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| **Department of Art and Design, School of Arts and Media** | | | |
| **PGR Supervisory Report** | | | |
| Student: | Sabine Kussmauul | Start date | 1st May 2019 |
| Supervisors  attending: | Dr. Maxine Bristow  Dr. Tom McGuirk | Mode of study | Part-time |
| Meeting date: | 16th December 2019 |
| Meeting no. | 2 |
| Summarise agreed courses of action  *(Please indicate whether action points from the last meeting have been achieved and include an agreed plan for the next research period)*  **Lit review:**   * The literature review is seen like a ‘scoping’ exercise, showing the breath of all the topics that might become involved. Tidy up the references and put them at the end of the text. Focus on practice next, rather than refine the lit review at this stage.   Sabine explains that writing the literature review has made her develop a wider, new sense for the whole of the project and the breadth of the themes involved. She did not expect a writing exercise to have the power to do this!  **Further writing:**   * Sabine has written a text called ‘*What one does’*. (See attachment at the end of this supervision report). * Sabine mentions how she has started to read literature, e.g. *The Sentient Archive* (Bissell, 2018) about ‘body as site’ that she has identified in the lit review and how this provides new viewpoints and verbalises dimensions that she has felt have been missing from the project . * Have more smaller bits of writing than few large ones. Also, use this as a sieving exercise for more formal texts. * To not straight dive into ‘formal’ writing, but to have many loose writing processes in order not to lose fine nuances. * Have a series of smaller practice-based projects and then relate them to theory. And produce a text from them. * You might use a text to formulate intentions for practice and then see later, how practice measures against it. * In reference to my text ‘*What one does’*, Tom suggests to look up autoethnography and see what it does differently to reflective practice writing – if it does.Such writing could be seen as some kind of ‘mediative’ dissemination, or working as an interface, that later even could come away again. * Sabine mentions a text that she wrote some time ago: *What is the form of things and why?* (Attached below) written this past summer with the intention to make her understand time scales and objects in environments.   **Practice:**  We talk about the materials that I use, the ‘mobile working kit’.   * Equipment embodies knowledge and they are ‘body extensions’. * From a situated cognition point of view, there is 1. One’s own embodiment, 2. Tools that extend this embodiment, and 3. Embeddedness (in a psychological as well as sociological sense) in the environment. Tom mentions *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition* (Robbins & Aydede, 2009).   Maxine suggests, with all this conceptualising and planning not to dismiss the power of the intuitive in practice.Also, not to ‘compartmentalise away’ certain aspects of practice from others because they might appear less relevant. Sabine mentions how working on a commission in the last weeks and doing lots of fashion illustration drawings this last autumn (in no relation to this PhD project) has somehow contributed to it, too.  Also look up other practitioners that Tom suggested.  Maxine asks how Sabine chooses sites/environments where she works.  **Methodology:**   * Don’t just consider existing Methodologies by others and what you have read about but ask yourself: What do I contribute through my practice to the field of Methodology? Performative writing? Thinking-and-voice-note-taking-whilst-out-on-long-runs? Other kinds of writing? * Tom says lit review chapters 1.2 and 11.3 could go into a methodology   **Points of action for Sabine:**  Practice:   1. To improvise when working outdoors and to find out how that provides ideas/starting points for different approaches to respond to environments. 2. To formulate several topics for small projects that arise from themes that seemed to call for attention when writing the lit review. And go for them after the improv part.   Write a text following each such project.   1. To work towards two exhibitions in uni gallery space (Grosvenor Centre, Chester?) from now till next Xmas. (Maxine to confirm dates) 2. To keep writing.   Methodology:  To draw together in a text what Methodologies seem to be relevant.  Planning  Make a plan for the next year – what projects to do, what to read…  Summary written by Sabine Kussmaul, 19st December 2019  **Attached texts :**   1. ***What one does.*** 2. ***Serrated leaves, scree slopes, cities: What is the form of things and why?*** | | | |

**What one does**

**What happens**

Feeling grass surface and distance out to the end of the drystone walls,

feeling of harshness and cold, from the air, breathed in

wind on grass, cloud movement further out

Drawing on paper

Scratching into sand

stretching line from here to the end of the field

**Positionings**

finding a position to stand

a direction to turn

where to look

intention or not to move forwards

finding a position to stand

a direction to look

making it on paper

trampling it onto ground

moving away from the moment and its mark into the field

draw the event of the mark onto paper

installing a circle of linework onto grass surface, stones and drystone wall

running away from it,

two fields further

find a position to stand

where to look

return

mark the event

sitting next to a large tuft of grass

find a way to sit

change position

move away from it

return back

mark the moment and the feeling

traverse an area (e.g. over a wall)

return a different way

repeat

draw you changes

draw from the surroundings, the periphery of my sensory range

draw (it ) into the inside

find a position to sit

a direction to look

a felt theme at the far distance of this location

a felt closeness

a visual encounter close by

a visual theme seen but far away

draw their connections

**Using time**

For a reasonable amount of time:

sit

Run away

Sit

Repeat

Draw the pattern

**Crossing medium boundaries**

A large drawing area

Uneven

Pinned down with tent pegs

Rolling on or sitting on it, so the wind does not rip it

Do things with it

Fold it up

Take it away

A large drawing area

Change it in response to land

And to how you move around and over it

A large construction from lines

Use it to view, feel, move with the environment

**Territory – about boundaries**

Mark a small space

Extend it as a response to feelings of self and environment

Create territory by running,

‘drawing it out’

**Draw the environment**

The feel of it

The body space of it

The back and the drawing hand

Its categories… ground, the above, features

Visual texture from what is relevant

Start drawing what is visually of interest,

Add to the drawing support to continue the drawing

Repeat

Make a linework construction

Get yourself into it

Use your body to change it in several significant ways

pelias

**Making a pattern**

Feeling

Position

Movement

A construction

A response

A drawing

A moved body event followed on from it

**Moving patterns**

A construction of lines

From one place

Moved to another place

Changed there

How?

**Repeating, mimicking something**

“imitate’ what comes to the attention

With linework installation

With drawn line

With body movments

Don’t add to it, stay strictly with just the imitation

**A question to…**

The land,

The environment

Memory

The path

The sign performed

**Writing yourself ‘into position’ in relationship to the practice**

Using writing to formulate the embodied dimension from where ‘I am coming from’

Using the writing to *perform* an understanding, a communication

A line

**Serrated leaves, scree slopes, cities:**

**What is the form of things and why?**

As a visual artist, my creative practice uses vision and the visual dimensions of things to produce meaningful statements. The material forms of such statements, again visual things, are the result of engaging with material environments and their conditions. This paper suggests a framework for the relationships between material processes and the form of things in order to position the role of creative practice.

It asks three questions.

1. What processes create shape and form?
2. How do human beings perceive environments?
3. What is the role of the visual artist and what does creative practice do?

Planet Earth has a unique cosmological setup. The sun supplies energy to the Earth’s surface. Due to the Earth’s rotation and curvature, changes in temperature are created. The proximity of the moon’s mass in combination with the Earth’s rotation leads to tidal water movements. These fundamental conditions impact on two different kinds of systems.

Firstly, plants and other organisms use the energy by the sun for their metabolism. Such metabolic activity manifests itself in changes to the shapes of their bodies. Most individuals, no matter if plant or animal, organise their lives between each other, so that communities between individuals are created: Communities of bacteria, or of people, built on continued interaction and relationships.

Secondly, in inorganic systems, the changes and rhythms by the sun’s incoming energy supply create movements of air and water. Weather is atmospheric movements of air and water. Rivers and oceans are movement patterns of big water masses. Over long time spans, such repeated material movements lead to the creation of new material forms: Scree slopes through erosion, sediments as new layers of soil.

Movement is an expression of interaction in inorganic and metabolic systems. Liquids move in cells or bodies, water and air move within an eco-system. In communities, individuals and materials move around. Movement is always accompanied by sound, created by the friction between moving materials. Human beings however, may not hear every sound that occurs due to the calibration of their sound sensors.

Every organism that has metabolism expresses its own ‘livingness’ through its body’s form. And each such body requires a certain amount of free space around itself, due to the movement patterns of the organism. Organisms build things in their environment by changing their material surroundings: People build houses, snails grow shells. Such building activity can also be part of a community effort which leads to bee hives, ant hills and human cities. Apart from the material environments that individuals and communities build, we can also recognise, through our mind’s eyes, the abstract forms of their dynamic community relationships, and express their forms in diagrams.

As human individuals we perceive the shape of things through our sensorial systems. Each specie’s sensorium is adapted to the particular ways of how it lives in its environment. For modern human beings, there seems to be a dominance of vision as an important way of orientating ourselves in the world. Part of this is due to our erect body posture which allows us to look into the distance and anticipate what will be coming up: We can pre-think things as our body posture facilitates cognition. Like that, our eyes and our thinking can surpass our’ body’s journeying capabilities.

When humans perceive shape through their visual mode of perception, only certain forms in our environments are seen, whilst other forms and shapes are not: We are little aware of the looks of a tiny mite, as our sensory system is not tuned to facilitate vision of such minute things. We simply have no understanding and participation in the little mite’s environment. We also have little awareness of the olfactory environments that blind moles are part of in their lives underground.

Form comes to us through the visual, adapted to our sensory system, sometimes complemented by visual aids, like microscopes or telescopes.

Architecture is an expression of human activity. Environments which are visually determined by architecture show a lot of vertical and horizontal lines and a lot of smooth surfaces. We see a lot of repetition and variation of such forms in such environments. We have learnt to understand and interprete such similarities, difference and variation , and it helps our spatial orientation. Architectural environments are material expressions of our human interactions with others, and determined by the human body form, its dimensions and movement patterns.

Natural environments can be a ‘mess’ of forms. They are the living worlds of a large amount of species whose body shapes and environments come in a multitude of scales and shapes. Visual structure seems less organised to us and there seems to be an absence of straight line demarcations. Surfaces only appear smooth when we look at them from a distance.

Many metabolising individuals know that they have ‘a body’. They have a ‘body self’. There are also body selves for whole communities, perceived by their members.

Inorganic things in our environments may not have an awareness of having a body. However, we may impart concepts of embodiment onto such things as a wall, a hill, or even the wind, and we might interact with them in this sense.

As a visual artist I use the visual potential of various materials, processes and technologies and how they affect our senses. Each process brings its own framework that uses the visual together with other dimensions of space and time: Video also uses time as part of its framework, and works have beginnings and end-points. Photography is visual too but timing is brought to it by the viewer’s length of time of engaging with it.

Writing and drawing allow to engage with realms that go can go beyond the visual though drawing eventually produces again a visual result.

When we make artwork we bring the framework of our medium and our individual approach to an engagement with environments: Being there, moving there, making changes, expressing our interactions and contribute.

Making drawings and installations, videos and photographs and writing and moving, can be seen as events happening between the artist and an environment. The artist can also come away, and ‘take away’, from the environment, bringing the results of earlier engagement on site to further interaction in a new environment, e.g. by exhibiting artwork in a gallery.

As artists we ask ourselves how we can engage in meaningful ways with environments feeding back about our engagement and contributing constructively.

The shape of things in our environments are an expression of the processes they undergo and how they live or are used in others’ lives. The shapes of the leaves of a tree, its silhouette with branches and trunk, and the shapes of a shell on the shore all are expressions of particular ways of living and their shapes are optimised for the species’ continuation in space and time.

We perceive form as visual manifestations of shapes in our environments. However, only some of the shape that is there can be perceived by us, due to the calibration of our sensory systems.