

Text on method

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I started this year with the prospect of participating in Art Rotterdam 2017 as a part of Prospects & Concepts, organised by the Mondriaan Fund. Participating was on the one hand an obligation I had to meet since I received a development grant in 2015. On the other hand I took it as an opportunity to try out new things in public and on a larger scale. With the work I was going to make I hoped to initiate the kind of turn in my practice that I wrote about in my application letter to the Piet Zwart Institute, underpinned (? uitgelegd aan de hand van explained through the..) by the issues I then experienced in my work since graduating from my bachelor studies.

It felt very liberating to enter the studio with no ideas. Besides Prospects & Concepts I had declined all other invitations for projects, residencies and exhibitions because I wanted to fully focus on picking apart and reconsider my artistic practice without too many distractions or presentation pressures coming from the outside.

In my application letter I wrote about my recent longing and attempts to translate the idea of consciousness (?) and having a mental or spiritual connection with objects or materialities into actual physical contact. I was also questioning the role and the need for abstraction in my work so far.

The most recent development in my work concerns what has so far been mainly physical and object-based. I am wondering how I can give voice to the body that stands opposed to the object (...) I have always been fascinated by the way in which physical presences are attracted to one another and enter into a relation of mutual exchange (...) This investigation mostly translates into objects; sculptures and installations consisting of objects, standing on their own, relating first and foremost to one another and also - but secondly - to the body and mind of the viewer. While for me this last relation seems most interesting, I struggle with the fact that this aspect has not always been reflected into my work.

(...) In a way I strive for unity with the things that are not me, maybe even to become them. (...) I would like to further investigate how to develop this element of contact with objects and the longing to turn into them. (...)

I tend to search for generality and universality in the objects that I make, for things that are stripped off from their properties, things without characteristics or information, empty things, like screens without projections. (...) This tendency often translates into abstraction, maybe even in formality. I wonder (...) how I could (...) create a broader framework for myself in which I am not tied to a form that may be too heavily loaded with presumptions that derive from art histories and its embedded principles, like for example in abstract or formal art. (...) I feel that I need to question the role of abstraction (abstract imagery) in my work.

The letter feels like a prequel to my text on method. In it I addressed the main issues I was experiencing in my practice. My interview with Vivian Sky Rehberg enabled me to further articulate a question that now became very leading: how could abstract

sculpture perform? The 'abstract sculpture' in this formulation could be replaced by 'objects' or 'things' in general, and lately (als een zijweg van ontwikkeling en speculeren op ideeën) more specific by 'furniture'.

In this text on method I will move from the current towards my aims for future experiment. I will go back to the previous, ending by outlining / listing my research strands and the broader context of the work (dat doe ik dus niet echt..).













I am an object with many echoes, 2017, Prospects & Concepts at Art Rotterdam 2017

During Prospects & Concepts I made a site for an ongoing performance with recurring objects, material motifs and unfolding materialities. People wearing marble suits carried around various objects. The objects were taken all over the fair, to other corners of the building, appearing in the bathroom or at the bar, seeing other works, eventually returning to base, constantly finding different formations.

Repetitive movements and actions were carried out quietly, at a contemplative pace. The objects were picked up, held, carried, put next to the body or onto it, exploring all the different ways in which the body could relate to the objects, led by the question of what these objects called or asked for with their quiet voices.

In the context of Art Rotterdam I wanted to make a work that was movable, not fixed to the location of a booth. I wanted to put a spin on the idea of display by addressing the objects themselves, asking them what they wanted; how and where they wanted to be carried. I wanted to treat the things, the art commodities in the context of the fair, as non-static, animate objects that demand things in themselves.

A total of fifteen people performed in the work over the week, mostly consisting of Piet Zwart students. I am very grateful that I had the chance to observe others – many different characters which had all their own specific ways - and to also have the experience of being in the work myself (beetje gek qua tijd). When I was performing I was in a way an object in my own installation. The pace and the rhythm with which I carried out the actions induced a meditative state of being. After being in there for a while I was becoming more and more absorbed by the objects and I started to forget about the presence of the visitors around me. On-site the actions that I laid down beforehand were coming together with more improvised ways of relating, raised by being amongst the objects, the context of the art fair and the space itself. The things started to become talkative. The experience of being faded away in the work - as a body that is an object in a sense, one that performs other objects - made it into an important departure for new ideas. (dit is goed)

After the Art Rotterdam I further thought about the notion of bodies becoming objects and the role the visibility of the face plays in that. I was wondering if I could make an object or a costume that obscures the face. I was also thinking about costumes that are less like clothes or suits and more like second skins (deze zin kan opzich korter). I went back to the beginning of it all, to the first idea in working toward this project that came up during a conversation with my studio mate Magre Steensma. She wanted to build a five meter high shelving unit and she was discovering that the organisers of Art Rotterdam were not very content with the idea of such a high and possibly dangerous construction since there would be so many visitors around. We were speculating on how she could be able to present it without having to worry about danger and liability (want dat is banaal, dat wil ik eigenlijk zeggen). I suggested that a possible work that I could make would be a guard that was facilitating her work; someone to be there as a body, not as a professional guard that could actually act when things should escalate, but rather as a senseless presence; someone who isn't really capable or equipped but is just there as a formality or an illusion. I wanted to camouflage or texturise his/her body, dress this person up in marble perhaps. I got very excited about carrying this out. Obviously my plans and ideas converted in the next couple of months.

I went back to the idea of a person that is in a way in function or at work, speculating for myself on a space that contains objects and a person that is somehow choreographing that space by arranging the things and moving around in it. In my mind this could connect with the empty objects for display I keep being interested in over time, like pedestals, other types of display furniture, empty screens and bill boards. These things themselves display nothing; in a way I feel that they hold the promise of something to come. They are potential supporters for the endless possibility of things they can carry (de eindeloze hoeveelheid dingen die ze kunne dragen, is dit wel de juiste vertaling). They have the agency of providing them a status which these things could otherwise not obtain. They are objects in themselves and yet they play the facilitating role for others (play the role is dat juist?). I want to further investigate the status of these things, dealing with the question of what meaning they could provide or could deliberately not provide: the things they can withhold by the act of not showing for example, facilitating a void. (een leegte als plek waar alles kan zijn)

I thought about movable and portable objects, foldable objects, objects with hidden wheels, with handles. I thought about different ways of moving them; about the act of moving things carried out by the body. I thought about different roles the person assembling that imaginative space could take on. He or she could be a maker, an attendant, an arranger or a furnisher, a host, a provider of information (a worker or labourer in those senses), an object in itself, a material (a skin, a tactility), a piece of scenery or furniture, a carrier, a display. Certain situations could provoke thinking about this person only as a (supporting or helping) hand, others as a body, a flat surface, a hanger, a provider of content (of informative or artistic nature), a voice.

I thought about making a series of foldable objects that one could take along. I thought about these things as pieces that could possibly be worn on the body, or could be attached to it in a similar way as a costume. I might be longing for something that could take on different shapes; something that holds the possibility of a state to come, that holds the future in that sense; something that could enable me as a body to do something with, something which I may otherwise couldn't do; an object like a puzzle piece that can be used or attached to the body enabling one to access something that could not have been accessed in any another way, in temporary togetherness. (hm dit is eigenlijk een beetje verwarrend, hoe t er nu staat).

I feel that for me the issues at stake in these explorations are to keep the lightness present; to cherish the element of play without reverting into either a literal field of play where anything can happen (like the performance - I say this for the sake of not repeating myself, but also to dare to take more control and to enable myself to be a bit more harsh in my choices) or on the other hand not to fall into a type of literal story telling in which the objects of display (exhibition furniture or structures, empty plateau's, pedestals) become characters in a narrative that sits close to institutional critique. (??? mehhhh kan ik dit eigenlijk wel zeggen)

When I think about *I am an object with many echoes* in relation to previous work it makes me very happy to realise that I finally actually touched my work and that I had given it a performative life after its making. For the first time, something had not only

become potentially movable or mobile, but was actually moved and shown as such.

Similarities with previous work might be that this too had a slight potential of being overlooked (?? dat is eigenlijk helemaal niet waar) or to dissolve in its surroundings. The mimicking and camouflage aspect was again present in my most recent work. In the Reading, Writing and Research seminar I realised that in order to introduce someone to my work who is unfamiliar with it, I often like to go back to a particular work I made, one that makes me very happy because in the process of its making I found a certain method that still feels as a very important discovery for me. I made this work in 2012, in an old Citroën garage in the city centre of Den Bosch.



Wall, 2012, Eindexaarsexpositie (Vugterstraat, Den Bosch)

(Dit kan of moet misschien wel weg)

(Prior thereto I worked for four weeks on site. The work I made there was a freestanding wall I added to a room in which there was already a small wall present that was shielding a basement hatch. In the time span I was on site, I took the space into consideration in an almost meditative way.

The freestanding wall I made was bigger than the one that was already there. I used the same materials and finished it with the same paint and I copied the baseboards. At the back side of it I made a fold into one of the corners.

The small wall that was present in the room triggered my thoughts on the specific architecture (das een beetje raar mss) of the space and the order of

things in it. The L-shaped wall seemed purely functional in a sense, but had a clear decorative character as well (-side to it as well, mss beter). I found it quite ambiguous in its status and presence. It was almost like it didn't want to draw too much attention to itself, being painted in the same white-greyish colour of the entire room and finished with the same baseboards as the other walls. It wanted to fit in but it remained estranged (ander woord bedoel ik). It was the only thing that was not structural. It was shielding, covering, obscuring.

Me wanting to make another wall that had the same ambiguity of fitting and yet not fitting in came from a longing to add something else to that situation; to the peaceful room with not much in it (super cheesy), but/ yet with its clear intimate and private interior logic (ughhh). I somehow wanted to add something to the narrative that messed in a silent way with the functional. (aaa lelijk)



Both of the works were made in relation to a specific context; the context being the trigger for the idea. The both of them confused and obscured the logic / order (?) of things in their specific environment. They were both dealing with reversion of materiality and senseless presence in a way. (this is bad)

The past work didn't move. It was static and fixed to its own location, which embodies more or less the issue and irritations I found myself dealing with in 2015 about my work in general. The recent work could potentially pop up everywhere because it was movable and moving. You could not walk around the current one, as it didn't have one format that it was bound to. The wall made it pretty easy for one to

walk around. The current one was made to walk around with.

some kind of ending here

I would like to conclude this text by listing my research strands, consisting of texts and other artists as touchstones.

2160 woorden min quote, 1877 min stukje Vugterstraat, *276 woorden quote*

Research strands

Things that Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science

Meeting the Universe Halfway, Karen Barad

The Order of Things, Michel Foucault

Poetry, Language, Thought, Martin Heidegger

De Wijde Wereld, Bas Heijne

Yael Davids

Kim van Erven

Tim Hollander

Hedwig Houben

Rebecca Ounstead

Yvonne Droge-Wendel

Margre Steensma

Guy-ben ner

Text on method outline

General note on mode of address. Write as if to someone not familiar with your work.

Title

Abstract: what is this document? what do you want the reader to get from this text?
(50-100 words)

Introduction: Give outline of the text and make the points you want to get across clear.

Current Practice (resource: here you can use the descriptions made in the last session)

Relation to previous practice

How does your current work connect to previous projects you have done? (resource: here you can use the descriptions made in the first sessions)

Relation to a larger context

Outline practices or ideas that go beyond the scope of your personal work. Write briefly about other projects or theoretical material which share an affinity with your project. It is simply about showing an awareness of a broader context, which you will later build upon in your project proposal and writing component in the second year (you may have covered some of this in your interview)

Research strands

Consider the possibilities open to you and where you would take your work in the near future.

General note= consider the role of images and links to video (if you want your proposal to take the form of a wiki/web page)

back to methods main:

http://pzwiki.wdka.nl/fineart/Reading,_Writing_%26_Research_Methods