternalism-and-its-ethical-implications/> \_\_\_\_\_ 254
- Figure 76. Bradley Dowden, *McTaggart's A series and B series*. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP). Source: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/time/#H12> \_\_\_\_\_ 254
- Figure 77. Bradley Dowden, *Time continuous discrete*. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP). Source: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/time/#H12> \_\_\_\_\_ 254
- Figure 78. Horatiu Nastase, *Illustration: Carin Cain*. Physics. Source: <https://physics.aps.org/articles/v2/71> \_\_\_\_\_ 255
- Figure 79. Erik Curiel, *A spacetime diagram of black hole formation*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Source: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spacetime-singularities/> \_\_\_\_\_ 256
- Figure 80. Jonathan Tallant, *Presentism, Eternalism*. Nottingham Contemporary. Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author. \_\_\_\_ 256
- Figure 81. Jonathan Tallant, *Growing block, Moving spotlight*. Nottingham Contemporary. Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author. \_\_\_\_\_ 257
- Figure 82. Jonathan Tallant, *Shrinking tree*. Nottingham Contemporary. Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author. \_\_\_\_ 257
- Figure 83. Rajaa Paixão, *Cashews trial*, 2019, silicone, acrylic, variable dimensions. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 258
- Figure 84. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Eyelids* sketch, 2019. \_\_\_\_\_ 258
- Figure 85. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Eyelids*, 2019-2020, work in progress documentation, resin plaster, stucco, paint, film, glue, chicken wire, paper mache, metal, electrical accessories. Photos: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 259
- Figure 86. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Eyelids*, 2019-2020, work in progress documentation, resin plaster, stucco, paint, film, glue, chicken wire, paper mache, metal, electrical accessories. Photos: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 259

- Figure 87. Rajaa Paixão, *TTS: Refractions* sketch, 2019-2020. \_\_\_\_\_ 260
- Figure 88. Rajaa Paixão, *TTS: Refractions*, work in progress documentation, 2019-2020, sewn fabric, metal. Photos: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 260
- Figure 89. Rajaa Paixão, *TTS: Masks* sketch, work in progress documentation, 2019-2020, sewn velvet, nude wood frame box. Photos: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 260
- Figure 90. Rajaa Paixão, *out of this world*, 2020, watercolour on 135gsm drawing paper, 29.7 x 21 cm. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 261
- Figure 91. Portrait of Helen Frankenthaler by Gordon Parks. *Portrait of American abstract painter Helen Frankenthaler in her studio, surrounded by her paintings, New York, New York, circa 1957. She wears a pink shirt and a white skirt.* LIFE Cover Store. Source: <https://lifephotostore.com/featured/1-portrait-of-helen-frankenthaler-gordon-parks.html?product=poster> \_\_\_\_\_ 262
- Figure 92. Rajaa Paixão, *Legged*, 2019, acrylic, watercolour, and ink on canvas, 100 x 80 x 1.5 cm. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 263
- Figure 93. Rajaa Paixão, *Plié Chassé Jeté*, 2023, watercolour and ink on drawing paper, 21 x 29,7 cm. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 263
- Figure 94. Rajaa Paixão, *baleia do sol*, 2020, digital painting Giclée print on archival paper, 29.7 x 21 cm, from the *Still Sea* series, edition of 5. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 264
- Figure 95. *Helen Frankenthaler in her New York studio, 1975* Photo: © Alexander Liberman, Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles © J. Paul Getty Trust Artwork © 2016 Helen Frankenthaler / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Waqas Wajahat. Source: <https://waqaswajahat.com/artists/40-helen-frankenthaler/overview/> \_\_\_\_\_ 265
- Figure 96. Phyllida Barlow. *Crowded house... Folly continues inside the British Pavilion.* Photograph: Ruth Clark/© British Council. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/may/09/phyllida-barlow-review-venice-biennale-british-pavilion-sculpture> \_\_\_\_\_ 265
- Figure 97. Nairy Baghramian. *Misfits M*, 2021. Marian Goodman. Source: <https://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/449-nairy-baghramian-misfits/> 266
- Figure 98. Installation view of Jesse Darling's works at the Turner Prize 2023, Towner Eastbourne. Foreground: *Corpus (Fortress)*, 2022, Concrete, rebar, wood, polystyrene, steel cable, barbed wire, bistro curtain, 317 x 212 x 45 cm. Courtesy the artist and Arcadia Missa. Background: sculptures from the series *Come On England*, 2023, pedestrian barriers, welded steel, tea towels, wheels, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist, Arcadia Missa, Galerie Molitor, and Sultana. Photo: Angus Mill. ArtReview. Source: <https://artreview.com/turner-prize-2023-review-coming-out-the-other-end/> \_\_\_\_\_ 266
- Figure 99. Carlos Bunga. *Museo Helga de Alvear* [[@museohelgadealvear](https://www.instagram.com/p/B-j-1fTDauG/)]. (2024, January 27). † *El pasado jueves, el artista portugués realizó una performance creada ex profeso para el Museo con el título 'Desplazar* [Instagram video]. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-j-1fTDauG/>. Screenshot by author. \_\_\_\_\_ 267

- Figure 100. Sheila Hicks. Eventbrite. Source: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sheila-hicks-exhibition-private-visit-at-beaubourg-by-her-daughter-members-only-tickets-43718549358> 267
- Figure 101. Sandra Mujinga. *Ghosting* (2019). Installation view of “Witch Hunt,” *Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, 2020*. Courtesy the artist, Croy Nielsen, Vienna, and *The Approach, London*. Artnet. Source: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/artist-sandra-mujinga-venice-2094912> 268
- Figure 102. *Memory of Water*, 2021, wooden boat, red wool, collection at Towada Art Center, Aomori, Japan, photos Kuniya Oyamada. Chiharu Shiota. Source: <https://www.chiharu-shiota.com/memory-of-water> 269
- Figure 103. *Eight key projects by Christo and Jeanne Claude*. Dezeen. Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/2020/06/01/christo-jeanne-claude-seven-key-projects-installations-design/> 269
- Figure 104. “Sunset,” 1150 x 500 centimeters. Colossal. Source: <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2021/02/agnes-hansella-macrame/> 270
- Figure 105. Nnenna Okore with “Sheer Audacity,” 2016, Burlap, Installation view. Courtesy Memphis Brooks Museum of Art. Art Ltd Magazine. Source: <https://artltdmag.com/2017/05/artist-qa-nnenna-okore/> 270
- Figure 106. Alexandra Kehayoglou’s Textile Landscapes. DesignerBox. Source: <https://www.designerbox.com/en/blog/article/261/tendance-deco-alexandra-kehayoglou> 271
- Figure 107. Courtesy of the artist and Robischon Gallery, Denver, Colorado, USA The artist thanks all who have sent sounds from all over the world for the making of this piece. Alive !. Source: <https://aliveartclimate.org/index.php/ana-maria-hernando-2/> 271
- Figure 108. Tau Lewis. Stephen Friedman Gallery. Source: <https://www.stephenfriedman.com/artists/79-tau-lewis/> 272
- Figure 109. View of the exhibition “Plug-in” by Joana Vasconcelos. Photo by Bruno Lopes. MAAT — Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology. Source: <https://maat.pt/en/node/3136> 272
- Figure 110. Vanessa Barragão at work on a new creation. Art the Science. Source: <https://artthescience.com/magazine/2019/03/01/creators-vanessa-barragao/> 273
- Figure 111. Cecilia Vicuña, *Truck Quipu* (2010), Con cón, Chile, Still photo from the film, *Kon kon pi* (2010). Cecilia Vicuña. Source: <http://www.ceciliavicuna.com/quipus/pnsaijz9ln6wc6bpwgalqrqn2iqtsp> 273
- Figure 112. Sheila Hicks, “Ligne de vie”, Centre Pompidou, Photo by Philippe Migeat, Courtesy of the artist. Whitewall. Source: <https://whitewall.art/art/sheila-hicks> 274
- Figure 113. Marisa Merz at home with Living Sculpture (1966). Turin, ca. 1966-67. Photo: Renato Rinaldi. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/who-is/who-marisa-merz> 275

- Figure 114. *Ursula von Rydingsvard in her Brooklyn studio, February 2020. Photo: Melissa Saenz Gordon. Art21. Source: <https://art21.org/read/big-question-where-do-vision-and-execution-diverge/>* 275
- Figure 115. Ursula von Rydingsvard. *Bowl with Inner Lip (2011) at the Ingraham Street studio. Photo by Micah Schmidt. Bklynr. Source: <https://www.bklynr.com/ursula-von-rydingsvard-will-be-the-last-artist-in-bushwick/>* 276
- Figure 116. Installation view of *Hyundai Commission: Anicka Yi* at Tate Modern, October 2021. Photo by Will Burrard Lucas. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/hyundai-commission-anicka-yi/exhibition-guide> 276
- Figure 117. *Robert Irwin, Light and Space (Kraftwerk Berlin), 2021. Commissioned by LAS (Light Art Space). © Foto: Timo Ohler. VG Bild-Kunst, 2021. LAS Art Foundation. Source: <https://www.las-art.foundation/programme/robert-irwin>* 277
- Figure 118. Dan Flavin. *Untitled (to the "innovator" of Wheeling Peachblow)* 1966-68, daylight, yellow, and pink florescent light, 8 ft. square across a corner, © Stephen Flavin/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art). Source: <https://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/dan-flavin-retrospective> 277
- Figure 119. *Aftershock, 2021 © James Turrell, Installation view Light & Space at Copenhagen Contemporary, Photo by Florian Holzherr. Copenhagen Contemporary. Source: <https://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/james-turrell/>* 278
- Figure 120. Rajaa Paixão, *TTS: Eyelids*, 2019-2020, work in progress documentation, resin plaster, stucco, paint, glue, chicken wire, paper mache, metal, fabric. Photos: author. 278
- Figure 121. Rajaa Paixão, *TTS: Eyelids*, 2019-2020, work in progress documentation, resin plaster, stucco, paint, glue, chicken wire, paper mache, metal, fabric. Photos: author. 278
- Figure 122. Cullinan Richards, installation shot of *Bitch Magic*, 26 January - 2 March 2024, Alma Pearl, London. Alma Pearl. Source: <https://almapearl.com/exhibitions/10-bitch-magic/> 279
- Figure 123. Cullinan Richards, installation shot of *Cullinan Richards: Retrospective*, 27 September - 2 November 2024, Alma Pearl, London. Alma Pearl. Source: <https://almapearl.com/exhibitions/15-cullinan-richards-retrospective/> 279
- Figure 124. *Joseph Beuys, I Like America and America Likes Me, 1974. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, Germany. Courtesy of SFMoMA. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-joseph-beuys-locked-room-live-coyote>* 280
- Figure 125. *A dog with its leg painted pink walks around, and is part of, the exhibition by French artist Pierre Huyghe at the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, on April 10, 2014. Photo courtesy Oliver Berg /AFP/Getty Images. Artnet. Source: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world-archives/exhibiting-live-animal-art-1097795>* 280

- Figure 126. *Marina Abramović and Ulay reunite at New York's MoMA for the former's The Artist is Present, 2010.* Courtesy: Youtube; MoMA, New York. Frieze. Source: <https://www.frieze.com/article/former-lovers-marina-abramovic-and-ulya-pen-memoir-together> 281
- Figure 127. *Ulay and Marina approach each other at the end of their trek.* Photograph: [publicdelivery.org](http://publicdelivery.org). The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/apr/25/marina-abramovic-ulya-walk-the-great-wall-of-china> 281
- Figure 128. José Teixeira. *Gravidade (Gravity)*, 12 December 2017 - 11 February 2018, Great War room, Lisbon Military Museum. Exhibition Publication. Repositório da Universidade de Lisboa. Source: <https://repositorio.ul.pt/handle/10451/45144> 282
- Figure 129. *Convento das Inglesinhas* space at ISEG Lisbon School of Economics and Management, February 2024. Image showing the inclined lower slope, with the curved wall of the upper slope on the left. Photo: author. 282
- Figure 130. Simulation of the dimensions of the proposed exhibition space, at the *Convento das Inglesinhas* space at ISEG Lisbon School of Economics and Management, February 2024. Photo: author. 283
- Figure 131. Richard Giblett. *Mycelium Rhizome, 2009. Pencil on paper. 120 x 240 cm. POA. Represented by Galerie Dusseldorf.* Galerie Dusseldorf. Source: [https://www.galeriedusseldorf.com.au/GDArtists/Giblett/RG2006\\_09/RGiblettRecentWk2006\\_09/source/21.mycelium\\_rhizome\\_lo\\_res.html](https://www.galeriedusseldorf.com.au/GDArtists/Giblett/RG2006_09/RGiblettRecentWk2006_09/source/21.mycelium_rhizome_lo_res.html) 283
- Figure 132. *The characteristics of sympodial rhizome bamboos and the estimation of aged culms.* Source: McClure (1966). ResearchGate. Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310651309\\_Clumps\\_and\\_Culms\\_Establishment\\_of\\_Gigantochloa\\_albociliata\\_and\\_Cephalostachyum\\_pergracile\\_after\\_Gregarious\\_Flowering\\_in\\_the\\_Mixed\\_Deciduous\\_Forest\\_at\\_Mae\\_Klong\\_Watershed\\_Research\\_Station/figures](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310651309_Clumps_and_Culms_Establishment_of_Gigantochloa_albociliata_and_Cephalostachyum_pergracile_after_Gregarious_Flowering_in_the_Mixed_Deciduous_Forest_at_Mae_Klong_Watershed_Research_Station/figures) 284
- Figure 133. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope*, March 2024, pencil and pen sketch. Photo: author. 284
- Figure 134. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope*, March 2024, digital sketch. Photo: author. 285
- Figure 135. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope*, March 2024, proposed materials. Photos: various. 285
- Figure 136. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope*, March 2024, digital simulation in-situ. Photo: author. 285
- Figure 137. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope*, March 2024, felt-tip pen, pencil and pen sketch. Photo: author. 286
- Figure 138. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope*, March 2024, digital sketch. Photo: author. 286
- Figure 139. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope*, March 2024, proposed materials. Photos: various. 286
- Figure 140. Rajaa Paixão, *Stroll Scroll* digital sketch, April 2024. Photo: author. 287
- Figure 141. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope* and *Stroll Scroll*, March 2024, digital simulation in-situ. Photo: author. 287

- Figure 142. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope* work in progress detail, April 2024. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 287
- Figure 143. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope* work in progress detail, April 2024. Photo: author. \_\_\_\_\_ 288
- Figure 144. Installation view of Victoria Adam's work in the RA Schools Show, 2015. Royal Academy. Source: <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/victoria-adam> \_\_\_\_\_ 288
- Figure 145. *Untitled* by Andra Ursuța. Slime-green resin cast. Greater London Authority. Source: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/arts-and-culture/current-culture-projects/fourth-plinth-traffic-square/fourth-plinth-commissions/untitled-andra-ursuta> \_\_\_\_\_ 289
- Figure 146. Lourdes Castro, *Ombre portée de René Bertholo*, 1968. Silkscreen on Plexiglas. Artnet. Source: [http://www.artnet.com/artists/lourdes-castro/ombre-report%C3%A9e-de-ren%C3%A9-bertholo-2-works-CXLMkzntnN\\_BnJw\\_jEmYQ2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/lourdes-castro/ombre-report%C3%A9e-de-ren%C3%A9-bertholo-2-works-CXLMkzntnN_BnJw_jEmYQ2) \_\_\_\_\_ 290
- Figure 147. Louise Bourgeois, *Spider*, 1997, steel, tapestry, wood, glass, fabric, rubber, silver, gold and bone. Private collection, courtesy Cheim & Read, New York © Louise Bourgeois Photo: Rafael Lobato. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/louise-bourgeois/room-guide/louise-bourgeois-room-8> \_\_\_\_\_ 291
- Figure 148. Marcel Duchamp, *Fresh Widow*, 1920, replica 1964. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fresh-widow-t07282> \_\_\_\_\_ 292
- Figure 149. *The interlude of surface*. Inês Norton. Source: <https://inesnorton.com/the-interlude-of-surface/> \_\_\_\_\_ 292
- Figure 150. Lee Ufan, (Installation View), via Bria Cole for Art Observed. Art Observed. Source: <http://artobserved.com/2015/06/new-york-lee-ufan-at-pace-gallery-through-june-27th-2015/> \_\_\_\_\_ 293
- Figure 151. *untitled*, 1965, Red fluorescent Plexiglas and stainless steel, 20 x 48 x 34 inches (50.8 x 122 x 86.4 cm), Art © Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. David Zwirner. Source: [https://dzprocdn.azureedge.net/-/media/davidzwirner/exhibitions/2013/donald-judd/donald-judd-david-zwirner-london-2013-press-release\\_letter\\_7-16.pdf?rev=325002848d73497babcf8523eb83bf3a](https://dzprocdn.azureedge.net/-/media/davidzwirner/exhibitions/2013/donald-judd/donald-judd-david-zwirner-london-2013-press-release_letter_7-16.pdf?rev=325002848d73497babcf8523eb83bf3a) \_\_\_\_\_ 294
- Figure 152. *Bryan Christie Design (left); Alfred T. Kamajian (a-d)*. MIT Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research. Source: [https://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/PDF/multiverse\\_sciam.pdf](https://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/PDF/multiverse_sciam.pdf) \_\_\_\_\_ 295
- Figure 153. Mariko Mori, *Radiant Being VI*, 2019, UV cured pigment, Dibond and aluminium, edition of 5 + 2AP, 68 x 68 x 3 inches, 172.72 x 172.72 x 7.62 cm, The work is accompanied by a signed certificate of authenticity, Courtesy Sean Kelly. Ocula. Source: <https://ocula.com/artists/mariko-mori/> \_\_\_\_\_ 296
- Figure 154. *Mariko Mori, Madama Butterfly*. Scenography Today. Source: <https://www.scenographytoday.com/mariko-mori-madama-butterfly/> \_\_\_\_\_ 296

- Figure 155. Mariko Mori, *Cyclic II*, 2014, aluminum, paint and lacquer, 205.4 x 215.4 x 205.4 cm, 80 7/8 x 84 13/16 x 80 7/8 in., Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York, © Photo : Jason Wyche, New York © Mariko Mori © ADAGP, Paris. AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions. Source: <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/artiste/mariko-mori/> 297
- Figure 156. Mariko Mori, *Spirifer II*, 2017-2018, Dichroic coated acrylic, Corian base sculpture: 37 1/4 x 23 5/8 x 20 5/16 inches (94.6 x 60 x 51.6 cm), base height: 13 5/8 inches (34.6 cm), base diameter: 11 15/16 inches (30.3 cm), overall: 50 7/8 x 23 5/8 x 20 5/16 inches (129.2 x 60 x 51.6 cm), edition of 8 with 2 APs. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/mariko-mori-spirifer-ii> 298
- Figure 157. *Alfred T. Kamajian*. MIT Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research. Source: [https://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/PDF/multiverse\\_sciam.pdf](https://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/PDF/multiverse_sciam.pdf) 299
- Figure 158. French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel with some of his works in Hong Kong, May 2014. The sculptures he is designing for Versailles have a similar pearl-strand shape. ALEX HOFFORD/epa/Corbis. Smithsonian Magazine. Source: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/first-new-permanent-sculpture-grace-versailles-300-years-180952210/> 300
- Figure 159. Leo Villareal, *Multiverse*, 2008, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Leo Villareal. Source: <http://villareal.net/multiverse-2008-national-gallery-of-art-dc> 300
- Figure 160. Marcel Duchamp, *Door: 11, rue Larrey*, 1927. Source: [https://www.toutfait.com/issues/volume2/issue\\_5/articles/gerrard/popup\\_12.html](https://www.toutfait.com/issues/volume2/issue_5/articles/gerrard/popup_12.html) 301
- Figure 161. L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped, 1961–2021. Photo: Wolfgang Volz. Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Source: <https://christojeanneclaude.net/artworks/realized-projects/> 302
- Figure 162. Installation view. Artwork © Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation. Photo: Thomas Lannes. Gagosian. Source: <https://gagosian.com/exhibitions/2022/christo-early-works-1958-1963/> 303
- Figure 163. Joana Vasconcelos. *Urinals*, 2005, ceramic urinals, handmade cotton crochet, 40 x 58 x 30 cm unique. Casa Triângulo. Source: <https://www.casatriangulo.com/artists/64-joana-vasconcelos/works/11299-joana-vasconcelos-urinals-2005/> 303
- Figure 164. Joana Vasconcelos. The Dior Fall/Winter 2023 finale. Photo Adrien Dirand/courtesy Dior. ARTnews. Source: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/portuguese-artist-joana-vasconcelos-transforms-diors-paris-fashion-week-show-into-a-surrealist-landscape-1234659896/> 304
- Figure 165. Cecília Costa. *Closer*. Dimension: 40 x 70 x 130cm. Medium: Madeira / Wood. Nominated by: Verónica de Mello. Sovereign Art Foundation. Source: <https://www.sovereignartfoundation.com/portuguese-art-prize-2022/> 304

- Figure 166. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled Works*, 1989–2008. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Source: <https://www.guggenheim.org/audio/track/doris-salcedo-untitled-works-1989-2008> 305
- Figure 167. Rajaa Paixão, *Pirilampo walk* installation view, 2018. Photo: author. 305
- Figure 168. Rajaa Paixão, *Pirilampo walk* installation view, 2018. Photo: author. 306
- Figure 169. Rajaa Paixão, *Pirilampo walk* installation view, 2018. Photo: author. 306
- Figure 170. *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, 1999 by Cornelia Parker at Tate Britain. Photograph: Amer Ghazzal/Rex/Shutterstock. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/may/22/cornelia-parker-tate-britain-london-review> 307
- Figure 171. *Perpetual Canon*, 2004 by Cornelia Parker: 60 flattened instruments once used by a brass band. Photograph: Guy Bell/Rex/Shutterstock. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/may/22/cornelia-parker-tate-britain-london-review> 308
- Figure 172. Phyllida Barlow's *dock* at Tate Britain Credit: Eddie Mulholland/Telegraph. The Telegraph. Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/artists/sculptor-phyllida-barlow-gets-cbe-for-services-to-art/> 308
- Figure 173. Royal Academy of Arts, *In the studio with Phyllida Barlow*. Image source: [https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/phyllida-barlow?fbclid=IwAR21oDd8VD659jIm1o9CKCiXDomoIgmlyUupa6noXMd6tHcuEB2PBwgu8iM&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=Exh%20%20PhyllidaBarlow%20%20PhyllidaBarlowTrailer%20%20ORGANIC%20%20%20INT&utm\\_content=ORGANIC&utm\\_term=20190213#video](https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/phyllida-barlow?fbclid=IwAR21oDd8VD659jIm1o9CKCiXDomoIgmlyUupa6noXMd6tHcuEB2PBwgu8iM&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Exh%20%20PhyllidaBarlow%20%20PhyllidaBarlowTrailer%20%20ORGANIC%20%20%20INT&utm_content=ORGANIC&utm_term=20190213#video). Screenshot by author. 309
- Figure 174. Louise Bourgeois. 64mag. Source: [https://www.instagram.com/64mag/reel/C\\_ugg25o5uO/](https://www.instagram.com/64mag/reel/C_ugg25o5uO/). Screenshots by author. 309
- Figure 175. Gerhard Richter painting in his studio, Düsseldorf. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/primer/gerhard-richter?fbclid=IwAR3Anx8zPyMSycQzxglbWTk091r35MbbBJZpbKhlHuGUcpGvhmS404dOEo#credits> 310
- Figure 176. Ockers, R. [@roy.ockers]. (2022, April 26). [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from [https://www.instagram.com/p/Cc0xpnaMp6e/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_linkts](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cc0xpnaMp6e/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_linkts) 310
- Figure 177. Writings by Smithson, © Holt/Smithson Foundation, licensed by VAGA at ARS, New York. Holt/Smithson Foundation. Source: <https://holtsmithsonfoundation.org/writings-by-smithson> 311
- Figure 178. Installation view of *Tragodia*, an exhibition of work by Tai Shani at Temple Bar Gallery. Photograph: Kasia Kaminska. The Irish Times. Source: <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/art-and-design/visual-art/tai-shani-s-tragod%C3%ADa-tells-of-life-death-and-intense-emotional-bonds-1.4128863> 311

- Figure 179. Tai Shani, *DC Semiramis*, 2018 Glasgow, Courtesy the artist © Keith Hunter. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/turner-contemporary/exhibition/turner-prize-2019/tai-shani> \_\_\_\_\_ 312
- Figure 180. ‘One of those acrobat hay rakes that whirl like sunflowers in the early surrealism of Joan Miró’: a detail from Mike Nelson’s *The Asset Strippers* at Tate Britain. Photograph: Matt Greenwood © Tate. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/mar/24/mike-nelson-the-asset-strippers-review-tate-britain-duveen> \_\_\_\_\_ 312
- Figure 181. Mike Nelson, *Studio apparatus for Kunsthalle Münster*, 2014, Installation view: Kunsthalle Münster, November 1, 2014 - February 22, 2015. 303 Gallery. Source: <https://www.303gallery.com/public-exhibitions/mike-nelson2?view=slider> \_\_\_\_\_ 313
- Figure 182. Rafał Zajko, ‘*Song to the Siren*’, 2022, installation view, photography by Ben Deakin. Cooke Latham Gallery. Source: [https://www.cookelathamgallery.com/exhibitions/25/installation\\_shots/image462/](https://www.cookelathamgallery.com/exhibitions/25/installation_shots/image462/) \_\_\_\_\_ 313
- Figure 183. Tatiana Trouvé, (2018). *Les Indéfinis* [Plexiglas, pierre, bois, métal, patine, peinture, laiton/ Plexiglass, stone, wood, steel, patina, paint, brass]. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/tatiana-trouve-les-indefinis-6> \_\_\_\_\_ 314
- Figure 184. Tatiana Trouvé, *Vue de l’exposition A Quiet Life* à la galerie Kamel Mennour, Paris, 2018 © Slash-Paris, 2018. Slash. Source: <https://slash-paris.com/articles/tatiana-trouve-galerie-kamel-mennour> \_\_\_\_\_ 314
- Figure 185. Philippe Parreno. *Time Coloured Space* (installation view). Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, Portugal, 2017. Photo: Andrea Rosseti. 1301SW. Source: <https://www.1301sw.com/artist/phillipe-parreno/> \_\_\_\_\_ 315
- Figure 186. *After A Life Ahead*, 2017, ice rink concrete floor; sand, clay, phreatic water; bacteria, algae, bee, chimera peacock; aquarium, black switchable glass, conus textile; incubator, human cancer cells; genetic algorithm; augmented reality; automated ceiling structure; rain; ammoniac; logic game. Photo: Ola Rindal. Courtesy the artist; Chantal Crousel, Paris; Marian Goodman, New York & Paris; Esther Schipper, Berlin; and Hauser & Wirth, London. ArtReview. Source: <https://artreview.com/ar-october-2018-feature-pierre-huyghe/> \_\_\_\_\_ 315
- Figure 187. Obrist, H. U. [@hansulrichobrist]. (2020, April 7). Pierre Huyghe - Do It Number 25 – Find a situation. – Write a time score (a scenario). – Select the players [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from [https://www.instagram.com/p/B-rLF2SAHYg/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/B-rLF2SAHYg/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link) \_\_\_\_\_ 316
- Figure 188. Tanner Mothershead. Create! Magazine. Source: <https://createmagazine.com/read/tanner-mothershead> \_\_\_\_\_ 317
- Figure 189. *The Colours of Infinity* Documentary, 1995. Presented and written by Arthur C. Clarke, directed and written by Nigel Lesmoir-Gordon. Screenbound International Pictures, United Kingdom. Streamed on Netflix, 2023. Screenshot by author. \_\_\_\_\_ 318

- Figure 190. Laure Prouvost, *Breathing Sun*, 2019, fabric, 2 tapestries, metal man with mirror, glass objects, lights. carlier | gebauer. Source: [https://www.carliergebauer.com/artists/laure\\_prouvost](https://www.carliergebauer.com/artists/laure_prouvost) 318
- Figure 191. Alicja Kwade, *Die Gesamtheit aller Orte*, 2012, metal plates, metal pipes, metal mesh, perforated metal, metal rails, steel plates, steel bar, copper tubes, brass rings, brass rods, euro coins, wood mouldings, wood panels, glass panels, mirrors, door, bricks, bicycles, door, window, lacquer, rust, 54 pieces, dimensions variable. Photo: Roman März. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/tatiana-trouvelles-indefinis-6> 319
- Figure 192. Joseph Beuys, *We are the Revolution*, 2010-2011, Courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery. ARTtimeNY. Source: <http://www.artimemy.com/?tag=social-sculpture> 319
- Figure 193. Adriano Amaral | *Untitled*, 2015, Installation view at De Ateliers, Amsterdam. Nuno Centeno. Source: <http://www.nunocenteno.com/artists/adriano-amaral/> 320
- Figure 194. Installation shots of Nobuko Tsuchiya at Leeds Art Gallery for Yorkshire Sculpture International. Courtesy Leeds Art Gallery. Photography Simon Warner. Yorkshire Sculpture International. Source: <https://yorkshiresculpture.org/artists/nobuko-tsuchiya/> 320
- Figure 195. Teresa Solar. La Biennale di Venezia. Source: <https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2022/milk-dreams/teresa-solar> 321
- Figure 196. The body as medium. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Source: [https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/marina\\_planes.html](https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/marina_planes.html). Screenshot by author. 321
- Figure 197. Eva Fàbregas. *Devouring lovers creates a sensuous spatial expression*. Image: Jacopo Laforgia. Stir. Source: <https://www.stirworld.com/see-features-sculpting-sensations-devouring-lovers-by-eva-fabregas> 322
- Figure 198. Adriano Costa | *April*, 2013, installation view at Sadie Coles HQ, London, England. Nuno Centeno. Source: <http://www.nunocenteno.com/artists/adriano-costa/> 322
- Figure 199. Rachel Whiteread © 2017 ART.ZIP. ART.ZIP. Source: <http://www.artzip.org/rachel-whiteread> 323
- Figure 200. Rachel Whiteread. *I Lobo You*. Source: <https://www.iloboyou.com/architectural-design-rachel-whiteread/> 323
- Figure 201. Maria Trabulo, *Fragile Stones*, 2023. @ Galeria Presença, Porto © Carlos Campos. Umbigo. Source: <https://umbigomagazine.com/en/blog/2023/05/24/pedras-frageis-de-raqqa-por-maria-trabulo-na-galeria-presenca/> 324
- Figure 202. Marguerite Humeau, *The Holder of Wasp Venom*, 2023. Natural beeswax, microcrystalline wax, pigments, 150-year-old walnut (cause of death: unknown), handblown glass and wasp venom. Edition of 3. 190 x 320 x 290 cm | 74 13/16 x 126 x 114 3/16 in. White Cube. Source: <https://www.whitecube.com/artworks/the-holder-of-wasp-venom?edition> 324

- Figure 203. Elena Damiani. *Fading field N 13*. 2019. Digital print on silk chiffon, wood structure, black matte paint on wall, variable dimensions. Installation view, As the dust unsettles, Revolver Galeria, Buenos Aires, 2019. Image courtesy Revolver Galeria. Photo: Catalina Romero. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Source: <https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/469> 325
- Figure 204. Klára Hosnedlová, *GROWTH*, Kunsthalle Basel, 2024, exhibition view (with performers), photo: Zdeněk Porcal – Studio Flusser / Kunsthalle Basel. Kunsthalle Basel. Source: <https://www.kunsthallebasel.ch/en/exhibition/klara-hosnedlova-2/> 325
- Figure 205. Esther Kläs, installation view „*Girare con te*“, Museo Marino Marini, Firenze, Italy, 2014. Kadel Willborn. Source: <https://www.kadel-willborn.de/en/data/artists/139/esther-klaes.html> 326
- Figure 206. Anselm Kiefer in the new installation for his retrospective at the Pompidou Center in Paris. Credit...Atelier Anselm Kiefer, 2015. The New York Times. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/31/arts/design/anselm-kiefer-and-his-hallmarks-have-a-moment.html> 326
- Figure 207. Anselm Kiefer, *Winterreise*, 2015-2020 – Private collection. Photo: Georges Poncet. Voorlinden. Source: <https://www.voorlinden.nl/exhibition/anselm-kiefer/?lang=en> 327
- Figure 208. Anselm Kiefer, *The Seven Heavenly Palaces* 2004-2015. Permanent exhibition from 24 September 2004 at Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan. Pirelli HangarBicocca. Source: <https://pirellihangarbicocca.org/en/anselm-kiefer/> 327
- Figure 209. Installation view of Mike Nelson, *Triple Bluff Canyon (the woodshed)*, 2004. Various materials. M25, 2023. Found tyres. Photo: Matt Greenwood. Courtesy the artist and the Hayward Gallery. 303 Gallery. Source: <https://www.303gallery.com/artists/mike-nelson/selected-works?view=slider> 328
- Figure 210. Thomas Hirschhorn. *Collapse*. 2018. Mixed media sculpture. Collection of the artist. Production support: The Institute of Art, Okutama. Courtesy: Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Installation view “Catastrophe and the Power of Art,” Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2018. Photo: Kioku Keizo. Mori Art Museum. Source: <https://www.mori.art.museum/en/news/2018/10/1692/> 328
- Figure 211. Tadashi Kawamata fills Lisbon’s MAAT with plastic to warn about ocean debris. Dezeen. Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/10/29/tadashi-kawamata-lisbon-maat-plastic-ocean-over-flow-installation/> 329
- Figure 212. Mire Lee, *Endless House: Holes and Drips*, 2022, Multiple ceramic sculptures on a scaffold, lithium carbonate and iron oxide glaze liquid, pump, motor and other mixed media, scaffold scale 1.8 x 2 x 4 m, dimension variable. Exhibition: The Milk of Dreams, The Arsenale, Venice Biennale 2022, Apr 23 – Nov 27, 2022. With the support of Mondriaan Fund, Korean Arts Management Service, Samsung Foundation of Culture / Special thanks to Sundaymorning@ekwc, Courtesy of the artist and Leeum Museum of Art. Mire Lee. Source: <http://www.mirelee.com/en/works/endless-house-holes-and-drips> 330

- Figure 213. Kader Atia. *The Museum of Emotion*. Installation view. Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London, United Kingdom. February 13 – May 6, 2019. Photo by Thierry Bal. Lehmann Maupin. Source: <https://www.lehmannmaupin.com/artists/kader-attia> 331
- Figure 214. Mandy El-Sayegh, “*Cite Your Sources*”. Installation view at Chisenhale Gallery, 2019. Commissioned and produced by Chisenhale Gallery, London. Photography by Andy Keate. Courtesy of the artist. Flash Art. Source: <https://flash--art.com/2019/05/sensible-ecstasy-in-the-works-of-mandy-el-sayegh/> 331
- Figure 215. Claire Barclay, *Suspect Collapse*, 2017. Rubber and steel. Dimensions TBC. Stephen Friedman Gallery. Source: <https://www.stephenfriedman.com/content/feature/1790/detail/artworks10871/> 332
- Figure 216. Cyprien Gaillard. ‘*Cenotaph to 12 Riverford Road, Pollockshaws, Glasgow*’, 2008, reconstituted concrete, installation view, Hayward Gallery, London. MAP Magazine. Source: <https://mapmagazine.co.uk/cyprien-gaillard-recycling-th> 333
- Figure 217. Ângela Ferreira. Exhibition view of *Realistic Manifesto*, 2022. NF/ Nieves Fernández. Source: <https://nfgaleria.com/en/exposicion/angela-ferreira-realistic-manifesto-gabos-fundamental-principles-of-constructivist-practice/> 334
- Figure 218. Ângela Ferreira, *A Tendency to Forget*, 2015. Exhibition view at Museu Coleção Berardo-Arte Moderna e Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo © Jorge Silva. PIN–UP. Source: <https://archive.pinupmagazine.org/articles/interview-angela-ferreira-modern-architecture-colonialism#24> 334
- Figure 219. Fernanda Fragateiro, exhibition view of “*Em bruto: relações comoventes*” at Fundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia, León (ES), 2022. Irène Laub. Source: <https://irenelaubgallery.com/artistes/fernanda-fragateiro/> 335
- Figure 220. Ian Kiaer. Installation View. Alison Jacques. Source: <https://alisonjacques.com/artists/ian-kiaer> 335
- Figure 221. Jeff Koons. *Tulips*, 1995–2004, High chromium stainless steel with transparent color coating, 203 x 460 x 520 cm. Guggenheim Bilbao. Source: <https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/the-collection/works/tulips> 336
- Figure 222. Lubaina Himid. *Naming the Money*, 2004. Photograph: Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/sep/24/lubaina-himid-turner-prize-2017-interview> 336
- Figure 223. Nina Canell, *Brief Syllable (Heavy)*, 2016, Acrylic, subterranean high voltage cable, concrete, 16.5 x 16.5 x 111cm. Art Viewer. Source: <https://artviewer.org/nina-canell-at-leo-xu-projects/> 337
- Figure 224. Nina Canell. *Perpetuum Mobile (25 kg)*, 2009, basin, water, cement, and ultrasound. Photo by Robin Watkins. All images courtesy of the artist, Daniel Marzona, Mother’s Tankstation, and Galerie Barbara Wien. BOMB Magazine. Source: <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/nina-canell/> 337

- Figure 225. Jesse Darling, *Crevé*, exhibition view, Triangle France - Astérides, Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille, 2019. Photo: Aurélien Mole. Triangle France. Source: <http://trianglefrance.org/en/exhibitions/jesse-darling/> 338
- Figure 226. Installation views: *Art Now: Jesse Darling: The Ballad of Saint Jerome* 2018 © Jesse d. Courtesy the artist and Arcadia Missa. © Tate photography (Matt Greenwood). Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/jesse-darling> 339
- Figure 227. Sarah Sze, *Love Song*, 2024. Inkjet prints on paper mounted on tyvek, string, clamps, aluminum, and mixed media. Dimensions variable. Kevin Todora. Nasher Sculpture Center. Source: <https://www.nashersculpturecenter.org/art/exhibitions/exhibition/id/2039/sarah-sze#!/info/exhibition/4548/9527> 339
- Figure 228. Kenichi Kanazawa. *tedgioia/Twitter*. Interesting Engineering. Source: <https://interestingengineering.com/culture/japanese-artist-shapes-sound-through-sand-creating-masterpieces> 340
- Figure 229. Keynote lecturer neurobiologist Semir Zeki speaking on Mathematical Beauty at the MAAT – Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology's *International Conference on Art and Health*, at the EDP Headquarters in Lisbon, on 10 November, 2023. Photo: author. 340
- Figure 230. Keynote lecturer neurobiologist Semir Zeki speaking on Mathematical Beauty at the MAAT – Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology's *International Conference on Art and Health*, at the EDP Headquarters in Lisbon, on 10 November, 2023. Photo: author. 341
- Figure 231. Richard Deacon, *Not Yet Beautiful*, 1994. Welded polycarbonate, 70 x 210 x 120 cm (27½ x 82¾ x 47¼ in). Photography courtesy of L.A. Louver Gallery, Venice, CA, USA. Parasol unit. Source: <https://parasol-unit.org/whats-on/the-strangeness-of-beauty-issue-10-richard-deacon/> 341
- Figure 232. *Artist Tove Storch: "I've never seen a sculpture like this before" | Louisiana Channel*. YouTube. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sPDrK23ueU>. Screenshot by author. 342
- Figure 233. Delcy Morelos. *Agua salada organizada*, 2014. Installation view of two works in the series. Acrylic on jute. 113 7/8 x 3 x 4 3/4 in. (289.2 x 7.5 x 12 cm). Marian Goodman Gallery. Source: <https://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/535-delcy-morelos-el-oscuro-de-abajo/> 342
- Figure 234. *Hunefers' Judgement in the presence of Osiris, Book of the Dead of Hunefers, 19th Dynasty, New Kingdom, c. 1275 B.C.E., papyrus, Thebes, Egypt (British Museum)*. Khan Academy. Source: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/egypt-art/beginners-guide-egypt/a/ancient-egyptian-hieroglyphs-overview> 343

- Figure 235. *Image 5 of 11 - NAZCA LINES FIGURE 5*. Machu Travel Peru. Source: <https://www.machutravelperu.com/peru-tours/packages-nazca-lines-machu-picchu> 344
- Figure 236. *mikroman6//Getty Images*. Popular Mechanics. Source: <https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/archaeology/a45304938/new-language-discovered-ruins-ancient-empire/> 344
- Figure 237. Huma Bhabha, 2022. Photograph by Daniel Dorsa. Courtesy of David Zwirner. Art Basel. Source: <https://www.artbasel.com/stories/huma-bhabha-montpellier-moco-sculptures-poughkeepsie-new-york> 345

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## APPENDIX A: ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. Robert Irwin: *All the Rules Will Change*, Apr 07–Sep 05, 2016. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Source: <https://hirshhorn.si.edu/exhibitions/robert-irwin/>

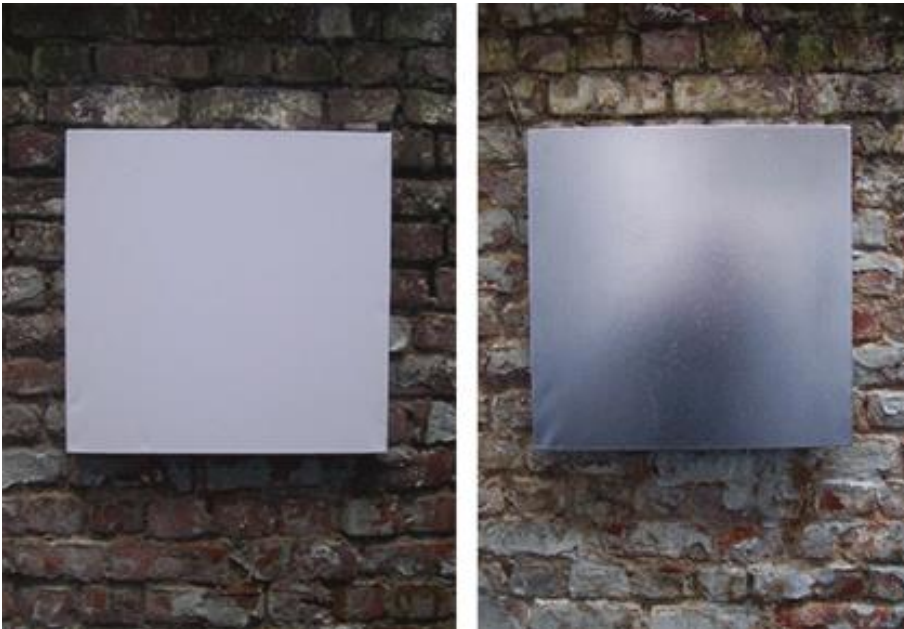


Figure 2. Ada Rajszys, *whe(a)ther / conditional paintings*, 2008, 50X50, 100% cotton stretched canvas, acrylic double primed, outside. Ada Rajszys. Source: <https://adarajszys.com/conditional-painting/>

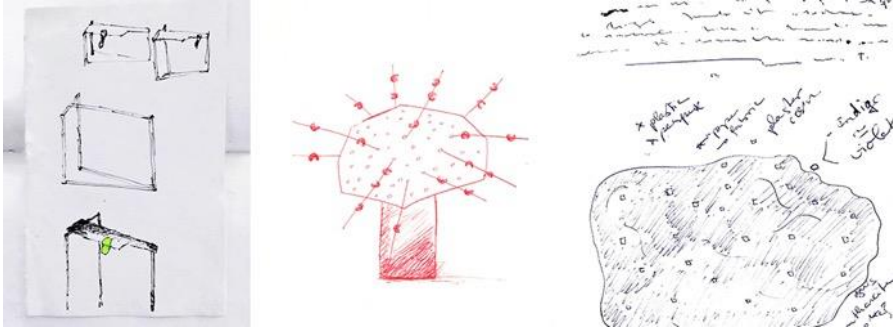


Figure 3. Rajaa Paixão, sketches, 2019. Photos: author.

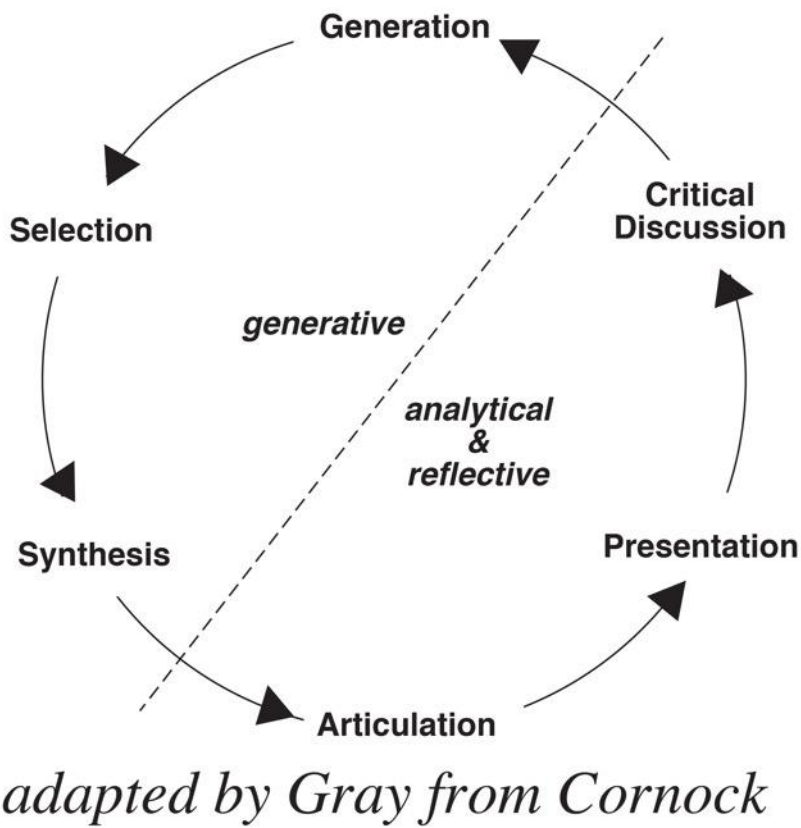


Figure 4. Reprinted from "Research procedures / methodology for artists & designers" by C. Gray & J. Malins, 1993, p. 7. The Centre for Research in Art & Design, Gray's School of Art, Faculty of Design, The Robert Gordon University. Carole Gray. Source: <http://carolegray.net/Papers%20PDFs/epgad.pdf>

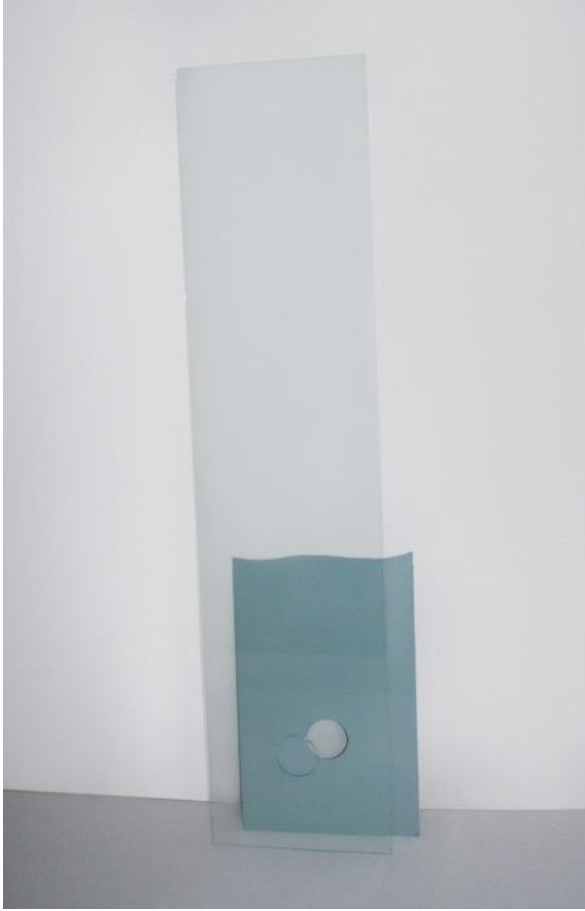


Figure 5. Rajaa Paixão, *Gregor Samsa: Window*, 2014, glass, paint, 165 x 45 x 5 cm, a sculpture imagining the window from the room of cockroach-metamorphosed Gregor Samsa. Photo: author.



Figure 6. Rajaa Paixão, *Toc 1969: Chronos*, 2014, perspex, sand, glue, nails. Photo: author.



Figure 7. Rajaa Paixão, *Toc 1969: Coatlique*, 2014, metal, perspex, sand, glue. Photo: author.



Figure 8. Painting with one hand while holding my son in my other arm at the Mother House Studios, London, June 2017. Photo: Mother House Studios.



Figure 9. Rajaa Paixão, *Left Overs*, *Mother Art Prize* group exhibition installation view, November 2017, 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning Gallery, London. Photo: Mother House Studios.



Figure 10. Rajaa Paixão, *Left Overs*, *Mother Art Prize* group exhibition, Catalogue, November 2017. Photo: author.



Figure 11. Camille Henrot, *3, 2, 1...*, 2021. © ADAGP Camille Henrot. Courtesy of the artist and Kunstgiesserei St. Gallen. Photo: Annik Wetter. e-flux. Source: <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/466643/camille-henrotwet-job/>



Figure 12. Hannah Cooke, *Ada vs Emin*, 2018. Hannah Cooke. Source: <https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/17/ada-vs-emin/>



Figure 13. Tracey Emin, *My Bed*, 1998, Box frame, mattress, linens, pillows and various objects, Overall display dimensions variable. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/emin-my-bed-103662>



Figure 14. Hannah Cooke, *Ada vs Abramović*, 2018. Hannah Cooke. Source: <https://hannahcooke.de/2020/01/18/ada-vs-abramovic/>



Figure 15. Marina Abramović, *The Artist Is Present*, 2010, Performance. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Source: [https://www.moma.org/learn/moma\\_learning/marina-abramovic-marina-abramovic-the-artist-is-present-2010/](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/marina-abramovic-marina-abramovic-the-artist-is-present-2010/)



Figure 16. Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document*, 1973-1979, Generali Foundation | Werner Kaligofsky. Public Media Group of Southern California. Source: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/the-10-most-powerful-artworks-on-motherhood-from-the-20th-century>



Figure 17. Judy Chicago, *The Creation from the Birth Project*, 1984, Modified Aubusson tapestry 42 x 163 inches. Executed by Audrey Cowan Collection of the Museum of Arts and Design, NY; gift of the Robert and Audrey Cowan Family Trust. KCET. Source: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/the-10-most-powerful-artworks-on-motherhood-from-the-20th-century>



Figure 18. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards*, 2014, a sculptural work about an impossible, hypothetical yet actual attempt of a trip, using the power of physics and surrounding forces such as black holes, time and the speed of light. Photo: author.



Figure 19. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards - Travel Machine*, 2014, wood, leather, nails, metal, 192 x 56 x 3 cm.  
Photo: author.



Figure 20. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards - Premature Relativity*, 2014, metal, perspex, mirror, sand, 115 x 90 x 40 cm. Photo: author.

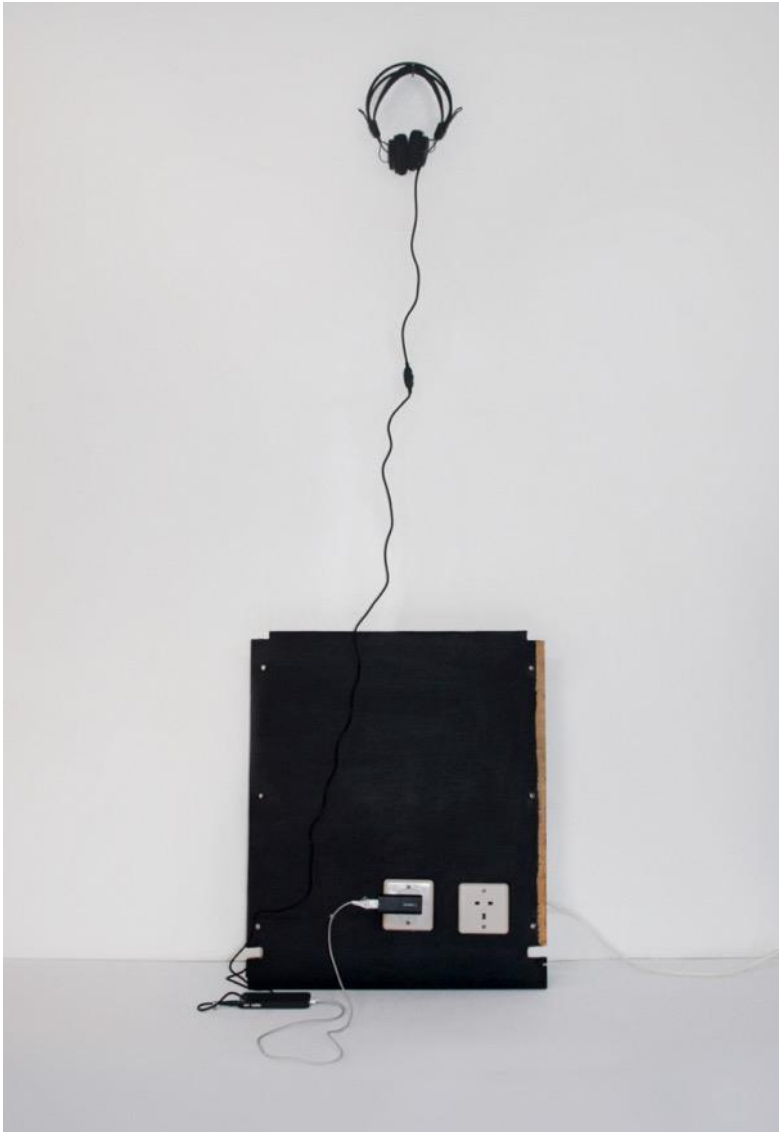


Figure 21. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards - Memoirs of the Twenty-First Century* (2014), 2014, wood, plastic, nail, electronics with audio sound, 165 x 50 x 8 cm. Photo: author.



Figure 22. Rajaa Paixão, *Berlin 78 days backwards - Memoirs of the Twenty-First Century* (2014), 2014, audio sound, 2'59''. SoundCloud. Source: <https://on.soundcloud.com/5CFNN>



Figure 23. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Space a: the real*, 2014, installation view of sculptural work about ubiquity and astral projection. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.



Figure 24. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Space c: the fictitious*, 2014, installation view of a sculptural work about ubiquity and astral projection. The Project Space, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.



Figure 25. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Space b: in-between*, 2014, installation view of the projection of the film *I forgot your name*, part of a sculptural project about ubiquity and astral projection. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.

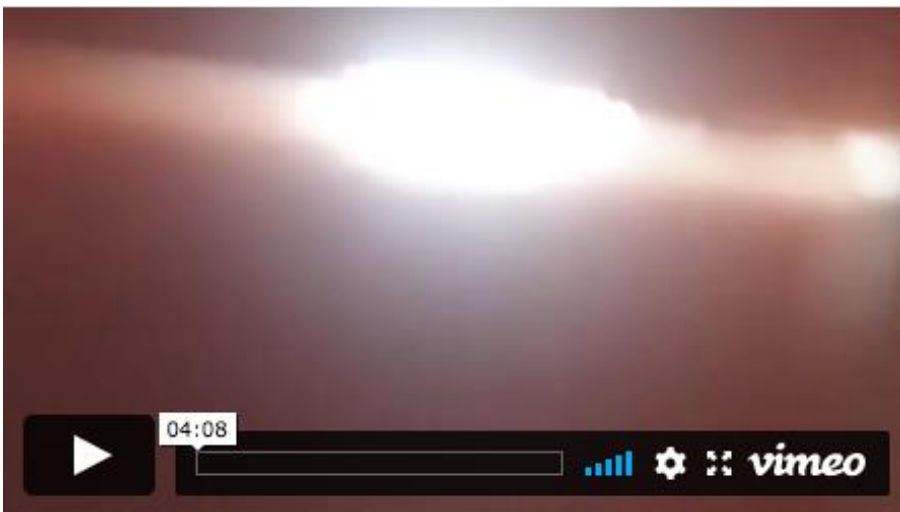


Figure 26. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name*, 2014, film 4':04'' projection. Music composition by Miguel Paixao, produced by Rajaa Paixão. Vimeo. Source: <https://vimeo.com/107407600>



Figure 27. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Single bed*, 2014, wood, dye, steel, screws, mattress, waterproof cover, water. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.



Figure 28. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Single bed* (detail), 2014, wood, dye, steel, screws, mattress, waterproof cover, water. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.



Figure 29. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Kit*, 2014, towel, wool, glass, water drops, a sculptural work about ubiquity and astral projection. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.



Figure 30. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Enlarged Ouné*, 2014, fabric, string, nail, a sculptural work about ubiquity and astral projection. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.



Figure 31. An example of a Lebanese *Ouné*. 2017. Photo: author.



Figure 32. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Oval mirror*, 2014, wood, mirror, glue, paint, staples, nail. Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.



Figure 33. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Black net*, 2014, mesh, pine wood, varnish, glue, screws, staples, metal paint. The Project Space, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.



Figure 34. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - 21g*, 2014, film 6'' looped. The Project Space, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.

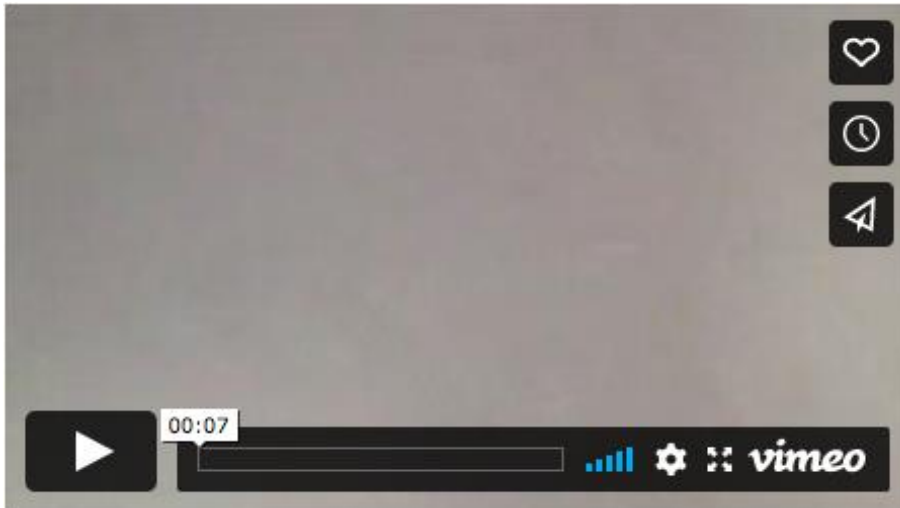


Figure 35. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - 21g*, 2014, film 6'' looped. Vimeo. Source: <https://vimeo.com/107407601>



Figure 36. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - 4 walls*, 2014, found glass frame, digital print photography on adhesive paper, carpet tape, hooks, nails. The Project Space, Kingston School of Art, London. Photo: author.

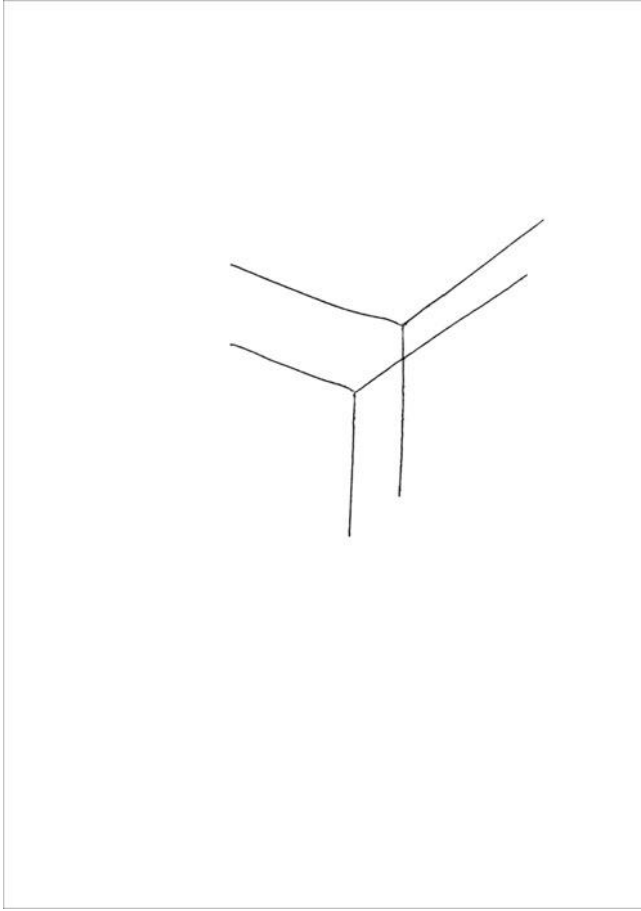


Figure 37. Rajaa Paixão, *I forgot your name - Minimalist ubiquity* catalogue insertion, 2014, inkjet print on 350gsm A4 mat paper. Photo: author.



Figure 38. A water tank during September in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, 2018. Photo: author.



Figure 39. Ruins surrounding a water tank during September in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, 2018. Photos: author.



Figure 40. Bernd & Hilla Becher, *Water Towers*, 1970 – 2010, 15 silver-gelatin prints, 30 × 40 cm, 11 7/8 × 15 3/4 inches. Sprüth Magers. Source: <https://spruethmagers.com/artists/bernd-hilla-becher/>



Figure 41. *Eva Rothschild, Tombstones, 2011, Jesmonite, felt, aluminum, polystyrene and fiberglass. 137 x 15 x 15 1/4 inches (348 x 38 x 38.5 cm), Edition of 3, ER 90. 303 Gallery. Source: <https://www.303gallery.com/gallery-exhibitions/eva-rothschild>*



Figure 42. Cildo Meireles *Babel* (detail) 2001 Photo: Tate Photography. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern/display/media-networks/cildo-meireles>



Figure 43. Olafur Eliasson, *Power tower*, 2006. Belvedere Museum, Vienna. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/olafur-eliasson-power-tower>



Figure 44. Lee Bul. *Aubade V*, 2019. Installation View, *Forms of the Shadow*, Secession, Vienna, 2024. BB&M. Source: <https://www.gallerybbm.com/news/54-lee-bul-minouk-lim-forms-of-the-shadow-vienna-secession/>



Figure 45. Sabine Mirlesse. *Taygeta (10.22)*, aluminum, patina, 2022. Sabine Mirlesse. Source: <https://sabinemirlesse.com/Crystalline-Thresholds-Les-Portes-de-Givre>



Figure 46. Sabine Mirlesse. *Crystalline Thresholds | Les Portes de Givre*, 2022-2023. Sabine Mirlesse. Source: <https://sabinemirlesse.com/Crystalline-Thresholds-Les-Portes-de-Givre>



Figure 47. Sabine Mirlesse. *Maia and Taygeta (12.22)*, 2022. Sabine Mirlesse. Source: <https://sabinemirlesse.com/Crystalline-Thresholds-Les-Portes-de-Givre>



Figure 48. Robert Smithson. *Spiral Jetty*. 1970. Great Salt Lake, Utah. Mud, precipitated salt crystals, rocks, water. 1,500 ft. (457.2 m) long and 15 ft. (4.6 m) wide. Dia Art Foundation. © Holt/Smithson Foundation and Dia Art Foundation / Licensed by Artists Rights Society, New York. Holt/Smithson Foundation. Source: <https://holtsmithsonfoundation.org/spiral-jetty>



Figure 49. Sabine Mirlesse. *Crystalline Thresholds* | *Les Portes de Givre*, 2022-2023. Sabine Mirlesse. Source: <https://sabinemirlesse.com/Crystalline-Thresholds-Les-Portes-de-Givre>



Figure 50. A water tank in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, ca. January-April 2019. Photo: author.



Figure 51. Michael Craig-Martin, *An Oak tree*, 1974. Michael Craig-Martin. Source: <https://www.michaelcraigmartin.co.uk/artworks/11-an-oak-tree/>



Figure 52. Robert Morris, *Untitled* (Mirrored Cubes), 1965-1971. Inhotim. Source: <https://www.inhotim.org.br/en/inhotim/arte-contemporanea/obras/untitled-mirrored-cubes/>

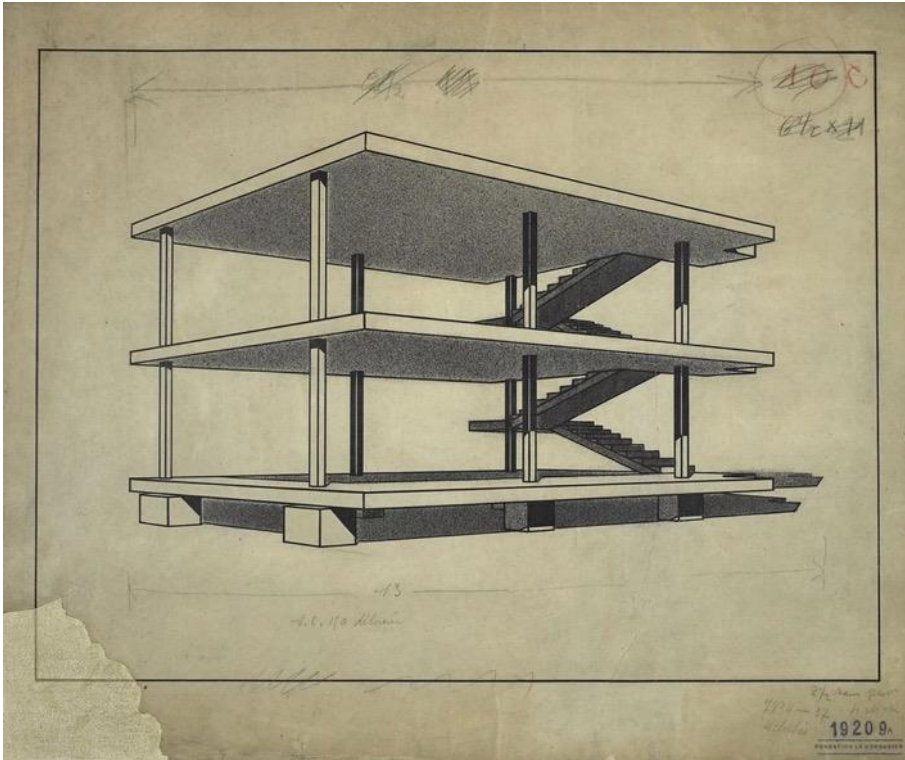


Figure 53. Le Corbusier, *Maison Dom-ino, Sans lieu, 1914. Ossature de béton armé.* Le Corbusier - World Heritage. Source: <https://lecorbusier-worldheritage.org/en/1887-1917/>



Figure 54. Installation view of *Haegue Yang: Leap Year*, 2024.  
Photo: Mark Blower. Courtesy the artist and the Hayward Gallery.  
Southbank Centre. Source: [https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/haegue-yang-leap-year/?gad\\_source=1&gbraid=0AAAAADRLRXu8UCOMIZKYT4S9lU9HGJV0n&gclid=Cj0KCQjwveK4BhD4ARIsAKy6pMJG7AjNwk-pFOJtf3a2I8ssWrMZOwrZ0p\\_4WQC1O7JbLMvOFkZF8aAkXAEA Lw\\_wcB](https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/haegue-yang-leap-year/?gad_source=1&gbraid=0AAAAADRLRXu8UCOMIZKYT4S9lU9HGJV0n&gclid=Cj0KCQjwveK4BhD4ARIsAKy6pMJG7AjNwk-pFOJtf3a2I8ssWrMZOwrZ0p_4WQC1O7JbLMvOFkZF8aAkXAEA Lw_wcB)



Figure 55. Irene Schubiger (\*1948), *o. T.*, 2016. Gips, Silikon, 23 x 40 x 20 cm, Courtesy Galerie annex 14, Zürich © Foto: Kunstmuseum Olten, Ausstellungsansicht Kunstmuseum Olten, 2019. Kunstmuseum Olten. Source: <https://kunstmuseumolten.ch/programm/ausstellungen/linck-reloaded#&gid=1&pid=14>

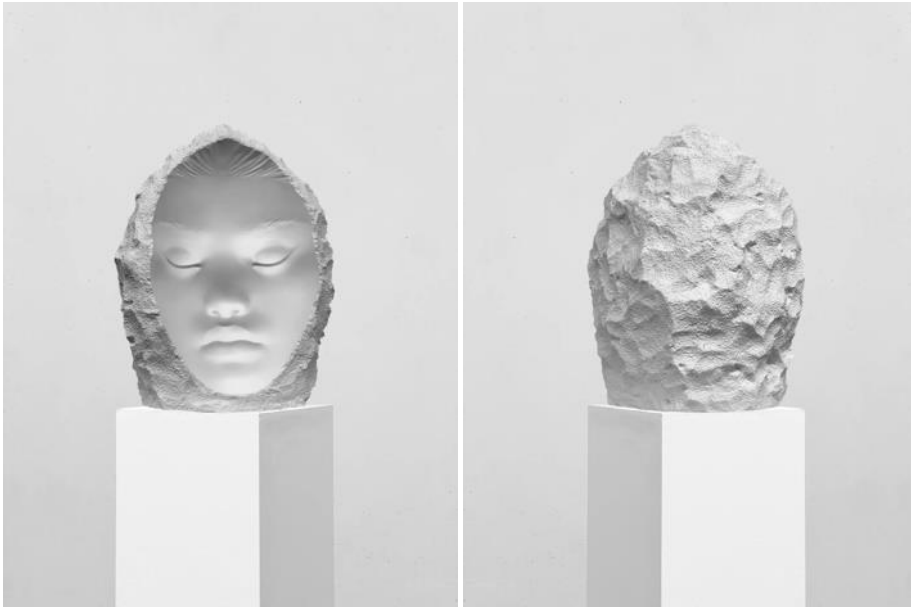


Figure 56. Alejandro Monge. *I.S.*, 2024. Fiberglass, concrete and pigments. 40 x 25 x 20 cm. 15 3/4 x 9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in. HOFA Gallery (House of Fine Art). Source: <https://thehouseoffineart.com/artists/278-alejandro-monge/works/5824/>



Figure 57. Mark Manders. Installation view, 2015. Tanya Bonakdar Gallery. Source: <https://www.tanyabonakdargallery.com/exhibitions/34-mark-manders-tanya-bonakdar-gallery-new-york/>



Figure 58. Michael Asher, Claire S. Copley Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA, September 21–October 12, 1974, view through the gallery toward the office and storage areas. For this work, Asher removed the partition wall dividing the office and gallery space, revealing the day-to-day activities of the gallery to the public. Photograph by Gary Krueger. © Michael Asher Foundation. Michael Asher Foundation. Source: <https://michaelasherfoundation.org>



Figure 59. Michael Asher, installation view, *The Clocktower*, 1976. Artforum. Source: <https://www.artforum.com/events/michael-asher-5-231728/>



Figure 60. Joan Jonas. *My New Theater V, Moving In Place (Dog Dance)*, 2002 - 2005. Painted wooden box, painted wooden trestles, video on DVD (colour/sound), DVD player, LCD monitor, speakers. 169 x 38 x 79 cm, duration 6 min 11 sec looped. Edition of 3 + 2 AP. Amanda Wilkinson. Source: <https://amandawilkinsongallery.com/artists/32-joan-jonas/works/2495-joan-jonas-my-new-theater-v-moving-in-place-dog-2002-2005/>. Additional source: <https://vimeo.com/93617388/a94aa62568>



Figure 61. Isamu Noguchi inside the "peach pit" of his sculpture, *Momo Taro*, during the Storm King Art Center 25th Anniversary Luncheon, April 1985. Photo by Helaine Messer. Storm King Art Center. Source: <https://collections.stormking.org/Detail/entities/180>

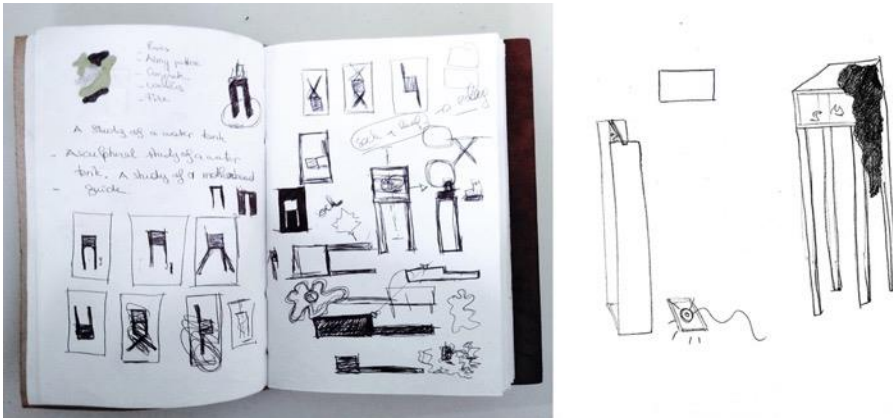


Figure 62. Rajaa Paixão, a selection of sketches of the water tank in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, 2018. Photos: author.



Figure 62. Photo/video documentation of the water tank's surroundings in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, 2018. Photos: author.



Figure 63. Rajaa Paixão, *ladder and bridges*, 2018, modeling clay on paper, variable dimensions. Photo: author.

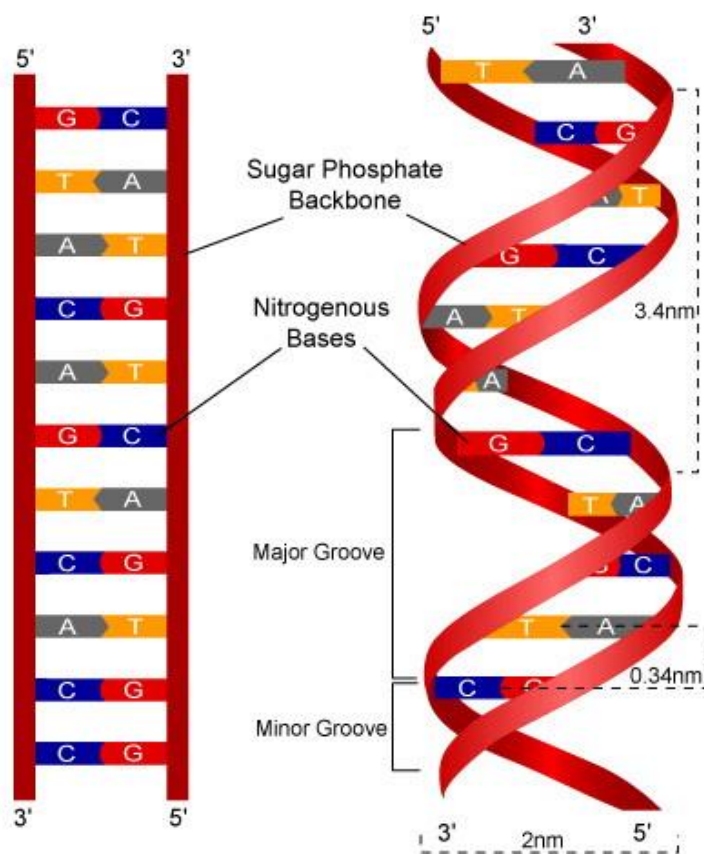


Figure 64. DNA Structure. Source:  
[http://www2.nau.edu/lrn22/lessons/dna\\_notes/dna\\_notes.html](http://www2.nau.edu/lrn22/lessons/dna_notes/dna_notes.html)



Figure 65. *Simulation: a hint to an Interface under creation*, 2018, modeling clay on paper, variable dimensions. Photo: author.



Figure 66. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: the water and the tank*, 2018, silicone, wood, glass, clay, wall paint, varnish, 106 x 35 x 35 cm. Photo: author.



Figure 67. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: the water and the tank* (detail), 2018, silicone, wood, glass, clay, wall paint, varnish, 106 x 35 x 35 cm. Photo: author.



Figure 68. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: dripping and leakage*, 2018, wood, metal, translucent plastic sheet, glue, ceramic holder, screws, bulb, lighting electrical accessories, 110 x 25 x 80 cm. Photo: author.



Figure 69. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: the ruins and the frozen puddle*, 2018, silicone, metal paint, rock, roof tile, metal, wood, metal wire, indoor paint, variable dimensions. Photo: author.



Figure 70. Rajaa Paixão, *TWT: post-play happy socks*, 2018, clay, acrylic paint, varnish, marble, metal, 80 x 73 x 20 cm. Photo: author.



Figure 71. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Wormholes & Space Cashews*, 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, plaster, spray paint, 90 x 90 x 100 cm. Photo: author.

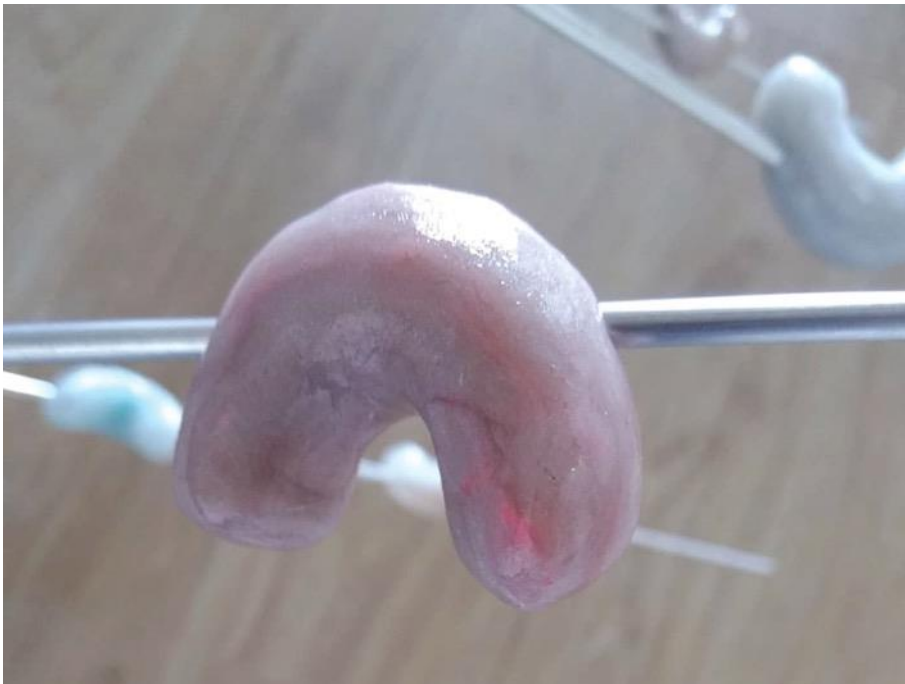


Figure 72. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Wormholes & Space Cashews* (detail), 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, plaster, spray paint, 90 x 90 x 100 cm. Photo: author.



Figure 73. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Space Skins*, 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, plaster, spray paint, 101 x 120 x 22 cm. Photo: author.



Figure 74. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Space Skins* (detail), 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, plaster, spray paint, 101 x 120 x 22 cm. Photo: author.

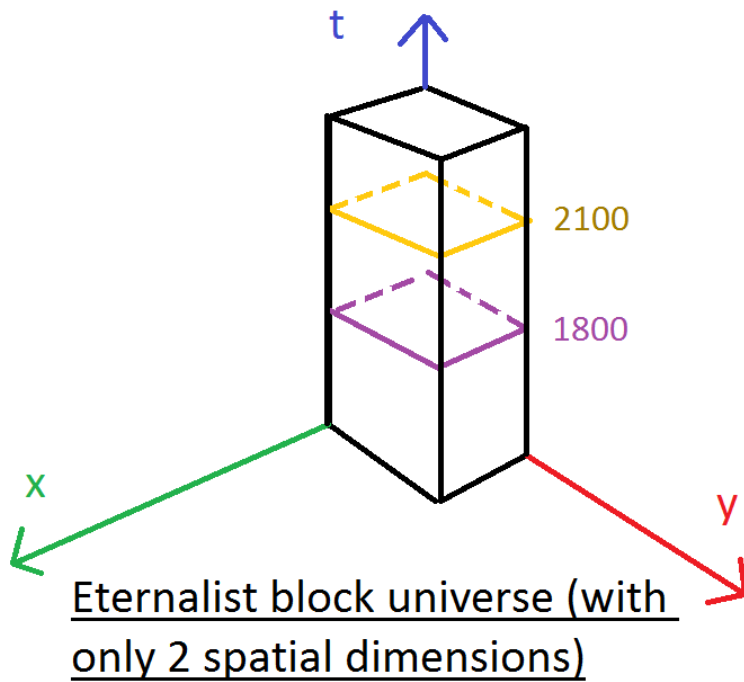
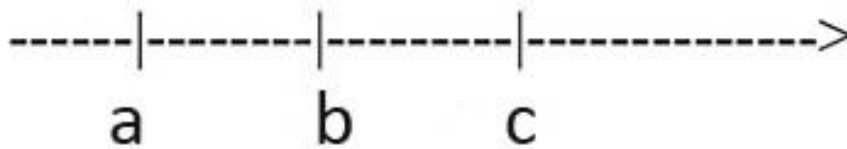


Figure 75. Brian Tomasik, *Eternalist block universe (with only 2 spatial dimensions)*. Reducing Suffering. Source: <https://reducing-suffering.org/eternalism-and-its-ethical-implications/>



*McTaggart's A series and B series*

Figure 76. Bradley Dowden, *McTaggart's A series and B series*. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP). Source: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/time/#H12>

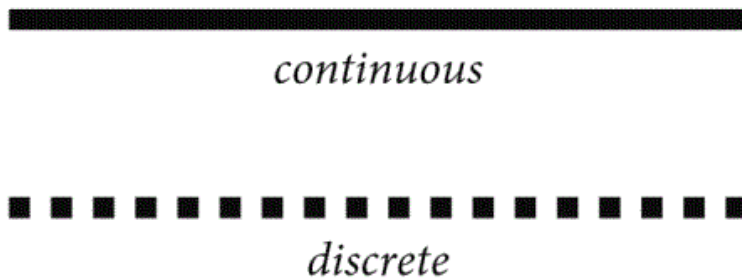


Figure 77. Bradley Dowden, *Time continuous discrete*. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP). Source: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/time/#H12>

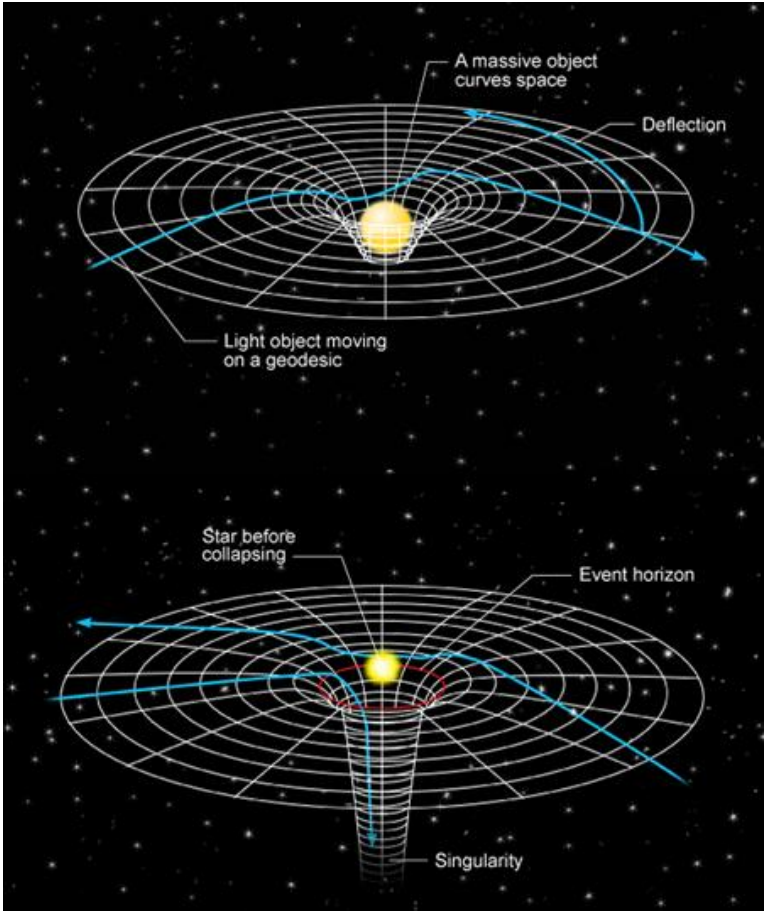


Figure 78. Horatiu Nastase, *Illustration: Carin Cain*. Physics. Source: <https://physics.aps.org/articles/v2/71>

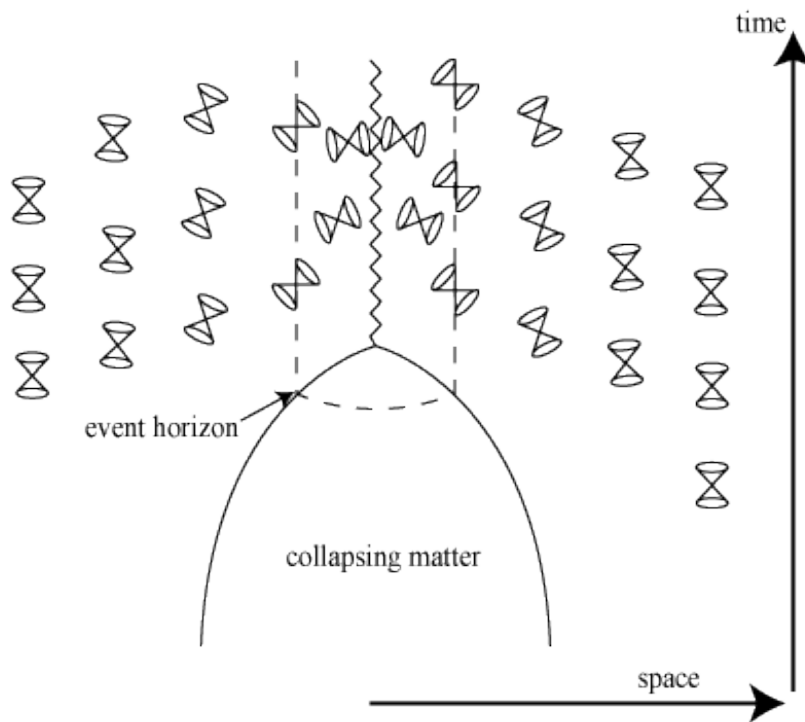


Figure 79. Erik Curiel, *A spacetime diagram of black hole formation*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Source: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spacetime-singularities/>

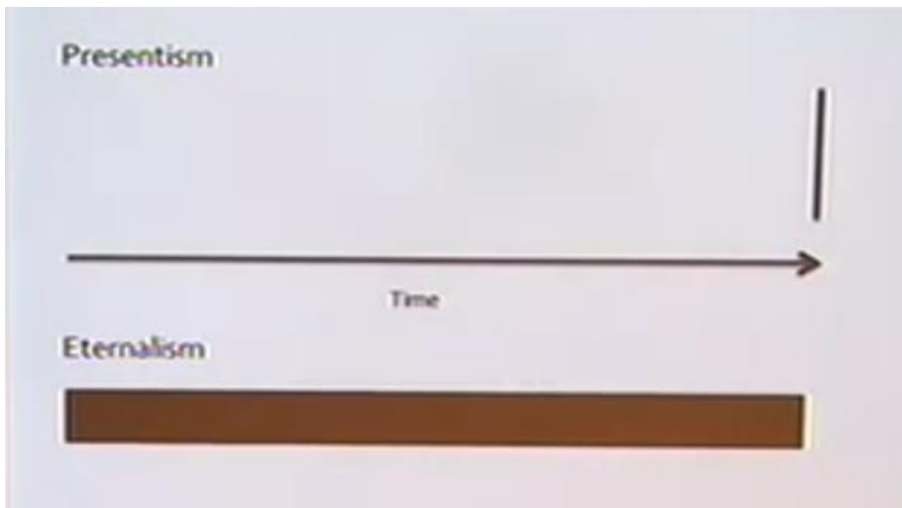


Figure 80. Jonathan Tallant, *Presentism, Eternalism*. Nottingham Contemporary. Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author.

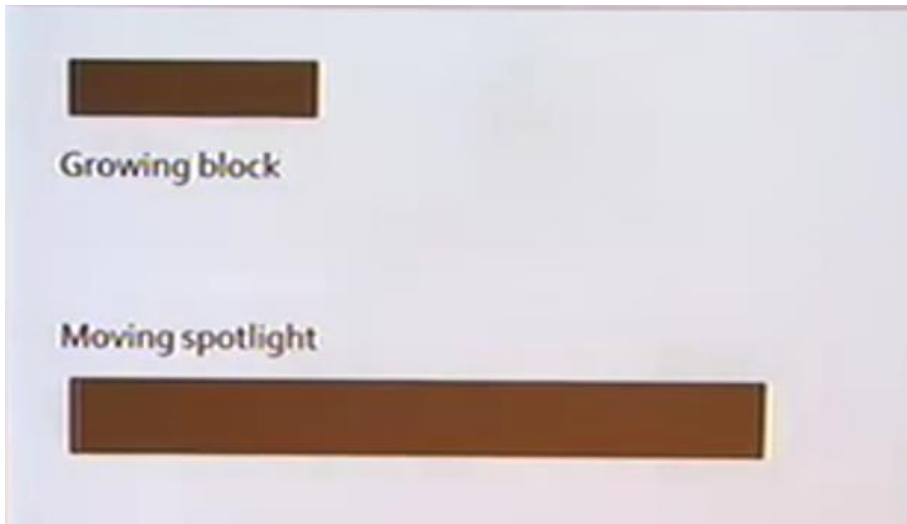


Figure 81. Jonathan Tallant, *Growing block, Moving spotlight*. Nottingham Contemporary. Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author.

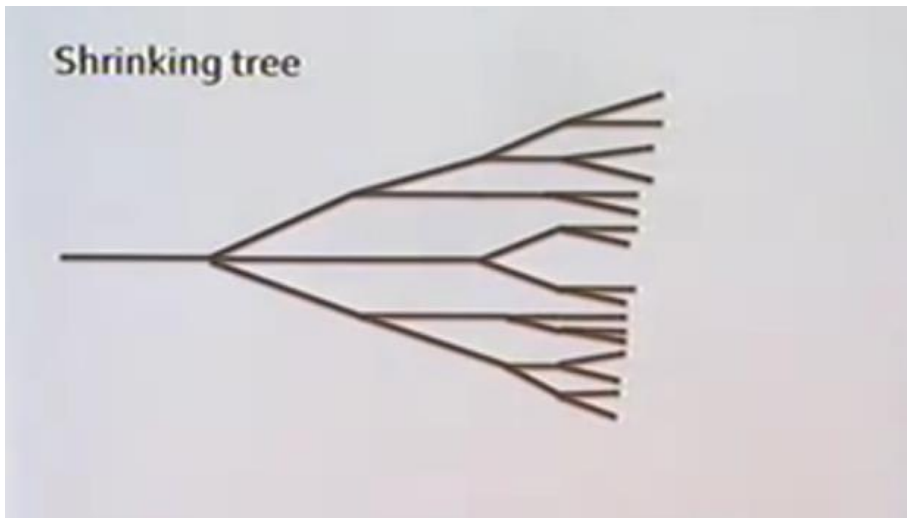


Figure 82. Jonathan Tallant, *Shrinking tree*. Nottingham Contemporary. Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author.



Figure 83. Rajaa Paixão, Cashews trial, 2019, silicone, acrylic, variable dimensions.  
Photo: author.



Figure 84. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Eyelids* sketch, 2019.



Figure 85. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Eyelids*, 2019-2020, work in progress documentation, resin plaster, stucco, paint, film, glue, chicken wire, paper mache, metal, electrical accessories. Photos: author.



Figure 86. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Eyelids*, 2019-2020, work in progress documentation, resin plaster, stucco, paint, film, glue, chicken wire, paper mache, metal, electrical accessories. Photos: author.

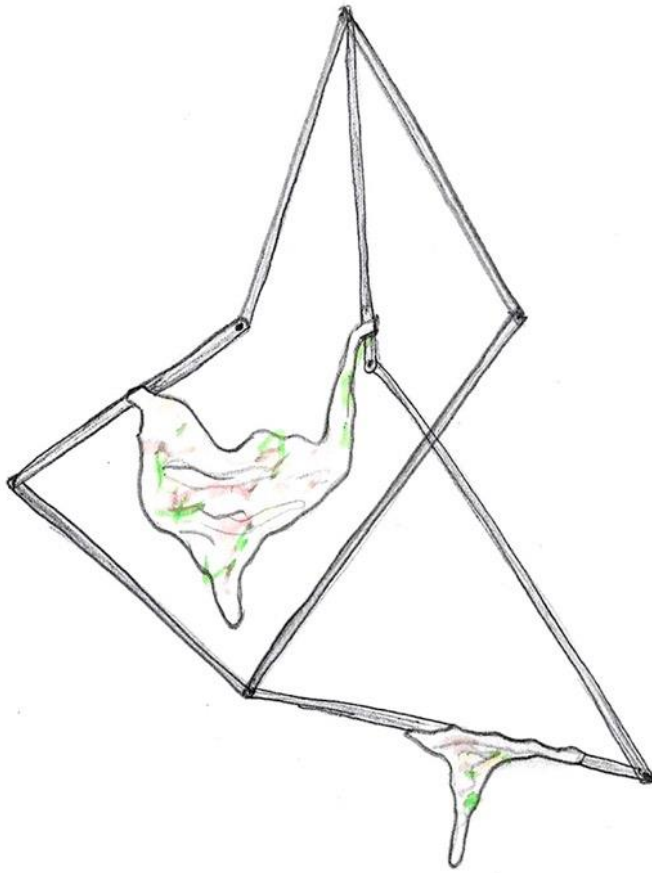


Figure 87. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Refractions* sketch, 2019-2020.



Figure 88. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Refractions*, work in progress documentation, 2019-2020, sewn fabric, metal. Photos: author.



Figure 89. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Masks* sketch, work in progress documentation, 2019-2020, sewn velvet, nude wood frame box. Photos: author.

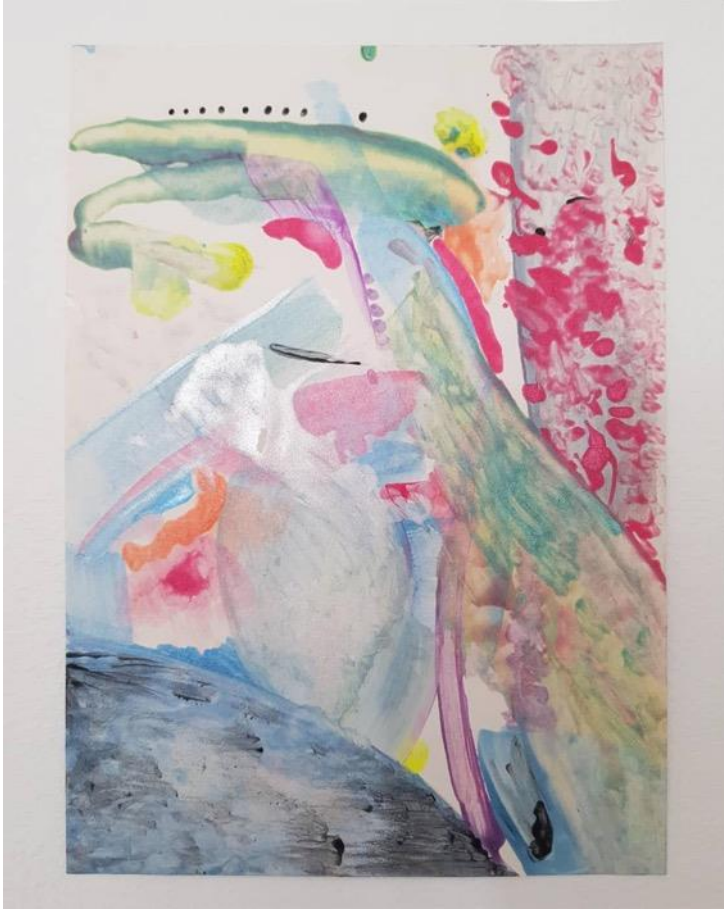


Figure 90. Rajaa Paixão, *out of this world*, 2020, watercolour on 135gsm drawing paper, 29.7 x 21 cm. Photo: author.

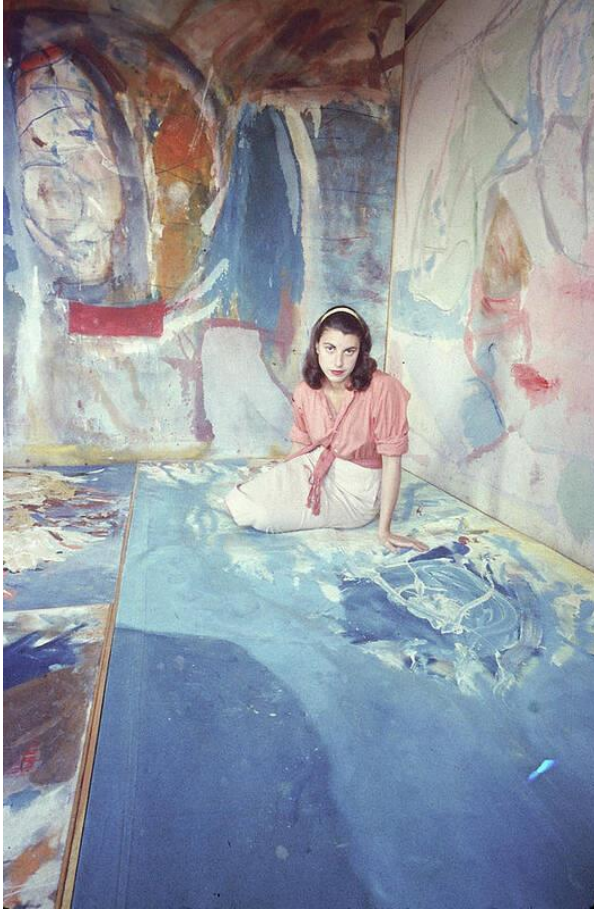


Figure 91. Portrait of Helen Frankenthaler by Gordon Parks. *Portrait of American abstract painter Helen Frankenthaler in her studio, surrounded by her paintings, New York, New York, circa 1957. She wears a pink shirt and a white skirt.* LIFE Cover Store. Source: <https://lifephotostore.com/featured/1-portrait-of-helen-frankenthaler-gordon-parks.html?product=poster>



Figure 92. Rajaa Paixão, *Legged*, 2019, acrylic, watercolour, and ink on canvas, 100 x 80 x 1.5 cm. Photo: author.



Figure 93. Rajaa Paixão, *Plié Chassé Jeté*, 2023, watercolour and ink on drawing paper, 21 x 29,7 cm. Photo: author.

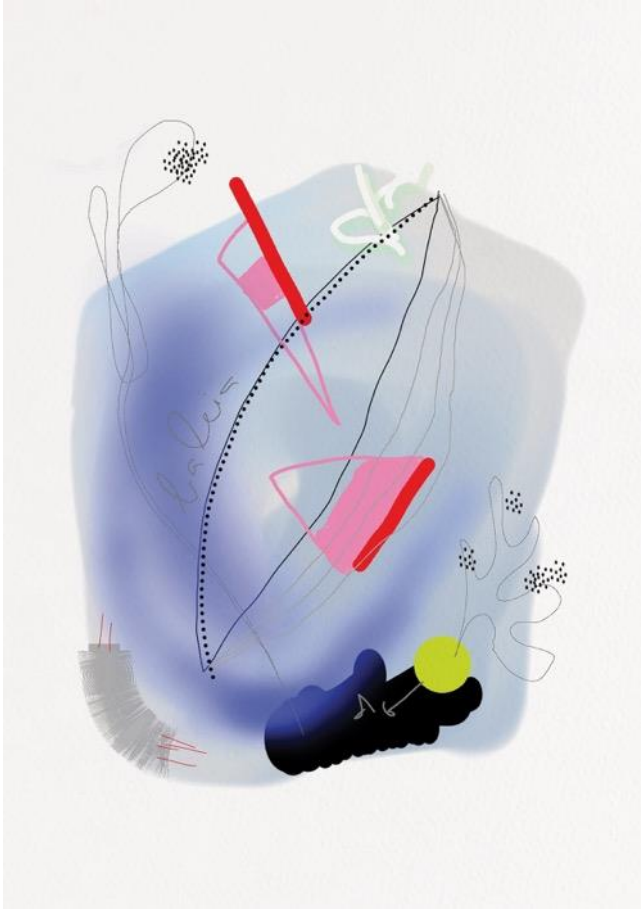


Figure 94. Rajaa Paixão, *baleia do sol*, 2020, digital painting  
Giclée print on archival paper, 29.7 x 21 cm, from the *Still Sea*  
series, edition of 5. Photo: author.

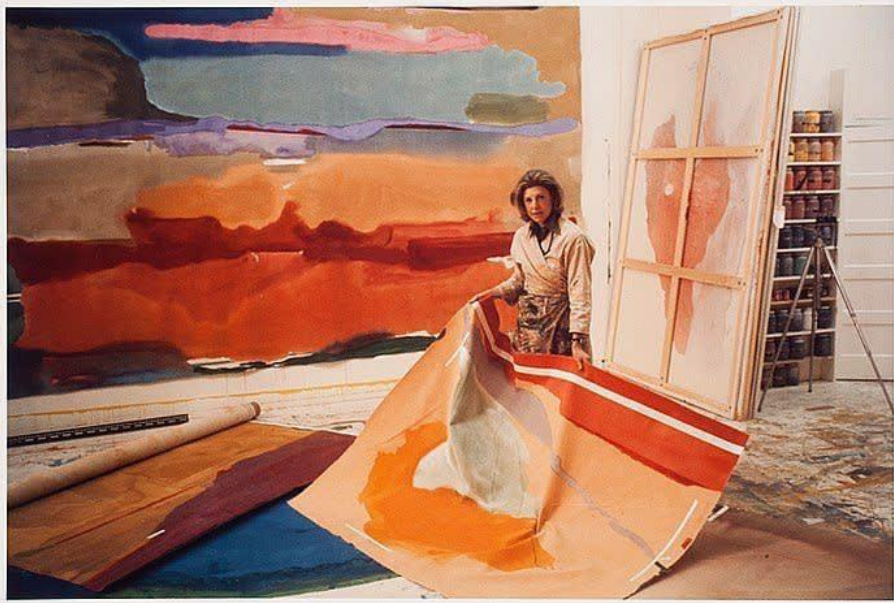


Figure 95. Helen Frankenthaler in her New York studio, 1975 Photo: © Alexander Liberman, Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles © J. Paul Getty Trust Artwork © 2016 Helen Frankenthaler / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Waqas Wajahat. Source: <https://waqaswajahat.com/artists/40-helen-frankenthaler/overview/>



Figure 96. Phyllida Barlow. *Crowded house... Folly continues inside the British Pavilion*. Photograph: Ruth Clark/© British Council. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/may/09/phyllida-barlow-review-venice-biennale-british-pavilion-sculpture>



Figure 97. Nairy Baghramian. *Misfits M*, 2021. Marian Goodman. Source: <https://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/449-nairy-baghramian-misfits/>



Figure 98. Installation view of Jesse Darling's works at the Turner Prize 2023, Towner Eastbourne. Foreground: *Corpus (Fortress)*, 2022, Concrete, rebar, wood, polystyrene, steel cable, barbed wire, bistro curtain, 317 x 212 x 45 cm. Courtesy the artist and Arcadia Missa. Background: sculptures from the series *Come On England*, 2023, pedestrian barriers, welded steel, tea towels, wheels, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist, Arcadia Missa, Galerie Molitor, and Sultana. Photo: Angus Mill. ArtReview. Source: <https://artreview.com/turner-prize-2023-review-coming-out-the-other-end/>



Figure 99. Carlos Bunga. *Museo Helga de Alvear* [[@museohelgadealvear](https://www.instagram.com/museohelgadealvear)]. (2024, January 27). ✚ *El pasado jueves, el artista portugués realizó una performance creada ex profeso para el Museo con el título 'Desplazar* [Instagram video]. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-j-1fTDauG/>. Screenshot by author.



Figure 100. Sheila Hicks. Eventbrite. Source: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sheila-hicks-exhibition-private-visit-at-beaubourg-by-her-daughter-members-only-tickets-43718549358>



Figure 101. Sandra Mujinga. *Ghosting* (2019). Installation view of "Witch Hunt," *Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, 2020*. Courtesy the artist, Croy Nielsen, Vienna, and *The Approach, London*. Artnet. Source: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/artist-sandra-mujinga-venice-2094912>



Figure 102. *Memory of Water*, 2021, wooden boat, red wool, collection at Towada Art Center, Aomori, Japan, photos Kuniya Oyamada. Chiharu Shiota. Source: <https://www.chiharu-shiota.com/memory-of-water>



Figure 103. *Eight key projects by Christo and Jeanne Claude*. Dezeen. Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/2020/06/01/christo-jeanne-claude-seven-key-projects-installations-design/>



Figure 104. "Sunset," 1150 x 500 centimeters. Colossal. Source: <https://www.thisiscoossal.com/2021/02/agnes-hansella-macrame/>



Figure 105. Nnenna Okore with "Sheer Audacity," 2016, Burlap, Installation view. Courtesy Memphis Brooks Museum of Art. Art Ltd Magazine. Source: <https://artltdmag.com/2017/05/artist-qa-nnenna-okore/>



Figure 106. Alexandra Kehayoglou's Textile Landscapes. DesignerBox. Source: <https://www.designerbox.com/en/blog/article/261/tendance-deco-alexandra-kehayoglou>



Figure 107. *Courtesy of the artist and Robischon Gallery, Denver, Colorado, USA The artist thanks all who have sent sounds from all over the world for the making of this piece. Alive !.* Source: <https://aliveartclimate.org/index.php/ana-maria-hernando-2/>



Figure 108. Tau Lewis. Stephen Friedman Gallery. Source: <https://www.stephenfriedman.com/artists/79-tau-lewis/>



Figure 109. View of the exhibition "Plug-in" by Joana Vasconcelos. Photo by Bruno Lopes. MAAT — Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology. Source: <https://maat.pt/en/node/3136>



Figure 110. *Vanessa Barragão at work on a new creation.* Art the Science. Source: <https://arthescience.com/magazine/2019/03/01/creators-vanessa-barragao/>



Figure 111. *Cecilia Vicuña, Truck Quipu (2010), Con cón, Chile, Still photo from the film, Kon kon pi (2010).* Cecilia Vicuña. Source: <http://www.ceciliavicuna.com/quipus/pnsaijz9ln6wc6bpwgalqrqn2iqtsp>



Figure 112. *Sheila Hicks, "Ligne de vie", Centre Pompidou, Photo by Philippe Migeat, Courtesy of the artist. Whitewall. Source: <https://whitewall.art/art/sheila-hicks>*



Figure 113. Marisa Merz at home with Living Sculpture (1966). Turin, ca. 1966-67. Photo: Renato Rinaldi. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/who-is/who-marisa-merz>



Figure 114. Ursula von Rydingsvard in her Brooklyn studio, February 2020. Photo: Melissa Saenz Gordon. Art21. Source: <https://art21.org/read/big-question-where-do-vision-and-execution-diverge/>



Figure 115. Ursula von Rydingsvard. *Bowl with Inner Lip* (2011) at the *Ingraham Street studio*. Photo by Micah Schmidt. Bklynr. Source: <https://www.bklynr.com/ursula-von-rydingsvard-will-be-the-last-artist-in-bushwick/>

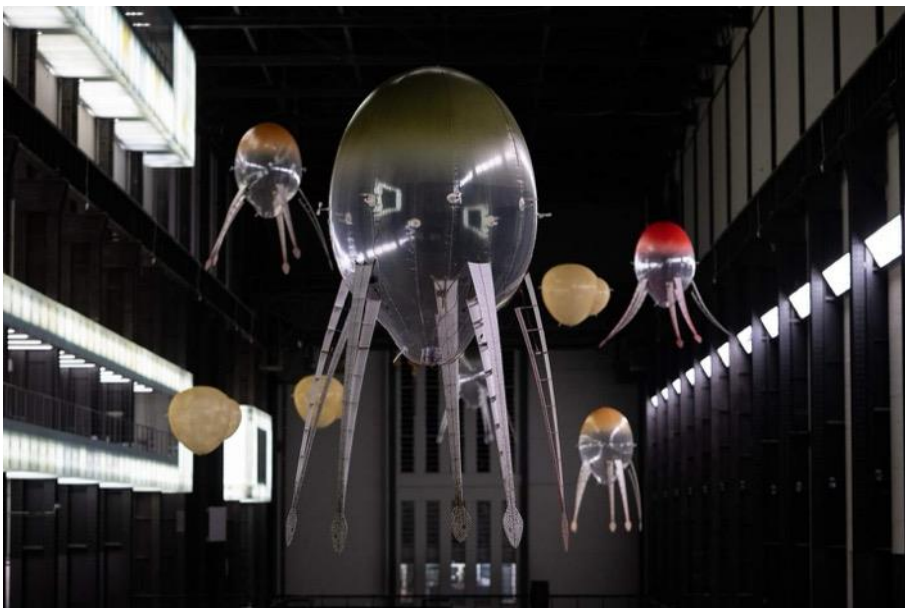


Figure 116. Installation view of *Hyundai Commission: Anicka Yi* at Tate Modern, October 2021. Photo by Will Burrard Lucas. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/hyundai-commission-anicka-yi/exhibition-guide>

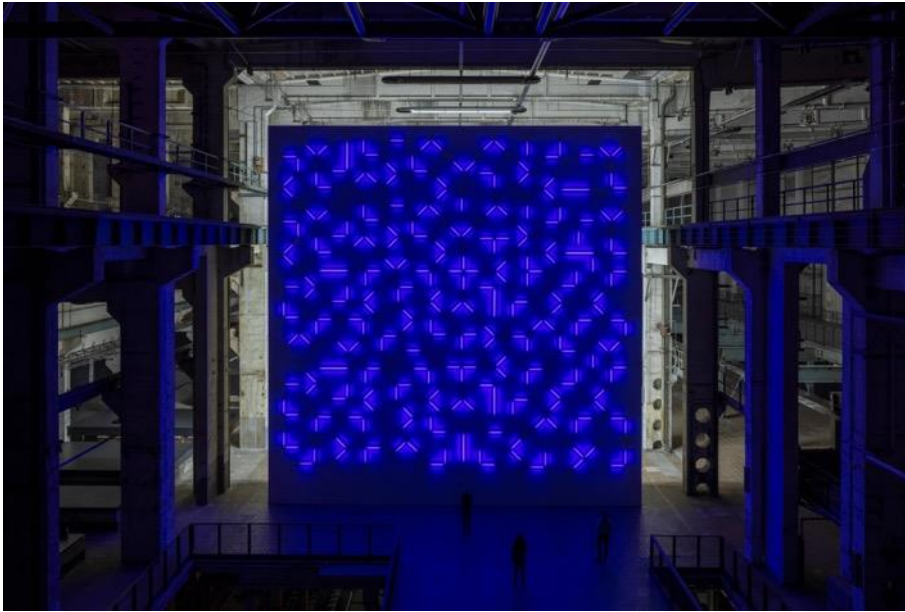


Figure 117. Robert Irwin, *Light and Space (Kraftwerk Berlin)*, 2021. Commissioned by LAS (Light Art Space). © Foto: Timo Ohler. VG Bild-Kunst, 2021. LAS Art Foundation. Source: <https://www.las-art.foundation/programme/robert-irwin>

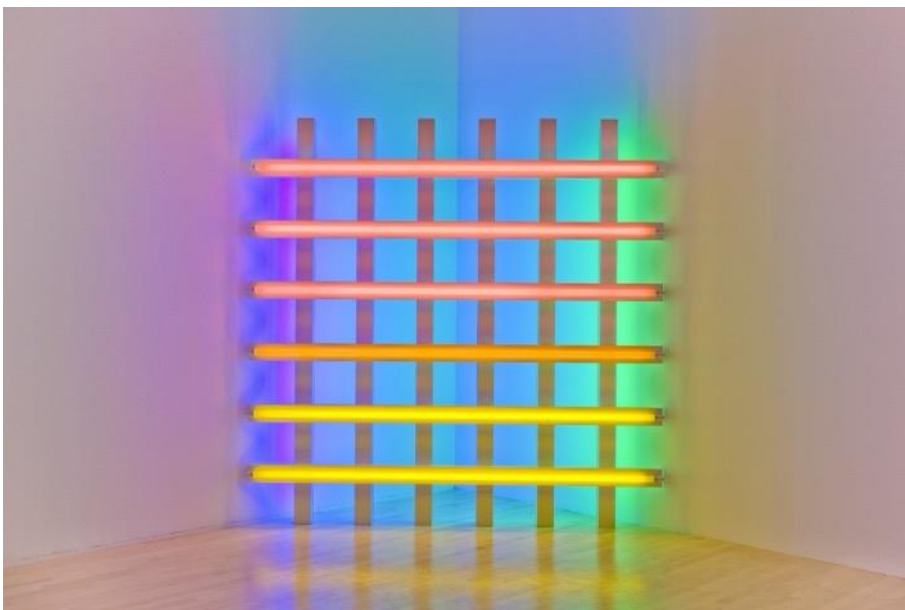


Figure 118. Dan Flavin. *Untitled (to the "innovator" of Wheeling Peachblow)* 1966-68, daylight, yellow, and pink florescent light, 8 ft. square across a corner, © Stephen Flavin/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art). Source: <https://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/dan-flavin-retrospective>



Figure 119. Aftershock, 2021 © James Turrell, Installation view Light & Space at Copenhagen Contemporary, Photo by Florian Holzherr. Copenhagen Contemporary. Source: <https://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/james-turrell/>

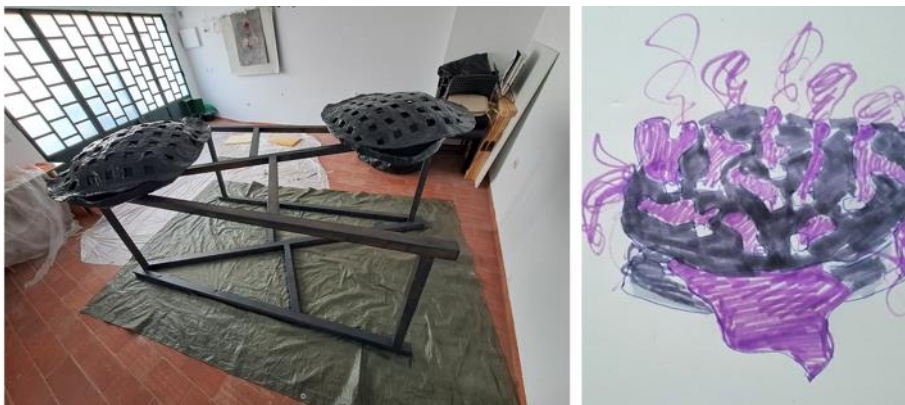


Figure 120. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Eyelids*, 2019-2020, work in progress documentation, resin plaster, stucco, paint, glue, chicken wire, paper mache, metal, fabric. Photos: author.

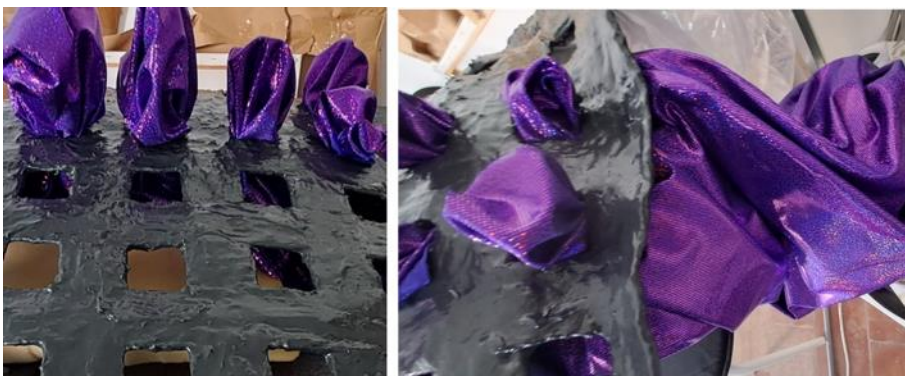


Figure 121. Rajaa Paixão, *TTTS: Eyelids*, 2019-2020, work in progress documentation, resin plaster, stucco, paint, glue, chicken wire, paper mache, metal, fabric. Photos: author.



Figure 122. Cullinan Richards, installation shot of *Bitch Magic*, 26 January - 2 March 2024, Alma Pearl, London. Alma Pearl. Source: <https://almapearl.com/exhibitions/10-bitch-magic/>



Figure 123. Cullinan Richards, installation shot of *Cullinan Richards: Retrospective*, 27 September - 2 November 2024, Alma Pearl, London. Alma Pearl. Source: <https://almapearl.com/exhibitions/15-cullinan-richards-retrospective/>



Figure 124. *Joseph Beuys, I Like America and America Likes Me, 1974.* © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, Germany. Courtesy of SFMoMA. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-joseph-beuys-locked-room-live-coyote>



Figure 125. *A dog with its leg painted pink walks around, and is part of, the exhibition by French artist Pierre Huyghe at the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, on April 10, 2014.* Photo courtesy Oliver Berg /AFP/Getty Images. Artnet. Source: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world-archives/exhibiting-live-animal-art-1097795>



Figure 126. *Marina Abramović and Ulay reunite at New York's MoMA for the former's *The Artist is Present*, 2010. Courtesy: Youtube; MoMA, New York. Frieze. Source: <https://www.frieze.com/article/former-lovers-marina-abramovic-and-ulya-pen-memoir-together>*

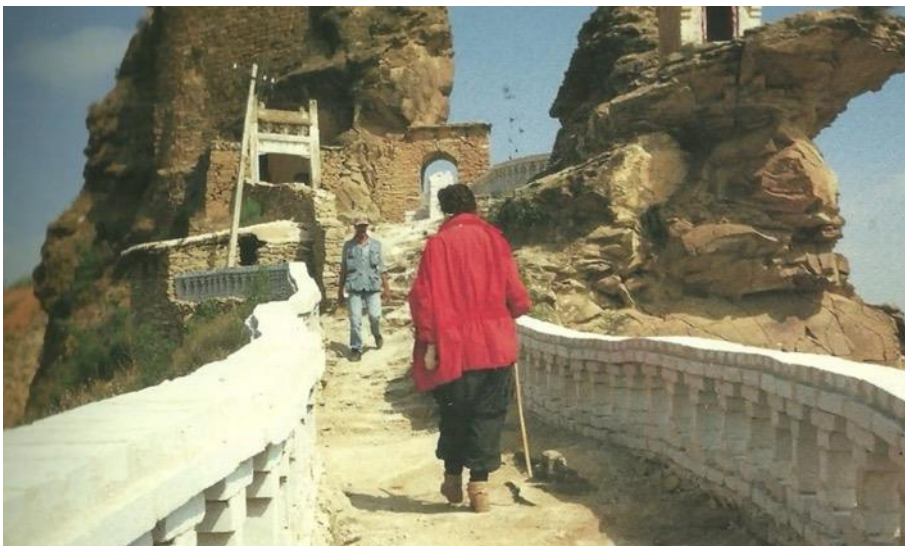


Figure 127. *Ulay and Marina approach each other at the end of their trek. Photograph: [publicdelivery.org](http://publicdelivery.org). The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/apr/25/marina-abramovic-ulya-walk-the-great-wall-of-china>*



Figure 128. José Teixeira. *Gravidade* (Gravity), 12 December 2017 - 11 February 2018, Great War room, Lisbon Military Museum. Exhibition Publication. Repositório da Universidade de Lisboa. Source: <https://repositorio.ul.pt/handle/10451/45144>



Figure 129. *Convento das Inglesinhas* space at ISEG Lisbon School of Economics and Management, February 2024. Image showing the inclined lower slope, with the curved wall of the upper slope on the left. Photo: author.

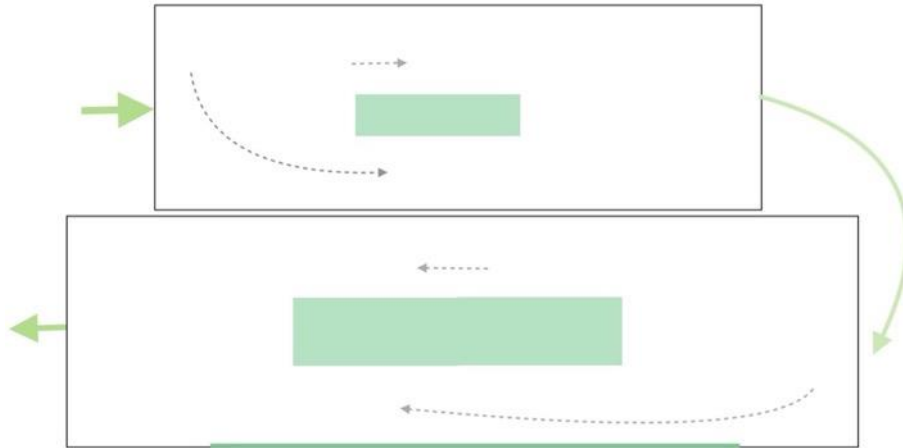


Figure 130. Simulation of the dimensions of the proposed exhibition space, at the *Convento das Inglesinhas* space at ISEG Lisbon School of Economics and Management, February 2024. Photo: author.

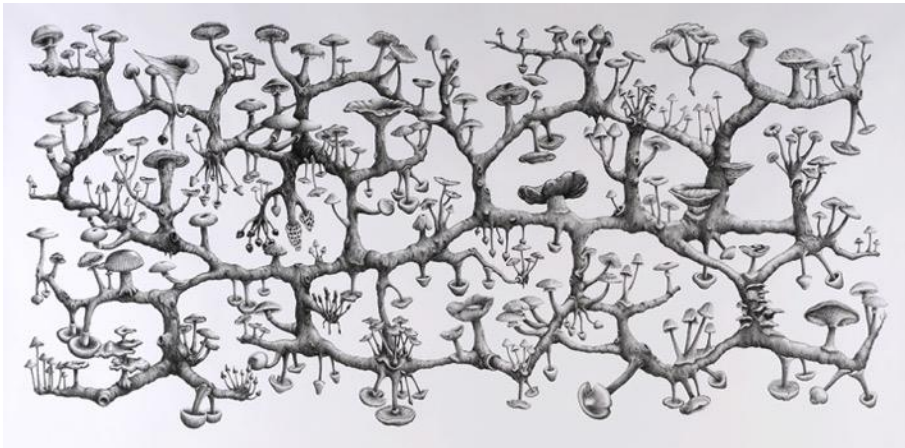


Figure 131. Richard Giblett. *Mycelium Rhizome*, 2009. Pencil on paper. 120 x 240 cm. POA. Represented by Galerie Dusseldorf. Galerie Dusseldorf. Source: [https://www.galeriedusseldorf.com.au/GDArtists/Giblett/RG2006\\_09/RGiblettRecentWk2006\\_09/source/21.mycelium\\_rhizome\\_lo\\_res.html](https://www.galeriedusseldorf.com.au/GDArtists/Giblett/RG2006_09/RGiblettRecentWk2006_09/source/21.mycelium_rhizome_lo_res.html)

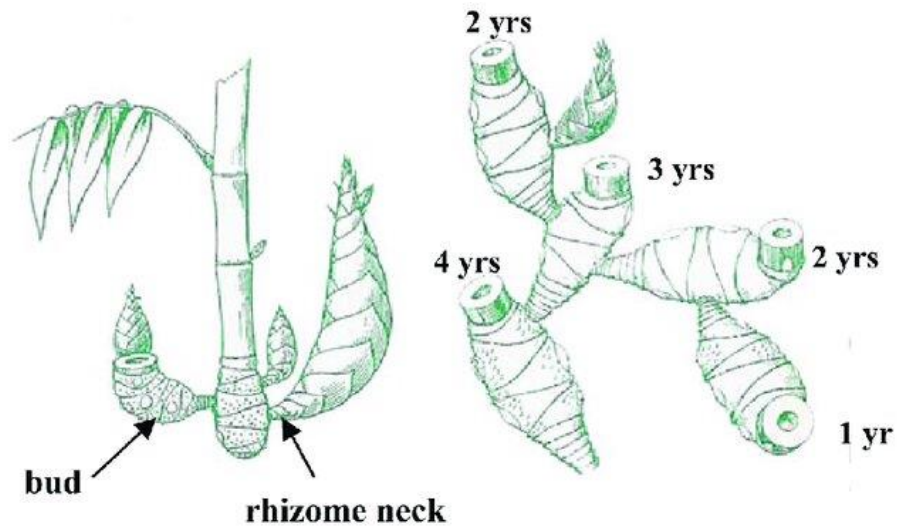


Figure 132. *The characteristics of sympodial rhizome bamboos and the estimation of aged culms.* Source: McClure (1966). ResearchGate. Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310651309\\_Clumps\\_and\\_Culms\\_Establishment\\_of\\_Gigantochloa\\_albociliata\\_and\\_Cephalostachyum\\_pergracile\\_after\\_Gregarious\\_Flowering\\_in\\_the\\_Mixed\\_Deciduous\\_Forest\\_at\\_Mae\\_Klong\\_Watershed\\_Research\\_Station/figures](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310651309_Clumps_and_Culms_Establishment_of_Gigantochloa_albociliata_and_Cephalostachyum_pergracile_after_Gregarious_Flowering_in_the_Mixed_Deciduous_Forest_at_Mae_Klong_Watershed_Research_Station/figures)

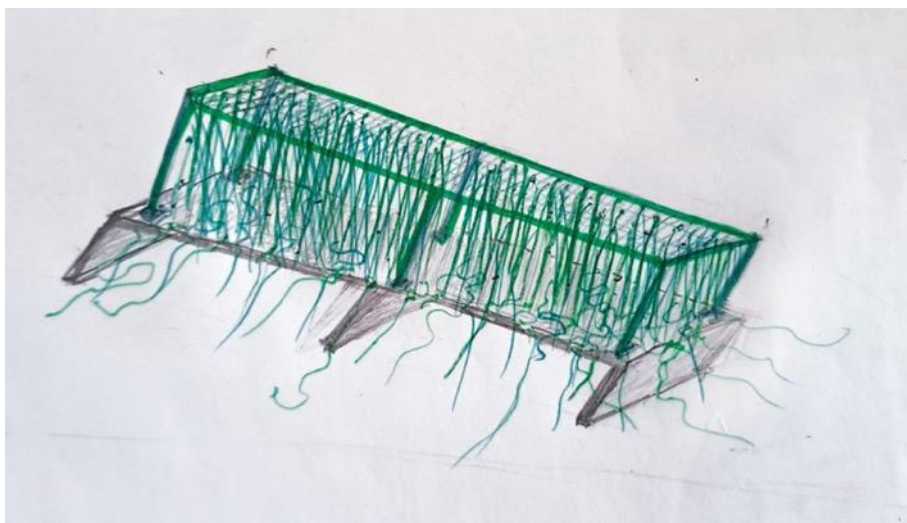


Figure 133. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope*, March 2024, pencil and pen sketch. Photo: author.

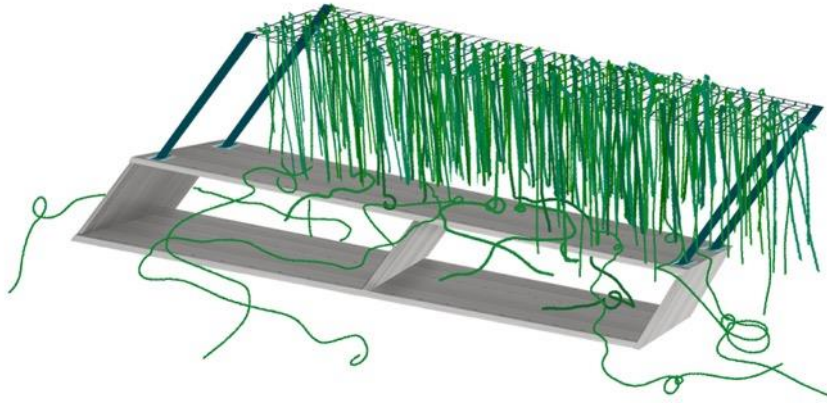


Figure 134. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope*, March 2024, digital sketch. Photo: author.

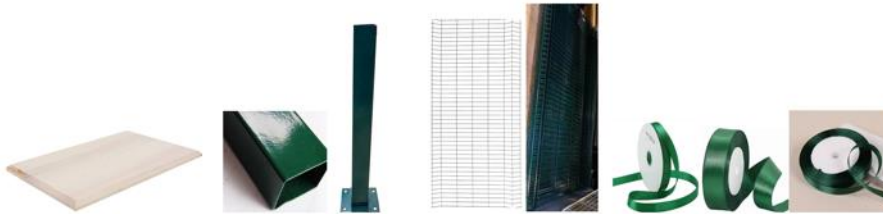


Figure 135. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope*, March 2024, proposed materials. Photos: various.



Figure 136. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope*, March 2024, digital simulation in-situ. Photo: author.



Figure 137. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope*, March 2024, felt-tip pen, pencil and pen sketch. Photo: author.

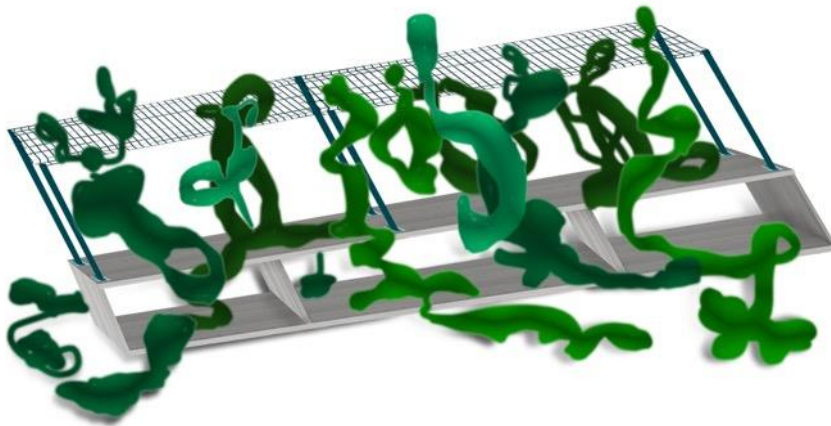


Figure 138. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope*, March 2024, digital sketch. Photo: author.

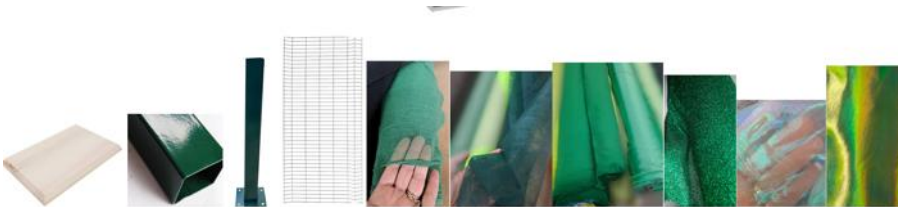


Figure 139. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope*, March 2024, proposed materials. Photos: various.



Figure 140. Rajaa Paixão, *Stroll Scroll* digital sketch, April 2024. Photo: author.



Figure 141. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope* and *Stroll Scroll*, March 2024, digital simulation in-situ. Photo: author.

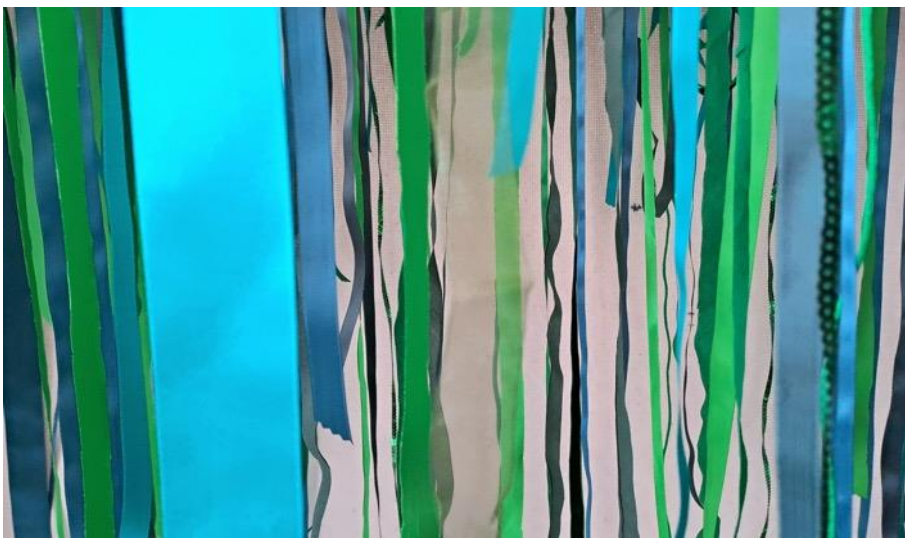


Figure 142. Rajaa Paixão, *Upper Slope* work in progress detail, April 2024. Photo: author.



Figure 143. Rajaa Paixão, *Lower Slope* work in progress detail, April 2024. Photo: author.



Figure 144. Installation view of Victoria Adam's work in the RA Schools Show, 2015. Royal Academy. Source: <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/victoria-adam>



Figure 145. *Untitled* by Andra Ursuța. Slime-green resin cast. Greater London Authority. Source: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/arts-and-culture/current-culture-projects/fourth-plinth-traffic-square/fourth-plinth-commissions/untitled-andra-ursuta>



Figure 146. Lourdes Castro, *Ombre portée de René Bertholo*, 1968. Silkscreen on Plexiglas. Artnet. Source: [http://www.artnet.com/artists/lourdes-castro/ombre-port%C3%A9e-de-ren%C3%A9-bertholo-2-works-CXLMkzntnN\\_BnJw\\_jEmYQ2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/lourdes-castro/ombre-port%C3%A9e-de-ren%C3%A9-bertholo-2-works-CXLMkzntnN_BnJw_jEmYQ2)



Figure 147. Louise Bourgeois, *Spider*, 1997, steel, tapestry, wood, glass, fabric, rubber, silver, gold and bone. Private collection, courtesy Cheim & Read, New York © Louise Bourgeois Photo: Rafael Lobato. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/louise-bourgeois/room-guide/louise-bourgeois-room-8>



Figure 148. Marcel Duchamp, *Fresh Widow*, 1920, replica 1964. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fresh-widow-t07282>



Figure 149. *The interlude of surface*. Inês Norton. Source: <https://inesnorton.com/the-interlude-of-surface/>



Figure 150. Lee Ufan, (Installation View), via Bria Cole for Art Observed. Art Observed. Source: <http://artobserved.com/2015/06/new-york-lee-ufan-at-pace-gallery-through-june-27th-2015/>



Figure 151. *untitled*, 1965, Red fluorescent Plexiglas and stainless steel, 20 x 48 x 34 inches (50.8 x 122 x 86.4 cm), Art © Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. David Zwirner. Source: [https://dzprocdn.azureedge.net/-/media/davidzwirner/exhibitions/2013/donald-judd/donald-judd-david-zwirner-london-2013-press-release\\_letter\\_7-16.pdf?rev=325002848d73497babcf8523eb83bf3a](https://dzprocdn.azureedge.net/-/media/davidzwirner/exhibitions/2013/donald-judd/donald-judd-david-zwirner-london-2013-press-release_letter_7-16.pdf?rev=325002848d73497babcf8523eb83bf3a)

## LEVEL IV MULTIVERSE

THE ULTIMATE TYPE of parallel universe opens up the full realm of possibility. Universes can differ not just in location, cosmological properties or quantum state but also in the laws of physics. Existing outside of space and time, they are almost impossible to visualize; the best one can do is to think of them abstractly, as static sculptures that represent the mathematical structure of the physical laws that

govern them. For example, consider a simple universe: Earth, moon and sun, obeying Newton's laws. To an objective observer, this universe looks like a circular ring (Earth's orbit smeared out in time) wrapped in a braid (the moon's orbit around Earth). Other shapes embody other laws of physics [a, b, c, d]. This paradigm solves various problems concerning the foundations of physics.

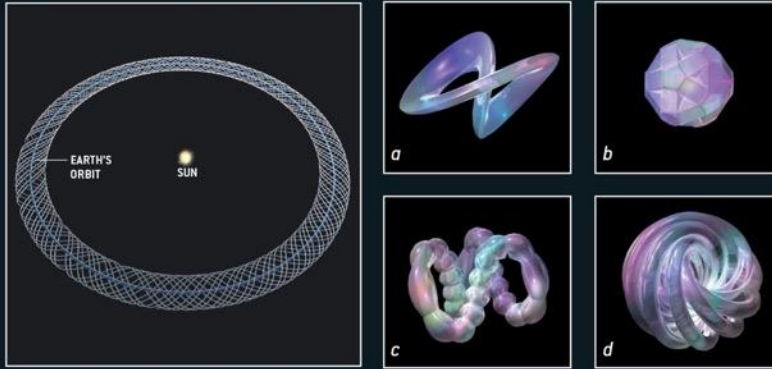


Figure 152. *Bryan Christie Design (left); Alfred T. Kamajian (a–d)*. MIT Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research. Source: [https://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/PDF/multiverse\\_sciam.pdf](https://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/PDF/multiverse_sciam.pdf)



Figure 153. Mariko Mori, *Radiant Being VI*, 2019, UV cured pigment, Dibond and aluminium, edition of 5 + 2AP, 68 x 68 x 3 inches, 172.72 x 172.72 x 7.62 cm, The work is accompanied by a signed certificate of authenticity, Courtesy Sean Kelly. Ocula. Source: <https://ocula.com/artists/mariko-mori/>



Figure 154. Mariko Mori, *Madama Butterfly*. Scenography Today. Source: <https://www.scenographytoday.com/mariko-mori-madama-butterfly/>



Figure 155. Mariko Mori, *Cyclic II*, 2014, aluminum, paint and lacquer, 205.4 x 215.4 x 205.4 cm, 80 7/8 x 84 13/16 x 80 7/8 in., Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York, © Photo : Jason Wyche, New York © Mariko Mori © ADAGP, Paris. AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions. Source: <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/artiste/mariko-mori/>



Figure 156. Mariko Mori, *Spirifer II*, 2017-2018, Dichroic coated acrylic, Corian base sculpture: 37 1/4 x 23 5/8 x 20 5/16 inches (94.6 x 60 x 51.6 cm), base height: 13 5/8 inches (34.6 cm), base diameter: 11 15/16 inches (30.3 cm), overall: 50 7/8 x 23 5/8 x 20 5/16 inches (129.2 x 60 x 51.6 cm), edition of 8 with 2 APs. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/mariko-mori-spirifer-ii>



Figure 157. *Alfred T. Kamajian*. MIT Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research. Source: [https://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/PDF/multiverse\\_sciam.pdf](https://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/PDF/multiverse_sciam.pdf)



Figure 158. French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel with some of his works in Hong Kong, May 2014. The sculptures he is designing for Versailles have a similar pearl-strand shape. ALEX HOFFORD/epa/Corbis. Smithsonian Magazine. Source: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/first-new-permanent-sculpture-grace-versailles-300-years-180952210/>



Figure 159. Leo Villareal, *Multiverse*, 2008, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Leo Villareal. Source: <http://villareal.net/multiverse-2008-national-gallery-of-art-dc>



Figure 160. Marcel Duchamp, *Door: 11, rue Larrey*, 1927. Source: [https://www.toutfait.com/issues/volume2/issue\\_5/articles/gerrard/popup\\_12.html](https://www.toutfait.com/issues/volume2/issue_5/articles/gerrard/popup_12.html)



Figure 161. L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped, 1961–2021. Photo: Wolfgang Volz. Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Source: <https://christojeanneclaude.net/artworks/realized-projects/>



Figure 162. Installation view. Artwork © Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation. Photo: Thomas Lannes. Gagosian. Source: <https://gagosian.com/exhibitions/2022/christo-early-works-1958-1963/>



Figure 163. Joana Vasconcelos. *Urinals*, 2005, ceramic urinals, handmade cotton crochet, 40 x 58 x 30 cm unique. Casa Triângulo. Source: <https://www.casatriangulo.com/artists/64-joana-vasconcelos/works/11299-joana-vasconcelos-urinals-2005/>



Figure 164. Joana Vasconcelos. The Dior Fall/Winter 2023 finale. Photo Adrien Dirand/courtesy Dior. ARTnews. Source: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/portuguese-artist-joana-vasconcelos-transforms-diors-paris-fashion-week-show-into-a-surrealist-landscape-1234659896/>



Figure 165. Cecília Costa. *Closer*. Dimension: 40 x 70 x 130cm. Medium: Madeira / Wood. Nominated by: Verónica de Mello. Sovereign Art Foundation. Source: <https://www.sovereignartfoundation.com/portuguese-art-prize-2022/>



Figure 166. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled Works*, 1989–2008. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Source: <https://www.guggenheim.org/audio/track/doris-salcedo-untitled-works-1989-2008>



Figure 167. Rajaa Paixão, *Pirilampo walk* installation view, 2018. Photo: author.



Figure 168. Rajaa Paixão, *Pirilampo walk* installation view, 2018. Photo: author.

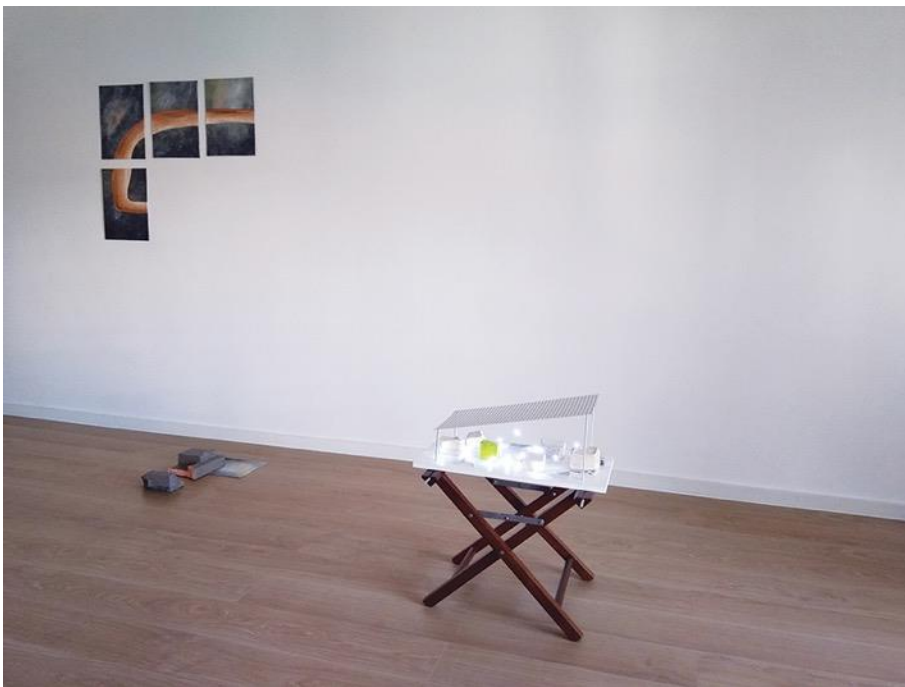


Figure 169. Rajaa Paixão, *Pirilampo walk* installation view, 2018. Photo: author.



Figure 170. *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, 1999 by Cornelia Parker at Tate Britain. Photograph: Amer Ghazzal/Rex/Shutterstock. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/may/22/cornelia-parker-tate-britain-london-review>



Figure 171. *Perpetual Canon*, 2004 by Cornelia Parker: 60 flattened instruments once used by a brass band. Photograph: Guy Bell/Rex/Shutterstock. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/may/22/cornelia-parker-tate-britain-london-review>



Figure 172. Phyllida Barlow's *dock* at Tate Britain Credit: Eddie Mulholland/Telegraph. The Telegraph. Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/artists/sculptor-phyllida-barlow-gets-cbe-for-services-to-art/>



Figure 173. Royal Academy of Arts, *In the studio with Phyllida Barlow*. Image source: [https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/phyllida-barlow?fbclid=IwAR21oDd8VD659jIm1o9CKCiXDomoIgmIyUupa6noXMd6tHcuEB2PBwgu8iM&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=Exh%20%20PhyllidaBarlow%20%20PhyllidaBarlowTrailer%20%20ORGANIC%20%20%20INT&utm\\_content=ORGANIC&utm\\_term=20190213#video](https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/phyllida-barlow?fbclid=IwAR21oDd8VD659jIm1o9CKCiXDomoIgmIyUupa6noXMd6tHcuEB2PBwgu8iM&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Exh%20%20PhyllidaBarlow%20%20PhyllidaBarlowTrailer%20%20ORGANIC%20%20%20INT&utm_content=ORGANIC&utm_term=20190213#video). Screenshot by author.



Figure 174. Louise Bourgeois. 64mag. Source: [https://www.instagram.com/64mag/reel/C\\_ugg25o5uO/](https://www.instagram.com/64mag/reel/C_ugg25o5uO/). Screenshots by author.



Figure 175. Gerhard Richter painting in his studio, Düsseldorf. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/primer/gerhard-richter?fbclid=IwAR3Anx8zPyMSycQzxglbWTk091r35MbbBJZpbKhlHuGUcpGvhmS404dEOe#credits>

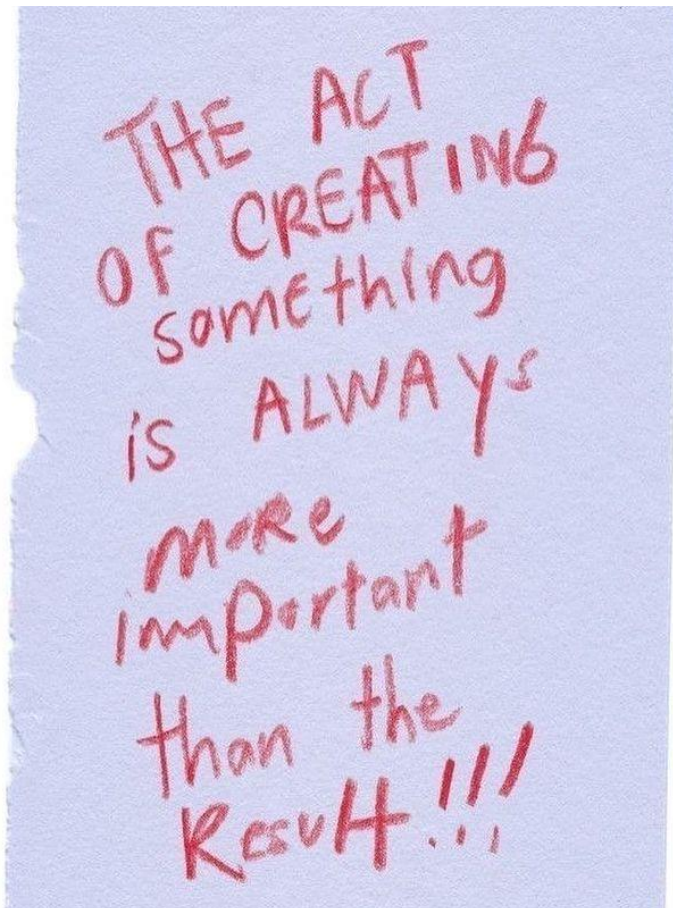


Figure 176. Ockers, R. [@roy.ockers]. (2022, April 26). [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from [https://www.instagram.com/p/Cc0xpnaMp6e/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_linkts](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cc0xpnaMp6e/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_linkts)





Figure 179. Tai Shani, *DC Semiramis*, 2018 Glasgow, Courtesy the artist © Keith Hunter. Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/turner-contemporary/exhibition/turner-prize-2019/tai-shani>



Figure 180. 'One of those acrobat hay rakes that whirl like sunflowers in the early surrealism of Joan Miró': a detail from Mike Nelson's *The Asset Strippers* at Tate Britain. Photograph: Matt Greenwood © Tate. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/mar/24/mike-nelson-the-asset-strippers-review-tate-britain-duveen>



Figure 181. Mike Nelson, *Studio apparatus for Kunsthalle Münster*, 2014, Installation view: Kunsthalle Münster, November 1, 2014 - February 22, 2015. 303 Gallery. Source: <https://www.303gallery.com/public-exhibitions/mike-nelson?view=slider>



Figure 182. Rafał Zajko, *Song to the Siren*, 2022, installation view, photography by Ben Deakin. Cooke Latham Gallery. Source: [https://www.cookelathamgallery.com/exhibitions/25/installation\\_shots/image462/](https://www.cookelathamgallery.com/exhibitions/25/installation_shots/image462/)



Figure 183. Tatiana Trouvé, (2018). *Les Indéfinis* [Plexiglas, pierre, bois, métal, patine, peinture, laiton/ Plexiglass, stone, wood, steel, patina, paint, brass]. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/tatiana-trouve-les-indefinis-6>



Figure 184. Tatiana Trouvé, Vue de l'exposition *A Quiet Life* à la galerie Kamel Mennour, Paris, 2018 © Slash-Paris, 2018. Slash. Source: <https://slash-paris.com/articles/tatiana-trouve-galerie-kamel-mennour>



Figure 185. Philippe Parreno. *Time Coloured Space* (installation view). Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, Portugal, 2017. Photo: Andrea Rosseti. 1301SW. Source: <https://www.1301sw.com/artist/phillipe-parreno/>



Figure 186. *After A Life Ahead*, 2017, ice rink concrete floor; sand, clay, phreatic water; bacteria, algae, bee, chimera peacock; aquarium, black switchable glass, conus textile; incubator, human cancer cells; genetic algorithm; augmented reality; automated ceiling structure; rain; ammoniac; logic game. Photo: Ola Rindal. Courtesy the artist; Chantal Crousel, Paris; Marian Goodman, New York & Paris; Esther Schipper, Berlin; and Hauser & Wirth, London. ArtReview. Source: <https://artreview.com/ar-october-2018-feature-pierre-huyghe/>

**HUYGHE, Pierre**

*Instruction (2004)*

- Find a situation.
- Write a time score (a scenario).
- Select the players.

1. Extract the coefficient of fiction contained in the situation.

2. Intensify it. This supplement of fiction should amplify the reality of the situation. That's your score, your ritournelle that rules the game.

3. Each player should now be ready to play the score, during and inside the actual situation.

Whether it's a situation or a natural phenomenon, the time of the score is always linked to its' natural duration. Like the duration of a rainbow.

Figure 187. Obrist, H. U. [@hansulrichobrist]. (2020, April 7). Pierre Huyghe - Do It Number 25 – Find a situation. – Write a time score (a scenario). – Select the players [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from [https://www.instagram.com/p/B-rLF2SAHYg/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/B-rLF2SAHYg/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)



Figure 188. Tanner Mothershead. Create! Magazine. Source: <https://createmagazine.com/read/tanner-mothershead>



Figure 189. *The Colours of Infinity* Documentary, 1995. Presented and written by Arthur C. Clarke, directed and written by Nigel Lesmoir-Gordon. Screenbound International Pictures, United Kingdom. Streamed on Netflix, 2023. Screenshot by author.



Figure 190. Laure Prouvost, *Breathing Sun*, 2019, fabric, 2 tapestries, metal man with mirror, glass objects, lights. carlier | gebauer. Source: [https://www.carliergebauer.com/artists/laure\\_prouvost](https://www.carliergebauer.com/artists/laure_prouvost)



Figure 191. Alicja Kwade, *Die Gesamtheit aller Orte*, 2012, metal plates, metal pipes, metal mesh, perforated metal, metal rails, steel plates, steel bar, copper tubes, brass rings, brass rods, euro coins, wood mouldings, wood panels, glass panels, mirrors, door, bricks, bicycles, door, window, lacquer, rust, 54 pieces, dimensions variable. Photo: Roman März. Artsy. Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/tatiana-trouve-les-indefinis-6>



Figure 192. Joseph Beuys, *We are the Revolution*, 2010-2011, Courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery. ARTIME NY. Source: <http://www.artimemy.com/?tag=social-sculpture>



Figure 193. Adriano Amaral | *Untitled*, 2015, Installation view at De Ateliers, Amsterdam. Nuno Centeno. Source: <http://www.nunocenteno.com/artists/adriano-amaral/>



Figure 194. Installation shots of Nobuko Tsuchiya at Leeds Art Gallery for Yorkshire Sculpture International. Courtesy Leeds Art Gallery. Photography Simon Warner. Yorkshire Sculpture International. Source: <https://yorkshire-sculpture.org/artists/nobuko-tsuchiya/>



Figure 195. Teresa Solar. La Biennale di Venezia. Source: <https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2022/milk-dreams/teresa-solar>



Figure 196. The body as medium. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Source: [https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/marina\\_planes.html](https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/marina_planes.html). Screenshot by author.



Figure 197. Eva Fàbregas. *Devouring lovers creates a sensual spatial expression*. Image: Jacopo Laforgia. Stir. Source: <https://www.stirworld.com/see-features-sculpting-sensations-devouring-lovers-by-eva-fabregas>



Figure 198. Adriano Costa | April, 2013, installation view at Sadie Coles HQ, London, England. Nuno Centeno. Source: <http://www.nunocenteno.com/artists/adriano-costa/>



Figure 199. Rachel Whiteread © 2017 ART.ZIP. ART.ZIP. Source: <http://www.artzip.org/rachel-whiteread>



Figure 200. Rachel Whiteread. *I Lobo You*. Source: <https://www.iloboyou.com/architectural-design-rachel-whiteread/>



Figure 201. Maria Trabulo, *Fragile Stones*, 2023. @ Galeria Presença, Porto © Carlos Campos. Umbigo. Source: <https://umbigomagazine.com/en/blog/2023/05/24/pedras-frageis-de-raqqa-por-maria-trabulo-na-galeria-presenca/>



Figure 202. Marguerite Humeau, *The Holder of Wasp Venom*, 2023. Natural beeswax, microcrystalline wax, pigments, 150-year-old walnut (cause of death: unknown), handblown glass and wasp venom. Edition of 3. 190 x 320 x 290 cm | 74 13/16 x 126 x 114 3/16 in. White Cube. Source: <https://www.whitecube.com/artworks/the-holder-of-wasp-venom?edition>



Figure 203. Elena Damiani. *Fading field N 13*. 2019. Digital print on silk chiffon, wood structure, black matte paint on wall, variable dimensions. Installation view, *As the dust unsettles*, Revolver Galeria, Buenos Aires, 2019. Image courtesy Revolver Galeria. Photo: Catalina Romero. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Source: <https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/469>



Figure 204. Klára Hosnedlová, *GROWTH*, Kunsthalle Basel, 2024, exhibition view (with performers), photo: Zdeněk Porcal – Studio Flusser / Kunsthalle Basel. Kunsthalle Basel. Source: <https://www.kunsthallebasel.ch/en/exhibition/klara-hosnedlova-2/>



Figure 205. Esther Kläs, installation view „*Girare con te*“, Museo Marino Marini, Firenze, Italy, 2014. Kadel Willborn. Source: <https://www.kadel-willborn.de/en/data/artists/139/esther-klaes.html>

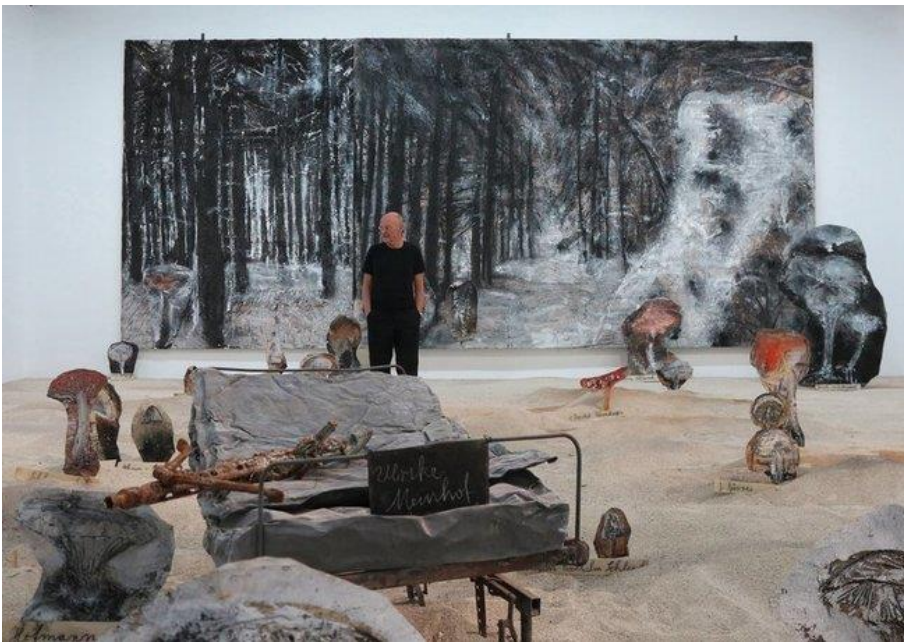


Figure 206. Anselm Kiefer in the new installation for his retrospective at the Pompidou Center in Paris. Credit...Atelier Anselm Kiefer, 2015. The New York Times. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/31/arts/design/anselm-kiefer-and-his-hallmarks-have-a-moment.html>



Figure 207. Anselm Kiefer, *Winterreise*, 2015-2020 – Private collection. Photo: Georges Poncet. Voorlinden. Source: <https://www.voorlinden.nl/exhibition/anselm-kiefer/?lang=en>

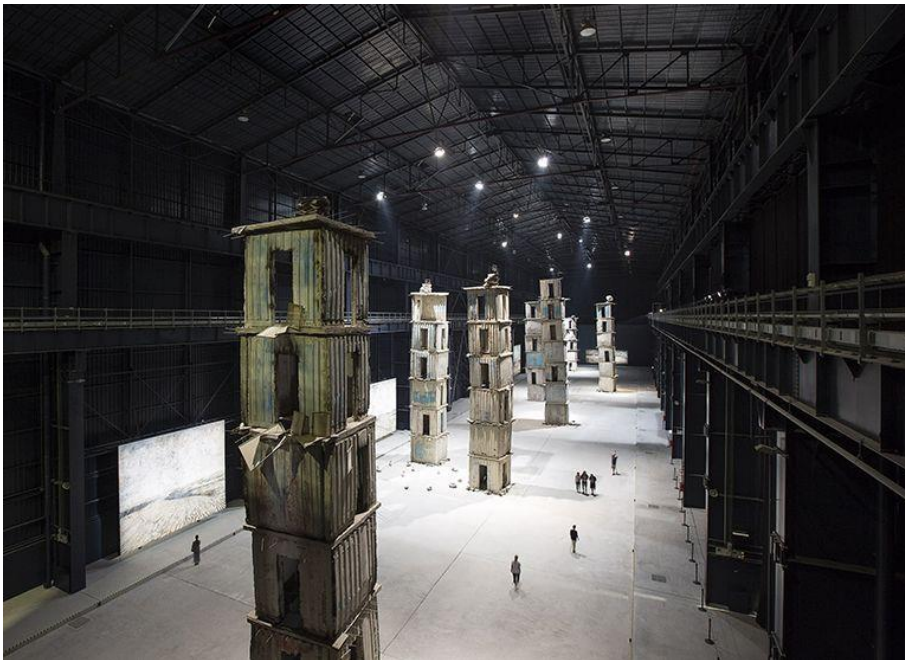


Figure 208. Anselm Kiefer, *The Seven Heavenly Palaces* 2004-2015. Permanent exhibition from 24 September 2004 at Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan. Pirelli HangarBicocca. Source: <https://pirellihangarbicocca.org/en/anselm-kiefer/>



Figure 209. Installation view of Mike Nelson, *Triple Bluff Canyon (the woodshed)*, 2004. Various materials. M25, 2023. Found tyres. Photo: Matt Greenwood. Courtesy the artist and the Hayward Gallery. 303 Gallery. Source: <https://www.303gallery.com/artists/mike-nelson/selected-works?view=slider>



Figure 210. Thomas Hirschhorn. *Collapse*. 2018. Mixed media sculpture. Collection of the artist. Production support: The Institute of Art, Okutama. Courtesy: Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Installation view “Catastrophe and the Power of Art,” Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2018. Photo: Kioku Keizo. Mori Art Museum. Source: <https://www.mori.art.museum/en/news/2018/10/1692/>



Figure 211. Tadashi Kawamata fills Lisbon's MAAT with plastic to warn about ocean debris. Dezeen. Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/10/29/tadashi-kawamata-lisbon-maat-plastic-ocean-over-flow-installation/>



Figure 212. Mire Lee, *Endless House: Holes and Drips*, 2022, Multiple ceramic sculptures on a scaffold, lithium carbonate and iron oxide glaze liquid, pump, motor and other mixed media, scaffold scale 1.8 x 2 x 4 m, dimension variable. Exhibition: The Milk of Dreams, The Arsenale, Venice Biennale 2022, Apr 23 – Nov 27, 2022. With the support of Mondriaan Fund, Korean Arts Management Service, Samsung Foundation of Culture / Special thanks to Sundaymorning@ekwc, Courtesy of the artist and Leeum Museum of Art. Mire Lee. Source: <http://www.mirelee.com/en/works/endless-house-holes-and-drips>



Figure 213. Kader Attia. *The Museum of Emotion*. Installation view. Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London, United Kingdom. February 13 – May 6, 2019. Photo by Thierry Bal. Lehmann Maupin. Source: <https://www.lehmannmaupin.com/artists/kader-attia>



Figure 214. Mandy El-Sayegh, *"Cite Your Sources"*. Installation view at Chisenhale Gallery, 2019. Commissioned and produced by Chisenhale Gallery, London. Photography by Andy Keate. Courtesy of the artist. Flash Art. Source: <https://flash---art.com/2019/05/sensible-ecstasy-in-the-works-of-mandy-el-sayegh/>



Figure 215. Claire Barclay, *Suspect Collapse*, 2017. Rubber and steel. Dimensions TBC.  
Stephen Friedman Gallery. Source:  
<https://www.stephenfriedman.com/content/feature/1790/detail/artworks10871/>

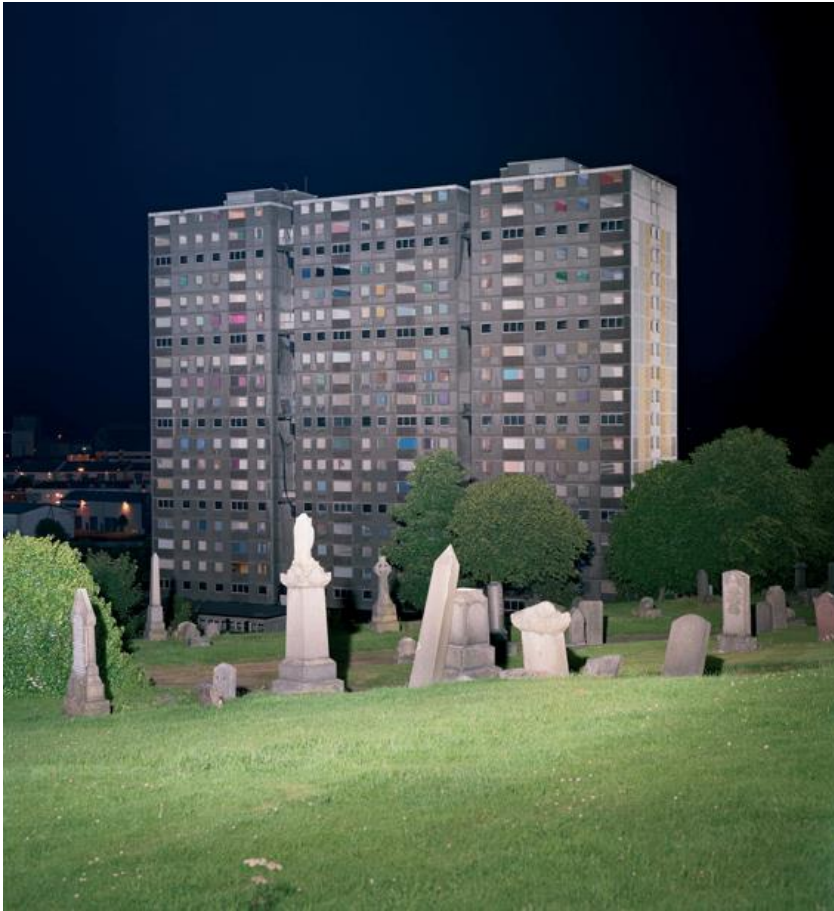


Figure 216. Cyprien Gaillard. *'Cenotaph to 12 Riverford Road, Pollockshaws, Glasgow'*, 2008, reconstituted concrete, installation view, Hayward Gallery, London. MAP Magazine. Source: <https://mapmagazine.co.uk/cyprien-gaillard-recycling-th>



Figure 217. Ângela Ferreira. Exhibition view of *Realistic Manifesto*, 2022. NF/ Nieves Fernández. Source: <https://nfgaleria.com/en/exposicion/angela-ferreira-realistic-manifesto-gabos-fundamental-principles-of-constructivist-practice/>



Figure 218. Ângela Ferreira, *A Tendency to Forget*, 2015. Exhibition view at Museu Coleção Berardo-Arte Moderna e Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo © Jorge Silva. PIN-UP. Source: <https://archive.pinupmagazine.org/articles/interview-angela-ferreira-modern-architecture-colonialism#24>



Figure 219. Fernanda Fragateiro, exhibition view of "*Em bruto: relações comoventes*" at Fundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia, León (ES), 2022. Irène Laub. Source: <https://irenelaubgallery.com/artistes/fernanda-fragateiro/>



Figure 220. Ian Kiaer. Installation View. Alison Jacques. Source: <https://alisonjacques.com/artists/ian-kiaer>



Figure 221. Jeff Koons. *Tulips*, 1995–2004, High chromium stainless steel with transparent color coating, 203 x 460 x 520 cm. Guggenheim Bilbao. Source: <https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/the-collection/works/tulips>



Figure 222. Lubaina Himid. *Naming the Money*, 2004. Photograph: Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens. The Guardian. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/sep/24/lubaina-himid-turner-prize-2017-interview>



Figure 223. Nina Canell, *Brief Syllable (Heavy)*, 2016, Acrylic, subterranean high voltage cable, concrete, 16.5 x 16.5 x 111cm. Art Viewer. Source: <https://artviewer.org/nina-canell-at-leo-xu-projects/>



Figure 224. Nina Canell. *Perpetuum Mobile (25 kg)*, 2009, basin, water, cement, and ultrasound. Photo by Robin Watkins. All images courtesy of the artist, Daniel Marzona, Mother's Tankstation, and Galerie Barbara Wien. BOMB Magazine. Source: <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/nina-canell/>



Figure 225. Jesse Darling, *Crevé*, exhibition view, Triangle France - Astérides, Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille, 2019. Photo: Aurélien Mole. Triangle France. Source: <http://trianglefrance.org/en/exhibitions/jesse-darling/>



Figure 226. Installation views: *Art Now: Jesse Darling: The Ballad of Saint Jerome* 2018 © Jesse d. Courtesy the artist and Arcadia Missa. © Tate photography (Matt Greenwood). Tate. Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/jesse-darling>



Figure 227. Sarah Sze, *Love Song*, 2024. Inkjet prints on paper mounted on tyvek, string, clamps, aluminum, and mixed media. Dimensions variable. Kevin Todora. Nasher Sculpture Center. Source: <https://www.nashersculpturecenter.org/art/exhibitions/exhibition/id/2039/sarah-sze#!/info/exhibition/4548/9527>



Figure 228. Kenichi Kanazawa. *tedgioia/Twitter*. Interesting Engineering. Source: <https://interestingengineering.com/culture/japanese-artist-shapes-sound-through-sand-creating-masterpieces>

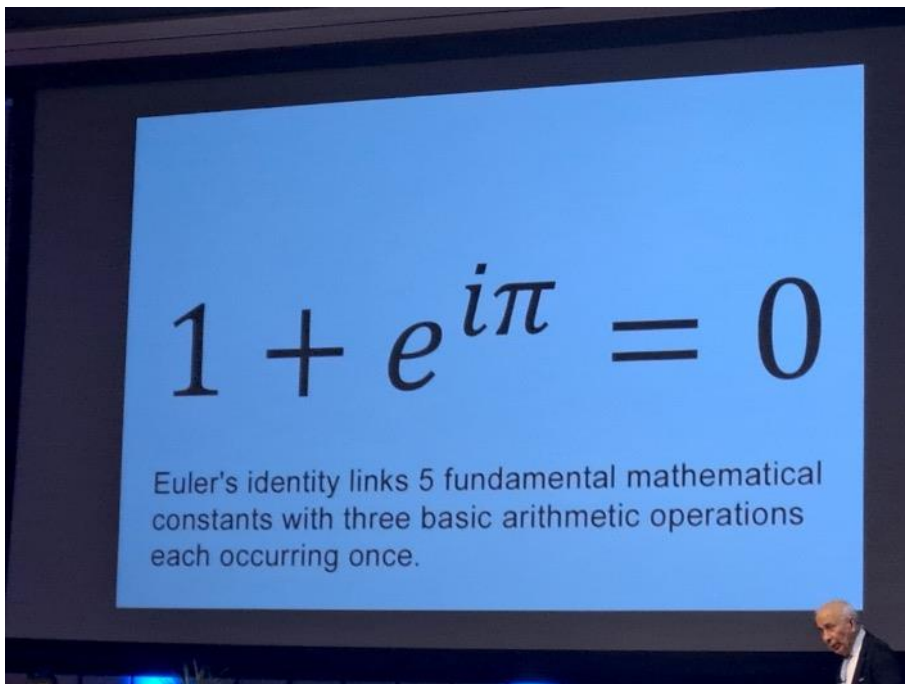


Figure 229. Keynote lecturer neurobiologist Semir Zeki speaking on Mathematical Beauty at the MAAT – Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology's *International Conference on Art and Health*, at the EDP Headquarters in Lisbon, on 10 November, 2023. Photo: author.

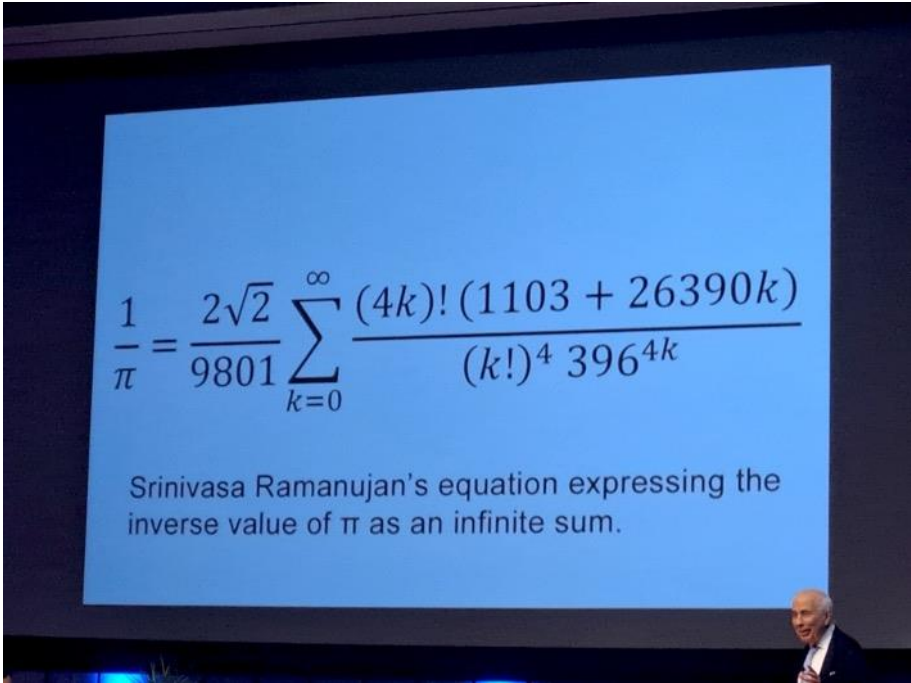


Figure 230. Keynote lecturer neurobiologist Semir Zeki speaking on Mathematical Beauty at the MAAT – Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology's *International Conference on Art and Health*, at the EDP Headquarters in Lisbon, on 10 November, 2023. Photo: author.



Figure 231. Richard Deacon, *Not Yet Beautiful*, 1994. Welded polycarbonate, 70 x 210 x 120 cm (27½ x 82¾ x 47¼ in). Photography courtesy of L.A. Louver Gallery, Venice, CA, USA. Parasol unit. Source: <https://parasol-unit.org/whats-on/the-strangeness-of-beauty-issue-10-richard-deacon/>



Figure 232. Artist Tove Storch: "I've never seen a sculpture like this before" | Louisiana Channel. YouTube. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sPDrK23ueU>. Screenshot by author.



Figure 233. Delcy Morelos. *Agua salada organizada*, 2014. Installation view of two works in the series. Acrylic on jute. 113 7/8 x 3 x 4 3/4 in. (289.2 x 7.5 x 12 cm). Marian Goodman Gallery. Source: <https://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/535-delcy-morelos-el-oscuero-de-abajo/>



Figure 234. *Hunefer's Judgement in the presence of Osiris, Book of the Dead of Hunefer, 19th Dynasty, New Kingdom, c. 1275 B.C.E., papyrus, Thebes, Egypt (British Museum). Khan Academy. Source: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/egypt-art/beginners-guide-egypt/a/ancient-egyptian-hieroglyphs-overview>*



Figure 235. *Image 5 of 11 - NAZCA LINES FIGURE 5.* Machu Travel Peru. Source: <https://www.machutravelperu.com/peru-tours/packages-nazca-lines-machu-picchu>



Figure 236. *mikroman6/Getty Images.* Popular Mechanics. Source: <https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/archaeology/a45304938/new-language-discovered-ruins-ancient-empire/>



Figure 237. Huma Bhabha, 2022. Photograph by Daniel Dorsa. Courtesy of David Zwirner. Art Basel. Source: <https://www.artbasel.com/stories/huma-bhabha-montpellier-moco-sculptures-poughkeepsie-new-york>

## APPENDIX B: REFLECTIVE TEXTS



**i. Autoethnography *Notes on the water tank***



The water tank during September, 2018

Why the water tank? Out of all the social issues we face, why would a structure somehow ‘irrelevant’ be a trigger to research that holds substantial academic responsibilities?

First, I will start by describing the tank. Located in Grândola, Alentejo, Portugal, the tank is situated on the premises of the family’s country house, and is surrounded by ruins in the back.



Ruins during September, 2018

Why do objects mesmerise us more than others, and why do we tend to obsess about them?

In order to understand my own attention to the tank, I will try to analyse it from two crucial points of view, the first one from my point of view as an artist, and the second one as a mother.

### **The artist**

As a visual artist focusing on sculpture and highly influenced by minimalist art, I can picture this structure in the park facing one of KAWS' gigantic sculptures, perhaps the parent and child one<sup>1</sup>. Given a neat paint and placed out of context, the tank could have been called public art, or a monument.

Rosalind Krauss<sup>2</sup> pointed out that 'over the last ten years rather surprising things have come to be called sculpture'... that was nearly 40 years ago. In that sense, anything could be introduced as art, if the creator decides it is, and intends it to be.

I look at the tank and imagine a collaboration between Robert Morris and Le Corbusier, a sculpture titled *Untitled sur pilotis*, or alternatively, and ironically, a reserve of water offering a protection against inundation problems.

Would it be a good idea to try and rewrite its story through new structures? Should I be concerned with another aspect at this stage of my practice development?

How can visual narratives portray this thinking? What happens when the narrative is not a clear post-creation reading, and when the viewer is unaware of the thinking behind it? Does the work need to be explained?

*| The qualities of scale, proportion, shape, mass, are physical. Each of these qualities is made visible by the adjustment of an obdurate, literal mass [...] The objection is raised against the use of color that emphasizes the optical and in so doing subverts the physical. The more neutral hues, which do not call attention to themselves, allow for the maximum focus on those essential physical decisions that inform sculptural works.<sup>3</sup>*

### **The mother**

As a mother, the perception is also concerned with scale, though not aesthetically, and rather within a balance and proportions context, and function. Seeing my 2 year-old standing underneath the nearly 5m-high tank certainly triggered a sense of anxiety over its questionable sturdiness. The tank is supposedly built to store water. For a mother, not being able to see what's inside this threatening structure makes it even more intriguing. Does it contain water? Is the water clean? Has the water dried out, will it freeze in the winter? Looking at the outer condition of the structure, one wonders in what state the water currently is. Am I being paranoid? Is my reaction a natural or a bad one?

I can't help but think about how mothers are supposed to be in the eyes of society: strong, solid, in control; when a tsunami might be taking place inside their mind.

Water is free in its fluid nature, malleable, adaptable, a vital and powerful element that sustains living creatures and could in extreme conditions bury cities. It can be admired, but also feared.

In the case of the water tank, the water is tamed, controlled, powerless, reduced, and more prone to condition deterioration. Time plays a role in the ageing process and quality of the water. Mothers are expected to keep their composure, without betraying any internal turmoil, at the risks of being labelled 'aggressive' or even 'crazy'. Does society reduce mothers to water tanks where the ageing process is a sign of degradation? Mothers might not be aiming to go out of control in the purpose of destroying or harming, but to break the walls of oppression, confinement insight their thoughts, judgment, and from being expected to reform under one rigid model.

Would it help if the tank were transparent? Would it be enough to see through mothers, facilitate communication to better understand them, and interact without misconception? Or do mother must break out of all pre-existing misconception and build their own tailor-made guidelines?

*| Beyond the fiction of reality, there is the reality of the fiction.<sup>4</sup>*

I developed a body of sculptural works based on this thinking, using the narrative as a method, rather than a result. Fictive narratives were created based on an imagined 'life' of the tank, leading to the creation of new sculptures. The process has helped locate where the fictive infiltrated, and how close it can be to the real, at the point of intersecting and being perceived as one.

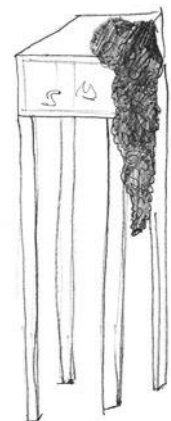
From the actual tank, imagined objects have materialised. The real became fictive through a narrative, and then the fictive became real through the existence of the new artefacts. Considering that the latter version of the real is widely spread, and theories are built on top of the new real, which was built on fiction, from fiction built on the real... How many false ideas have we inherited from our mothers, who inherited it from their owns mothers, and so on and so forth...? It goes back to indefinite generations. What mutated versions of paradigms have emanated from societies and are embedded in us?

### **Original scenario**

The water tank is an opaque hermetic structure built to store water inside of it.

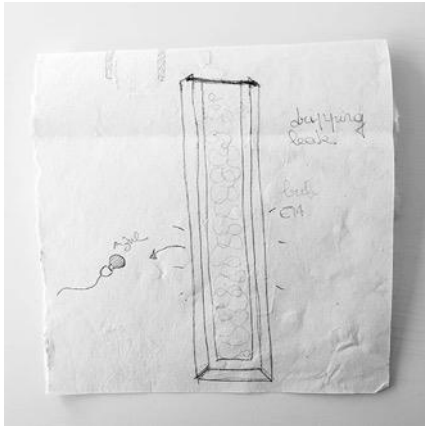
### **Scenario a**

The tank has been downsized, the imperfect cube and the long base structures have been accentuated, and the tank has become less dominant. It has now conceded to show transparency and reveals its inside. The water has taken control over its destiny and has overflowed outside the tank. Instead of being threatening, the water lies calmly and peacefully on the tank, looking very vivid, free – yet composed – healthy, and doesn't appear to be affecting the balance of the tank. Residues have remained



inside the tank, pure white, clean, and harmonious, retaining a shine betraying the former presence of the water.

### Scenario b



Some water drops have escaped outside the tank, and are leaking on the tank's bases/pilotis. Invisible to the eye, light can reveal their presence and crystalline properties.

### Scenario c

External factors surrounding the tank play a role in its existence. Autumn leaves contribute an organic and ephemeral look, softening its threatening aspect. The water drops have fallen on the surrounding elements, gathering and reshaping in a frozen state, affecting the texture and the matt aspect of the surfaces it touches.

### Scenario d

Human presence is occasionally present, interacting lively around the tank, instigating the play factor, and adding a sunny touch to the green scenery.

Conclusions underlining hidden misconceptions:

### The artist

By creating works of art born from fictive experiences or narratives, the materialisation of the stories makes the experiences real.

Works of art that don't display obvious or detectable signs of social involvement don't necessarily indicate a lack of concern from the part of the artist. Whether it's implicit,

explicit, conscious or not, by the mere fact of not only creating, but also sharing, every artist intervenes socially.

The artist might not hold control over the viewer's interpretation of their work, but through their intentions, has control in defining whether the work is defined as art or not.

### **The mother**

The perception of threat and fear of keeping the child safe, have turned the water tank into a dangerous structure. The water tank might be the last element that might harm the child, but the fictive scenario that has emerged has become real due the overpowering anxiety of the mother.

Looking at the narratives behind the creation of the fictive water tank project, it is clear that the elements are real and have existed. The narrative versions can be real, except that the fictive is so embedded, that it is difficult to locate where it precisely took over and what exactly has happened, is prone to happen, or is simply speculations. A lot of paradigms around motherhood have occurred in the same way.

### **Thoughts in common:**

During this dual process, both parallel thinking from the two different point of views were accompanied by one similar shadow thought: the fear and doubt of the good and the bad, good art, bad art, good artist, bad artist, and a good or a bad mother.

Both were concerned with time and age and the achievements to be made at an early stage of both paths.

Both tend to be identified with movements, art movements for sculpture, or social movements for mothers.

Both can be linked to similarities in the thinking of my own mother.

Both involve the play and the experimentation factors.

Both are defensive about their respective work and child, and both tend to be overprotective. They apprehend criticism and can be alienated by it.

Both have an extendable property. According to Krauss, 'categories like sculpture and painting have been kneaded and stretched and twisted in an extraordinary demonstration of elasticity, a display of the way a cultural term can be extended to include just about anything. And though this pulling and stretching of a term such as sculpture is overtly

performed in the name of vanguard aesthetics-the ideology of the new-its covert message is that of historicism.’

On the other hand, from personal and peer experience, mothers have the faculty to adapt, to face pressures, they have to stay alert, protect, multitask, be mentally ubiquitous, assist. Mothers expand, need to be mentally and actively ‘elastic’ to keep on top of events. A scientist recently proved that cats can be both solid and fluid. Can science elaborate on the elasticity and the endurance of the mother’s mind?

Every artist, same as every mother, needs their own voice and style (practice, or parenting) to evolve and improve, they need freedom of expression, without the fear of repercussions on their art or child. More or less, the rules they have to abide by are the ones of safety nature, and other obvious reasons as such.

Women artists, same as mothers, when showing originality out of the familiar and expected norms, materials and dimensions, are more prone to be perceived as ‘crazy’. Which, generally, is not the case of male artists, who are perceived as genius.

Looking back at the text I highlight the following overlapping concepts:

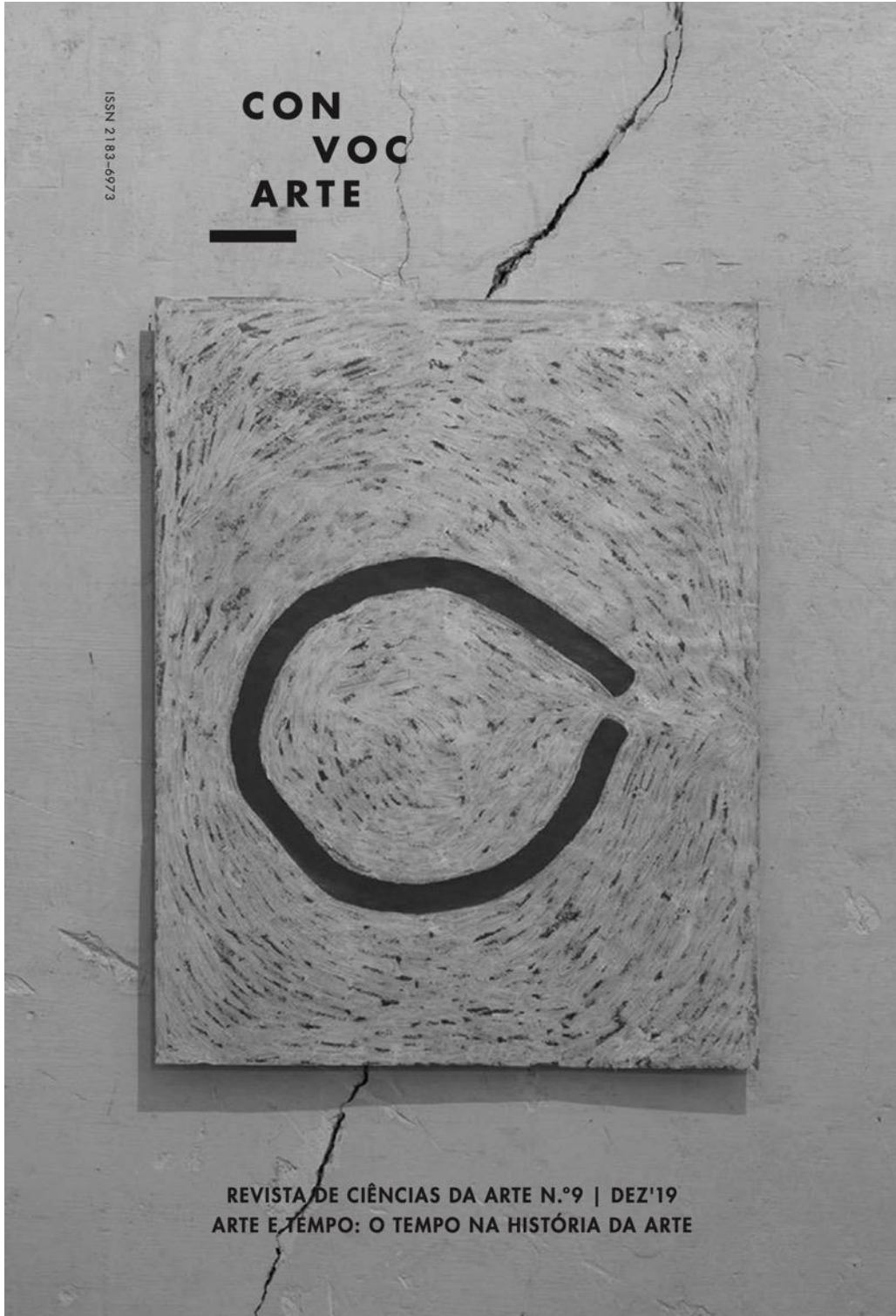
*The good and the bad / The mother of the mother / Criticism / Extendable properties / Freedom / Fear / Crazy / Play / Movement / Time and age*

More themes in common can be elaborated, such as *Depth, The tactile and the sensorial, and Control.*

[1] The Independent, “Pop artist KAWS’s cartoon sculptures hit the Yorkshire countryside”, 2016 [2] Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field”, *October*, 8, 30-44, 1979 [3] Robert Morris, “Notes on sculpture”, *Artforum*, 4(6), 42-44, 1966 [4] Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, 2012

Date: September 2018
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ii. Publication: *Fatalism as a product of Motherhood in the context of Sculpture*



# Fatalism as a product of Motherhood in the context of Sculpture

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CONVOCARTE N.º 9 – ARTE E TEMPO: O TEMPO NA HISTÓRIA DA ARTE

## **Abstract**

*This text studies the notion of time perceived by an artist and mother working with the medium of sculpture. It employs time as a catalyst to understand if, and how, early motherhood can influence the artistic creation, and argues that the influence is occurrential. It indicates that the artist adopts an eternalist approach involving the far future, and the mother is concerned with a fatalist aspect necessitating the past. It concluded that balance can be achieved in the making of sculpture.*

## **Keywords**

*time, sculpture, motherhood, fatalism, topology*

## **Resumo**

Este texto debate a noção de tempo percebida por uma artista mãe que trabalha a escultura como meio. Pensa o tempo como catalisador para compreender se e como a maternidade precoce pode influenciar a criação artística e argumenta esta evidência. Deste modo, a artista adopta uma posição eternalista ao envolver no seu processo o futuro distante, na mesma medida, a artista mãe se preocupa com um aspecto fatalista que se exige do passado. Argumentamos no texto que o equilíbrio pode ser alcançado no "fazer" da escultura.

## **Palavras-chave**

Tempo, escultura, maternidade, fatalismo, topologia

## Introduction

When we think about time, we first think of clocks with defined predictable periodic structures, ticking, and most of all irreversible. We can't see it, but we feel it through change and motion, and a sense of duration dissected into hours, minutes, and seconds. This is the measured notion that we visualise best, the one explicitly defined by Physics. For centuries theorists strived to determine one true ultimate definition of the fundamental nature of time. It resulted in an ample epistemology enclosing extensive formulations and theories of what *time is*, based on this intuition of time passing, in order to clarify the ontological differences between past, present and future. In this paper I mostly focus on what *time looks like*, and employ the notion as an indicator to scrutinise the combination of sculpture and motherhood. To think of the shape of time would be to assert that time is real, a claim rejected by philosopher John M. E. McTaggart for who time isn't real (Tallant, 2014). Throughout history five different views and models of time and its connection to change have been articulated (Tallant, 2014): The *Presentist* model (*Presentism*) (Figure 1), in which only present objects exist. The *Eternalist* model (*Eternalism*) (Figure 1), where all objects from the past, present, and future simultaneously exist.

The *Growing block* model (Figure 2), in which the past exists and is fixed, continually adding new facts to reality. The *Moving spots* model (Figure 2), where all objects in time exist, but with the present moment moving through it.

And finally the *Shrinking tree* model (Figure 3), where all future possibilities start being eliminated by performing different actions.

*Eternalism* is the model that has been adopted most as the most plausible view according to Physics. It is also pertinent to the theme of sculpture as it presents the dimension of time like the



Figure 1. Jonathan Tallant, *Presentism, Eternalism*. Image source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author.



Figure 2. Jonathan Tallant, *Growing block, Moving spotlight*. Image source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author.

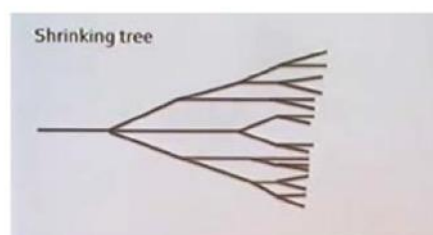
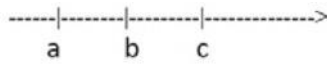


Figure 3. Jonathan Tallant, *Shrinking tree*. Image source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AVclZc9E_Q). Screenshot by author.



McTaggart's A series and B series

Figure 4. Bradley Dowden, *McTaggart's A series and B series*. Image downloaded from: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/time/#H12>



Figure 5. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Space Skins*, 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, stucco, spray paint, 101 x 120 x 22 cm. Photo: author.

one of space. It highlights the importance of the far future, as in 'the eternalist picture, all beings that will ever exist do exist, just in a different part of spacetime' (Tomasik, 2014). In other words, contemporary artists coexist with the artists of the past, and the artists of the future. McTaggart based his theory on the standard time diagram (Figure 4) to present two ways of ordering all events in time linearly. It shows time increasing to the right on a directional horizontal line or arrow, on which three events (a, b, c) are consecutive starting with the one with most pastness.

This diagram visually presents the notion of order in time and therefore succession, translated into past, present, and future. It is also behind the division of philosophers in two camps (a and b). The *A-series* counts on the present to locate its event in time, and the *B-series* disregards present, past, and future, leading to some of the different models listed above (as cited in Dowden, n.d.). Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity implies that time is continuous without stops, pauses or gaps (Dowden, n.d.). The theory opened new horizons to the definition of time and presents time and space interchangeably as a spacetime curved by matter, with gravity being the effect of geometry causing the curvature of spacetime to deflect massive bodies (Nastase, 2009). This matter can get squeezed to a collapsing point where those bent curvatures don't leave any room for light and form black holes (Curiel, 2009). A new theory suggests that matter sucked by black holes might be released in the universe in the future making time travel to the future possible (Lincoln, 2018).

### 1. Visual adaptation

A subjective study was developed to elucidate how I perceive time as an artist who's also a mother, currently working with the medium of static sculpture. In order to understand if, and how, the status of early motherhood can influence the artistic creation, the notion of time pre-

sented above was used as a catalyst to analyse the creation process of a particular project. With theory initially informing practice, this section adopts a practice-led approach. A sculptural project was created specifically taking into consideration these existent philosophical and scientific concepts studying the shape of time. Two post-creation texts were written to analyse one of the sculptures, one from my point of view as an artist, and the other from my point of view as a mother. The notion of the shape of time was translated into a visual perception culminating in the creation of *Nurturing sculpture-time (NST)* (2019), consisting of two sculptural works *Space Skins* (Figures 5,6) and *Wormholes & Space Cashews* (Figures 7,8). The oscillation between real and fictive events was employed to generate the narratives behind the artefacts.

In the following post-creation text, *Wormholes & Space Cashews* is analysed twice.

### 1.1. The artist

Thinking of a starting point to create a three-dimensional work, the artist didn't perceive one specific linear direction and decided to create many. Time might consist of multiple isolated time streams instead of a single line, and the topology of time hasn't been decisively visually formulated in the philosophy of time. The notion of a three-dimensional, defined as volume, is not given by direct visual perception (Read, 1956, p. 27). An imaginative or a mental effort is required to pass beyond the memory image and construct a three-dimensional image. Although we see objects from several points of view, we retain one particular and significant aspect as a memory image. In this work, a thin perforated metal platform is vertically holding on a solid and grainy stucco base. Twelve metal bars pierce through its holes, creating a separation of two new spaces, with twelve before and twelve after, intersecting at the perforated points. The dense structure resides in inorganic time and presents matter within this



Figure 6. Rajaa Paixão, NST: *Space Skins* (detail), 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, stucco, spray paint, 101 x 120 x 22 cm. Photo: author.

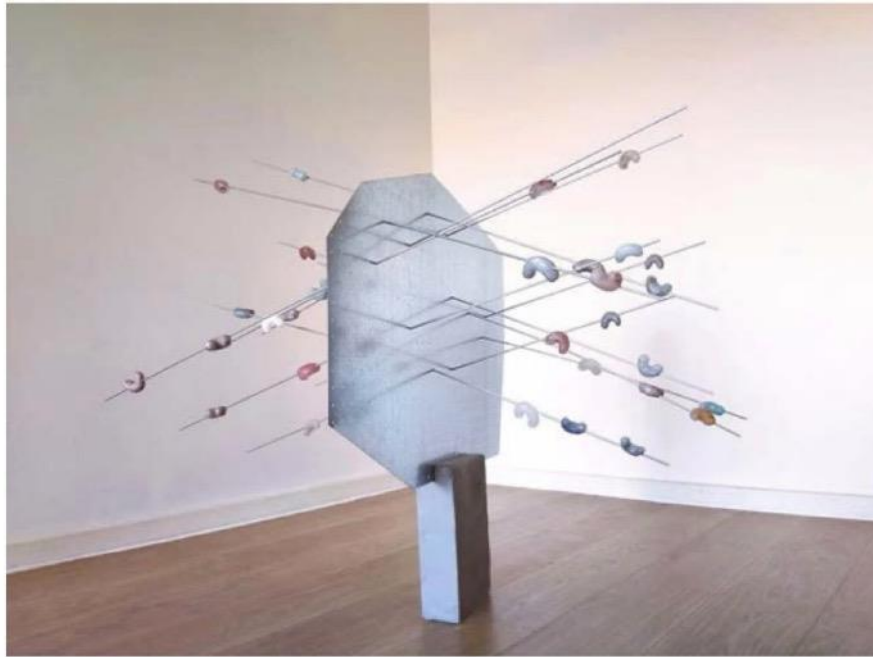


Figure 7. Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Wormholes & Space Cashews*, 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, stucco, spray paint, 90 x 90 x 100 cm. Photo: author.

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Rajaa Paixão, *NST: Wormholes & Space Cashews* (detail), 2019, metal, silicone, acrylic, stucco, spray paint, 90 x 90 x 100 cm. Photo: author.

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time's solid-state (Smithson, 1996a, p. 11). Stephen Hawking (2010) claims that everything has holes and wrinkles when looked at closely. 'Nothing is flat or solid', a basic physical principle that applies to time: 'There are tiny crevices, wrinkles and voids in time. Down at the smallest of scales, smaller even than molecules, smaller than atoms, we get to a place called the quantum foam. This is where wormholes exist'. The shape of the platform has been altered to 'escape the primacy of the rectangle' (Smithson, 1996b, p. 190). The platform, the bars, and the base are grey, blending in colour and reflecting light. The sculptor has control over the choice of material and the impact of light on it. The source of light reflects on the surface of polished metal 'and produces areas of high light and of deep shade that profoundly modify our perception of the form'. No matter how we move around the sculpture, light remains a moving and fluctuating element, playing over the smooth surface of a solid object and distorts 'the plastic impression of that object on our senses.' (Read, 1956, pp. 108-109). In that sense, light can (partially) turn them black or white, while they are still grey. If Henri Bergson (1912, p. 88) had never seen 'gray', he would have never been able to imagine how black and white, or two points of view, 'interpenetrate'. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh (n.d.) explains that grey carries a special significance for Gerhard Richter and isn't merely monochrome.

*Grey is the non-color par excellence, the sum of all colors in which various positions come to expression. Grey is the color of negation, of resistance, of an inability to unify, to reconcile. That's a spectrum from the very beginning that Richter has to be credited for. (Buchloh, n.d.)*

The platform disrupted the divergent directions of the bars, and divided the continuous lines into two sides. It simultaneously multiplied their number too, halting the growth of the past. Simultaneity is one casualty of the theory of relativity and holds the property of two events happening at the same time in a particular frame of reference. According to relativistic physics, what is simultaneous in one frame of reference will not necessarily be simultaneous in another (Mastin, n.d.). But can change be halted? *Reductionism with Respect to Time* opposes the view of *Platonism with Respect to Time* on whether time can exist without change, and mostly whether time exists independently of the events that occur in time ("Time", n.d.). The grey assemblage is static, yet the bars betray a motion of an event that just happened. This causes the crossing with the platform to create an invisible grid, where the directional timely bars become the space itself. Sculpture, with its static nature, is the medium that least represents time unfolding through motion (Krauss, 1977, p. 41). Nonetheless, it can relate to the passage of time through the notion of causality, and the connection between effects and their causes (p. 10).

## 1.2. The mother

The mother is also concerned with the dynamics of space but stays alert and aware of the physical and periodic time. The most overpowering influential factor, which was the emotional health anxiety linked to severe food and skin allergies in the child, was isolated and scrutinised. The erratic and exploratory artistic thoughts are often interrupted by exterior interferences, inducing worries and a need to rush. There's an intrusive tense on the guard, the irrational dread of unfortunate events, by not having control over what is going to happen in the future, the inevitable and the unavoidable, or *Fatalism*. Fatalism is a worry that has generated a good deal of work in the philosophy of time ("Time", n.d.). Finding it hard to neutralise a possible threat of an accidental and reoccurring anaphylaxis from a nut allergy, the mother decided to confront the object of fear and integrate it in the assemblage. Many little opalescent silicone and worm-looking cashew nuts are sparsely inserted on both sides of the bars, establishing balance in order to keep the platform straight, though generating asymmetry. The silicone is manually coloured and produces a variation of tones, as if subjected to sudden changes of temperature or conditions. Every technique illustrates and amplifies the metaphysical structure of our flesh, and is 'a technique of the body' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 168). The soft feature of the coloured silicone alleviates the harshness of the metallic elements, which can be very specific, and 'usually aggressive' like most industrial materials (Judd, 1965, p. 5). The materials of a work are 'closely related' to its form, and the 'obdurate identity' of a material is characterised by an objectivity: 'the qualities of materials—hard mass, soft mass, thickness of 1/32, 1/16, 1/8 inch, pliability, slickness, translucency, dullness—have unobjective uses'. Echoing the elastic aspect of the skin, their visceral marbled effect is a pastel version of the dark cosmic texture, and their organic attribute is closer to the idea of nature (Smithson, 1996c, p. 250). Those sculptural facts of space, light, and materials always function concretely and literally (Morris, 1968, p. 223). Time as biological evolution or decay has been here reinstated (Smithson, 1996a, p. 11). The four-dimensional notion of time and space has been drastically zoomed on, focusing on limited saccadic periods of time happening on the basic linear direction of time. Rosalind E. Krauss (1977, p. 5) notes how sculpture allows the maker to gradually become aware of its location 'at the juncture between stillness and motion, time arrested and time passing'. This tension brings 'enormous expressive power'. The psychological and subjective time remembering terrifying events is stretched compared to physical time, and a higher density of data make them seem to last longer than the actual time the events unfolded at (Eagelman, 2009). The stretched property is translated in the silicone material. The one reality we seize from within is our own personality in its flowing through time and our enduring self. This is achieved by intuition rather than by simple analysis (Bergson, 1912). The notion of simultaneity previously portrayed in

the minimalist grey structure is now disrupted by the little silicone sculptures successive on individual bars, but side by side on multiple ones. Following Bergson's (1913) thoughts on succession, we validate time as alloyed to space and avoid confusion between succession and simultaneity, and quality with quantity. In pure duration, the states of consciousness happen as a whole without distinction, melting into one another. The moment we place them side by side, we'd be projecting time into space. Given the example of an unlimited straight line on which a point – here a cashew sculpture – is moving, this point cannot feel itself moving except by taking consciousness of itself. And by doing so, it might perceive a succession in the movement but will not assume a succession in the form of a line, unless it can rise above the traversed line and see juxtaposed points of it. It is only then that space will be acknowledged. The skewered skin sculptures might at first seem to 'timidly' resist gravity, same as objects hung on walls. One of the conditions of understanding them is supplied by the sensing of the gravitational force acting upon them in actual space. By becoming part of a whole assemblage that imposes its own autonomous and literal space, of three coordinates instead than two, their awareness is maximised (Morris, 1968, p. 224). Rather than timid, they are defiantly challenging gravity, firmly embarked on bridges to eternalism, oblivious to their earthly properties. The fused sculptural body is no longer defined by organic structure, simple materiality, or its occupying space, but by the relations of its parts, and by its actions and reactions in relation to both its surrounding and internal milieus (Baugh, 2010, p. 35).

## 2. Unearthing Fatalism

The practical work behind the critical text has pointed to a specific aspect of time to explore; switching the approach from practice-led to practice-based. The reflections highlighted that the artist working with sculpture was concerned with the physical nature of time, its shape and topology, time pertaining to an eternalist and elaborated dimension interchangeable with space or spacetime; and was inspired by fictive narratives. It also showed that the mother was influenced by the fatalist and the conscious nature of time, and approached it through the perception of details based on subjective experiences by adopting real narratives. The thinking of the mother was marked with the tense factor, and an irrational dread of unfortunate events, by not having control over what is going to happen in the future, the inevitable and the unavoidable. It is said that women are prevented from engaging in professional artistic endeavours due to the absence of unlimited blocks of time (Kirschenbaum & Reis, as cited in Ciciola-Izzo, 2014). With the rise of feminism and women in the arts voicing their rights and equal representation, more texts, interviews, exhibitions, and platforms, have highlighted women artists and mother artists. Andrea Liss (2009, p. xv) writes that in earlier feminist activism the mother 'remained a silent outcast for many feminists who strategically needed to distance themselves

from all that was coded as passive, weak, and irrational sometimes repudiating their own mothers in the process.'

*To be a feminist mother continues to mean temporarily losing one's soul connection to one's work and one's self in order to give love and care to the new other. For some feminist mothers, this also means allowing one's self to become completely absorbed by the mystery and inexplicable joy that the infant brings. Sometimes these desires merge: passion for one's baby or one's child(ren) opens up new perspectives and forms of being and living. Oftentimes the mother's desires collide with her artist self. (Liss, p. xvii)*

Phyllida Barlow (as cited in Higgins, 2017) shares that the demands of both children and artist are incompatible, and that 'the world of the studio requires a focus that is uncompromising'. Children should have the same 'uncompromising focus.' Having children and making sculpture involve 'a similar range of emotions', from 'intense boredom to wild euphoria', and that doing both simultaneously 'is extremely complicated mentally' and is 'like oil and water.' Rachel Whiteread (as cited in Barber, 2005) points out: 'I'm sure motherhood has changed me. I think there's a playfulness that wasn't there', after Lynn Barber (2005) remarked that with motherhood 'there's a new lightness to her work'. With *Motherhood Art* becoming a genre, a rising number of mother artists have adopted motherhood as their main theme of exploration. Tracy Emin (as cited in Cooke, n.d.) doesn't think she'd be making work if she were a mother. She admits that she would have been either 100% mother or 100% artist as she's not flaky and doesn't compromise. Marina Abramović (as cited in Cooke, n.d.) echoes Emin, revealing never wanting children because she is convinced that it would be a disaster for her work: 'We just have a certain amount of energy in our body that I should have shared. In my opinion, that's why women are not as successful in the art world as men.' Hannah Cooke (n.d.) confronted Emin and Abramović's with their 'negative' statements by creating slow motion videos showing her breastfeeding her daughter in respective exhibition-like settings. In one, she is sitting on a messy bed that looks like *My Bed* by Emin (n.d.-a), and in the second, sitting in front of a woman in a red dress that looks like Abramović in her performance *The Artist is Present* (n.d.-b). The presence of control is already deeply anchored in the life of mothers, even before they become mothers. Simone De Beauvoir (1949) had elaborated on women's lack of control over their bodies during pregnancies and the anxieties that they encounter. Seven decades later, women are still fighting to gain or regain control over their bodies, pregnancies, sexual orientation, rights as women, or mothers. Nathalie Tiberghien's (2016) autoethnography interviews of two women stress on the dominance of control in a mother's life. The control over schedules, attempting to control the child's development, experimenting 'crazy' moments while being 'out of control', not

expecting how 'uncontrollable' mothering can be, but at the same time controlling 'a lot'. She considers that the 'notion of being in control does not represent working mothers' experiences', amongst other frequent mentions of control associated with motherhood. To introduce the conscious weight of fatalism characterised by an absolute lack of control – not over 'crazy' daily mothering tasks, but over ones whole destiny itself – would mean to raise the intensity of loss of control to an unfathomable level of possible anxiety. It is widely known that ignorance sparks fear and panic, the fear of the unknown, when very little or practically nothing of what we fear might ever happen. What type of knowledge around the philosophy of fatalism can bring comfort to mothers, outside the theological and the spiritual or *Theological fatalism* (Rice, 2002)? To what extent can we control events? In *Brick Lane* novel, years after being married off, dutifully caring for her husband, children, and keeping house, Chanu begins questioning whether she has a hand in her own destiny, or whether fate controls her (Paul, n.d.). The novel portrays Bengali 'girls' ongoing struggle with the prominent cultural idea of Fate as a guiding principle in life'. It presents character as the real decision maker in determining and dictating lives instead of fate. Is it then a matter of strong will, free will, rebellion, impulsivity, or any other action-inducing trait of character? In that case our actions can determine the outcome of an event and cause something to change or to happen, or what is known as *Determinism*. The concept of determinism is built on the idea that everything can be explained, and that behind every event there's a cause. This cause is partly determined by our actions, with the help of the 'laws of nature' (Hofer, 2003). Amongst the various arguments and views on fatalism, Aristotle's argument for fatalism falls under *Logical fatalism*, and responds to logical laws and metaphysical necessities. He argues that everything happens by necessity, or the inevitable, an event that can't be prevented by anyone and needs to happen (Rice, 2002). In film, the split screen method has been used to show a different scenario in each half screen, such as demonstrating how a good deed can positively change someone's life and can unfold in a chain reaction of altruism. On other occasions, the notion of time is directly depicted, illustrating how one second backwards or forwards can change a life. In the fatalist picture, all these scenarios would culminate in a predetermined ending, with the last frame showing identical twin shots. Jim Beam's (2011) *Bold Choice* commercial opens with the voiceover 'life boils down to a series of choices', promoting the idea that 'the choices you make and the ones you don't become you.' Actor Willem Dafoe is pictured ageing, wearing different characters, playing various roles and professions, in a narrative outlining what his life would have been like if he had chosen the wrong bus. His 'bold choice' will end up taking him where he is 'supposed to be'... on the New York bus to become his famous self. In his analysis of the representation of time in film, Gilles Deleuze (1989, pp. 176-177) observes that 'it is characteristic of the problem that it

is inseparable from a choice.’ Choice is increasingly linked to living thought and an ‘unfathomable decision’ when the problem regards existential determinations rather than mathematical matters. In that case, choice concerns the mode of existence of the person who chooses, and not a particular term. It went from non-choice to choice by being itself ‘formed between choosing and not choosing’, and covering ‘as great an area as thought’. Harry G. Frankfurt (1969, pp. 829-830) asserts that ‘the principle of alternate possibilities’ has played a dominant role in the free-will problem. The principle considers a person morally responsible for his actions only if he could have done otherwise, and therefore is false, view that a person may be morally responsible for his action despite not having been able to do otherwise. Ian Robertson (2019) believes that our ability to imagine things that have not happened or existed before, and to work purposefully towards realising them is our uniquely human quality. Fatalism lying in three historical eras of thinking (Era of God, Era of Physics and Era of Biology) is limiting this potential of humanity to imagine and realise the future, making fatalism a curse. ‘Everything is physics – all the rest is stamp collecting’ (Rutherford as cited in Robertson, 2019). So if we believe that our lot in life is predetermined by gods, entropy, or genes, we would be cut off from ‘harnessing the remarkable capacities of the mind to change itself and as a result alter physical, social and economic reality and so diminish that quintessentially human capacity to imagine and create the not-yet-existent.’

### Conclusion

The text including the heuristic exploration of the artist and the mother experiment helped answer several questions such as how can an artist perceive time? How can a mother perceive time? How does this notion operate on both? How can fictive narratives allude to specific materials? It denoted an internal conflict in perception where the artist was concerned with the physical nature of time pertaining to an eternalist and elaborated dimension interchangeable with spacetime, and where the mother was concerned with fatalism. It indicated that the artist favoured fictive narratives when the mother adopted real ones, and that the fictive and the real featured interchangeably and facilitated the designation of materials. Throughout the text the notion of time and its possible topology(ies) was key to demonstrating how motherhood with its sense of control can interfere and disrupt the free course of the art practice.

I find it important to mention that my work in general deals with real and imagined narratives around various themes leading to fictive objects, and doesn’t fall under *Motherhood Art*. The motherhood-related elements are occasionally incorporated following rare associated occurrences, therefore, are occurrential. Despite the fact that this study is specifically focusing on my perception of time as an artist who is also a mother, it is highly probable

that most artists dealing with a recent marking event could experience the infiltration of fatalism triggered by a catalyst. This type of disruption of the artistic perception would then be a temporary and intermittent manifestation, rather than a categorical opinion on the compatibility of art and motherhood. Furthermore, it would fundamentally depend on personal spatiotemporal circumstances instead of a generalised one.

However, to objectively reflect on how sculpture and motherhood in this particular framework relate and what they can learn from each other, it is essential to reobserve that the sculptor's eternalist approach needs the far future to grow, but logical fatalism holding the mother back imposes the necessity of the past. Diodorus Cronus' *Master Argument* is that everything that is past and true is necessary, the impossible does not follow from the possible, and we do not know the intermediate steps (Rice, 2002). We conclude that despite potential internal conflicts, balance and reconciliation can be achieved in the making of sculpture. Sculpture with its four-dimensional vision involving time could highly benefit all mothers, even as a recreational activity. It can help them rise above weighting factors, and train them to perceive a promising bigger picture, away from details that facilitate obsessive tendencies. And by challenging the artist, motherhood can demand balance and add unexpected, and unusual touches to the sculptural work.

In a wider perspective, the paper, moreover, serves as one example of the relationship between art theory and art practice and how the artistic order of thinking might unfold. It demonstrates how the process of methodologies can switch from practice-led to practice-based, or vice versa, and how reflectivity and reflexivity feature together. On one hand, it highlights the risks imposed by theory of overriding a considerable intuitive and reflexive aspect of the artistic process. On the other hand, it validates the importance of the role of art practice in generating new knowledge. We don't always define what we know when we go about 'the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life (Schön, 1983, p. 49). We can find ourselves at a loss when trying to describe what we thought we knew. This 'ordinarily tacit' knowing is 'implicit in our patterns of action' and therefore 'knowing is *in* our action'. The 'reflection-in-action' is "central to the 'art' presenting 'situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict" (p. 50). In that respect, the action of creating would be a more accurate, and more targeted source of original knowledge, here narrowed down from the generic notion of time to the pertinence of fatalism in this precise context.

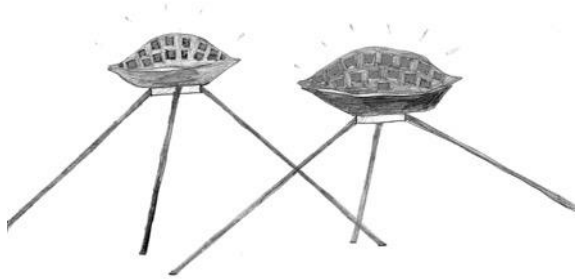


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### iii. Autoethnography: *Notes on fatigue*



Rajaa Paixão. *Too tired to sleep: Eyelids* sketch, 2019. Photo: author.

{Eyelids} too tired to sleep

What is the last colour you saw before you closed your eyes to sleep that night? What last ray of light lingered around? Mine was purple. I closed my eyes that night and this one thread ricocheted into numerous purple cuboids lost in the limbo night, behind the neutral colours of my inner eyelids.

Heavy  
very heavy eyelids  
sleepy  
though high on purposeless adrenaline.

Zillion of overlapping thoughts bicker, with floating headlines, lastly read on social media intercepting. Something I keep promising myself over and over again to refrain from doing before going to sleep.

Breaking news, outbreaking viruses, breaking records, breaking entries, breaking the law, breaking up, Breaking Bad... and breaking my sleep.

The purple refractions are a relief, an escape to cling to.

Phosphenes. That's what these flashes of light we sometimes see with our eyes closed are called.

Phosphenes are impressions of light that occur without actual light entering the eye; they are caused by biophotons produced by our biological system.

They occur when our eyes are triggered.

They reset my mental clutter and project me to a peaceful enigmatic space.

In my case, occasional Phosphenes are welcome.

In other frequent cases, they are not as they could be a symptom of serious conditions, such as ocular migraine or multiple sclerosis, and then would result of an inflammation of the optic nerve.

Date: September 2019
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**iv. Autoethnography: *I would like to be baptised***

I would like to be baptised.

I've never been.

Not like that.

I want to submerge myself in my element, in pure crystal blue water, in ambient noise, in nothingness.

Independent from any institution, any ideology, any flux of information, from anything surrounding me and not feeding my soul, from overwhelming ties, oppressing systems, untrue friendships and hypocrisy.

Wash away the thoughts and the dirt clouding my mind.

Declutter, declutter, declutter.

I can't expect miracles to clear away any misery or injustice. I expect inner change, good, literal brainwashing, resetting.

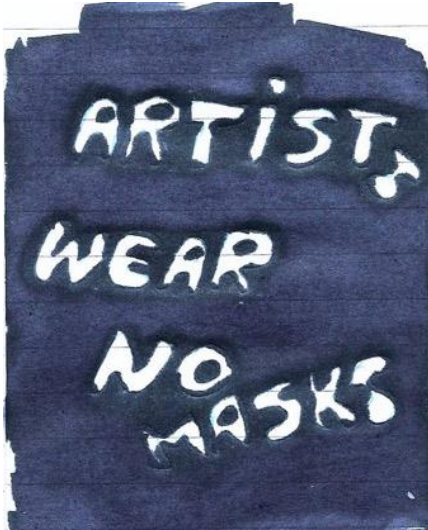
And when I reemerge, I wish to learn better, screen better – without silly symbolism, without having to block people, unfollow threads, or recreate memories-free spaces – just focus on what and who matters.

I want to have little, be surrounded by little, and with that little, of valuables; people, objects, hope, motivation, dreams; with that little, I want to do more, start building again, and helping, be there better, fully, for my loved ones, for my community, know where to help, how to help, and change something, even in and with that little around me.

I want to be baptised, not to commit, but to be free and set free. ☮

Date: 5 July 2020
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v. Autoethnography: *No Masks*



Rajaa Paixão. Ink on notebook paper drawing, 2019. Photo: author.

One of the things I love most about art is how it allows you to keep one foot in, one foot out.

This one infinite string attached, the unsettled relationship with space, where you can have your head in the clouds and keep your feet on the ground.

The intersection where you can dream and turn dreams into life events.

When life gets too hard, you can immerse yourself in making without completely losing yourself in the process.

When you get too erratic, life pulls you back to balance.

There is no healthier relationship than one that acknowledges the respect of space, independence, and freedom.

One that allows you to constantly be yourself under social pressure, become, and renew yourself all over again.

I find this the most dignified, and sanest human condition, not just to put your masks down, but to needing none.

Date: 31 October 2019

vi. Poem: *Ithaka* by C. P. Cavafy

*As you set out for Ithaka  
hope your road is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.  
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,  
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:  
you'll never find things like that on your way  
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,  
as long as a rare excitement  
stirs your spirit and your body.  
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,  
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them  
unless you bring them along inside your soul,  
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.*

*Hope your road is a long one.  
May there be many summer mornings when,  
with what pleasure, what joy,  
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;  
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations  
to buy fine things,  
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
sensual perfume of every kind—  
as many sensual perfumes as you can;  
and may you visit many Egyptian cities  
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.*

*Keep Ithaka always in your mind.  
Arriving there is what you're destined for.  
But don't hurry the journey at all.  
Better if it lasts for years,  
so you're old by the time you reach the island,  
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,  
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.*

*Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.  
Without her you wouldn't have set out.  
She has nothing left to give you now.*

*And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.  
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,  
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean. (Cavafy, 2020, pp. 36-37)*

## APPENDIX C: AUTHOR'S RHIZOMES

*\*What can differentiate contemporary public sculpture from classic public sculpture with its roles as a monument, a statue, or a memorial, is its blending threshold with its location. Therefore, we can attribute the quality of lasting delimitation from the surrounding scenery, background and foreground depth, to contemporary sculpture.*

*\*The starting point of the sculptor is the inside, the space, and it goes on to be shaped as a place.*

*\*When the narrative, the fictive and the imagination are the space, each sculpture is a physical space-place, placed inside a larger place.*

*\*We live on the perimeter of the planet when the sculptor owns the periphery and the core. That's how knowledge can be generated, by learning about our world from the inside, and the surrounding space or universe. This is where the role of the sculptural process is most informative.*

*\*Sculpture with its form and matter is an act of rejection of the collective fake and a testimony of the individual transparency.*

*\*The more the sculpture becomes unusual, original, different, and specifically unfamiliar, the more the artist is helping build an authentic space of free ideas, a safe space for the inclusion of all communities and individuals.*

*\*The sculptor's eternalist approach needs the far future to grow.*

*\*Balance and reconciliation can be achieved in the making of sculpture.*

*\*Sculpture with its four-dimensional vision involving time could highly benefit all mothers, even as a recreational activity.*

*\*Sculpture is, should be, and become free, instinctive, random under the material property or the physical object.*

*\*Despite not belonging to the sculptural medium within its traditional understanding as a category, the moment the paintings took space and shape, they were sculptural by nature regardless of their numeric level of flatness.*

*\*Materials need to be given a chance to surprise us.*

*\*The beauty of sculpture is that the contrast of black and white in photography and its printing techniques, or the neon and the neutral in painting, can be experimented with through various methods with just a finishing choice such as glossiness and mattness.*

*\*Sculpture is not always in the expanded field but it is primordial not to make it in the restricted field.*

*\*Sculptures carry rooms of mental space within.*

*\*The sculptor is the actor performing the sculptural process, and the sculptures as surrounding props move to the centre of the stage. Sculptures become the acting factor, the performer, by just being.*

<p><i>*When the artist integrates their memory of the past and their imagination of the future into their lived present, they finally coincide with themselves, becoming two in one, both actor and spectator, both performer and observer.</i></p>
<p><i>*The maker doesn't need to physically perform sculpture for the aesthetic activity to exist, because it already exists in their intense subjectivity.</i></p>
<p><i>*The sculptor not only performs but spatially projects the mental aesthetic space in the physical world for others to see what otherwise, they can't physically see.</i></p>
<p><i>*The sculptor facilitates the transit of the affective and oneiric dimensions to live exclusively in the mind of the subject.</i></p>
<p><i>*The role of the acting sculptures in the gallery or exhibiting space is not for the visitor to see it as the artist meant it to be, or as imposed upon, but as a catalyst, as a shortcut, a bullet train leading the affective dimension to the station of the aesthetic space.</i></p>
<p><i>*Sculpture is about allowing the viewer to freely feel intense emotions, learn new symbols, discover new significations and meanings, experience new awakenings, allow thoughts to overflow, saturated reactions to burst and wonder with sensations, or vehemently and openly disagree with a preposterous perception.</i></p>
<p><i>*Doctoral research sculptures create another intersecting space between practice and theory, between artefacts and exegeses.</i></p>

*\*The purpose is not to show sculptures to be merely observed, but to show them to create a declic or release mechanism, where viewers get exposed further to the subjective aesthetic space I live in. To remind them of their own aesthetic space, that they have one too, and that it is ok if it is different from mine. To normalise strangeness in perception, as strangeness same as a stranger, once we meet it, it stops existing and becomes an acquaintance.*

*\*Sculptures belong to an alternate reality, and simultaneously exist in the maker's and the viewers' real one.*

*\*Sculptures can be an adaptive physical form of a real occurrence pertaining to conditional factors.*

*\*Fictive sculpture can be a portal for both makers and viewers, to step outside their every day and view it from a new angle. This would then help us comment on our world and our modern issues.*

*\*Imagination is immune to conditions and control, runs completely free, and transcends from real back-stories.*

*\*Using imagination as a tool, sculpture is the tangible materialisation of our singular minds.*

*\*The further we dare to dream and imagine away from social stereotypes, the closer we get to our pure selves and share this unprocessed world with each other through sculpture.*

*\*Through fictive narratives, sculptures have the purpose of materialising another reality and dimensions full of possibilities, where tensions dissipate allowing the expansion of experience.*

*\*Assembled imagined sculptures help visualise a new intimate space floating in undefined time, and independent from alienating personal and social associations.*

*\*Individually, each sculpture plays the role of a domestic object which makes spatial experiences concrete and accessible.*

*\*There are two main conditional aspects of sculpture: Restrictive Conditional Sculpture, and Liberating Conditional Sculpture.*

*\*The mere role of sculpture of shielding, of creating a safe intimate space for the maker, an independent dimension for expression, is already on its own a major contribution to humanity.*

*\*Sculpture is not for everyone but is accessible to everyone.*

*\*Every contemporary sculpture is a tool with benefits towards evolution, development, and mind and consciousness expansion.*

*\*To expand, we need to visualise expansion, in order to approach it and understand the power of the mind and our abilities as humans and intelligent species. Sculpture can perform this visual.*

*\*Objects help advancement, and sculpture, with its potential or physical expansion of matter, helps us as humans to guess further the greatness of the human mind and our abilities.*

*\*Sculpture is a quantitative palpable post-qualitative form born from the cognitive practice of the human mind. It has its own rules, autonomy and agency and transports us to a future beyond posthumanism breaking free from the control of the artist.*

*\*Sculpture is a hybrid extension of our physical self.*

*\*Sculpture is a an existing invisible extension made visible.*

*\*To spread our physicality to accommodate more of our mind, we need to grow conductible matter to transport some of the overwhelm in our mind. Sculpture is that matter.*

*\*Neutralising fears and acknowledging the excess of feelings and thoughts doesn't happen at once. It gradually unravels during the process of making specifically and precisely material sculpture. The process includes the internal preconception phase until the external physical post-creation one. For this reason, artificial intelligence will never be able to comprehend these human interior/exterior world relations, let alone perform these consecutive chain roles.*

*\*Because of atomic vibrations, emotional energy is transmitted through our thoughts, feelings, and actions, therefore creations, or sculptures.*

*\*In contemporary sculpture, the good feeling of beauty is not always a result product to judge as beautiful or not. It is a process of making something good, and better, like the predisposed feeling of right or wrong and morality that characterises the human species.*

*\*The epitome of beauty would be if the viewer feels and sees beauty in a sculpture.*

*\*Because sculpture has physical spatial room for emotional and physical growth, it would constitute the ultimate spacetime medium with the highest power in terms of conduction and frequency which can be augmented or restricted by the nature of the materials it features.*

*\*Physical sculpture is potentially a conductor of energy, a mediator of emotions, a tool for emotional regulation, or insulation. Sculpture could possibly be a sentient object or a sentient post-object.*

*\*If stones and other inanimate objects are considered to be 'sentient' in some cultures such as some forms of Buddhism, then perhaps sculpture would be too.*

*\*If the sculpture drank or transferred the maker's emotions, their empathetic side and the human need for connection and symbolism, this can make sculpture anthropomorphist phenomena, a nonhuman entity with human characteristics.*

*\*Creation needs to happen at the culprit of emotions to create the strongest ripples.*

*\*Not only sculpture draws worlds for us to picture, but it literally builds it for us to step into it and around it, conveying a physically palpable energy and vibe.*

*\*If materials potentially and most probably hold properties that haven't been discovered yet, this means that sculptures with their varied materials and found objects are one of the media that are most prone to a shape memory effect.*

*\*Sculpture is a testimony of being alive in a physical body.*

*\*Sculpture is a proof of living, of the present, of the now, the very primitive gesture of simply being able to make, being in a human form, being a human, simply being and no other reason is required.*

*\*Making sculpture is a celebration of the format of my birth in the human body for it might be my last time as a human.*

*\*Using physical elements in sculpture is a way of creating a concretely imagined world that is better, fairer, and kinder.*

*\*Sculpture is also adaptive and born from a place of displacement out of a comfort zone. The gallery model itself serves displacement and is a blank refuge and shelter that sheds light on the subject matter. However, to understand the making of the initial displacement, the studio would be the place where the transformation happens and that needs to be scrutinised most.*

*\*The sculpture-making process – mostly when narratives are involved – facilitates mental metamorphosis and therefore the crystallisation of events where they are broken down to become acceptable, assimilable, domestic, and safe.*

*\*Sculpture is spatial, meaning it projects what is in our head and creates a multidimensional space. Even though that space might be inspired by or include others, it remains our own space. It has our energy and most of all our walls and boundaries. So not only do we live in the present while creating it but we project onto this space outside our head where no one can reach our vulnerability.*

*\*The walls and multidimensions of sculpture help us create the boundaries we sometimes find hard to apply between us and others. It makes us understand our coordinates in life, where we stand in terms of our situation and helps us distance ourselves and think clearly without our thoughts being polluted by others.*

*\*The sculptor creates a language only they can fully read and can teach others the significance of it.*

*\*The future will excavate remnants of a deeply personal language and communication system weaved by the sculptor.*

*\*A sculptural system is not only carved but also elevated or erected as artefacts, monuments, ritual sites, worshipped artistic practices, materialised beliefs and higher powers that only the artist can tap into. It informs the future of the tools and earthly materials we have access to. It doesn't need to be understood, it doesn't need to be liked, but it needs to be assimilated solemnly as a timeless concrete humanmade meteorite, telling a feeling, an experience, and the anguishes of the times we live and have lived in.*

*\*Because of its fictitious nature and perceptual effect, the understanding of the fictive sculpture's ontology – what it is, what it can be, or what it ought to be – lies in between the practical and the philosophical realms.*

*\*Artists make sculptures to understand narratives and sometimes find answers to questions about themselves, about others and the world around them. Hence, the answer to an anxious question might be in the form of a feeling or experience. The process might not only carry the promise of the answer but also the discovery, thrill and peace of being actively doing something about the questions.*

*\*Another understanding of fictive sculpture lies in the commitment to the activity of making, turning the abstract and theoretical into a concrete material. This activity bathes in gratification and joy of accepting and adapting to change, interacting with an outside to which we become receptive and responsive, therefore more tolerant and patient with our surroundings.*

*\*The exploration of the sculptor is a step towards peace, an understanding between the artist and the materials, and an arrangement between the artist and the space.*

*\*The sculptural elements of materials and space don't judge, don't condemn, don't retribute, don't punish, don't censure, don't denounce, don't reprehend, don't reprobate, don't marginalise, don't prosecute, don't discriminate, don't criticise and don't argue. On the other hand, viewers, visitors, societies and communities do.*

*\*As long as the artist is free to think, the fictive space and imagined sculpture are the only remaining constant no one can take away, and for that the conditions are always favourable, auspicious, even nonexistent.*

*\*Fictive sculpture is never conditional until the moment it is born in the physical world. Until it is materially real.*

*\*Sculpture is interchangeable with imagination, and conditional sculpture is interchangeable with matter.*

*\*Sculpture doesn't need to be seen, touched, or experienced to exist.*

*\*We touch therefore we condition, but we imagine therefore we sculpt.*

*\*In the end, sculpture is about control. It is about control over our mind, over our physical world. And even if the sculpture is falling apart, it would be intentionally controlled by the artist.*

*\*Sculpture might be conditional, but the condition to create is that it is exclusively under the conditions of the maker and the fictive control of their own reality, of life.*

*\*What distinguishes sculpture from the object is the loss of control, of abdicating to creating without rules, under any condition.*

*\*Sculpture is spatial acceptance and learning to let go of rules and social ideals.*

*\*The object is never fictive. Hence a sculpture is never fictive. If it is materialised in our perceived reality, it is real whatever its provenance is. On the other hand, the pre-object or pre-sculpture is fictive, the sculpture is real. The narrative is never real, but fictive in its essence.*

*\*Sculpture is literally a volume of sentiments, and art is a well of feelings and emotions that were too powerful to lock in. This clash needs to be addressed in academic research to find balance amidst both, without compromising on the empathic aspect of sculpture, as square and minimalist as it might be shaped into.*

*\*By making contemporary sculptures, the maker is physically projecting a transparent place of worship in a concrete space, trusting the visitor with it.*

*\*Creating sculptural work that doesn't replicate reality through a faithful illustration represents a mission to show the unseen, surprising others and at times, surprising ourselves as makers.*

*\*Making sculpture is excavating a buried city and worlds hidden from others and from one's mind. These are sites which artists can intuitively sense the existence of, but won't discover the extent of their scale and depth unless they keep excavating, that is making. This is why the arts need to be well funded, as the artist can not always explain hidden underground layers of what looks like a desert to others, or articulate a twenty-sixth letter of the alphabet that others can't hear.*

*\*Contemporary sculpture is the lens to an invisible inner core and can't be situated along with the same functionality of historical sculpture and statues, or evaluated in financial currency or quantitative value.*

*\*The role of contemporary sculpture is quite opposite to what the object and the material serve in modern life.*

*\*Fictive sculpture is only material in its peripheries, but centrally transcendental into everything that is non-object, non-material, and non-physical, but remains real in all its fictitiousness.*

*\*The role of fictive sculpture is to lead us to the unlimited potential of the human mind and alternate realities beyond our bodily experience.*

*\*Fictive real or real fictive sculptures are pathways to fictional time slips, portals to a non-linear time, where past, present and future don't only coexist such as in eternalism, but are redundant in a non-sequential, non-peripheral real fictive spacetime, as others don't need to see for it to be real.*

*\*As clearly and real neoclassical clay sculpture spun on a rotating platform appears, fictive sculptures constantly rotate in a three-dimensional simulation in the artist's mind longing to bilocate.*

*\*My sculptures are a closure of the internal personal real imaginary, bodily projected as a fictive real object, constituting a collective social real fictive conditional sculpture.*

