School of Media, Creative Arts, and Social Inquiry

Process as Outcome: Methods of Engagement with the Nonhuman Object/thing/material

Alira Jane Callaghan

This thesis is presented for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

of

Curtin University

June 2021

Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature: .... Date: ....

ABSTRACT

This is a project that develops creative research methods that focus on how we do what we do (art) and how we could do differently what we do by troubling our understanding of definitions and relations. Informed by the meeting points and divergences of new materialism and object-oriented ontology, this project problematises the commonly accepted paradigm of what constitutes a nonhuman (so that we might begin to think more in terms of everyday relations to the material world around us) and re-imagines the types of useful spaces for thinking, making, and showing art (so that we might engage with the material world differently). Deploying an expanded notion of practice-led research developed through curiosity and an openness to difference has resulted in a project that cycles back on itself both in terms of process and visual form. Within this largely investigational space of thinking and making art, a degree of planned unpreparedness has been written in by way of open-ended questions and objectives. Through creative practice and exegetical writing, this research communicates two main propositions: 1) objects, things, and materials of the material world should be seen as "nonhuman"; and 2) doing so impacts the methods that come to be used in thinking, making, and showing art. The approach of working from inside the project to develop outwards the useful parameters and methods for engaging with objects, things, and materials enacts intra-action and utilises messy becomings. What

results is a self-reflective and ongoing research project that uses these processorial encounters as the form of this project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge that this research project was undertaken on Whadjuk Noongar boodja and I sincerely and gratefully pay my respects to elders past and present.

I also acknowledge the contribution of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship that supported this research, and Dr Dean Chan for copyediting this exegesis.

Immense thanks go to my supervisors—Associate Professor Susanna Castleden and Dr Christina Chau. Susanna—your generosity in guidance, care, and knowledge has been a gift I feel lucky to have received. Christina—your unwavering enthusiasm and belief in the project kept me afloat; thank you for your advice and mentorship. You are both inspiring women and I feel lucky to have had your companionship during this PhD journey. Your acceptance and trust in me and the project when I didn't feel it myself helped me to see this through. Thank you.

Undertaking this PhD only became an option because of the curiosity instilled in me through my years of study leading up to it. Belated thanks go to Tim Gregory, Jo Richardson, Bruce Slatter, Riley Salmon-Lomas, and Susanna Castleden—my desire to ask questions was fostered through your passion for art.

To Matt Roberts and Rebecca Baumann—our catchups and hangouts recharged me and I'm so grateful for your friendship. Thank you, Hannah Gilovitz, for always being there. A unique thanks go to the new friends I made in the PhD Forum's online study room; you are the best thing to have come out of the isolation caused by the pandemic. Your relentless and uplifting support in both study and life has brought me joy even in the hardest moments of this project.

To Josh, for your kindness, understanding, and support through it all. I wouldn't have made it through this without you. And finally, to my mum, Dianne, our last conversation was about my decision to do a PhD and I have not forgotten your support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract v

Acknowledgments vii

Contents ix

List of Figures xi

Introduction / / Finding My Practice in Strange Places 1

Problem one / / Establishing Useful Parameters 31

Chapter 1. Between an Object-Oriented Rock and a New Materialist Hard Place 32

- Coming to the World of Objects 38
- Turning to Matter 54
- Seeing Again Otherwise 59

Chapter 2. Object/thing/material 66

- Bringing Together Ungroupable Object/thing/materials 74
- Coming to Know Object/thing/material 84
- The Object/thing/material of the Artworld 87

Problem Two / / Moving Beyond Established Parameters **101**

Chapter3. Entangled Practice **102**

Following the Practice-led Lead 111

Developing Process as Outcome 119

Chapter 4. Configuring residency as a thinking, making, showing space **133**

Another. October 2017 139

Gallery as Residency. January 2018 147

Is it a feeling? September 2018 167

Chapter 5. Processorial object/thing/material **186**

Vibrant Documentation 191

Presenting Process as Outcome 203

Artist Bookish 217

Conclusion / / Expanding out again **232**

Reference List **251**

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction / / Finding My Practice in Strange Places

Figure i. Grip tape surrounding artwork at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, 2017. Work by Anni Albers, *Free-Hanging Room Divider*, 1949. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure ii. Member of the public walking through artwork installation at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure iii. Walking through Félix González-Torres, *"Untitled" (Chemo)*, 1991, at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure iv. Webbing straps at the World of Birds enclosure, Bronx Zoo, New York, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure v. Félix González-Torres, "*Untitled" (Placebo–Landscape–for Roni)*, 1993, at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan

Figure vi. Félix González-Torres *"Untitled"*, 1980-1990 at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan

Figure vii. Exhibition handouts, candies, and paper stack copies from González-Torres works shown at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Chapter 1. Between an Object-Oriented Rock and New Materialist Hard Place

Figure 1.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Chapter 2. Object/thing/material

Figure 2.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 2.2 early object/thing/material combinations in studio, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 2.3 early object/thing/material combinations in studio, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 2.4 early object/thing/material combinations in studio, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 2.5 early object/thing/material combinations in studio, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 2.6 early object/thing/material combinations in studio, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 2.7 Nina Canell, *Gum Shelf*, 2017. Mastic gum, steel.
Retrieved from https://goldsmithscca.art/event/transparent-things/.

Figure 2.8 Nina Canell, *Mender,* 2012. Nails, hidden magnet, 15 x 5 x 3cm. Retrieved from https://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/205-the-devils-fidelity/works/artworks28571/.

Figure 2.9 Vanessa Billy, exhibition view, *Dear Life*, 2017. Photograph: Marc Domage. Retrieved from https://www.boltelang.com/artists/vanessa-billy/.

Chapter 3. Entangled Practice

Figure 3.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.2 Alira Callaghan, developing a thesis structure in the studio, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.3 Alira Callaghan, developing a thesis structure in the studio, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.4 Alira Callaghan, seeing relations in residency spaces at Paper Mountain, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.5 interacting with types of sponge at Paper Mountain, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.6 screen shot of video in space at Paper Mountain, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.7 sanding a balloon at Paper Mountain, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.8 balancing on disco balls at Another residency, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.9 cutting a scouring sponge at Paper Mountain, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 3.10 deinstalling sandpaper blinds from a group show, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Chapter 4. Configuring Residency as a Thinking, Making, Showing Space

Figure 4.1 Alira Callaghan, detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.2 Alira Callaghan, streamer doorway, first day at Another residency, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.3 Alira Callaghan, space view during Another residency, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.4 Alira Callaghan, space view during Another residency, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.5 Alira Callaghan, space view during Another residency, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.6 Alira Callaghan, space view during Another residency, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.7 disco ball balloons deflated and left in place, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.8 Jose Dávila, installation view, *Open Studio*, 2000. Wood, sheetrock, and furniture, dimensions variable, Braziers Workshop, Oxfordshire, UK. Retrieved from https://josedavila.mx/open-studio/.

Figure 4.9 Paper Mountain gallery space, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.10 Paper Mountain gallery space, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.11 progression of space, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.12 progression of space, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.13 progression of space, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.14 triangle connections, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.15 triangle connections, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.16 agar detail, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.17 agar detail, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.18 agar detail, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.19 space on last day of project, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.20 space on last day of project, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.21 Dieter Roth & Björn Roth, installation view, *Books. Dieter Roth. Bjorn Roth. Studio*, 2017. New York. Photograph: Timothy Doyon. Retrieved from https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/5930-books-dieter-roth-bjorn-roth-studio?modal=media-player&mediaType=instaview&mediaId=12789.

Figure 4.22 developing ideas for *Is it a feeling?*, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.23 developing ideas for *Is it a feeling?*, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.24 laying out works in the Lobby space, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.25 laying out works in the Lobby space, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.26 images in the Lobby space for *Is it a feeling?,* 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.27 images in the Lobby space for *Is it a feeling?,* 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.28 images in the Lobby space for *Is it a feeling?*, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.29 images in the Lobby space for *Is it a feeling?*, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.30 installation of desk space at the Lobby, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 4.31 detail of desk set-up at the Lobby, 2018. Photograph: Laura Agar.

Chapter 5. Processorial Object/thing/material

Figure 5.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.2 Studio 3 at the Fremantle Arts Centre with accumulated object/thing/materials, 2019. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.3 Studio 3 at the Fremantle Arts Centre with accumulated object/thing/materials, 2019. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.4 Studio 3 at the Fremantle Arts Centre with accumulated object/thing/materials, 2019. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.5 Robert Smithson, *Leaning Mirror*, 1969. Mirrors, sand, 83.8 x 223.5 x 274.3cm, Dia Beacon, 2017. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.6 Jagna Ciuchta, deinstal image, *Missing Alina (Grand Palais)*, 2014, International Contemporary Art Fair (FIAC). Photograph: Jagna Ciuchta. Retrieved from https://www.jagnaciuchta.com/Missing-Alina-Grand-Palais.

Figure 5.7 Jagna Ciuchta, installation image, *Goats and Marble*, 2016. Acrylic paint, inkjet on wallpaper. Photograph: Anatole Barde. Retrieved from https://www.jagnaciuchta.com/Goats-and-Marble.

Figure 5.8 screen shot from video sorting through images, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.9 stack of 6x4in photos with testing combinations of object/thing/materials, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.10 stacks of images printed in various sizes, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.11 Motohiro Tomii folder book, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.12 Motohiro Tomii inside folder book, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.13 felt case for Shinro Ohtake book at Daikanyama Tsutaya Books, 2016. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.14 seeing Shinro Ohtake's *Pink Tree,* at STPI Gallery, Singapore, 2020. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.15 seeing Shinro Ohtake's *Pink Tree,* at STPI Gallery, Singapore, 2020. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.16 seeing Shinro Ohtake's *Pink Tree,* at STPI Gallery, Singapore, 2020. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.17 Shinro Ohtake, *Scrapbook #66,* 2010-2012, mixed media artist book, 72 x 96 x 129cm. Retrieved from https://parasol-unit.org/whats-on/shinro-ohtake/

Figure 5.18 concertina book on table, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.19 concertina book hung up, 2018. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.20 Richard Tuttle, *The Missing Portrait*, 2008, handmade book, 45.72 x 41.91 x 20.32cm. Retrieved from https://www.pafa.org/museum/collection/item/missing-portrait

Figure 5.21 progression of processorial object/thing/material, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.22 progression of processorial object/thing/material, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.23 progression of processorial object/thing/material, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.24 progression of processorial object/thing/material, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.25 progression of processorial object/thing/material, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure 5.26 progression of processorial object/thing/material, Singapore residency, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Conclusion. Expanding Out Again

Figure viii. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure ix. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure x. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xi. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xii. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xiii. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xiv. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xv. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xvi. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xvii. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xviii. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

Figure xix. processorial object/thing/material, 2021. Photograph: Alira Callaghan.

INTRODUCTION / /

FINDING MY PRACTICE IN STRANGE PLACES

> I just found by mistake that I was doing it, and then found that I needed to do more of it. (Ingold 2019, 46:53)

Early on in my doctoral studies I went to New York to visit friends who had recently relocated there. The post-candidacy drift had already begun and the first doubts about the complexity of the project had reached me. The required duality of keeping both the macro and micro aspects of the project in mind at the same time made it difficult to not slip into moments of confusion or despair. Consequently, I thought I would take a break and put this "thing" I had started to one side in a nice, safe spot where it would be contained and unchanged while I was on leave from my studies. I now relish my naivety in thinking this way. Instead, it became apparent that I had not, in fact, wholly left the project behind. Throughout my time away I found my practice in plain view across multiple sites in the city and in considering the nature of this project I acknowledge that it may have found me instead. Accidentally locating my practice in New York drew my attention to the reality that being situated within the physical world means being constantly enmeshed within the project—a project whose subject is matter and the objects that take up space in our world. While I had already established that practice-led research was going to be directly informing the methodology of the project, the trip away made it clearer to what extent this process could be explored. It became particularly relevant for this project to include a practice-led, rather than practice-based, methodology as doing so enabled investigation into what constitutes such an approach while engaging in it. The act of recalling and reflecting on my time spent in New York only served to highlight the ways I was, and am, positioned within the research. Looking back and thinking forward has created slippages in time in the following pages of this exegesis—flicking back and forth between feelings of then and now.

Within this project I have tried to find, through experience, a language suitable for the entanglement with the other-than-human "stuffs" brought into this research space. Searching for this language led me on a multi-directional path, not simply rhizomatic—as in Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) terminology—or tentacular—to call upon Haraway (2016)—but one that came into close contact with interdisciplinary thinking without breaking stride, a continuous line drawing. This journey has involved mingling with philosophical discourses that consider the human/nonhuman relationship, specifically new materialism and object-oriented ontology. As a result of this, choosing to orient myself towards matter—away from pervasive anthropocentrism—served to keep in check the often unintentional reliance on human exceptionalism. Immersing myself in these fields has aligned this project with some aspects of the included theorists' intentions while also causing me to reconsider the relevance of some of the others. An example of this can be found in my inclusion of the largely androcentric world of object-oriented ontology and speculative realism. I choose to side with object-oriented ontology's non-anthropocentric conception of the world as being comprised of objects in which humans are no more privileged than any other object, but its problematic, unnuanced discussion of the lived experience of what it means to be considered an object in society cannot be ignored. In locating points of interest and concern within such perspectives, I find myself in dialogue with other theorists who have tread similar paths. *Problem One / / Establishing Useful Parameters,* consisting of two chapters, locates those thoughts of mine and others in order to tread a path through nonhuman discourse from within visual art. Positing that the objects, things, and materials that we coexist with in the material world be considered nonhuman, this research project explores, through practice-led research, methods for developing processes of engagement with such matter. In chapter 1, *Between an Object-oriented Rock and a New Materialist Hard Place*, I foreground the discussion on the entangled experience of positioning the nonhuman within creative practice, setting the tone for the following chapters.

On my trip to New York I realised I was in an ecosystem of convergences and becomings relevant to my research. These moments extended even to the intended leisure activities of shopping and sightseeing. It was in The Strand Bookstore that I discovered the writings of Katherine Behar and, in particular, object-oriented feminism—a field of inquiry I did not know I was looking for, but which provided necessary rejoinders to some of the more problematic object-oriented ontological statements. Considering I was meant to be on a break, it was a mistake on my behalf to even wander over to the philosophy section where any number of books could potentially hold the key to my research. Luckily I didn’t find any books specifically dealing with the processes of engagement with nonhuman objects, things, and materials, or perhaps I wouldn’t have continued with this research. The potential of Behar’s edited book *Object-Oriented Feminism* (2016) was apparent from a split-second scan of the back cover. Keywords like intervention, speculative realism, new materialism, stuff, matter, and interdisciplinary shot towards me. Coincidentally, I was already familiar with Behar as an artist through a performance project in which she considered “buildings’ psychologies” as driving change in urban landscapes.[1] I wonder whether I would have connected so instantly to the book if I had not known Behar’s name as an artist, or what number of antecedent events had to have occurred to prime me for the moment to happen as it did. Was it my attraction to the bold red spine? The modern font that conveyed its contemporaneity in contrast to the Penguin reprints? Or the effect of my bias towards the word “object”? No matter, I found it (perhaps) and I would have to keep it in my luggage for the rest of the trip. This book threw a proverbial spanner into my suitcase that I was more than willing to carry. Behar’s object-oriented feminism proposes to “turn the position of philosophy inside out, to study objects while being an

---

1. *Building Blocks,* 2008, exhibited as part of *CamouFlash—Disappearing in Art* in Germany was a project I found through researching artists engaging with nonanthropocentric theoretical spaces. Of her project, Behar says: “what if urban changes were motivated not by humans' whims, but by buildings' psychologies? The city would reorder itself every time a building blushed with embarrassment and the landscape would shift again should a building desire, even momentarily, for its image to persist” (n.d., para 2).

object oneself" (Behar 2016, 3) and from the outset, this edited book situates its included texts as a problematisation of popular object-oriented perspectives, giving voice to experiences of objectification usually not mentioned in object-oriented ontology. This acknowledgement of human-objects is particularly interesting as an approach to dealing with the often ignored problem of never not being human in our interactions with nonhumans.

As an agitation to cartesian dualisms that influenced much of Western cultural theory and specifically the perceived shortcomings of the linguistic turn of the 20th century, new materialism repositions the human, orienting towards matter and nonhuman actants in an act of critical engagement with material realities. It recognises and advocates that matter comes to exist through and within humans because of the entanglement between both types of entities in the material world—an intertwinement between nonhuman bodies and human ones (Coole & Frost 2010, 42)—and exists in this practice-led research project as a troubling perspective to some of object-oriented ontology's immoveable stances. While it is harder to unite object-oriented ontology under a guiding principle due to its many siloed voices, it largely also theorises from an opposition to anthropocentrism; that is, object-oriented ontology acknowledges that objects make up the world, that humans are no more important an object than any other, and that we need to continue to learn what we mean when we talk about them (Harman 2010; Bryant 2010; Bogost 2009)[2].

Object-oriented philosopher Graham Harman espouses that humans are simply another example of an object that exists with other myriad objects, and that "philosophy must deal with every type of object rather than reducing all objects to one privileged type" (Harman 2012b, 4). In stating this, Harman seeks to level the playing field in order to develop a greater understanding of the relations that occur in the space of human/nonhuman proximity; however, in attempting to do so, he simplifies the complexity of being a human-object and minimises the hierarchy that continues to exist between humans and nonhumans. It is easy to be drawn to Harman's world of objects that are simply getting on with the task of existing, but while exchanging the word "human" for "object" does help to illustrate the underlying non-anthropocentric position of object-oriented ontology, it also engages in a form of erasure that ultimately serves humans more than it does objects. Throughout *Object-Oriented Feminism* is the desire to drive discussions of nonhuman objects towards positions of radical agency, leaning in to the challenges

---

2 . These selected references for Bogost, Bryant, and Harman are from their respective blogs in which they write unfettered by publication pressures and freely pose their considerations and unfinished thoughts in a refreshing contrast to a lot of published object-oriented ontology texts. See https://doctorzamalek2.wordpress.com; https://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com; and http://bogost.com/blog/.

of an object-oriented theory with a level of criticality and curiosity not always present in object-oriented ontology.[3] The ground here is clearly still contested but rather than critiquing the friction between object-oriented ontology and object-oriented feminism from a distance, this research project locates itself amongst the discourse, making strange alliances with unlikely theoretical perspectives and maintaining curious relationships with unpredictable matter.

Finding Katherine Behar's book in New York came at a time when I was considering the voice I bring to this project—that of a white, cisgender woman, located in an isolated city, coming from an even more isolated country town—and how necessary or not it was for me to use my voice in the context of this field of research. It was through reading *Object-Oriented Feminism*'s chapters that I came to feel: a) there is no one person who can or cannot engage in this discourse if their position is considered and acknowledged alongside it; b) the ability to write about these things doesn't equate to an acknowledgment of value; and c) the more alternative voices there are, the more potential such engagements hold for productive critique. While I acknowledge the position I am working from as being white and privileged in my feminism, I recognise that this research project involves citing some theorists who don't reflect on the power their voices have. As such, I try, whenever possible, to employ citational practices proposed by Sara Ahmed, and when it is not possible to do so, I condense the source material to fewer texts by the same author even if this goes against appearing "widely read". For example, knowing that Ahmed attends to citations as "feminist bricks…the materials through which, from which, we create our dwellings" (2017, 16) and draws to our attention the prevalence of white male voices in academia and research more broadly, I question my need to cite 10 of Graham Harman's texts when he is, by and large, saying the same thing across them all.[4] Ahmed's impact on my research has been intensified during this project and so whenever I play in white, male philosophical spaces, I do so with acknowledgement of the fact and counter with divergence. So, while I might engage in attempts at working from a flattened ontology at times, it is with the acknowledgment of being a human-type, feminist object first and an object-oriented ontological object second. I, therefore, returned from New York prepared to engage with nonhuman objects, things, and materials as both human and object. While the texts from *Object-Oriented Feminism* don't appear throughout the whole exegesis, it exists as one of the cornerstones of the formative first year and reflects important aspects of this research project—that of remaining open to change, embracing the journey and discovery as integral to the development of new knowledges, and

---

[3] Perhaps an exception to this is Timothy Morton's (2016) inclusion in *Object-Oriented Feminism* with a chapter developing the notion of "weird essentialism" in which deviancy is connected to Luce Irigaray's work on "woman's divergence from phallocentric logic" (2016, 65-81).

---

4. See also Hélène Frichot discussing citational practices, with reference to Ahmed and in particular Harman, in her book *Creative Ecologies: Theorizing the Practice of Architecture* (2019, 101).

remembering that you don't always know what you will find in the philosophy section of a bookstore. All this is not to say that there aren't parameters and clear objectives in this research, but rather that I have written in space for such processes to occur within the practice-led research methodology.

My journey of thinking about materials through philosophy coalesced with learning about materials through art. I have often engaged with objects, things, and materials which are excitingly ambiguous in terms of their classification: duct tape, balloons, plastic, metal, sandpaper, rock, grip tape, streamers, disco balls, and mylar all fall somewhere along the object/thing/material scale. In some contexts they could be labelled any one of the terms—object, thing, material—and it is this ability to shift that I refer to when I say "ambiguous". The seeming ordinariness of the list comes from our familiarity with the items as being readily available at party and stationery stores as well as DIY or home improvement warehouses that reflect some aspect of their purpose for being manufactured. However, it is these facades of functionality that obscure our understanding of them as nonhuman, often through our ingrained negation of their existence outside of utilitarian purposes. Perhaps it was only through encountering anti-slip grip tape's components in other forms like sandpaper and silicon carbide that I was subsequently able to see it anew as more than just its mass-produced definition.[5] Recalling my encounters with this particular object or thing or material on my trip to New York brought together disparate threads that demonstrate the connection between artists, materials, and places within my PhD in ways I might not have been able to see otherwise.

---

[5] Anti-slip grip tape is safety tape with a strong adhesive on one side and various grit levels for traction, commonly used on step edges.

In chapter 2, *Object/thing/material*, I lay out the stages involved in coming to a critical decision on the use of the terms object, thing, and material, and propose the conceptual term “object/thing/material”. This construction, which has its roots in my earlier research from 2013, is cemented through practice-led research in which studio engagements with matter occur. Once laid out, the use of “object/thing/material” is ascribed to that which is interacted with and becomes the standard term used throughout the exegesis. I try not to refer to “stuff” as it can evoke an overabundance of useless, unnecessary, or unimportant somethings; as Maurizia Boscagli states, “What defines stuff is its amorphousness as accumulation, assemblage, jumble of objects” (2014, 11). Combining the three words highlights their connectivity and becomes a less reductive way of discussing these specific, predominantly inanimate, nonhumans. As I conclude that it is detrimental to separate or interchange the words “object”, “thing”, “material”, any instances of them as individual terms in this exegesis come from reference to someone else’s usage, conceptual understanding, or the need to emphasise its commonly understood state of being. The trifold concept at play here does not only exist in theory; in practice, it manifests as a sense of ambiguity, curiosity, and contradiction towards physical matter. An object/thing/material’s composite existence complicates its definability and, as such, a roll of grip tape on a shelf can be referred to as an object in one instance, but a thing when viewed as an unravelled pile on the floor some distance away, and that same thing becomes a material if adhered to the edge of a step. At any juncture these terms only serve to aid us in limiting the grip tape's potential, bringing it in line with preconceived notions of functionality and purpose. To attempt to distinguish grip tape as being one term or another does not go towards developing new understandings, whereas considering it as a nonhuman object/thing/material highlights the potential it contains to surprise and inform.

The collected texts and theorists in this project didn't always come about because of their logical relevance, but rather through chance encounters, curiosity, and confusion. While the inclusion of some happen to make perfect sense because of the fields I was hovering within, certain outliers or contradictors emerged in the same space through an openness to discovery in the research journey. This characterises the research as a unique comingling of texts and ideas that aid in the messy entanglements that such a practice-led project both necessitates and thrives on. For example, attending a philosophy conference in Hobart allowed me to spend some of my time off in independent bookstores where I discovered Michelle Boulous Walker's *Slow Philosophy* (2017). She explores what it means to be patient and read slowly, developing slow reading as an act of rebellion against institutional demands of efficiency and productivity. Although I don't cite Boulous Walker's attentive examinations of Irigaray, Adorno, Beauvoir, or Wittgenstein, I do take up the reminder that slowness, or critical attentiveness, "opens and

MoMA for free entry (I admit that I was one of the cheap tourists) made for an even more intense experience and I hovered around these "taped" artworks trying to snap pictures of feet disobeying rules. I stood and watched people streaming through the Rauschenberg installation for quite some time. Some people would skirt the edges, obviously feeling that trespassing just a little bit wouldn't hurt the artwork, while other people were so oblivious of the work and the designated space, I was left wondering why they had come to an art museum in the first place. Then there were those that animatedly moved out of the space when told by the attendant that they had overstepped the boundary, as if they had been walking on the artwork itself. Watching the one attendant try to fend off all the offenders was an amusing experience (perhaps the attendants, more than anyone, would like to see a more robust barrier). In creative practice I deliberately misplace the intended utilitarian nature of object/thing/materials, like the grip tape, and instead choose to rub up against them—coming into proximity with them—as ways to reconsider our coexistence.

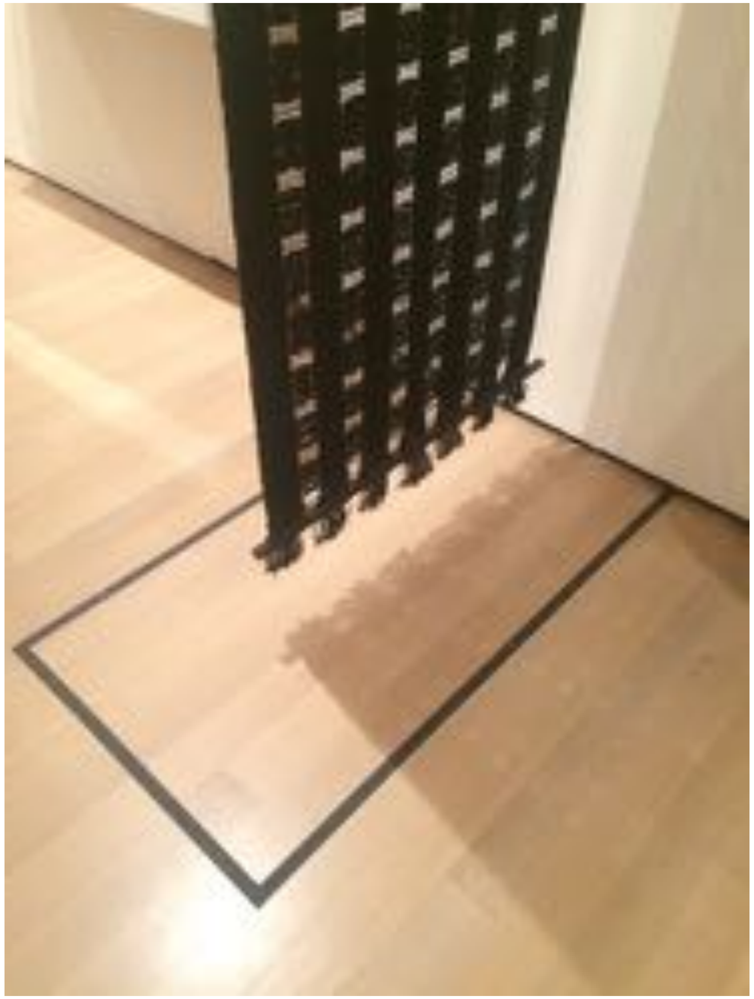


Figure i. Grip tape surrounding artwork at MoMA, New York, 2017. Work by Anni Albers, *Free-Hanging Room Divider*, 1949.

Figure ii. Member of the public walking through artwork installation at MoMA, New York, 2017.

It wasn’t just noticing the grip tape in these spaces that connected the sites to my practice, but the way locating it out in the world helped reiterate the importance of staying with this “thing”, even without fully understanding its way of being in the project. Donna Haraway speaks of the need to “stay with the trouble”—an action that necessitates learning to be fully present in a way that “requires each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations… we become-with each other or not at all” (2016, 4). Haraway poses this idea through the lens of spiralling ecological devastation and proposes living and dying on a damaged earth with nonhumans as a way to work towards a liveable future. While Haraway does not discuss this concept specifically in relation to art, it has nonetheless been taken up enthusiastically within the posthumanities and so I hold onto this idea of staying with the trouble, beyond its simple sentiment, and acknowledge its potential for combatting the anthropocentric/androcentric positions of our engagement with object/thing/materials. Although I was already familiar with Haraway’s work through her examination of the cyborg in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (1991) and *When Species Meet* (2008), her explicitly entangled approach did not become embedded in my thinking until I found a copy of *Staying with the Trouble* (2016) in the new release section at another New York bookstore. Haraway’s optimistic approach for negotiating the dire situation of the world is a welcome change in discourses on the Anthropocene. Haraway engages a range of SF terms—science fiction, speculative fabulation, string figures, speculative feminism, science fact (ibid, 2). For me, Haraway’s *speculative feminism* is linked to the object-oriented feminism of Behar, and so I found myself further entwined with non-anthropocentric approaches during an intended breather from my PhD. My curiosity about anti-slip grip tape, while unrelated to Haraway in many respects, led me to notice and stay focussed on something I did not know the purpose of. While this process is not dissimilar to the situation many artists find themselves in, I could not help but see the tentacular thinking described by Haraway (2016) as being present in relation to my time away and my various experiences in New York. In chapter 3, *Entangled Practice*, which begins to address *Problem Two / / Moving Beyond Established Parameters*, the entwined nature of creative practice and theoretical musings is explored, calling upon Haraway's notion of staying with the trouble to make sense of such coexistence.

Access to first-hand conversations pertaining to the nonhuman can be difficult to locate in isolated institutions (read Perth, Western Australia) and so I was open to all opportunities that came up across disciplines. Sometimes it was a reading group critiquing Michael Marder's vegetal rights,[6] or at other times, entire symposiums exploring speculative ethology and human/animal interrelations[7]—in which Haraway's perspectives are well utilised. This created an interesting amalgamation of thoughts on connecting with, and connections to, nonhumans. While my interest focusses on a more inanimate nonhuman rather than plant, animal, or machine, the process of listening and being in proximity to these broader conversations provided intriguing analogies. I have sat through conference presentations on zoo biology, mentally swapping out any reference of animal for art, not in an effort to minimise animal studies but in order to imagine the kinds of conversations I could be having about nonhuman object/thing/materials as explored through creative practice. At one such event, academic Matthew Chrulew presented on Swiss biologist Heini Hediger and the way zoo enclosures are designed to stop animals getting out without needing cages—leading me to imagine animal-like art trying to escape and, in turn, making me seriously consider the analogy between zoo enclosures and art galleries.[8] Perhaps the anti-slip grip tape at MoMA is not there to keep the public from getting too close to the art, but rather is an attempt at keeping the art in.

---

[6] See "Vegetal Anti-Metaphysics: Learning from Plants" (Marder 2011).

[7] I attended the 2017 and 2019 editions of The History, Philosophy and Future of Ethology symposium held in Perth, Western Australia, with presentations by Vinciane Despret, Cary Wolfe, Hollis Taylor, Thom van Dooren, Deborah Bird Rose, among many others. For the 2019 program, see: https://ccat.curtin.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2019/12/Ethopower-and-Ethography-draft-programme.pdf.

I often recall my fleeting interaction in 2016 with Belgian philosopher Vinciane Despret at a workshop (facilitated by Matthew Chrulew) about creative devices for asking questions in research. Each participant had to submit a short text outlining our areas of research (at that stage I was still very much holding on to object-oriented ontology as the driving force of my candidacy). Despret advised me not to take seriously everything that object philosophers say. I can no longer remember if there was much of a conversation following this or even the exact words, but the sentiment has not left me. The combination of obvious disinterest in object-oriented ontological approaches and her extensive consideration of the types of questions that render useful answers for nonhuman contact helped create space for critique that I was beginning to follow instinctively. I had attached too many limbs of the project to the footholds of object-oriented ontology. While I am sure Despret has never thought again of our meeting, that encounter helped shift the trajectory of the types of questions I was asking about object/thing/materials and encouraged me to engender new responses, rather than reiterating other people's perspectives. This premise is the conceptual framework that Despret uses in her book *What would Animals Say if We Ask the Right Questions?* (2016) which, of course, I also found on my trip to New York at the same time as *Staying with the Trouble*. Despret's connection to my thinking is further entwined with Haraway, who has this to say about Despret: "because of her incomparable ability to think-with other beings, human or not…Despret teaches how to be curious" (2016, 7).

---

[8] See “Reconstructing the Worlds of Wildlife: Uexküll, Hediger, and Beyond” (Chrulew 2020) for discussion on Hediger and zoo enclosures.

On this same trip to New York, after finding Behar, Haraway, Despret, and the grip tape, I visited the Bronx Zoo. To enter the World of Birds exhibit I had to pass through not a door but a curtain of webbing to enter the enclosure. A combination of carefully considered lighting and the webbing in the dark doorway discouraged the birds from attempting to escape (this connects back to Hediger's approaches to zoo enclosures). Similar to the experience of watching people overstep the boundaries at MoMA, I took a moment to watch people wading through the entryway, flicking their straps into the path of the next person, doubling the number of straps they had to get through before seeing the birds of paradise. This motif of blinds/straps in doorways has been a recurring one in previous experiments of mine, often as a way of encouraging physical interaction with a material (or object or thing). Other than webbing I have worked with streamers and strips of sandpaper, plastic butcher's blinds, and rolls of alfoil. Having attended a retrospective exhibition of Félix González-Torres' work at the David Zwirner Gallery in Chelsea back on my first day in New York, I later found the webbing at the zoo to be even more intriguing because of its visual connection to González-Torres' work. "*Untitled" (Chemo)*, 1991, consists of floor-to-ceiling and wall-to-wall beaded "curtains" that viewers negotiate their way through, and this work came to mind when walking into the World of Birds. Standing in a dark and slightly scruffy zoo enclosure with webbing straps, and thinking of the imposing and beautiful beaded curtain of "*Untitled" (Chemo)*, while also considering my attempts with blinds-like things, created an enjoyable yet mysterious triangle.

Figure iii. Walking through Félix González-Torres, *"Untitled" (Chemo)*, 1991, at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2017.

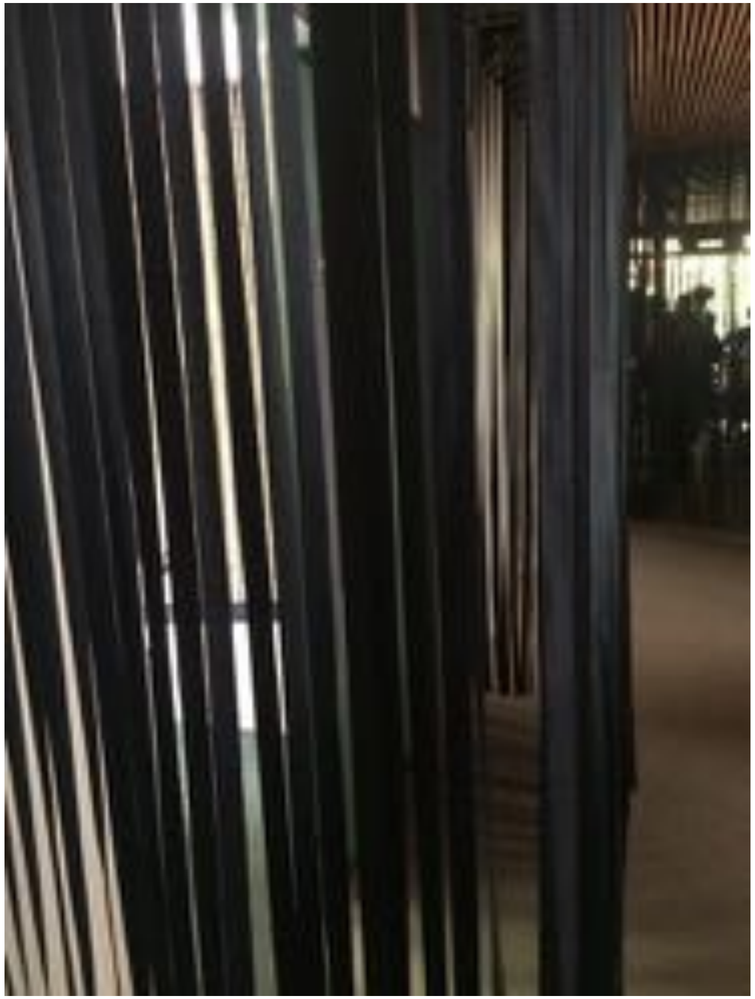


Figure iv. Webbing straps at the World of Birds enclosure, Bronx Zoo, 2017.

Although my own work requires a similar willingness for physical engagement (as do a lot of González-Torres' works), when faced with doing so at the David Zwirner Gallery, I felt apprehensive about touching what I shouldn't or walking through something the wrong way. I read the gallery sheet many times to ensure that the candies in *"Untitled" (Placebo–Landscape–for Roni)*, 1993, would be replenished as visitors took them, before taking two myself, and only after watching someone else do it first. It may have been my first New York gallery jitters or the value I placed on González-Torres' work, but I didn't walk through the beaded curtain until I was sure there was no other way to access the other side of the room; and as I took two pieces off the endless copies of paper in *"Untitled"*, 1980-1990, I waited for a gallery attendant to tell me off. David Deitcher writes in *Stone's Throw* (2016)—another book found by chance on that first visit to the Strand Bookstore, chosen off the shelf because of its minimal spine and my interest in rocks and stones—"Felix wanted people to have his work in the sense that those who remove elements from a stack or take a piece of candy can take aesthetic and/or affective pleasure in their interactions with them" (45). And while I have derived pleasure from my ownership of small parts of his work, I was also worried about breaking gallery conventions by engaging in the process. From this discomfort, I considered what space and subject matter would do for encouraging unselfconscious interaction with art, either in the making or experiencing of it. Perhaps something unassuming or unidentifiable that reads less like gallery-ready art and more like a work in progress would better encourage engagement—or making and showing art in spaces that are not bound by traditional gallery conventions, perhaps a space that sits between the enclosed gallery and the site-specific wild (as in the comparatively open space of working site specifically) . Thoughts such as these, which arose from the encounter with Félix González-Torres' work, would eventually lead me to consider the artist residency as a space that is conducive to this type of unconstrained behaviour, both for me and for others.

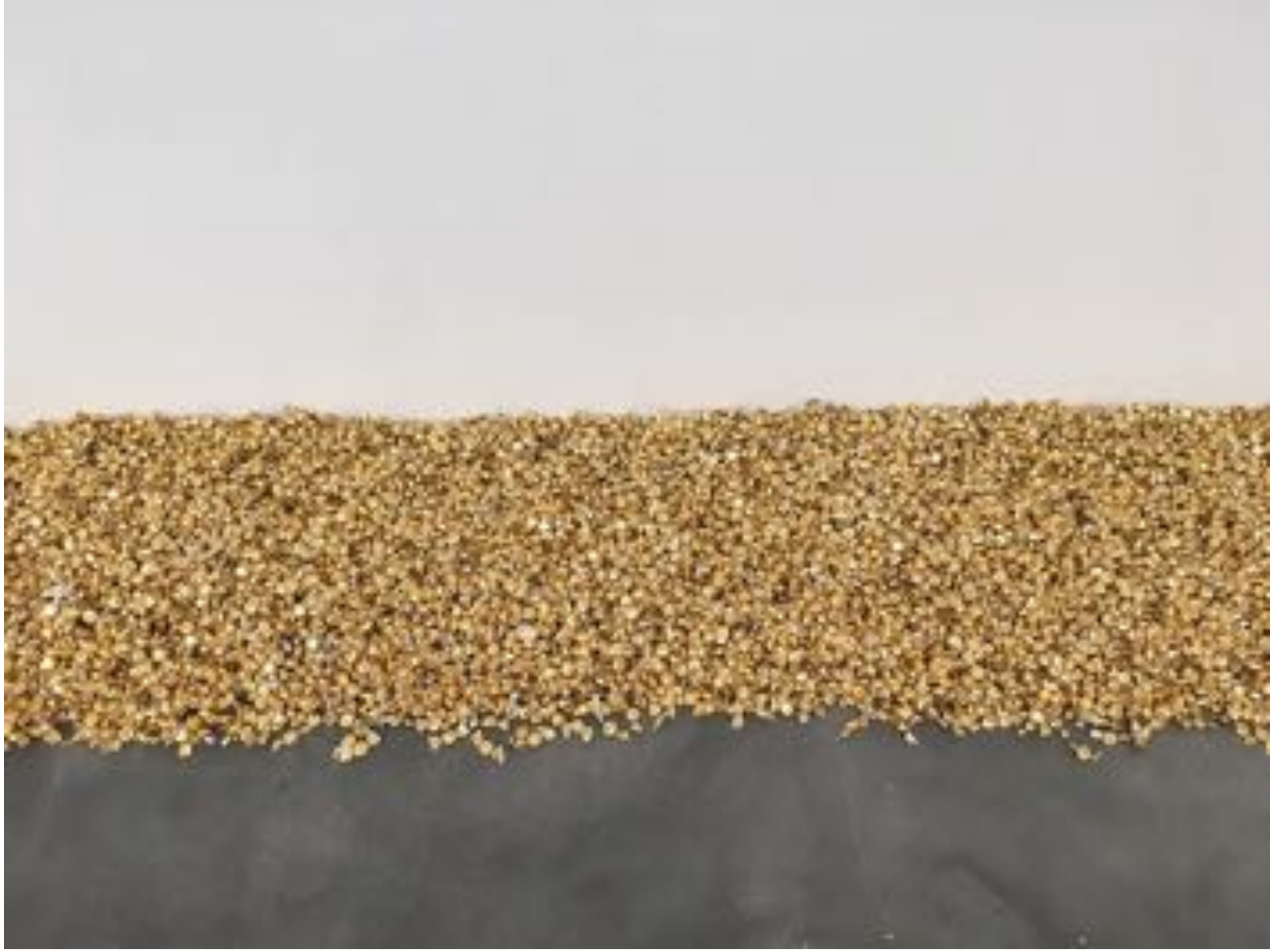


Figure v. Félix González-Torres, *"Untitled" (Placebo–Landscape–for Roni)*, 1993 at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2017.

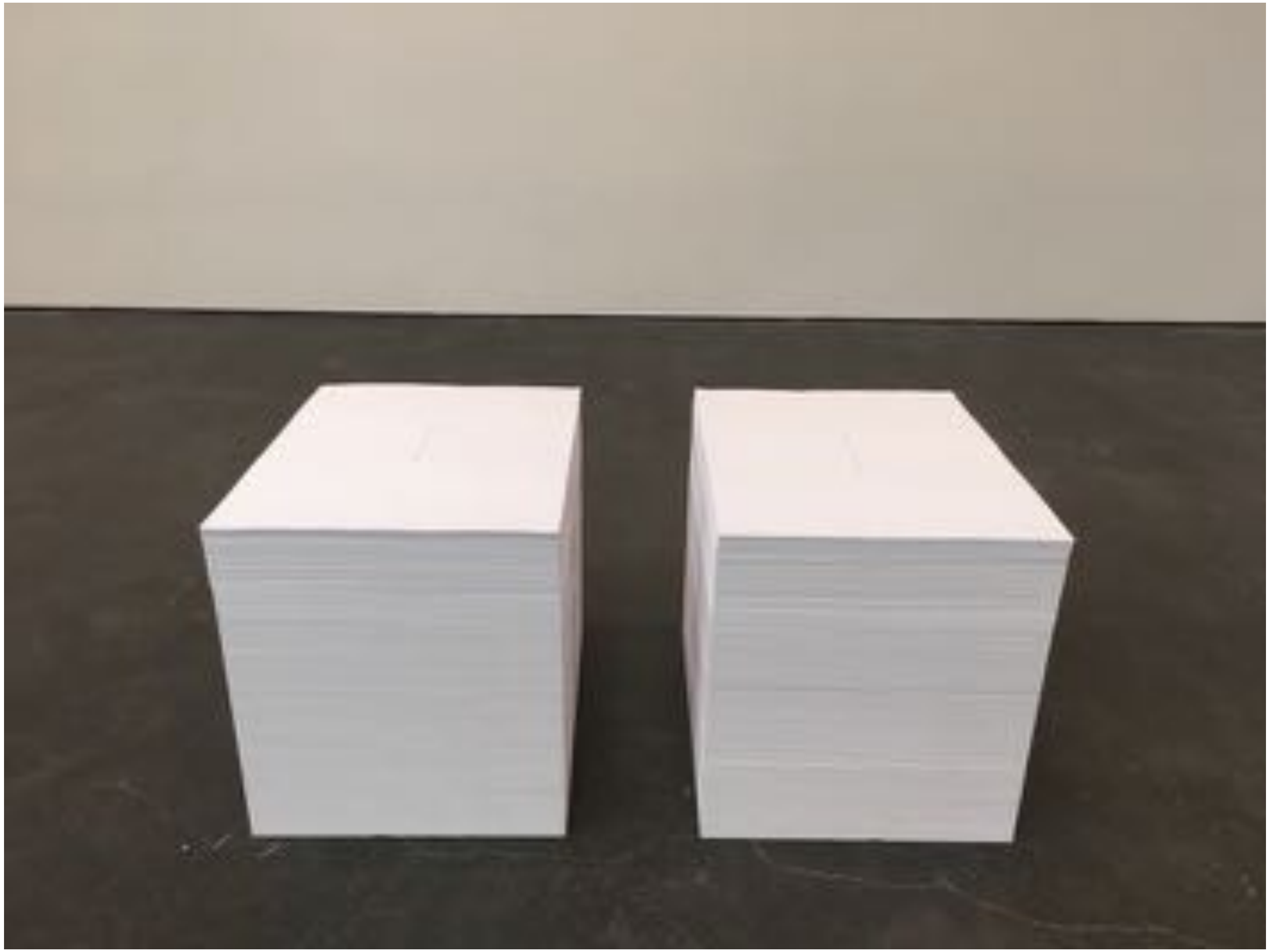


Figure vi. Félix González-Torres *"Untitled"*, 1980-1990 at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2017.

The recurrent theme of coming into contact with objects, things, and materials on my trip to New York in places other than the studio or gallery helped me to continue considering alternative spaces for making and experiencing art. Having undertaken an artist residency prior to travelling to New York, I was already aware of its potential as a less formal space, primed for interaction and curiosity. A residency proposes a space that can be a thinking, making, and showing space all at once, and exists in a greater state of flux than the traditional studio or gallery. This allows it to become a space that art, across all aspects of thinking, making, and showing, can exist within. Similarly, project spaces or alternative gallery sites that maintain a recognisable connection to art, but are flexible enough in usage, can encourage interaction. Perhaps if *"Untitled" (Chemo)* was installed in a less hushed, commercially focussed, four white walls and grey floor rectangle, and was instead closer (geographically and contextually) to its place of conception, interaction would have seemed less off limit. In *Studio and Cube: On the Relationship between Where Art is Made and Where Art is Displayed* (2008)—a book this time found on my upstate trip to Dia Beacon, New York—Brian O'Doherty states that "Daniel Buren was the first to ponder and write about what he called 'the hazardous passage' from the studio (where he considered the work to be in place) to the gallery/museum, where placelessness isolates and reifies it" (17-18).

Chapter 4, *Configuring Residency as a Thinking, Making, Showing Space*, explores what these processes of art, which developed out of thinking about González-Torres O'Doherty work when in New York, might look like within this research project. Included within this discussion of place and creation are artists who reconsider what it means to make art for the gallery (as a machine of capitalist art or as a neoliberal institution), as well as those that choose to use the gallery space as the medium and subject matter of their work, specifically the minimalist artists Jose Dávila, Robert Smithson, Vanessa Billy, and Nina Canell. Shortly after the New York trip, I undertook a residency-like project at Paper Mountain, an artist-run gallery in Perth, Western Australia. I turned the gallery into a project space where I completed a two-week residency during opening hours. It was intended as an investigation into the idea of a residency as a midpoint between studio and gallery with the hope that the informal nature of the space (created through studio-like furniture—desk, chair, coffee mug, fan, toolbox, ladder, etc., and various works in progress) would encourage encounters between humans (whether the public or myself as artist) and nonhumans (object/thing/materials) in unselfconscious ways. During my time there, the notion of the residency as a thinking, making, showing space was tested and I learnt a lot about my own processes and the preconceived ideas others bring to engagements with familiar objects, things, or materials. Rather than using my numerous residency activities as examples of resolved creative practice projects, within this exegesis they become another form of research.

The process of recalling and reflecting on my time in New York brought together places, interactions, and tangential thinking I wasn't expecting. Time away had become time spent progressing my research in ways I couldn't have planned and the threads that came together as a result went on to loosen others, as the process of practice-led research is so good at doing. On the day I left New York, the Guggenheim—in partnership with the Circle Through New York project—set their Félix González-Torres work *"Untitled" (public opinion)*, 1991, free of its institutional restraints. It would take up residence in a church, a pet store, a high school, a tv studio, and a research institute, encouraging new interactions in spaces "other than" a gallery.[9] While my trip was coming to an end, the work of González-Torres was escaping. With more time passing since this trip to New York, I can see that the events and thoughts about art that permeated my way of being in the city are not unlike the types of developments one can hope to have during a residency. Whether it was through being an active participant in exhibitions, book browsing, engaging in dialogue about art, or observing the public's interactions within a gallery environment, I came away from that limited period of time with new directions, some clearer thoughts and some cloudier, and a sense of having achieved something. And like more fixed residencies, I continue to think back on that experience and see new patterns and points of interest, keeping those few weeks rolling around with the other residencies I would go on to undertake over the course of this project. What I couldn't see in those months before, during, and even for a period of time after this New York trip, was that the activities I was doing both within and outside of my initial candidacy proposal were all in service of a process of being in proximity with object/thing/materials. What developed from this reflexive act of looking back and thinking forward was a greater ability to articulate that which I had already been doing—favouring the process of doing art research over the outcome such an act may produce.

---

[9] See https://www.circlethroughnewyork.com for project details.

Chapter 5, *Processorial Object/thing/material*, underscores the importance of process to this project—in the sense of philosophical framing, doing practice-led research, and favouring it over the art object. What follows is the understanding that this project flourishes when outcomes in the shape of artworks are not prioritised. In not rushing to a produced outcome, the sealed-off nature of completed, "final" works is replaced by an object/thing/material form that remains incomplete in perpetuity through and by its process of manifestation. I returned from my trip to New York with copies from Félix González-Torres' stack work; uneaten candy from *"Untitled" (Placebo–Landscape–for Roni)*; a wrapper from another candy work, *"Untitled" (Ross)*, 1991; bookmarks from Printed Matter; gallery room sheets from David Zwirner, Hauser and Wirth, the Whitney, New Museum, and Dia; flyers for shows I wouldn't be around to see; rolls of metal and tape; too many books; and digital images in abundance. Collectively, these objects, things, and materials represent some tangible form of my experiences in

New York, a form of documentation of spaces and the time spent in them. *Processorial Object/thing/material* is my chance to solidify my approach to documentational practices employed throughout the course of this project across all engagements with object/thing/materials, and the chapter demonstrates the continuing entanglements of this project through a form that need not become resolved.

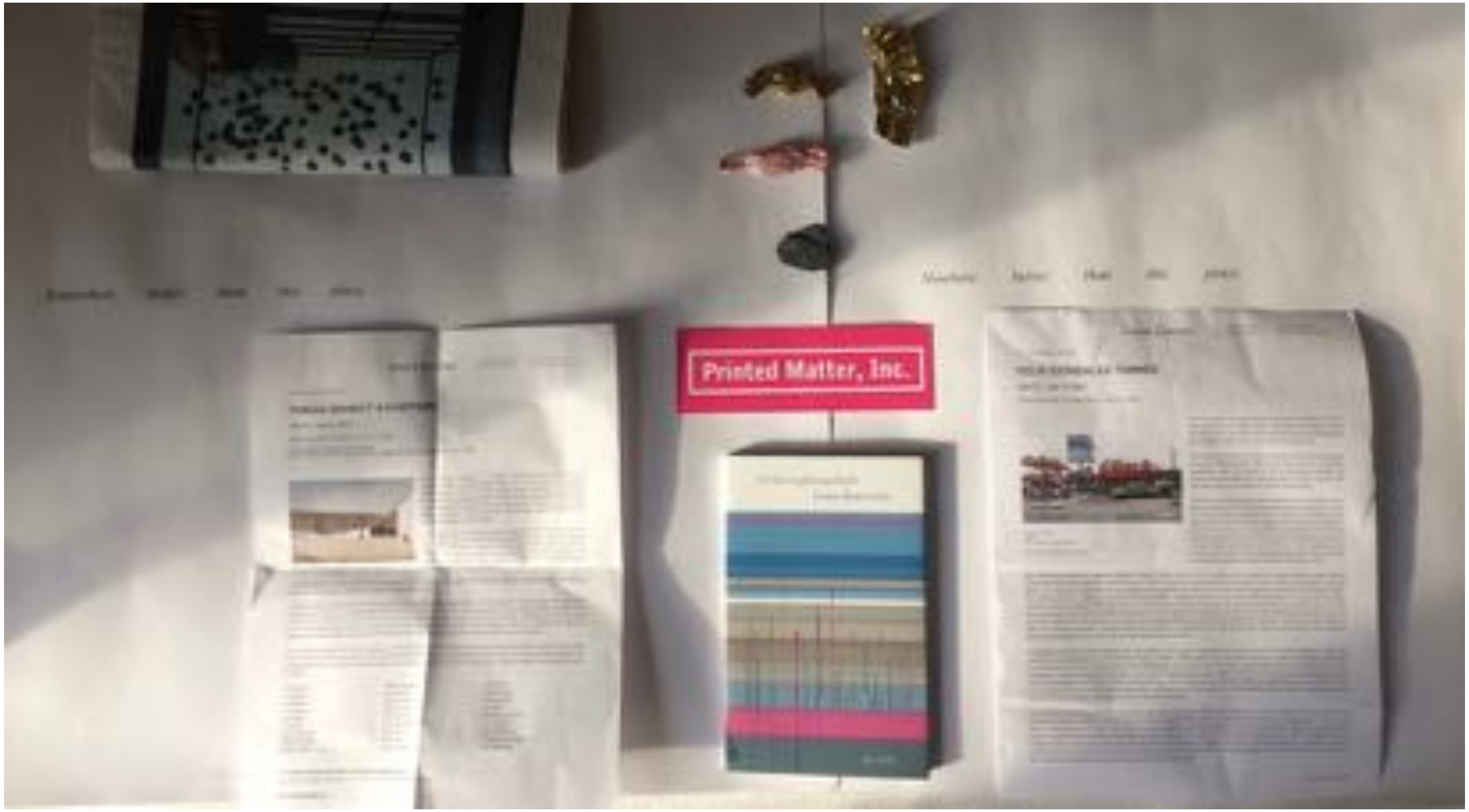


Figure vii. Exhibition handouts, candies, and paper stack copies from Félix González-Torres works shown at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2017.

Image on next page—Figure 1.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016.

PROBLEM ONE / /

Establishing Useful Parameters

CHAPTER 1.

BETWEEN AN OBJECT-ORIENTED ROCK AND A NEW MATERIALIST HARD PLACE

> New materialisms and OOO [object-oriented ontology] can be theorized as two current actualizations of the desire to think without presupposing dualist structures such as subject and object, word and world, nature and culture. (Tuin 2014, 232)

To be between a rock and a hard place usually implies that neither point is ideal and yet a decision needs to be made one way or the other. There were times early in my research when object-oriented ontology and new materialism seemed to be metonyms because both oppose anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism. However, further research demonstrated the ways they are often opposed despite being seen as similar. In order to clarify the scope and intention of this project, it seemed that my early oscillating between new materialism and object-oriented ontology would need to be resolved, and some kind of decision made. And yet it was through persevering with the crossovers and divergences between the two theoretical fields that I came to understand each of them more critically than I would have if I had considered them separately. I also recognised that reading one through the other enacted a useful method of diffractive reading that "allows for affirming and strengthening dynamic links" (Tuin 2014, 237) between texts and concepts. Rather than proceeding to align with one particular field of thought, or what I call "bookend", I stayed open to learning and considering both, finding my own path through them to fill out my understanding of the nonhuman and its place in my research project. As I see my rock (object-oriented ontology) and hard place (new materialism) as bookends—able to provide support while not being fixed in place; shiftable—the title of this chapter is meant more fondly than the original saying. It is in the moments of spending time with objects, things, and materials, coming to and moving around, thinking of and with matter in visible forms that I move beyond the choice of one field or the other, into an entirely new space for critical engagement. Writing about critical posthumanisms and new materialisms, Vivienne Bozalek and Michalinos Zembylas state that in these fields, "difference is celebrated as productive rather than seen as alterity" (2016, 194). I take this statement as encouragement to persevere with a discussion which moves from object-oriented ontology to new materialism even while they are at times opposed.

This chapter presents some main agents in the evolving situation of defining the nonhuman as it is understood by object-oriented ontologists, new materialists, and myself. Due to the rhizomatic nature of many of the components relevant to this act of definition, the ever-expanding discoursal universe is difficult to map in its totality, therefore what follows is representative of my journey through the theoretical research of object-oriented ontological and new materialist concerns relevant to the nonhuman and facilitated by the method of practice-led research. The ongoing discourse occurring between these spaces and my creative practice involves re-reading, re-theorising, and re-contending. Agitating and finessing positions—reminiscent of the way sandpaper scours smooth surfaces and smooths rough ones—allows for continual transformation through theoretical and creative engagement. This occurs in a sometimes messy way, in an act of intra-action, that highlights shared desires of new materialism, object-oriented ontology, and my project, to understand the nonhuman within the material world. As Rebekah Sheldon says in her chapter in *The Nonhuman Turn* (2015), "[Karen] Barad coins the term *intra-action* to undo the implicit understanding of interaction as the meeting of two already-formed objects. Rather, intra-actions instantiate boundaries anew" (202; emphasis in original). Utilising intra-action in this context assists with going beyond historical readings of the theory and allows me to move, somewhat dialectically, to a new space of critical creative practice. Bringing together in one chapter object-oriented ontology and new materialism is not done to demonstrate their compatibility (as Sheldon points out on page 193, this is a misapprehension anyway), or opposition, rather it is to work through the way I have come to know them both because of my art practice and their connection to the notion of the nonhuman.

While the nonhuman is often associated with animals, plants, and artificial intelligence, less is said about the inanimate types—objects, things, and materials. New materialism has explicitly carved out positions on matter and how it effects approaches to the nonhuman, but the consideration of what would commonly be seen as inanimate largely extends to mineral forms at a micro level and not matter as it is experienced in everyday occurrences. Diana Coole says, "New materialist ways of thinking accordingly challenge traditional distinctions between the human and nonhuman, as well as classical hierarchies that describe a descending scale from God, through human, animal, and vegetable, to minerals and the inorganic" (2015, 43). Yet, this notion of the inorganic is not made clear in new materialist work. Does the inorganic refer to machine and technological versions of the nonhuman, or human-manufactured objects, things, and materials? To propose that a roll of tape or foam ball be included in the concept of the nonhuman might seem disingenuous at first but as they too are constituted from the matter of new materialism and whose kind are present in the lives of humans as much as, if not more so than, plants or animals, it would be exclusionary to deem these stationary entities as something altogether "other". The lineage of "animals, plants, organisms, climatic systems, technologies, or ecosystems" (2015, x) described in Richard Grusin's introduction to *The Nonhuman Turn* makes no mention of the largely immobile stuff that surrounds us. Even in their most commonly accepted definitions, these entities must suffer the insult of being compared to humans, as if being human is the state all must surely desire to attain. The human exceptionalism present in our system of language unavoidably shapes our relationships and so the turn away from linguistics towards ontology in the 21st century encouraged "a rethinking of human-centered thought in order to take up the non-human, or the agencies and animacies of objects, things, and environments" (Clough 2016, 59).

Across object-oriented ontology and new materialism, the nonhuman in its broadest sense is similarly understood, however this understanding is troubled when examined ontologically. "The two work hand in hand, for OOO does not just turn our attention toward the nonhuman, it does so in order to postulate an emphatically anti-relational ontology in which objects recline at a distance from each other and from the networks in which they are embedded, very much including but not limited to human cultural practices" (Sheldon 2015, 194). While object-oriented ontology turns to the nonhuman as a tool for establishing constantly withdrawing entities, new materialism turns to it in an explicitly relational way. "It begins from the assumption that ideas and things do not occupy separate ontological orders but instead are co-constituents in the production of the real" (ibid). Therefore, "[f]or object-oriented ontology, epistemology is epiphenomenal, a second-order representation whose range of effects is limited to human knowers. For feminist new materialism, by contrast, epistemology is an agent with directly material consequences" (196). The frames of reference for the nonhuman and the actions they perform are brought into contact by Sheldon in her positioning of Plato's notion of *chora*, and by me in positioning objects, things, and materials as nonhuman. The push and pull of relational or anti-relational becomes perpetually present in moments of my creative practice when I come to physically encounter objects, things, and materials—squeezing, scrunching, flattening, folding, and combining.

My engagement with the nonhuman is tied to encounters that shift understandings and perspectives in regard to objects, things, and materials supported by the parameters of object-oriented ontology and new materialism. While a lot of discussions pertaining to the nonhuman have an ecological focus, this project is not especially focussed on the Anthropocene. Theorists working across the fields of object-oriented ontology and new materialism who I have brought into this project have at times in their work explicitly engaged with the challenges and contentions of this relatively new epoch. Donna Haraway, who prefers the term Chthulucene, states that "unlike either the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene, the Chthulucene is made up of ongoing multispecies stories and practices of becoming-with in times that remain at stake, in precarious times, in which the world is not finished and the sky has not fallen—yet" (2016, 55). Claire Colebrook has done extensive work across climate change and the Anthropocene's relation to it, including as series co-editor of Critical Climate Change that includes the books *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies* (Davis & Turpin 2015) and *In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism* (Stengers 2015). I was lucky enough to hear both Turpin and Stengers talk about their work at the *geo-* symposium in 2016 organised by Robert Briggs. Anna Tsing, whose writing about the matsutake mushroom saw a clear uptake in the humanities of language relating to destruction and collaborative survival, recently worked with Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena, and Feifei Zhou to create the web portal *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*. Timothy Morton, coming from an object-oriented ontology positioning, has established novel ways of perceiving the effects of global warming on the world through their notion of the "hyperobject" as "something that is so vastly distributed in time and space, relative to the observer, that we might not think it's even an object at all" (Morton 2018, n.p.).

While my project creates situations for close mingling with nonhumans in the form of objects, things, and materials through creative practice, and is taking place at a time of ecological devastation represented by the Anthropocene—that requires important and timely criticisms of human exceptionalism and capitalism—I do not engage directly with such concepts. Rather, these parallel concerns remain somewhat present in the project because of the proximity and inclusion of theorists, like those above, working across disciplinary boundaries. In order to establish the nonhuman within creative practice in the forms of objects, things, and materials, I have drawn from multiple fields, disregarding disciplinary lines in favour of a mode of learning transversally. I have been planting my form of nonhuman seeds with others from anthropology, philosophy, ethology, animal studies, and architecture in the hope of germinating creative practice frames of research in other fields. My project is not presenting a case for why the nonhuman can be objects, things, and materials; instead, I begin my research with the presupposition they are that already, with everything that follows building from this point. And so, while this project isn't about performing an object-oriented ontological or new materialist art, it is about playing with those parts of the theoretical research in creative practice that engender curiosity and offer new perspectives for encountering the nonhuman from—and doing so without any expectation of what might result from it and from following the journey of doing practice-led research.

Coming to the World of Objects

> …art has always been heretical with regard to the philosophy it seeks to express. (Kolozova 2015, 255)

Speculative realism offered me the beginnings of a language I didn't know how to tease out from my practice on my own. It included the intrigue of a perspective that was anti-anthropocentric and because of its conflation with object-oriented ontology, it also read as being pro-objects. Coming from an art practice that focussed on solid, fairly utilitarian material things, I connected more to the position Graham Harman took on speculative realism through his own object-oriented philosophy and saw it from the lens of addressing nonhumans rather than via the concepts of networks, phenomena, or mathematics. The original panel discussion at Goldsmiths that included Graham Harman, Ian Hamilton Grant, Quentin Meillassoux, and Ray Brassier was an occasion for bringing together their similar yet disparate positions regarding continental philosophy's anthropocentric foundations and asking if the path out of anthropocentrism would be a return to realism (Brassier, Grant, Harman, & Meillassoux 2007). Due to speculative realism being established loosely around such a broad central proposition, there are multiple threads. "These variants of SR are somewhat inchoate with one another and its fragile unity fell apart not long after the launch conference" (Avenessian & Malik 2016, 4), yet it is considered that the lasting and connecting ideology between those present on the panel is Meillassoux's proposition of *correlationism*—that is, the largely Kantian perspective of not being able to separate knowledge and being (Bryant, Srnicek, & Harman 2011, 4).

While speculative realism is often said to have had a miraculous conception at Goldsmiths, University of London, it largely formed into a contemporary philosophy in online blogs and discussions. The popularity of such a multi-directional position regarding the future of philosophy demonstrated the desire for another approach for thinking about the world—"Fellow travellers dissatisfied with the stagnant state of Continental philosophy were experimenting with ways of changing things. It is perhaps unsurprising that this loose network of blogs had crystallised around Speculative Realism (SR)—a new and exciting trend which had emerged on the scene…permeated by a certain enthusiasm, ambition, and intensity that offline academia seemed to lack" (Wolfendale 2014, ix-x). Wolfendale was engaging with the beginnings of speculative realism online through his blog *Deontologistics*, and he is one of the few theorists who has laboured through the formulation of speculative realism and methodically critiqued it in detail. For him, it is a disappointment that the reins of the philosophy were taken back somewhat by Harman's commitment to the original premise, "the SR *trend* slowly transmuted into the SR/OOO *brand* as Harman asserted himself as its spokesman, and the community's unique dynamic dissolved as a result" (Wolfendale 2014, xiv; emphasis in original). The voracity with which speculative realism was picked up and discussed within philosophical contexts and across other disciplines is a result of Continental philosophy's need to be antagonised for greater relevance to contemporary contexts; however, speculative realism's enduring popularity does not necessarily indicate it is the philosophy that will get us out of the current anthropocentric quagmire. As Rosi Braidotti points out,

> There are two or three things that I don't fully get about the speculative realists. First of all, the treatment of objects as self-organizing entities is not in itself new. Media and science fiction scholars—like Jussi Parikka now, or Donna Haraway before him—have been theorizing objects along these lines for years. Similarly, the emphasis on matter, and the continuity between matter and mind, and between human bodies and the world in which they live, is not new either. It has always been at the core of Spinozist, Deleuzian and materialist feminist studies, including those of Simone de Beauvoir, Haraway and my own. I am surprised, sometimes even shocked, that their discussions and bibliographies make little mention of these debates. How can you wipe out the whole of Deleuzian studies in one footnote? 'The Deleuzian quest, even process ontology really, is correlationist.' Excuse me? What are you saying? Is that all Deleuze deserves? My political culture—feminism—never existed! (Braidotti & Vermeulen 2014, n.p.)

It was the momentum behind speculative realism as a new and exciting philosophy that helped it reach across disciplines and enable me to encounter it in Perth in 2013, by which stage it had shifted to be almost synonymous with object-oriented ontology. The context in which I was encountering speculative realism and object-oriented ontology was in relation to dOCUMENTA (13) held the year before where curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev invited Graham Harman to deliver a lecture. At that time, Harman's lecture, combined with discussions of anti-anthropocentrism and object agency surrounding the exhibition, was a locus for me in understanding this new philosophy's connection to art. What I didn't notice was that more prevalent than object-oriented ontology at dOCUMENTA (13) was the influence of feminist materialist discourse and direct connection to intra-action, multispecies practices, and quantum physics, as well as the explicit inclusion of Donna Haraway and Vinciane Despret who would later become pivotal people to think-with the problem of the human/nonhuman. This, and many other instances through my project's unfolding, bring me back to the moment in the *Cultures of Energy* podcast where Tim Ingold says:

> I can never understand philosophers and what they write until I've figured it out for myself and then I think 'oh that's what they're trying to say' but you can't read a philosopher and be converted by them unless you're already thinking along the lines that they're thinking. (Ingold 2019, 23:20)

And so, I wasn't oriented to new materialist perspectives until much later, after engaging with objects in creative practice and coming up against hurdles when thinking theoretically in their presence.

Speculative realism piqued the interest of artists largely because of its speculatory groundings, offering a contradictorily freeing framework within which imagination and musings become exemplified. While art certainly doesn't need encouragement or permission from theorists to explore their concepts, speculative realism did seem to provide a locus for certain practitioners and curators, as Vermeulen says, "Over the last few years, there have been seemingly countless exhibitions and symposia about the philosophical movement known as speculative realism… A philosophy that foregrounds speculation was always going to offer points of entry for artists, whose discipline trades in imagination, but few would have predicted the speed with which it's been picked up by them" (Braidotti & Vermeulen 2014, n.p.). The umbrella term of speculative realism offers access to a collection of perspectives floating around similar contentions and interests. Although I am not advocating for a defined speculative realist practice (if there could even be such a thing), I accept that without this theoretical passage to where I am now, and therefore the path where I am continuing to arrive at, the conclusion would be different. Being open to this fluid act of research engages in a form of intra-action that strengthens my understanding of the project and its relations to the theory it draws from.

Similar to speculative realism, object-oriented philosophy operates from the now-familiar position of being opposed to human exceptionalism; as Harman (2010) says, "To be an object-oriented philosopher, what you need to do is hold that individual entities of various different scales are the ultimate stuff of the cosmos". Harman's philosophy builds on Heidegger's tool analysis, advocating for a reality where objects exist outside of relations with humans. According to Harman, objects are always withdrawing from their relations (both human or other objects), therefore approaching them indirectly becomes necessary—"objects are deeper than their appearance to the human mind but also deeper than their relations to one another, so that all contact between objects must be indirect or vicarious" (Harman 2012b, 4). This, Harman explains, results in never knowing the thing-in-itself—because it is always shifting away from perception. Hence, the knowing of an object must come from indirect or vicarious contact. The imagery this creates is that of a physicality—peering, bending, circling, sneaking. Attempting to steal glances at something when it is not aware, scrutinising it to find a hidden truth, approaching it from the side rather than front on. I almost imagine the object of discussion being so multi-faceted there is no way to look at it and see anything but repeated reflections—a self-defence of the object to elude itself from any outside threat. In actual fact, though, Harman is not creating such an object but stating that any time contact is made in whatever sense, it is not contact with the "real" thing, just the version of it that is available to us. "Although I will claim that real objects do exist beyond human sensual access to them, this should not be confused with Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena. Whereas Kant's distinction is something endured by humans alone, I hold that one billiard ball hides from another no less than the ball-in-itself hides from humans" (Harman 2007, 188). This infers that no amount of interaction with objects, or things, or materials would enable coming to know them in their real state. Rather than being disappointed that they can't be arrested in processes of creative practice, such mystery makes engaging with them more curious.

Object-oriented philosophy recognises that there are two types of object, with everything, and therefore the "stuff of the cosmos" (Harman 2010), falling into either one of these two subclassifications—real objects and sensual objects. Harman states: "[t]he whole point is that my ontology is not perfectly flat. I have real objects (inherited from Heidegger's tool-beings) and sensual objects (inherited from Husserl's intentional objects). These are two different things. The tree as I experience it is not 'just as real' as the tree that exists autonomously in reality whether anyone looks at it or not. I simply hold that the tree of experience (the 'sensual' tree) must be accounted for by ontology as a genuine fact. It can't be 'eliminated'" (Harman 2012a, para 4). So, object-oriented philosophy's objects are either real or sensual, and their ontology is mostly flat. This view differs from that of some other object-oriented ontologists who conceive everything as one and the same object. "Flat ontology is a thesis about what is and how things are, not a thesis about values and worth. It is not making the claim that a flea is as valuable as a human being. It is the thesis that fleas are real and so are human beings" (Bryant 2020).

The proposition of considering everything as object (whether one type or two) in a flat ontology is convincing as it goes towards removing the problematic hierarchy created by anthropocentrism—that is, by dictating that the human is now also an object like everything else, this problem is minimised. Unfortunately, the sweeping action that object-oriented ontology performs by renaming everything as object does not in actuality remove the hierarchies. It changes the name but not the power imbalance. While this stance of object-oriented ontology removes my ability (or necessity) to consider myself a subject in relation to objects—by shifting our interaction to that of object-to-object—I am stumped by being an object that cannot avoid the reality of having the ability to action change in a way the nonhuman object cannot. I find it therefore more accurate and perhaps more useful in this context to say that I am a human-object. A type of object, yes, but still an entity that has to deal with the hierarchy we have created and to try to either amend or abolish it. What initially felt like a solution to encountering objects as a subject had become its own problem—akin to Katherine Behar's description of object-oriented ontologists often appearing "elated by discovering a universe composed of objects, a sense of liberation from the shackles of subjectivity, especially from the 'unreal' delusions of correlationism" (2016, 5). Within my creative practice, I am present through physical actions with objects, things, and materials, therefore the removal of the problematic subject becomes in itself an issue. If naming myself an object doesn't have an effect on my ability to *affect* the objects, things, materials I encounter, through physical actions in processes of creative practice, then I will always come to them with an agency perceptibly more dominant than theirs. However, even in having to confront this friction, there is still something about object-oriented philosophy and Harman's examples that ground his thought in everyday, accessible concepts that attract me to think-with them.

Situating my research project in and around and amongst the object-sympathetic, like object-oriented philosophy, enables me to provide a practical, and based in creative practice, engagement through practice-led research. Taking cue from the indirect and vicarious contact with objects mentioned earlier, I approach objects, things, and materials within creative practice through both observation and interaction, to feel out and develop a situated investigation. Harman's theories have established a strong foothold in fields outside of philosophy jointly because of his commitment to his brand and prolific nature of publishing, and the apparent ease of translation of his ideas to and for creative practice. "When Graham Harman launches his conceptual brand, OOO, the response of architects, artists and those who deal with all manner of material and malleable stuff is likely to be one of recognition: Oh yes! We deal in objects too—we intimately know and handle objects, as they constitute our crafted artefacts, which we are occupied with designing, imagining, constructing and liberating into a world" (Frichot 2019, 106). When I first came to object-oriented ontology, some parts of it were already being considered through curated shows, symposiums, and collaborative projects, the prevalence of which gave the illusion that the propositions of flat ontologies, object withdrawal, and so on, were recognised as a set of ideas occurring and embedded within art and creative practice.

A non-exhaustive list of events I was seeing at the time of encountering object-oriented ontology that shaped my understanding includes the following. At dOCUMENTA (13) (already mentioned in terms of Graham Harman's inclusion), Guillermo Faivovich and Nicolas Goldberg worked on a project involving meteorites from Argentina that brought up questions of agency and nonhuman actants. In *Late at Tate: The Real Thing*, 2010, Urbanomic (the Continental philosophy-leaning publisher) presented an event at the Tate Museum involving performances, video and sound works, installation, and a panel discussion (involving Ian Hamilton Grant from the original speculative realism symposium), all exploring the "emerging philosophical paradigm of Speculative Realism and its impact on contemporary art practice" (Urbanomic 2010). *The Return of the Object* was a group show in 2012 curated by Stefanie Hessler which was framed by the apparent returned focus on object-based practices with accompanying text referencing Harman and speculative realism (Hessler n.d.). *Blowup: Speculative Realities*, also in 2012, was an exhibition of works by commissioned artists Tuur van Balen and Revital Cohen, Cheryl Field, and Karolina Sobecka. It was organised by Blowup coordinator Michelle Kasprzak who says she was "intrigued by the recent continental philosophical turn towards materialism and the object" (2013, 4). *The Carpentry of Speculative Things*, curated by Prue Gibson in 2013, made obvious reference to Ian Bogost's notion of "carpentry" as developed within his *Alien Phenomenology* (2012), and existed as part of Gibson's PhD research into object-oriented ontology and arts writing. In *Things Matter* from 2012, curator Klara Manhal refers to Jane Bennett in the accompanying catalogue essay (Turner 2013). All of these examples explicitly drew from or explored their subject matter as being impacted by the positions of speculative realism, object-oriented ontologies, and anti-anthropocentrism.

These themes would continue on to inform bigger projects like the 2014/15 Taipei Biennial, *The Great Acceleration*, where curator of the event, Nicolas Bourriaud, highlighted the Anthropocene and speculative realism within his curatorial notes prior to the event opening. Drawing heavily from Latour, Bryant, Harman, and Meillassoux, Bourriaud (2014) states that "human beings are only one element among others in a wide-area network, which is why we need to rethink our relational universe to include new partners". Then, in 2018, Timothy Morton himself co-curates an exhibition with Laura Copelin at Ballroom Marfa—*Hyperobjects*—which included an accompanying reader "Hyperobjects for Artists".[10] On the exhibition website, it is stated that "[t]o understand a hyperobject, we must transform the way we see and experience the universe. In line with this idea, the exhibition seeks to create encounters with artworks and non-art objects that de-centre and expand the scale of human perception" (Ballroom Marfa 2018). In 2020, there are still exhibitions continuing along much the same lines as 10 years prior—using object-oriented ontology or similar as quotes to frame curatorial decisions, or as keywords for exhibition and artwork titles—such as the show *Study of Things. Or a Brief Story About Fountain, Brick, Tin, Coin, Stone, Shell, Curtain, and Body* curated by Tan Yue for the Guangdong Times Museum. Some of these earlier shows were built on trying to decentre and destabilise human exceptionalism by re-orienting towards the object; some focussed

---

10. See https://www.ballroommarfa.org/program/hyperobjects/ for the e-version of the reader. Included are contributions from Ursula Le Guin, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Olafur Eliasson.

heavily on human and nonhuman relations, others on networks, and still others on a materiality of the everyday. Despite their differences in approach and curation, all projects presented clear artwork outcomes in final, resolved forms (with the exception of Faivovich and Goldberg's contribution to dOCUMENTA (13) which I discuss in more detail in chapter 5).

Philosopher and critical theorist Armen Avenessian, in response to *October*'s "A Questionnaire on Materialisms", attributes the popularity of Graham Harman's specific object-oriented ontology within art to his ability to re-read Husserl and Latour (and I would add Heidegger) and, in turn, making his theories accessible to the arts through the "ontological enhancement or upgrading of the status of objects" (Joselit, Lambert-Beatty, & Foster 2016, 8). Being somewhat critical of a move within the arts that has capitalised on the ideas of object-oriented ontology, Avenessian's contribution to the questionnaire focusses on the shortcomings of such a theoretical positioning:

> By and large, everything appears to have remained pretty much as it was. Critics still invoke the critical potential of art objects and the impression they make upon bourgeois subjects when those works hang upon their walls, and art historians still mystify white cubes as aesthetic experience in a profitable way (to say nothing of the ever-increasing volume of money that is laundered by means of contemporary art). That these practices continue to take place in relation to speculative and materialistic ideas, to concepts that are opposed to every form of correlationism, is a pity, and certainly helpful neither for art nor for philosophy… An art truly informed by speculative materialism would on the contrary strive not only for a transformation on the discursive level but also for an acceleration of the existing platforms of the art system: the material-economic forms of production of art and the paths for its distribution

> …rather than an aesthetic-critical art that bears such an affinity with our modern capitalism, a materialistic art, in a sense that is poietic and speculative, would aim at a new art, no longer our contemporary art. (Joselit, Lambert-Beatty, & Foster 2016, 9-10)

Avenessian's criticism of object-oriented ontology goes hand-in-hand with criticism of a kind of art produced as a result of that philosophy's increased popularity, which in turn continues the human-centred art market. I acknowledge that the vehicle of contemporary art, as it exists for the art world and market, does not align with my intentions for this research project because this system relies on and perpetuates the need for artwork to be final, resolved, and ready for public critique as its best version of itself. Therefore, if the outcome of this practice-led research project was placed in proximity to such a machine as contemporary art, in the way Avenessian that associates it with modern capitalism, it would get sucked into the commodifiable world, undoing itself and rendering it ready for consumption rather than continuing to exist in a state of *becoming*. By conforming to final and resolved forms of installation or sculpture presented in white cube or institutional gallery spaces, art falls short of moving beyond itself into something "poietic and speculative". As Avenessian says, "I would hope that the real philosophical and art theoretical potential of speculative realism or materialism might emerge more clearly, even if this were to have a threatening impact upon the *business as usual* aspect of contemporary art" (ibid, 9-10; emphasis in original).[11] Pursuing a cycle of thinking, making, and showing, and back to thinking, making and showing, and so on, art as an ongoing process can hold value for creative praxis and trouble the elevated notion of the unwavering form of the commodifiable, contemporary art world. While the works in those earlier mentioned object-oriented ontological projects may have within them the potential to be re-used, worked, iterated, etc., the curated nature of the projects, and the gallery spaces themselves, go towards presenting an image of finality that I have come to want to avoid. In Problem Two, I expand on this idea of bypassing the white cube gallery in favour of an open-ended outcome.

While Avenessian sees the popularity of speculative realism/object-oriented ontology as something that elevates an artist's prospects in the market—"In short, there have been a great many efforts that have led at the very least to successfully establishing a new, young, fresh generation of artists in a global market between Basel and Miami who benefit from their association with speculative philosophies" (ibid, 9)—Patricia Falguières in her response to the questionnaire attributes the popularity of speculative realism in art schools, art centres, and discussion panels to what she characterises as "reminiscence and remorse" (ibid, 39). On the one hand, she reflects: "that phenomenology constituted the last great philosophical corpus available to the elaboration of theories of great style art theory" and on the other, the guilt (of the art

---

11. The *business as usual* of contemporary art has been recently broadened to include the emergence of non-fungible tokens (NFT), however as NFTs have exponentially increased in popularity and price amongst collectors, it doesn't seem to be at risk of impacting negatively on the market.

institutions) of being complicit in diminishing critical debate, so that it focussed evermore on "the Duchampian readymade, and Warhol's brillo boxes" (ibid); therefore, she implies that object-oriented ontology provides the opportunity to make up for this.

Discussion on the prevalence of objects in art around the time of object-oriented ontology's rise to prominence has appeared in many popular art magazines. In *Art Monthly*, Maria Walsh's "I Object" (2013) asks questions about the usefulness of Harman's, Latour's, and Bogost's ideas for art. Laura McLean-Ferris' "Indifferent Objects" (2013) criticises the influx of object-oriented interest and the subsequent flattening of the hierarchy between all entities: "Care is the responsibility of humans, and even in an era of disembodiment we still have bodies, and these bodies and their experiences remain important" (para 4). Dylan Kerr in *Artspace* provides a "quick-and-dirty guide" to object-oriented ontology, which he says has "become the faddish successor to such previous intellectual trends as structuralism and postmodern theory" (2016, para 3); while Andrew Cole (2015), who is openly critical of this faddishness, wrote for *Artforum* an analysis on how object-oriented ontology's desire to work its way out from under Immanuel Kant in fact emulated his philosophies, and asked if such a protracted form of philosophy as object-oriented ontology is the right way to think.

The contention that often arises is that object-oriented ontology does not acknowledge that which already exists elsewhere. While the impoverishment of art created on behalf of institutions that Falguières speaks of may be accurate, she also isn't buoyed by object-oriented ontology's popularity because "art, as a form of making, has always been an experience of decentering the subject" (Joselit, Lambert-Beatty, & Foster 2016, 9). The types of considerations object-oriented philosophy, ontology, or speculative realism put forth can be found in art that explores human/animal relations, ecosystems and ecologies, dystopian worlds without humans, and anthropomorphised sculptures. The art exhibition *And Another Thing*, curated by Katherine Behar and Emmy Mikelson in 2011, comprised of work that sought to destabilise the anthropocentric position prior to the advent object-oriented ontology and speculative realism, but that was framed curatorially as demonstrating what object-oriented ontology would come to discuss. The curatorial statement included the following proposition: "whether anxious and lonely or brave and hubristic, humans have staked out for themselves a privileged position, alone, at the centre of everything" (Behar & Mikelson 2011, n.p.). The exhibition drew out the nonanthropocentric approaches of artwork that repositioned humans as just another thing, no more precious or central than any other.

While object-oriented ontology and speculative realism achieved a boom within art fields, new materialism, which was being expanded on somewhat concurrently, didn't have the same explosive take up. The fact that "A Questionnaire on Materialisms" barely discusses those working within and through new materialism demonstrates its having been overshadowed or at least not seen to be as much in need of critique or criticism. The continual process of becoming/arriving in this research, and its outcomes, are reflective of the discourse on object-oriented ontology becoming entangled with notions of the object-as-matter from new materialism and feminist theory. This is not to say, however, that the project is trying to develop a new materialist art either. Instead, it is some messy form that draws its energy from multiple points, a fluctuating form growing stronger because of its proximity to both curiosity-producing theories. In this way, I recall Kolozova's quote from the beginning of this sub-section and the unconventional ways art invokes philosophy.

Turning to Matter

> …foregrounding material factors and reconfiguring our very understanding of matter are prerequisites for any plausible account of coexistence and its conditions in the twenty-first century. (Coole & Frost 2010, 2)

Just as object-oriented ontology has seeded my mind with its themes, new materialism's matter and methods take up space too, forming a useful partnership. Part of new materialism is an encouragement to accept through curiosity that the pervasiveness of matter in the material world is an unavoidable fact, that "we live in the midst of things" (Coole 2015, 42). New materialism, which seeks to hold different, sometimes opposing, positions together in order to generate new knowledge and ways of learning, troubles the distinctions between the human and nonhuman by seeking to undo the hierarchies established through a history of epistemology and ontology that favoured anthropos. Identifying all matter as lively, as new materialists do, is not a reframing that erases the problematic histories humans have upheld, rather it is to force self-reflection on current entangled realities. For Coole, new materialism

> relocates humans by emphasizing their own materiality and through exploring their dependence on fragile or robust material systems and entities on which they leave more or less indelible traces. New materialist ways of thinking accordingly challenge traditional distinctions between the human and nonhuman, as well as classical hierarchies that describe a descending scale from God, through human, animal, and vegetable, to minerals and the inorganic. Instead, a singular yet variegated upsurge of materialization is countenanced. In summary, this is a philosophy of becoming rather than being: one that emphasizes materialization as a dynamic process (wherein matter matters itself) rather than a state. (2015, 43)

Similarly, Barrett and Bolt state,

> With its acknowledgment of agential matter, neo-materialism questions the anthropocentric narrative that has underpinned our view of humans-in-the-world since enlightenment, a view that posits humans as makers of the world and the world as a resource for human endeavours. The new materialist discourse derives its urgency from the ethical, ecological and political imperatives that loom as a consequence of this view of the world. (2013, 2-3)

These positions on new materialism coalesce with posthumanism in that it, too, is in opposition to traditional Western humanist perspectives on the human subject's relationship to the natural world (Bolter 2016, 1). They both take an anti-anthropocentric stance and both have clear connections to Deleuze and Guattari's "materialist approach to matter" (1987) and Guattari's transversality (2015). However, it is the emphasis that new materialism places on the "embedded and embodied" (Braidotti 2002, 2) connections between humans and nonhumans that is recalled in this project more so than posthumanism's focus on the human–animal–technology locus. Others that come into play in this project and, likewise, can sit on both sides of the new materialist/posthumanist panel are Donna Haraway, Jane Bennett, and Karen Barad—each theorist offering me different morsels to think-with and through in creative practice. Haraway's maxim of "staying with the trouble" defines many slow and extended engagements with objects, things, and materials as the project develops; Bennett ensures the object doesn't overshadow the thing; and Barad's diffraction offers an entangled reflexivity that is more indicative of the process of following one's curiosity in creative practice.

An understanding of new materialism can begin to be formed via its orientation towards matter—matter as agential and vital—together with its acknowledgement of the ordinariness of human actants (inasmuch as they are no more special than anything else). New materialism is a constantly developing perspective; as Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin say, "it is in the action itself that new materialism announces itself" (2012, 14). This non-fixity and openness that new materialism engenders is strengthened through diversity and new, critical perspectives across multiple fields with "(re-)readings that work towards its actualization" (ibid). It is the open-ended formulation, the orientation to matter and the nonhuman, the focus on becoming, and the entanglement that occurs in the process, which take up space in my mind when working on this research project. So, where object-oriented ontology brought forth for me a world of objects, new materialism turns the focus on the matter of those objects. Feminist new materialism then draws out the possibility of asking new questions about how we come to know that same world—"…feminist philosophers have introduced a new brand of materialism, of the embodied and embedded kind" (Dolphijn & Tuin 2012, 22). This feminist materialism is particularly useful for seeing the position of object-oriented ontology differently—perhaps even vicariously and indirectly. In laying the groundwork for object-oriented feminism as an intervention to philosophies of objectification and mattering, Katherine Behar says that "object-oriented feminism turns the position of philosophy inside out to study objects while being an object oneself" (2016, 3). The working from the inside style of problematising establishes object-oriented feminism as the work of marginalised women who are already *object*ified, that prioritises this move as a means to wrestle back agency from those doing the objectifying. Object-oriented feminism coincides with perspectives" (ibid) and as such, uses a diffractive method for coming to understand the theories that it engages with generatively rather than oppositionally.

In this exegesis I am articulating my diffractive engagements with objects, things, and materials in creative practice whereby I am in proximity, whether as subject or object, to nonhuman entities, and attempting to use our difference as something to think-with and about, rather than discount. "Rather than employing a hierarchical methodology that would put different texts, theories, and strands of thought against one another, diffractively engaging with texts and intellectual traditions means that they are dialogically read 'through one another' to engender creative, and unexpected outcomes" (Geerts & Tuin 2016). While this conception of diffraction usually refers to the act of reading text, I apply it as another way to encounter objects, things, and materials in this project. Instead of putting aside the thinking of object-oriented ontology for new materialism, my act of negotiating the problem by establishing parameters for working with both is also done through a method of diffraction so that the differences are "productive rather than seen as alterity" (Bozalek & Zembylas 2016, 194). The intra-actions that occur within diffraction mix up with my theoretical bookends, back and forth and multidirectionally, rather than progressing as a one-to-one distanced reflection. And so, it is new materialism and its feminist philosophies that help me circle back to staying with the trouble of objects and matter.

Echoing the type of scholarship diffraction and intra-action generate, the notion of transversal practice has been extended beyond its common definition into a method of conducting and understanding research. Within the cartographic project Dolphijn and van der Tuin conduct for new materialism, they propose that "the immanent gesture of new materialism is transversal rather than dualist as it intersects academic (neo-)disciplines,…paradigms,…and the linear spatiotemporalities conventionally assigned to epistemic trends…we study and propose a new materialism that *cuts across or intersects dual oppositions* in an immanent way" (2012, 100; emphasis added). Transversality, as new materialists know and use it, owes its initial development to Guattari who first explored it as a tool to transform institutions, specifically psychiatric facilities, as early as 1964 (Palmer & Panayotov 2016). "As a new materialist concept, transversality is non-categorical and non-judgemental. It defies disciplinary categories and resists hierarchies. A transversal line cuts diagonally through previously separated parallel lines, as in the common garden gate" (ibid, para 5). While one may work "trans-disciplinarily" (or inter-, or multi-), transversality works on a different plain—"eluding dualism, and in essence substituting it" (para 7). For Barrett, Bolt, and Kontturi in their special issue of *Studies in Material Thinking* on “Transversal Practices: Matter, Ecology and Relationality” (2017), new materialisms “articulate transversality not only as movements between domains of knowledge and the organic and the inorganic, but also as moments of ‘the between’, a shimmering of the perceptible and the imperceptible as double articulations that emerge through and in practice” (4). Within this practice-led research project, transversality occurs in the conception of objects, things, and materials as nonhuman, and the way in which this creative practice-led research engages theory across multiple disciplines and conceives of its existence through this act.

Seeing Again Otherwise

> Most crucially, and repeated frequently, Harman’s objects are non-relational and anti-materialist. (Frichot 2019, 99)

Reading Hélène Frichot’s *Creative Ecologies: Theorizing the Practice of Architecture* (2019) put into words a lot of the unease I had regarding Harman’s particular expression of object-oriented ontology, prompting me to examine more closely his position on art. Frichot says that Harman “is a philosopher who will not get his hands dirty, nor bend his head to the ground to go gleaning for things as a matter of survival” (ibid, 99) (gleaning, as we will see in a later chapter, is how I come to know my objects, things, and materials). And of his theories that remove humans and relations so that what is left is non-relational objects, she warns, “What this overlooks is the usefulness for creative practitioners of the modes of learning enabled when they manage their tools and instruments and designed things, now intimately close to the process of their creation, now stepping back in order to analyse their designs at a relative distance, only to move forward again to take up the creative process further. The practice-theory relay between tool and so-called broken tool is one that creative practitioners should be wary of dismissing too" (102-103). Frichot's writing encourages a closer examination of Harman's position toward creative practices.

For all the conflation that occurs between speculative realism, object-oriented ontology, object-oriented philosophy, and certain aspects of new materialism, it can be difficult to locate points of delineation because what may seem clear now was, at the time of their initial articulation, not easy to tease out. Where new materialism and object-oriented ontology diverge most is in Harman's object-oriented philosophy. This is because he is firmly anti-materialist and sees materialism "as one of the most damaging philosophical temptations of our time" (Harman 2014, 94). Harman couldn't make his position on this any clearer, it seems, and yet his prioritisation of objects continues to be referred to in artistic projects that focus materially on a world made of objects, much like those mentioned previously. Instead of considering matter as important (as new materialists do), Harman in his object-oriented philosophy favours form—a type of form "which hides midway between its material substrate and its concrete manifestation at any given moment in any given context" (97). Here, we find one of the many oppositions that lie under the surface of two proximate theoretical constructions—matter versus form—and as Lemke states, "given OOO's general hostility to any substantial notion of relationality, the matterless formalism it advocates risks revitalizing an old philosophical debate that juxtaposes form and matter" (2017, 141). What is one to do with such a defiant refusal of a materialism that has become tangled up with how object-oriented ontology is understood and how it exists in this project? Stay with the trouble of thinking-with and through; draw from the attentiveness present in my encounters with objects, things, and materials; and re-turn again to the subject matter at hand.

Acknowledging this unavoidable friction of having found use in Harman's conception of objects based on an understanding fragmented by the artworld's acceptance, I have since developed a greater level of wariness regarding Harman's object orientations. In turning away from materialism and towards a type of "matterless formalism", Harman locates a place for his philosophy alongside Michael Fried. In rejecting the literalist art of minimalist sculptural artists of the 1960s, Fried elevates the notion of an art that is instantaneous, an art that is "at every moment…wholly manifest" (Fried 1967, n.p.) and doesn't require external persons or other objects to bring it into being—an art that is *non-relational.* This is one thing that separates, for Fried, modernist work from literalist work—its ability to defeat theatre and become elevated to "the authentic art of our time" (n.p.). Robert Jackson (2014) connects Fried's position on art with Harman's through a comparative discussion of their approaches to aesthetics and objects. It is through this juncture that I have come to see how my project departs from Harman's specific type of object-oriented ontology. Jackson asks, "Isn't Fried's rejection of literalism in Donald Judd and Robert Morris' minimalist objects, at least comparable to Harman's outright rejection of materialism?" (2014, 120). Following Jackson's logic, I can see the friction arise; it is art that, following the popularity of the speculative realism symposium in 2007, has been utilising object-oriented philosophy and ontology to facilitate the return to the object. Harman's connection to, and support for, Fried demonstrates the incorrect or appropriated (and maybe therefore knowing) way art has been engaging object-oriented ontology. Making art in response to Harman's object-oriented ontology is not simply returning again to objects now with the added layer of them being in constant withdrawal from all else; it is actually enforcing a return to self-contained, formalist work that so much of contemporary art has been attempting to reconfigure. In *Art and Objects* (2020), Harman summarises the difference between formalism and literalism as follows: "literalism refers to art that renounces all depth and simply becomes a literal object obstructing our path" (52), while formalism "ascribes to the artwork a reality distinct from its appearance to humans or its socio-political impact" (ibid). In these definitions, Harman solidifies his own distaste for the minimalist sculpture of the '60s that Fried was critiquing and which saw many artists question the construction of the art world as capitalist and restrictive.

If Harman regards formalist artwork as performing object-oriented ontology's stance of non-relationality, then artworks made in response to his philosophy—which are usually heavily object laden and often relation based—emphasise Fried's position. Up until this point, I have been in agreement with object-oriented ontology's anti-Kantian stance that things exist beyond human's perception of them, but given Harman's alignment with Fried, this position becomes literalist art's opposite. A formalist art would be the anti-Kantian version here. *And yet*, that version confusingly espouses a human exceptionalism in the vein of Kant, in that it is in fact literalist art that sought to undermine the centrality of human exceptionalism, challenge conceptions of our relationship to objects through space, undermine the capitalist art market, and so on. This contradiction is a pivotal point in the project. Even though an expansive theory of objects as constituting everything in the universe should be freeing, this type of expansive inclusiveness is uniquely obstructive. In a further peculiar step, it is Harman's explicit move into the space of art via Fried that has forced me to grapple with this dilemma. After turning this corner, I now see many of those earlier discussed object-oriented projects I was encountering in early research on speculative realism as inaccurately aligned with a theory that opposes minimalist art's literal use of objects.

As I pointed out in the introduction of this exegesis, there are varying timelines occurring within my writing. Some writing follows a linear unfolding of the project with discoveries logically following each other, and other parts are the result of returning to and reconsidering the intent and usefulness of theoretical positions after having been considered in the situationally developed knowledges of creative practice. If I was to have left this chapter in an early form, the points may have remained much as they are up until now, but additional and newer research via practice-led approaches invariably troubled my perspective. As journeying and discovering and learning through doing are central to this project in order to uncover artistic research processes for encountering nonhuman objects, things, and materials, the moments of pivotal learning along the way need to be acknowledged as at least positive disruptions, if not the purpose of practice-led research.

Image on next page—Figure 2.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016.

CHAPTER 2.

OBJECT/THING/MATERIAL

> An awful lot of noise has been made recently about things, or objects, depending on your preferred terminology. It is as though we had not been discussing them already; handling them; measuring them; inventing, discovering and managing them; and being deeply affected by them, as well as affecting them. (Frichot 2019, 81)

Through this research project I have developed an extension of the term, and concept, of *objects* to include *things* and *materials*. I do this not to minimise the efficacy of the individual terms but to highlight how their mutability creates productive semantic discussions. In utilising aspects of the object-oriented ontology and new materialism bookends from chapter 1, the construction of the concept of object/thing/material establishes the bounds for engaging these terms within. I have largely referred to “objects, things, and materials” in the first chapter so that I could slowly work towards bringing them together; from here on, I will use the object/thing/material construct. Over the following pages I will explain my decisions for making this conceptual and linguistic shift, and how it stemmed from both creative practice and theoretical research. The foundational basis for incorporating such a move within this practice-led PhD is that no one term encapsulates the whole of what is meant by either object, thing, or material. Individually, they bring a lot of baggage that distracts from the situated realities of the versions found around us. This is not only a discussion that engages with critical theory and philosophy, but is also reflected in, and is a result of, creative practice research.

My process of coming to understand the need and benefit of the shift from individual to collective terminology precedes this practice-led project. Through my initial (and continuing) consideration of how we come to know and experience the material world, I sought a new approach for rethinking something commonly understood. In establishing the notion of object/thing/material, I bring into proximity the theoretical aspects of the individual concepts with the practical realities of a materially focussed creative practice. That I position object/thing/materials within the category of the nonhuman connects the concept to the wider discourse of what is at stake with the human/nonhuman dichotomy and offers another tool to think through this friction. Prior to this PhD project, I had situated the notion of *thing* as slippery—working initially from a position tethered to Bill Brown's "Thing Theory" (2001)—some *thing* that could move between objects and materials, some *thing* that was full of potential. It was through continued practice and theoretical research that I came to extend this to be a connector for *objects* and *materials*, not just unilaterally but circuitously (and now even transversally). The more research I did, the more any attempt at defining what objects are/do, what things are/do, and what materials are/do became unhelpful and counterproductive to a creative practice that physically engaged with them—the constant crossover of roles and qualities meant that no term was unique, and hierarchies slipped in according to function and value. Regardless of whether this move of redefining affects the object/thing/materials through a web of relations or not, it does change the nature of how we come to know them, interact with them, and coexist with them.

Examples of the conflation of terminology are regularly seen, especially for *object* and *thing*. Almost all texts that refer to either term will perpetuate this interchangeable action. For instance: "OOO means *'object'* in an unusually wide sense: an object is anything that cannot be entirely reduced either to the components of which it is made or to the effects that it has on other *things*" (Harman 2018, 43; emphasis added); "*Objects* could not hope for more staunch or loyal advocates than Graham Harman and Timothy Morton. I, too, am sympathetic to *things*, but Harman and Morton have challenged me to sharpen dimensions of my approach" (Bennett 2012, 225; emphasis added); the opening line in Bogost's book titled *Alien Phenomenology, or What it's Like to Be a Thing* states, "New Mexico offered me a childhood of weird *objects*" (2012, 1; emphasis added); and similarly, Brown's "Thing Theory" begins with a quote by Michel Serres, "Le sujet nait de l'*objet*" (the subject arises from the *object*) (2001, 1; emphasis added). While this interchangeability is somewhat semantic, nonetheless it is indicative of the limits of language in apprehending the meaning of these concepts.

Beyond the mutability of the individual words "object", "thing", and "material", the new concept object/thing/material holds within it an awareness of the process it underwent to arrive into being. Within the context of the object-oriented ontology bookend, the term "object" refers to the "ultimate stuff of the cosmos" (Harman 2010), and is so wide ranging as to include "quarks, Harry Potter, keynote speeches, single-malt scotch, Land Rovers, lychee fruit, love affairs, dereferenced pointers, Mike 'The Situation' Sorrentino, bozons, horticulturists, Mozambique, Super Mario Bros" (Bogost 2012, 12).[12] For Harman (2011), particularly, to speak of objects is to place their existence into a four-fold structure—real object, sensual object, real qualities, sensual qualities—which derives from Heidegger's fourfold (das Geviert).[13] Following Harman further, "object", for him, is a "perfectly clear and flexible term that ought to be retained" (2018, 42). This is because he sees inadequacies in Heidegger's theorisation of "thing" and "object" and, instead, he locates the object of object-oriented philosophy more within Kant's things-in-themselves because of the similarity in not being able to know the true object (-in-itself), due to its always-withdrawing status (Harman 2018). Extrapolating from Harman's continual preference for "object" rather than "thing", plus the fact that he does not explain what the notion of "thing" exists in relation to, it can be surmised that for Harman there is no *thing* (or even material); they are wrapped up in the meaning of "object" and need not be specifically spoken of.

Coming again as a rejoinder to the stalwart object-oriented ontological framing of *object*, object-oriented feminism examines how a feminist object may come to be understood, establishing its frame of reference in Heidegger's writing on art and thing. In Irina Aristarkhova's chapter in *Object-Oriented Feminism* (2016), it is noted that "[t]he differences between things and objects are especially relevant here, as they tend to be overlooked and their interchangeability, their sameness, assumed" (41). Therefore, in response to Heidegger's conception of things and objects, Aristarkhova notes, "Being called a thing is, then, a precondition to becoming an object, defined by its availability for being used (in a scientific laboratory or a household, for example). An object is a thing that has been made available to us, both figuratively and literally, one feeding the other" (43). This isolating and identifying of when one becomes another, and under what circumstances or by whom, becomes an exhausting move if philosophical enquiry is not the intention of the person attempting it. For creative practice, the intrigue is in the moments of conflation, uncertainty, and contradiction that these theorists perform, because it is in these moments that the actions of thinking and writing philosophically and theoretically reach their bounds, and is of course where art already exists, conducting its own epistemological searching. It is art that seems most at home in accepting undefinability.

---

[12] There are many ways to begin a survey on the entanglement of the words "object", "thing", and "material". See, for example, Boscagli (2014, 3); Frichot (2019, 81); Jackson (2014, 117); Ingold (2010, 3); Bogost (2012, 24); and Hudek (2014, 14).

[13] The fourfold for Harman is the logical structure all objects fall into: "Real objects and qualities exist in their own right, while sensual objects and qualities exist only as the correlate of some real object, whether human or otherwise" (2018, 160).

In seeing a note of caution in Luce Irigiray's critique of Heidegger and his objects, Aristarkhova asks why is the turn, or re-turn, to objects happening now—"In other words, there is a need to consider what such objectification of the object does for Heidegger and, potentially, for object-oriented feminism, material cultural studies, new materialism, and other thinking that seeks out and speaks so much to objects in their objectness, in their agency, as things themselves" (ibid, 51). While I take into my encounters with object/thing/materials these concerns, it is not the goal to find a single theoretical paradigm as the right one, or to ascribe to an understanding of objects by Harman over Heidegger. In conjoining object, with thing and material, all these contentions remain in proximity with one another so that for this project the object/thing/material I use in practice contains its own conception and contradictions. This project does not (and cannot) provide the solution or answer to such an entangled problem, but through the process of creative practice, we might come to challenge our understandings of, and/or our relationships with, the inanimate nonhuman.

While object-oriented ontology directed the initial perspective of the object's conception, Jane Bennett troubled it through her elevation of the "thing" which she presented as having the capacity for vitalism and power. "Objects appeared as things, that is, as vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics. In my encounter with the gutter on Cold Spring Lane, I glimpsed a culture of things irreducible to the culture of objects" (5). In Bennett's retelling of the moment she encountered scattered, disparate objects in the street, she presents the way in which things separate from objects that demonstrates a process of becoming, thereby articulating a new materialist perspective of process rather than being. Bennett's *thing-power* provides a different way of understanding the material world, offering "an alternative to the object as a way of encountering the nonhuman world" (xvii). This alternative way of constructing meaning from the matter around us brought the elusive thing of Bill Brown's "Thing Theory" (2001) out from the shadow of the object and into a more equal relational footing of object/thing.

Now that object/thing are combined, the nexus of object/thing/material is coming into view. Matter, as we know through new materialism, is lively and constitutive and yet remains as multifaceted as the ambiguous *thing*. For Elizabeth Grosz, thing and matter (and object) are already imbricated—"'the thing,' is only a recent incarnation of a series of terms which have an illustrious philosophical history: the object, matter, substance, the world, noumena, reality, appearance, and so on" (2001, 167). Moving further to establish the thing *as* matter, Grosz writes, "It is matter, the thing, that produces life; it is matter, the thing, which sustains and provides life with its biological organization and orientation; and it is matter, the thing, that requires life to overcome itself, to evolve, to become more" (168). Beyond Grosz's establishment of thing and matter as metonyms—evident in the implicit connection of object/thing with material, in the way this project has come to understand and engage them—is that they are all constituted of matter.

We have a definition that pertains to matter as a type of something that objects, perhaps, or things are made from—a substance (material) full of potential to be manufactured and produced into something else: "We find the thing in the world as our resource for making things, and in the process, for leaving our trace on things" (ibid). In articulating the move from a theoretical positioning of material to the way it exists in the situated and extended moments of engagement that my materially focussed project requires, I turn to Barbara Bolt: "Whilst materialist feminist theory has struggled to disentangle matter from discourses on matter, it may be argued that the art *is* a material practice and that materiality of matter lies at the core of creative practice" (2013, 5; emphasis in original). While I agree with Bolt when she goes on to remark how *un*remarkable connecting artistic practice to the material turn is, nonetheless this point needs to be made both in terms of how this project is entangled with new materialism and, perhaps more importantly, for connecting *material* with the transversal nonhuman object/thing/material as it occurs in this creative practice. Of course, visual art practices engage with materiality by nature of their content, but not all focus on materiality *as* subject matter.

In highlighting the fraught role of the definitions we have for these three words, Maurizia Boscagli (2014) turns to *stuff* as their replacement; *stuff* as cumulative, worn out and expensed, consumed and discarded. Boscagli's positioning of *stuff* as the "commodified and aesthetic version of materiality" (4) that exists in the everyday recalls some aspect of the type of object/thing/materials present in this project. However, *stuff* also brings with it a sense of overwhelming quantity and a vagueness that detracts from the task of establishing useful parameters for working and limits the scope for asking useful questions when encountering them in creative practice. So, we have *objects* that predominantly have to be discussed using also the word, and concept of, *things*, which in turn are shaped by the *material* forms they often come to embody. Both objects and things constitute material substances, matter. In all examples, whether object, thing, material, or stuff, lies the attempt to show that they are deeply nuanced and entangled notions. All of the moving between and back and forth creates a linguistic, and also conceptual, ambiguity that I redefine as object/thing/material in order to push through the contentions, to a space of critical creative engagement. Putting the three words together to create object/thing/material might not be as practical as establishing a new term, yet, as I have mentioned previously, by keeping them present their histories remain part of the becoming. Establishing object/thing/material, then, becomes my path through these contested theoretical positions and towards a space that can encounter them differently.

Bringing Together Ungroupable Object/thing/materials

> This leaves the thinker (and the creative practitioner too) in the awkward situation of wondering what exactly to add to this exhaustive array of contemplations and interactions with things. Things and/or objects (terms used both as synonyms and carefully distinguished, depending on who you are reading) appear like so many items that have been set out on a shop shelf… (Frichot 2019, 87)

What was initially a problem of trying to ascertain what exactly it was I was engaging with when I brought different types of manufactured object/things/materials into the project, gradually transitioned into an opportunity for thinking again, thinking otherwise, that which I had assumed to already know. Any parameters that developed for why certain forms of matter would be chosen from the shelves of art or craft stores, stationery or party shops, DIY or home improvement warehouses was through a slow process of practice-led research, one which cycled the stages of thinking, making, and showing art processes. With the development of the object/thing/material terminology discussed in the previous section, I was concurrently considering the consequences of these steps in the creative practice. Through the mode of practice-led research, two key developments arose—the ungroupability of object/thing/materials and, contradictorily, their thematic pairings as I came to encounter them.

Trying to group like objects, things, and materials to "get at" some form of a definition created shallow and fragile distinctions of what connected them. A roll of tape could be confidently placed in an *object* grouping. Sitting there on a table or the floor, the roll of tape is whole, solid, ready for action. Take a few steps back and the same tape roll feels lost or misplaced, no longer identifiable as masking or electrical or duct in type, yet still an object. But also a thing. Somebody has left some *thing* behind. On moving in closer, perhaps that same thing can be used to hold down papers, prop up a phone, stack with others, and hold pens. On touching it, its surface is softer than you thought, gives a fraction when you press into it, glides effortlessly away from its core when pulled, or, conversely, requires multiple, hard pulls to separate. This materiality directs its application; it is clearly good adhesive and yet also decorative. Tear a bit of material off and place it expectantly on the edge of the table—is this a new *thing* you've just made? Or *object*? If I had a thousand rolls of tape stacked together like a card tower, is the individual roll changed by its inclusion in a larger form? Perhaps the quantity of an object or thing affects its transition to material, or vice versa.

A lot of these possible distinctions centre on functionality, qualities, and potential. The example of the tape rolls demonstrates that in creative practice, the theorised definitions of objects, things, and materials begin reaching their limits when grounded in the everyday. Accepting these blurry boundaries of objects, things, and materials within my project resulted in the previously explained move of conjoining the terms, encompassing all aspects of their potentiality. While the first development was learning-through-practice the inability of objects, things, materials to be grouped independently of one another, the second was that through the process of extended curiosity and slow engagement, three pairing types gradually formed—flat and scrunched; fluoro and reflective; DIY and stationery.[14] The simple combination of flat and scrunched came out of repeatedly encountering object/thing/materials manufactured in flat forms, and the almost unavoidable result of scuffing and impacting the pristine surface. Filling my hands with the object/thing/material in its "pure" manufactured state—the supposed state of most potential—and squeezing, crushing, compressing it into "ruin" became a visceral encounter. The action, however, did not remove the object/thing/material's potential for use; it just altered it. The action also created a new object/thing/material to behold and see anew. No longer 2D, the scrunched form had distinct shadow and light, creases, folds, tears, space underneath and around. Bringing into proximity a flat and scrunched form created interplay between their states of existence, regardless of whether I was present or not.

---

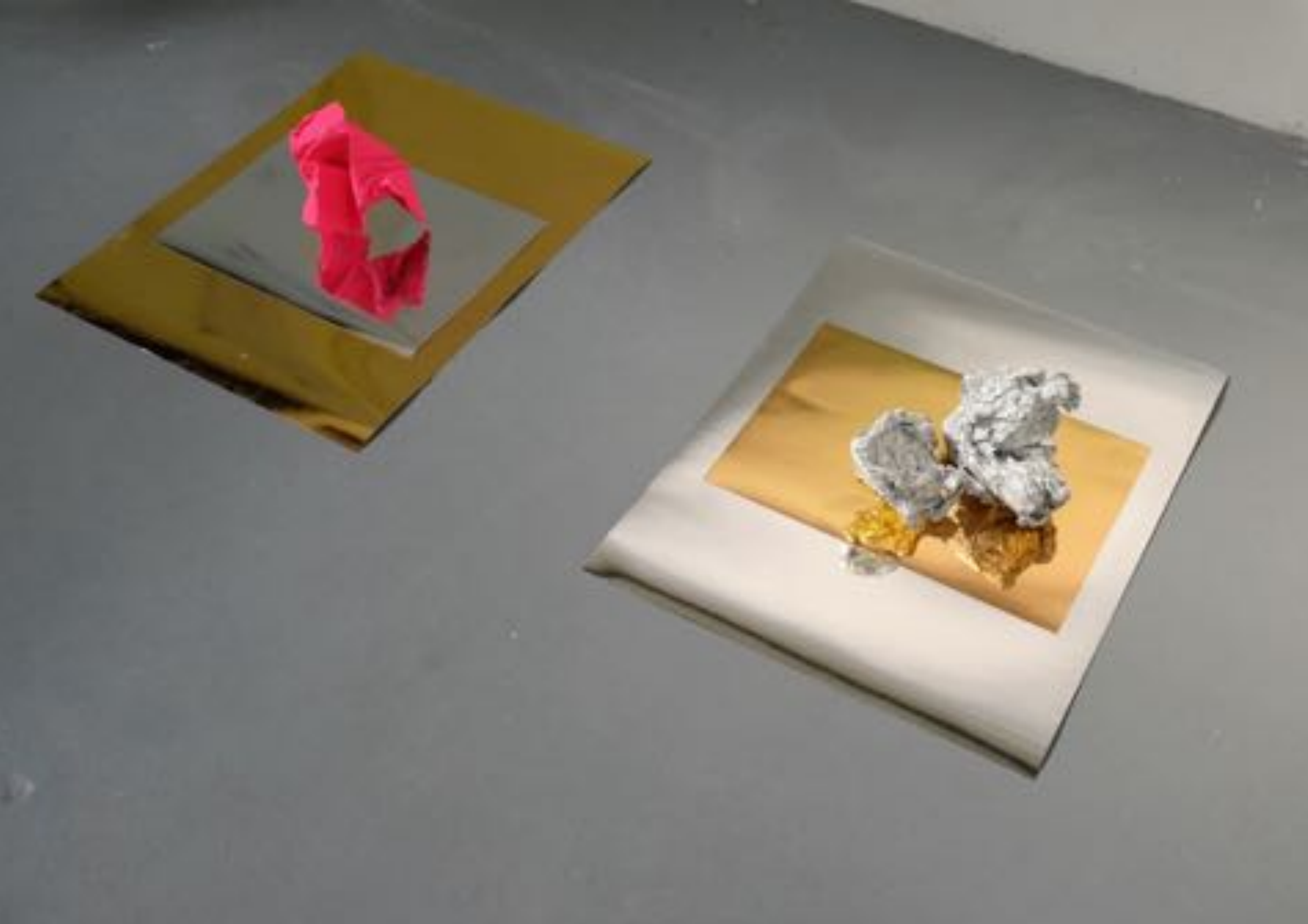
[14] The term "fluoro" throughout this project is short for fluorescent and denotes a type of colour (sometimes called neon) which comes from a process of light absorption that can creates luminous pigments.

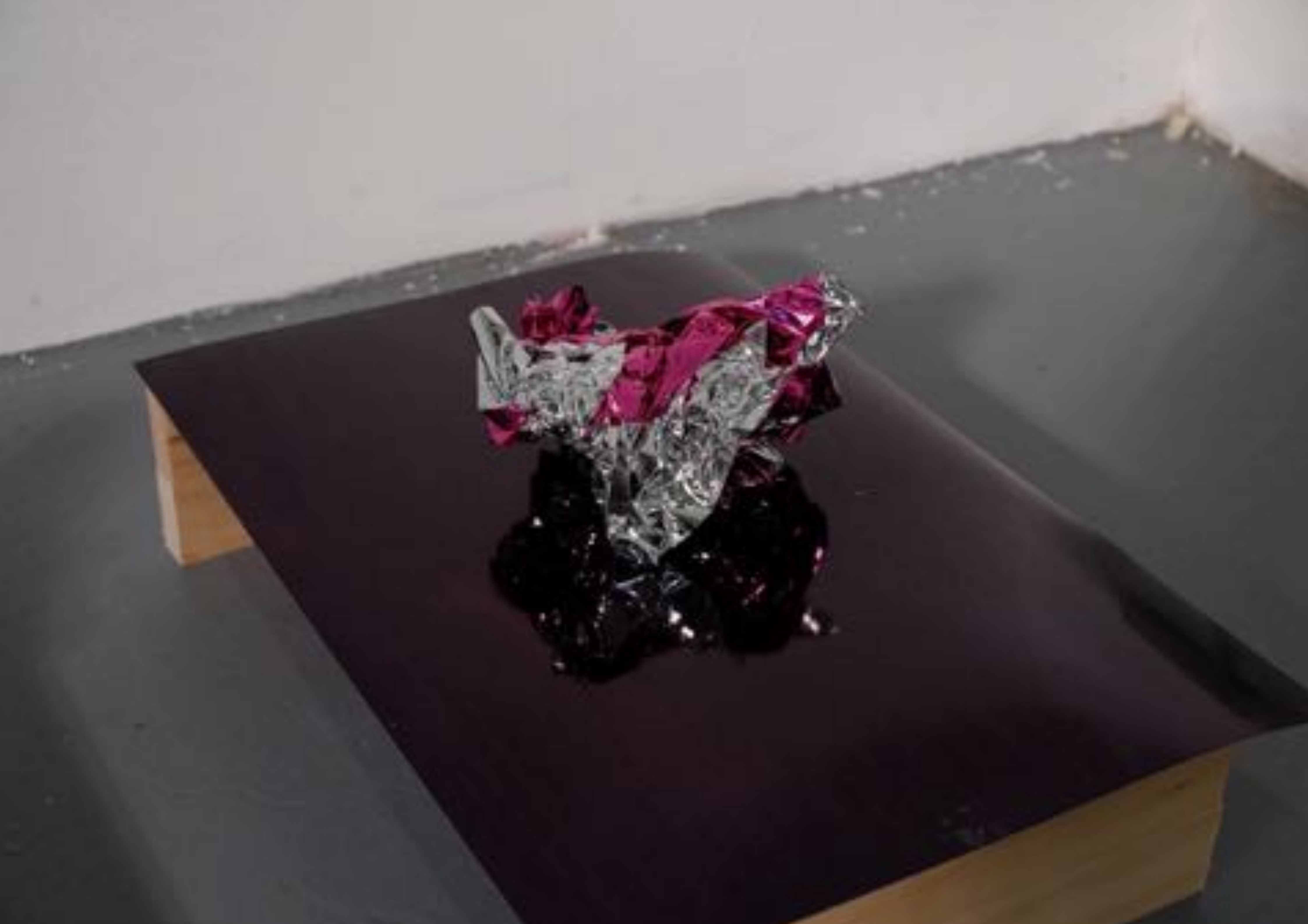
The pairing of fluoro and reflective developed through noticing the surface effect and point of difference to other iterations of the same object/thing/material made available to the public and has some crossover with flat and scrunched. It appeared slowly at first and then more and more once I became increasingly curious about the purpose for manufacturing something in fluoro pink or reflective gold—like elastic or a clipboard. In the sea of matter found in places like art and craft stores, stationery and party shops, DIY and home improvement warehouses, a fluoro or reflective version of something would stop the aimless scanning; it would physically arrest me, changing my course to get a closer look. Sometimes with wonder or amusement, I would fish out the curious object/thing/material and find a suitcase band in violent, fluoro orange, or a small square of transparent soft plastic in fluoro pink (with no apparent purpose or advertised usage) whose edges were blindingly bright when looked at side on and glossiness that warped its surroundings. This led to a cumulation of fluoro and reflective object/thing/materials that crossed over with the flat and scrunched pairing.

More present in the second half of the project, the stationery and DIY pairing became increasingly noticeable as it seemed fluoro and reflective versions of them were becoming popular—finding one type of pair meant incidentally finding the other. Walking the aisles of a DIY or home improvement store became an exercise in restraint due to the abundance of flat, scrunchable forms—such as plastic and metal sheeting, drop sheets, and acrylic sheets—and fluoro and reflective object/thing/materials—like rope and string, chain link, tape rolls, elastics, and straps. Additionally, a residency project in 2019 that I write about in a later chapter came to involve stationery in a more explicit manner and, as a result, visits to those stores happened even more frequently. The stationery and DIY pair became largely impacted by flat and scrunched, fluoro and reflective object/thing/materials.

These three loose pairings were not established at the outset of the project and I would not have been able to even guess at their coming into being. It was through the slightly meandering process of a project that valued journeying and discovery which resulted in the generative proximities of object/thing/materials despite their inability to be clearly defined. The object/thing/material, as it has come to be formed in this project, represents a type of matter that has gone through some transformational process via manufacturing. While this human intervention has set some functionality guidelines in place, it does not necessarily render the forms as no longer capable of change. We know that if we zoom out and view matter on a geological rather than a human scale, even the most solid, fixed, unwavering of things change, undergoing processes of unbecoming and becoming again that is so central to a new materialist perspective of being. Therefore, while manufacturing object/thing/materials en masse may pause some semblance of their potentiality, it does not cease their vitality all together.

Images on previous pages—Figure 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6 early scrunch and flat combinations in studio, 2017.





Coming to Know Object/thing/material

> What can I know through art practice? How do I think during the creative process; what noetic paths does my thinking process follow throughout the realization of material form; how are those paths different from deductive reasoning paths? And can this 'artistic thinking' be a valid kind of reflection on experience—in the sense that reflection on experience is fundamental to creating knowledge? (Boutet 2013, 29)

While the object/thing/material's conceptualisation closely involved object-oriented ontology, once established the combined term reflects more of a new materialist perspective in that it becomes untethered from disciplinary boundaries and is capable of a more expansive transversality. As my conception of the object/thing/material includes the seemingly inanimate matter that has been manufactured as also being nonhuman, I am working transversally to consider alternatives for coming to know that which we are surrounded by. In a way, expanding the limited lexicon of the nonhumans around us by reorienting towards object/thing/materials may lead to changes in the apparatuses by which we seek to know the material world. As Anna Tsing (2020) hopes, making our knowledge apparatuses livelier will lead to more lively understandings of the nonhuman. For Tsing, this makes up part of a larger argument of how the apparatuses we learn through affect what we can learn. So, if our knowledge apparatuses are framed by data, we may never come to know the nonhuman fully. She proposes shifting our apparatuses to practices and technologies of being instead (Tsing 2020). It is through this project that the apparatus of learning-through-doing, learning-through-proximity with object/thing/materials in creative practice, comes to be located. Even though many object-oriented ontologists and new materialists use practical examples in their scope-rendering lists of objects or matter, the very nature of a purely philosophical discourse denies the type of embodied learning and knowledge production necessary to turn theoretical presuppositions into meaningful actions within the world for humans and nonhumans. Therefore, coming to know the object/thing/material in a practice-led research project contains the potential to push beyond our current understandings of these complex relationships.

Once the object/thing/material has manifested out of the theory and practice of this project, it is located within the material world we encounter continuously. What has come to be at stake here is our ability to see the way these everyday encounters inform our understandings of what matter and/or the object/thing/material is to us; what we are to them in return; and wider ethical considerations about the matter we continuously manufacture and our relationships with nonhumans. This type of ethical proposition was not sought from the beginning of this practice-led project, but rather it developed through undertaking the project; and because of these encounters via theory and practice, an awareness about ethics has come to be located. This clearly has resulted from engagement with feminist new materialism and its theorists as well as from extended periods of curiosity. If we frame object/thing/materials as nonhuman, the divide between the worlds of human/nonhuman can become perceptually smaller, helping to bring into alignment a view of the material world as not wholly separate to our lived experience. This is as much about how I have come to know object/thing/materials in the world, as it is the methods that have been hinted at and teased out through creative practice-led research. What I can now see is that the development of an ethics pertaining to the nonhuman object/thing/material connects to a Baradian ethico-onto-epistem-ology: "Barad's ethico-onto-epistem-ology itself can in fact be regarded as a quantum entanglement that demonstrates that because we are part of the world, we can no longer see ourselves as innocent bystanders, observing the world from a freestanding perspective" (Geerts 2016, para 2). Our situatedness in the world, therefore, requires us to continue to work at our understanding of relationships with and responsibilities to the world around us, even extending to the object/thing/materials located within the easily accessible spaces of art and craft stores, stationery and party shops, and DIY and home improvement warehouses.

While some sympathy to an ethics was in place at the outset of this project—evident in the choice to position this discussion of object/thing/material within the political world of the nonhuman—it is by being prepared to stay with the trouble of not knowing the exact path this journey would follow that led to such an outcome. By turning to see how we have entwined ourselves with the matter we construct prolifically, we might be able to reconsider, unlearn, and then re-learn our relationships to it. As Colebrook says in "A Cut in Relationality: Art at the End of World", "we now acknowledge that nothing is an island; we—and the things around us—become what we are through encounters, with encounters and relations generating an openness, fluidity, and dynamism of life and the world" (2019, 175). For Jane Bennett, the notion of thing-power offers us an approach to these encounters, and coming to know of things in the world can encourage "greener forms of human culture and more alternative encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities"

(2010, x). Bolstered by the caring work of Tsing, Barad, Colebrook, and Bennett in examining our methods of understanding the world, my establishment of the nonhuman object/thing/material serves to further the enquiry.

The Object/thing/material of the Artworld

> I've been waiting for the revolution for a long time and it hasn't come. The ones that have come have done very little to change our ways. (González-Torres & Rollins 1993, n.p.)

The object/thing/material of art, as it comes to be experienced through thinking, making, and showing, shares little resemblance to the object of the artworld as it has come to be known in a post-Duchampian era. The process of encountering it is not done in service of creating sculptures or assemblages, but rather in coming to know them through proximity and engagements for the sake of learning anew. Postulating that this process of learning is preferred to an art object artwork derived from such engagements, this project distances itself from the goal of generating “artwork” that can be encountered by a viewer in the traditional framework offered by a gallery. Removing the requirement to produce art in the sense of finished, resolved, containable, presentable, exhibition-ready work provides space for remaining in the cyclical process of thinking, making, and showing art.

When considering the object/thing/material of, and that which constitutes, art, it is relevant to unpack the practices of Nina Canell and Vanessa Billy. They are artists who try to know the world around them through their practices and engagement with the materials they incorporate. They have been present in the background during this project, as early artistic references to seeing the world through its materiality. Canell works across sculpture and installation, and focusses on the physicality of material, or I would say object/thing/material. Flesh-coloured mastic gum, metal, concrete, and cabling used in Canell's work reflect those instances of natural matter falling over into the manufactured, and the manufactured matter becoming increasingly located in nature. It can be strangely difficult to find information about an artist's work and practice in their own words especially if their practice is presented to a public through the format of gallery spaces which contain catalogues with commissioned essays or reviews by art critics and writers. The following quote is a transcription from one of a few short videos in which Canell unpacks her thinking in relation to her work:

> Sculpture is this kind of combinations [sic], it's about how things meet, how things join up or not. All those meetings are produced on different scales, so you have the meeting between materials that are simply attaching to each other—you have those kinds of surface tensions…how that merges with the condition of the room and how that merges again with the sound that is generated by the sculpture…Are you a participant, are you activating something, are you engaging something which is already there or are you occupying it? (Gallery Weekend Berlin 2020, 0:18)

Canell’s sculptural object/thing/materials have a vibrancy to them in that they are not always fixed in form. Slabs of mastic gum on shelves slowly melt and slope off the sides. Lightly magnetised nails hang from each other off a wall.

Similarly, Vanessa Billy turns her attention to the way we engage our environment and its matter, and the type of persistent relations that are always occurring. Exploring balance and tension, she uses bronze, glass, concrete, and water. In an interview regarding the exhibition *White Goddess* in 2019, Billy says:

> I work with matter and materials as a way to relate to the world, a way of being in the world, an attempt at finding sense. How to compose an object, how to decompose it—the enormous, urgent environmental problem we are facing right now has to do with that. We have been enjoying ‘composing’—changing oil into plastic, for example—and we need to learn to decompose. Nothing disappears, it might change state but it remains, we live in a closed circuit. In the past, I’ve used cement, liking the idea that it’s stone broken down and re-formed. I’ve used the basic qualities of oil, floating sump oil on water (*Surfaces for the mind to rest or sink into,* 2009). More recently, I’ve been using bioresin, attempting to arrest it in its viscous stage, therefore revealing its constitution. Generally speaking, a successful piece for me is when intrinsic properties of a material play a lead role. I find it has the effect of binding the piece conceptually and sensually. (Billy & Mousse Magazine 2019, para 9)

Both Canell’s and Billy’s works exist in, and are encountered within the bounds of, contemporary art that thrives on resolved outcomes exhibited in gallery contexts. Even those works that display a type of agency in their transformation, or those that require intervention in order to activate them, are supported by the gallery which contextualises their practice. It is not necessarily the contemporary art gallery that is at fault in perpetuating cycles of capitalist commodification and consumption of art, yet art presented in such spaces becomes unavoidably contained within them. How would Canell's and Billy's processes of thinking, making, and showing be encountered if such acts occurred within spaces other than the compromised gallery?

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 2.7 Nina Canell, *Gum Shelf*, 2017.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 2.8 Nina Canell, *Mender*, 2012.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 2.9 Vanessa Billy, exhibition view, *Dear Life*, 2017.

Félix González-Torres, who was already working in the decades prior to Canell and Billy, had been pushing at the boundaries of what could occur in gallery spaces through works that played on the multiple, the devaluing of ownership, and the extension of an artwork's "life". Writing on González-Torres' life and art practice, David Deitcher remarks that the works of stacks of paper, such as *"Untitled" (Republican Years)*, 1992, or piles of wrapped candies, as in *"Untitled" (Placebo)*, 1991, extend the life of their conception in that the art can be replenished, refilled, remade "to whatever weight or height the owners of such works prefer, at which point another cycle of diminution and potential regeneration can begin" (2016, 33). In contrast, Canell's and Billy's works exist in predominantly resolute states, their value not impacted by a public's consumption of them. In an interview with Tim Rollins in 1993, González-Torres says:

> All these pieces are indestructible because they can be endlessly duplicated. They will always exist because they don't really exist or because they don't have to exist all the time. They are usually fabricated for exhibition purposes and sometimes they are fabricated in different places at the same time. After all there is no original, only one original certificate of authenticity. If I am trying to alter the system of distribution of an idea through an art practice it seems imperative to me to go all the way with a piece and investigate new notions of placement, production, and originality. (González-Torres & Rollins 1993, n.p.)

By issuing just one certificate of authenticity yet allowing for multiple copies, or involving multiple components, González-Torres maintained some control over his works in that the copies are effectively valueless, monetarily, in the wider art market. Through stipulating that someone taking or consuming candies from a work like *"Untitled" (Placebo—*

Landscape—for Roni) does not equate to owning it but is merely a "material effect" of it (Deitcher 2016, 43), González-Torres highlights the artworld's penchant for commodification and moves to disrupt it. Doing so is not a secondary outcome of his works, rather their conceptualisation connects to a consideration of the wider implications of the artworld context.[15] As González-Torres says to Rollins, "For me it makes a lot of sense to be part of the market. It would be very expected, very logical and normal and 'natural' for me to be in alternative spaces, but it's more threatening that people like me are operating as part of the market—selling the work, especially when you consider that, yes, this is just a stack of paper that I didn't even touch" (González-Torres & Rollins 1993, n.p.). Playing a joke on the artworld by controlling authenticity through devaluing work and highlighting the limited labour involved in the work displayed in galleries meant working within the system he sought to challenge. By the 1990s, after working since the '80s, González-Torres didn't think the changes needed to challenge such an institution from outside of it would occur: "Therefore I don't want a revolution anymore, it's too much energy for too little...I want to work within the contradictions of the system and try to create a better place" (ibid). This was almost 30 years ago and while González-Torres's work and life have had a major impact on a new generation of artists, including myself, working within the problem has not resulted in much change. Instead, what has happened more frequently is that the art market has adapted to absorb these internal challenges.

---

[15] González-Torres was a core member of the artist/activist collective Group Material in the 1980s which provoked and challenged the relevance of marketable art. In *Beyond Objecthood*, Voorhies explains that Group Material's collaborative nature subverted the notion of the individual artist due to the way they attended to all matters of the group as a united cohort, "thus seeking to avoid the art market's co-optation of the work and identities of individual Group Material members" (Voorhies 2017, 55).

I am not aiming to denounce the framework within which many artists have found livelihoods and that has enabled work of immense importance to be brought into the world. Nevertheless, this criticism regarding the usefulness of the art gallery is the reason why this project has had to grapple with its positioning, specifically as part of a postgraduate research degree which, intentionally or not, comes to expect definable artwork outcomes (however broadly defined) that are *presentable* in a way that can be assessed. So, then, when it is devised through the project's unfolding that the *process* is the outcome of the research, a position needs to be taken to establish why it is not being presented in a space like a gallery in order to legitimise its existence. This is not to say that galleries have always been, and will continue to be, in opposition to what I have described, but that at this juncture, where art needs to be the driver for moving beyond axioms and reframing the ways we come to understand the world, the gallery—because of its association with the version of the artworld that exists within the capitalist art market—can be put to one side.

Echoing Avenessian's call for a new art, Suhail Malik nonetheless removes contemporary art as a contender for this role. This is firstly because contemporary art, as it is commonly understood, is an idealism that needs to confront its own paradoxes (Malik 2014); and secondly because "a rigorous realism can readily dispense with art as it now stands without loss or limitation…which is to say that realism speculatively indicates the conditions for *another art than contemporary art*" (Malik 2015, 187-188; emphasis in original). However, before ascribing to Malik's other art, be warned that this new one may well be "indifferent to the experience of it, an art that does not presume or return to aesthetics" (ibid, 189). In responding to a "Questionnaire on 'The Contemporary'", Terry Smith describes contemporaneity as "the primary indicator of what matters most to us about the world right now, and what matters most to artists" (Foster 2009, 48). While this project engages in the axiom of contemporary art on the one hand due to this project's occurrence in the here and now, it also sees its direct connection to those markers of commodification which perpetuate capitalism. Therefore, if an art, whether contemporary or otherwise, has any hope of affecting change regarding capitalist and neoliberal dictates, re-locating the what and where of it is critical. An art object/thing/material that doesn't require a white cube gallery is one small part of a larger reorientation that might better position us to engage livelier knowledge apparatuses that can move beyond contentious classifications. It is, therefore, possible to propose that what comes to exist of the processes of encountering the nonhuman object/thing/material is art that is defined by its doing, its embodiment as practice, even though it is not an *artworld* artefact.

Regarding Avenessian's "new" art, I would nonetheless like to clarify that I am not articulating the object/thing/material as a new entity or form for the arts with the intention to undo or undervalue the work of others. Without their work, I would not have a foundation on which to build mine. Therefore, while I am articulating an alternative way of viewing and engaging with the material world, it is not without acknowledgment of the work of those around me and those long preceding this project. In an interview with Robert Storr, Félix González-Torres said:

> I think more than anything else I'm just an extension of certain practices, Minimalism or Conceptualism—that I am developing areas I think were not totally dealt with. I don't like this idea of having to undermine your ancestors, of ridiculing them, undermining them, and making less out of them. I think we're part of a historical process and I think that this attitude that you have to murder your father in order to start something new is bullshit. We are part of this culture, we don't come from outer space, so whatever I do is already something that has entered my brain from some other sources and is then synthesised into something new. (Storr 2006, 229)

The fact that this project can also connect to lineages of work and artists, whose reach extends beyond the restrictions of an exegesis, demonstrates the inauthenticity in announcing something new. Perhaps rather than filling a perceived gap in knowledge that I can claim as my own, I am revisiting already filled ones and attempting to think again.[16] I am distancing myself from an elevated art object that can only wholly manifest its contained, resolute nature in a gallery. I am in support of an art that engages with object/thing/materials and that fights its very label of *artwork* because it sees the limits in such a concept. Rather than an art object, an object/thing/material that has come to be through the processes of thinking, making, and showing art is *processorial*—in that it defies resolution or a point of fixity.[17] Bypassing gallery conformity and elevated status, the object/thing/materials engaged in this practice are experienced through processes, not through outcomes. All of this results in a conception of object/thing/materials as open-ended and unfixed, rather than locked into performing as commodities (either as tools or art). This form builds on, and is influenced by, the work of Canell, Billy, and González-Torres rather than undermining their approaches.

---

[16] This article by Max Liboiron on the notion of being "the first" questions the need to *stake one's ground* by identifying the colonialist language in research that attempts to be pioneering: https://environmentalmedialab.com/heliotrope/firsting-in-research.

Image on next page—Figure 3.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016.

---

[17] In the context of this research the made-up word *processorial* is not used to evoke the history of "process art" established in the 1960s though of course championing process over outcome does align with such artists working in this space like, Robert Morris and Bruce Nauman. Processorial describes the emphasis on continuity of an object/thing/material form, rather than a fixed form with emphasis on its process of production.

PROBLEM TWO / /

Moving Beyond Established Parameters

CHAPTER 3.

ENTANGLED PRACTICE

How to know a sponge? They're odd, I use kitchen sponges everyday but even they have many varieties. So many different versions of largely the same thing. Take it out the space you usually encounter it and what is it to you? Touch, squeeze, poke, rub, cut, pick, sand, roll, throw, press, stack, wrap, hang, join, affix, all while moving around in and out. Spending long enough with it as itself that it can be separated from the usual context you would encounter it in. Now, it is a curious nonhuman object/thing/material. How to decipher it? It perplexes once the manufactured function is removed, but how to extend this feeling beyond its current occurrence, beyond the event? Trying things, learning about material qualities. What it might be able to do, not what it is made for. Questioning why I do some things but not others, trying to reflect on my habits of interaction. Recording, pushing, leaving alone, pictures, sketches, notes, slow processes of construction, immediate actions, sitting, standing, walking, staring, watching, listening.

> New materialism calls for research inquiry via practice, via materiality—its calls for embodied, affective, relational understandings of research process. (Hickey-Moody 2015, 169)

Problem One / / Establishing Useful Parameters focussed on establishing the useful parameters to have in a project that seeks to remain open to discovery. *Problem Two / / Moving Beyond Established Parameters* considers how the processes of a practice-led research project that champions curiosity and entangled relations with the nonhuman object/thing/material can move beyond the bounds of the theory it draws from. In this move, new challenges are encountered and negotiated in terms of process and unexpected revelations. In this chapter I lay out the particular mode of practice-led research I have employed to support the aims of the project and unpack the terms relevant to creative research in the institution in order to better understand the role this project plays within such a space. In exploring what "entangled practice" means in the context of this project, I discuss the act of learning-through-doing that involves the cycle of thinking, making, and showing art that provides opportunities to rethink, reshape, and reconsider common axioms, and move beyond them towards understandings that shift creative practice into new spaces. In connecting back to the previous chapters, I identify how following the practice-led research journey has led to the need to pivot towards an open-ended process of art, rather than a resolved artwork outcome.

In my version of doing art research, practice-led research is more useful for exploration and for uncovering processes of encountering object/thing/materials, through reflection and intra-action, and of staying with the trouble and muddling through what happens. Practice leads me to new understandings about the (theoretical) research, where the project is going, and being open to the results. Within this exegesis, the words "research" and "practice" come to be blurred as research consists of multiple approaches—reading, thinking, writing, making, watching, showing; all of which is interwoven with what occurs in the practice of my project. When I am holding anti-slip grip tape I am thinking of how to write about it; when I am writing a paper I am thinking about it being an act of creative research; sometimes when I sit at my computer I record myself and watch it back to see what it looks like when my mind was processing something I read or wrote or thought. It is interesting to see what doing artistic research, i.e., practice, looks like, even when outside of the studio. Thinking of these spaces as part of creative practice has helped me to see practice-led research as encompassing more than the things done in the act of making artwork.

The nature of my approach to practice-led research is both entwined and open-ended; it is the format for allowing for unexpected turns in research, and knowing that arriving at them is not an accident, but rather a result of attentive, slow thinking and engagement. While there are some blurry distinctions between the terms, I unequivocally see my research project as being practice-led, not practice-based. I make this point because my research into the concepts of diffraction and transversality has also extended the commonly understood notion of practice-led research, as it is known in the institution, and how the expanded notion of practice-led can be used to bring together different ideas through its unfolding. As I am aiming to keep this research project in a state of potential rather than one with final outcomes, a practice-based approach is not of particular benefit to me. Practice-based research embeds research work in creative practice, but it sees “practice” as something which comes to be defined as resolved and shown to the public in its complete state (Candy 2006, 1). There is a key point of difference in how I am viewing distinctions between practice-led and practice-based: when Candy and Edmonds use “practice”, they are alluding to the outcome or, as they say, “artifact”; whereas when I say “practice”, I am referring to the act of *doing* art practice, whereby practice is the process of undertaking, and spending time in doing, art which may result in an artifact but that is not the sole form of outcome. It is already accepted that practice-led research includes the surrounding actions of theorisation and documentation (Smith & Dean 2009, 5) but a broader imagining of practice-led research that considers that same theorisation and documentation *as* the practice, not a consequence of it, is what I am establishing.

The notion of practice I employ in this project is akin to doing research. Practice, in this sense, constitutes research if research is exploration, investigation, querying, and experimentation. As Estelle Barrett says, “there has been a general shift in the arts and humanities towards a second mode of discovery and learning, which Ian Biggs (2009) describes as a mode of knowledge production that emphasizes a context of application, heterogeneity, a reduced reliance on hierarchy and acknowledgment that the production of new knowledge is potentially a transformative act; that is to say that the *production of knowledge is experiential and performative*” (2013, 63-64; emphasis added). In a similar vein, Anna Hickey-Moody establishes practice *as* research as being “experimental and materialist because it values responsiveness to context and recognizes agency in the material world, which matters because it means research is always acknowledged as a process of making and value is placed on the research process as well as the product" (2015, 171). This understanding of practice as research is indicative of the entangled practice of this project, one that is informed by theoretical contexts pertaining to the nonhuman and also sees inherent value in how the outcome of practice can be processes, not just artworks. And it is the experiential knowledge achieved through this project that I seek to emphasise, wanting it to be seen as a creative practice output treated with as much worth as any constructed art form.

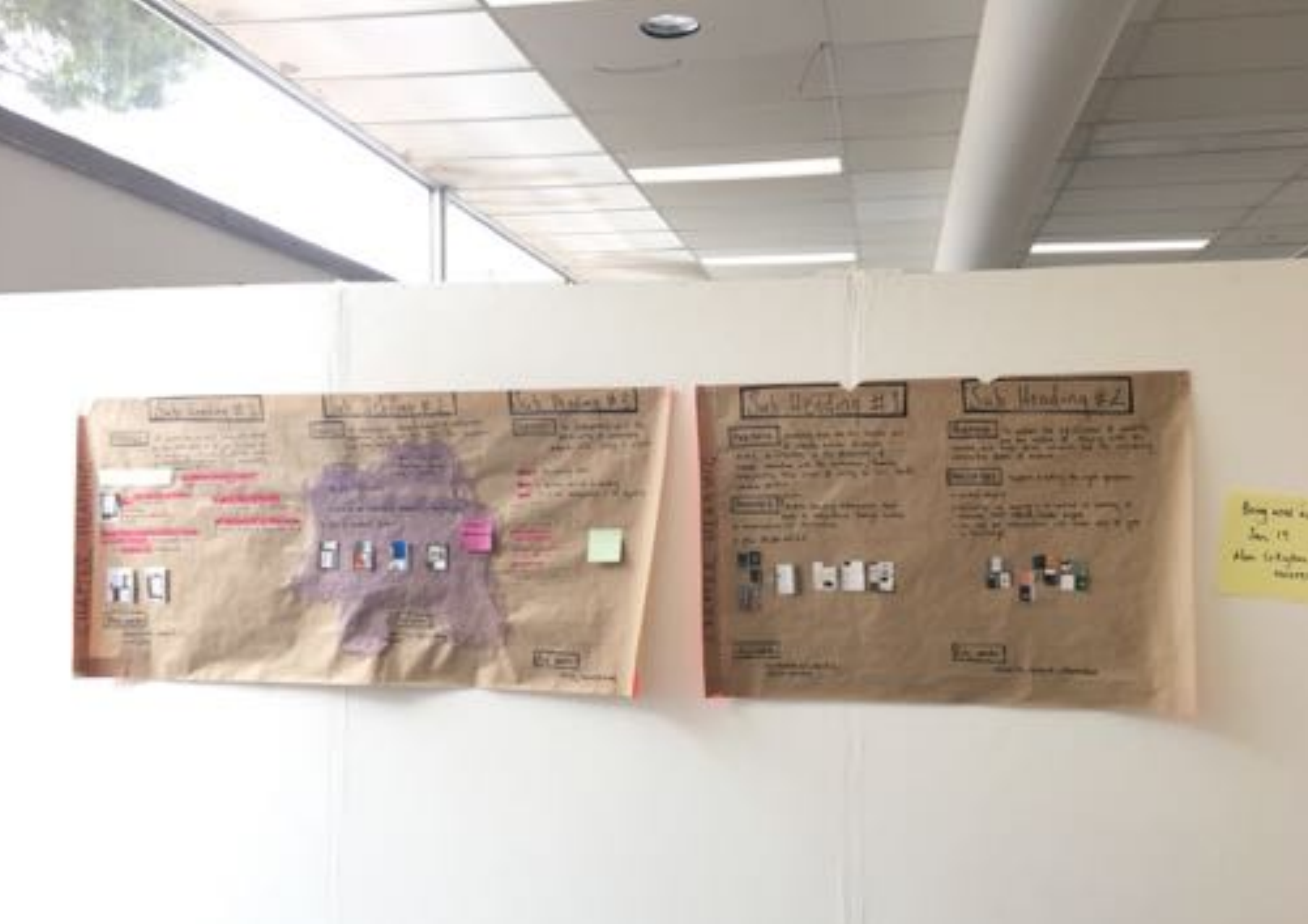
While Hickey-Moody utilises "practice as research", the distinction of "artistic research" that is embedded in institutional contexts regarding the application of an art concerned with research further connects with my invocation of practice-led research. Michael Schwab expounds that the reward of artistic research as a method of knowledge production is great enough to risk possible appropriations or misunderstandings of theoretical propositions in the process:

> Artistic researchers seem to have the luxury to jump right in simply appropriating or inventing concepts whose plasticity can be supplied by artistically staging them as epistemic things. If they work, new understanding will be gained; if they fail to work, we may encounter forced acting, incoherent scripts, and pointless monologues. In the absence of deeper historical grounding, there is no other choice but to take this risk. It may be those kinds of characteristics that the development towards artistic research has brought to the table of knowledge production in general. (2018, 9)

While Schwab states the risk involved in the uptake of artistic research, a practice-led approach to research minimises it through the rigorous conceptual and practical considerations involved, rather than via a retrospective application or reframing. Co-editor of RUUKU Studies in Artistic Research Maiju Loukola says that “artistic research is about arranging scenes for bringing together different material and nonmaterial elements with some kind of purpose in mind—intuitive will, a desire towards, a will to test and find out, to see what happens and what might offer itself to be explored as the process evolves” (2017, 85). The amorphous, curious state of artistic research defined by Loukola evokes the type of practice-led format I have comprehended through, and for, this project.

In addition to locating in both practice as research and artistic research some aspects of the practice-led approach being formulated in this project, I connect Graeme Sullivan’s postdiscipline practice with new materialism’s transversality. Postdiscipline practice is particularly reminiscent of a transversal mode of research which Sullivan explains is “the way visual arts research takes place within and beyond existing discipline boundaries as dimensions of theory are explored” (2010, 111). As stated in chapter 1, Palmer and Panayotov (2016) explain transversality as “non-categorical and non-judgmental. It defies disciplinary categories and resists hierarchies”. Here, I bring Sullivan’s postdiscipline practice into proximity with new materialism’s transversality and, in doing so, feel that my practice-led research form, somewhat like the object/thing/material involved, remains intentionally loosely bound so as to defy disciplinary categorisation. While Sullivan advocates for a way of doing art research that still “maintains a degree of integrity” (2010, 112), I say the more heretical and radical the better in order to keep carving out research that *comes to know* through curious and caring knowledge apparatuses.

Images on following pages—Figure 3.2; 3.3 developing a thesis structure in the studio, 2018.


Sub Heading #1
Sub Heading #2
Jan. 19

Following the Practice-led Lead

> So the artisan, the craftsman, the maker, is someone who has to be ever-observant of the movements of stuff around him, and has to bring the movement of his or her own conscious awareness into line with the movements of the surrounding materials. Thus making something is a mode of questioning and response, in which the maker puts a question to the material, and the material answers to it; the maker puts another question, the material answers again, and so on. Each answers to the other. I use the term *correspondence* to capture this mutual responsiveness. In making, the maker follows the material and that process of following the material is a correspondence between the flow of the material and the movement and flow of the maker's consciousness. (Ingold 2015, 64)

Following the lead of practice-led research into uncertain terrain has resulted in discoveries and paths I could not have foreseen at the outset. Letting these processes unfold has proliferated the act of learning-through-doing which sees sometimes intuitive or curiosity-driven action reflected upon, repeated, questioned, done again differently, speculated, and considered. Each action brings with it a plethora of things to know and learn again. When learning-through-doing, I feel I am involved in what Frichot decribes as "gleaning". Drawn from Agnes Varda (who, in a different iteration of this project, could have been an interesting affiliate because of her experimental approach to thinking, making, showing), gleaning is the embodied act of locating. "What do we do when we glean? We select, extract, gather, pull out of context, recombine and often we have to be prepared to pick up the leftovers because, no doubt, someone has been there before us. This pertains to well-worn concepts too. We compose exhaustive combinatorials of things and string them together in search of some meaning, of some thread to follow, however artificially strung out” (Frichot 2019, 83). In the context of this project, I glean both through theories and in situated practice. Gleaning, as it occurs with the object/thing/material I engage, also involves myriad acts and actions—touch, squeeze, poke, rub, cut, pick, sand, roll, throw, press, stack, wrap, hang, join, affix. ”Gleaning is an art of stooping down to pore over what has been forgotten, to pick at the earth, to pluck at the pavement in the dishevelled aftermath of an event. It is an art of survival. It is an art of creative resistance in response to a fast-paced consumptive lifestyle” (ibid). For me, gleaning is as much an observational encounter as it is interactive. A lot of watching and seeing needs to occur; this helps to see the spaces between, the spaces where the relations are happening, the spaces where the object/thing/material is expanding, pushing against their predetermined boundaries.

My approach to practice-led research has also been impacted by the object-oriented ontology and new materialist bookends established in problem 1 of the exegesis. This is seen in bringing, across disciplines, those questions of what constitutes a nonhuman; what hierarchies look like in creative practice (if considering matters of vitality or animism); what championing curiosity and difference (as productive, rather than alterity) might look like; and even for asking what the right questions are for engaging with the nonhuman object/thing/material in creative practice. Knowledge gaining practices can occur through many forms but the type of questions we ask impacts on the type of knowledge that comes to be known.

The questions I have asked through this project are intentionally expansive and often set in motion more questions. The answers need not be the focal point if, in the asking of such questions, new knowledge is created and the cycle of learning-through-doing continues. This is reflected in my project's research question of investigating methods of engagement for encountering the nonhuman—itself prompting a gradual unfolding of the processes with which to encounter object/thing/materials via discovery and curiosity.

As mentioned in the introduction, Despret's book *What would Animals Say if We Asked the Right Questions?* (2016) reframes the act of inquiry to one of identifying difference and developing approaches to research from that position. Questions like "What are rats interested in during experiments?" (89) and "Why do we say that cows don't do anything?" (177) are starting points for Despret that open up numerous other questions within her research. The importance is not in asking a question one already knows the answer to, but rather that which takes one on a unique journey of knowledge production, even if nothing is answered. So, in this sense, the questions are anti-hypotheses—that is, to not know what will come from the asking of the questions which, in turn, becomes the purpose of doing the research—rather than a scientific method that uses the questioner's speculations to guide the methods. The unknowability in asking such curiosity-driven questions drives the enthusiasm for undertaking the research; however, one must also remain open to the resultant journey in order to recognise and foster the knowledge that arises.[18]

Approaching research with curiosity is at the forefront of what Natalie Loveless (2019) calls "research-creation". Not dissimilar to practice-led research, research-creation is an "interdisciplinary theory-practice that mobilizes artistic methodologies but is not limited to the arts proper" (Truman et al. 2019, 224). Loveless recognises that we know art research by many names, and situates research-creation as another way to affect the conversation about what it means to do art at postgraduate level. Loveless aligns research-creation with the interventions of decolonial, feminist, queer, and interdisciplinary research (Truman et al. 2019) and explicitly follows the work of American First Nations writer Thomas King and multi-species feminist scholar Donna Haraway. The combination of King's and Haraway's methods of storytelling develop through Loveless into an approach to artistic research that understands its power to ask questions that result in important stories (Loveless 2019). Loveless identifies in King's and Haraway's stories a need for curiosity, and recognises that "it is *curiosity* that emerges as key to our capacity to make changes" (2019, 22; emphasis in original) and that ultimately, "to do research—of any kind—is not simply to ask questions, it is to let our curiosities drive us and allow them to ethically bind us" (24).[19] To frame research questions as telling stories and crafting an ethics driven by curiosity means to slow down the process of developing such questions in the first place, letting the process guide the unfolding of the right questions. I don't seek to re-name or problematise research-creation or practice-led research, but I can see how a "process-led practice" might develop from this point—encompassing research question creation and practice as an open (rather than closed/final) format within which immediate steps are laid out in order to begin somewhere but wherein text and creative practice are followed to unknowable ends.

---

[18] Nevertheless, the doctoral candidacy process at my institution required some certainty about methods and approaches and outcomes at the outset of the research. This posed a difficult problem when I was at that stage because I was less equipped then with the conceptual framings and language of new materialism and feminist research methods which were to come through the research. Reflecting on this difficult process at the beginning of my journey also informs my desire to advocate for allowing space for unknowability in arts research as a legitimate means of knowledge production.

More generally, research-creation seems to connect itself to the standardised forms of assessment of research: "In qualitative research publications and conference presentations, research-creation has begun to be employed as both a methodology (the theoretical underpinnings that inform empirical research) and a method (a procedure for doing empirical research)" (Truman et al. 2019, 221). On this point, the practice-led research I am advocating is one that remains unfixed, avoiding outcomes that exist as known and final, and, as such, exists in a greater state of potential. In working my way through Loveless' research-creation, I place my practice-led research beyond the formalities of quantitative and qualitative research, and champion an approach that allows for following curiosity. This queries how best to present the importance of the creative processes (involved in doing art research) as the manifested form of artistic output.

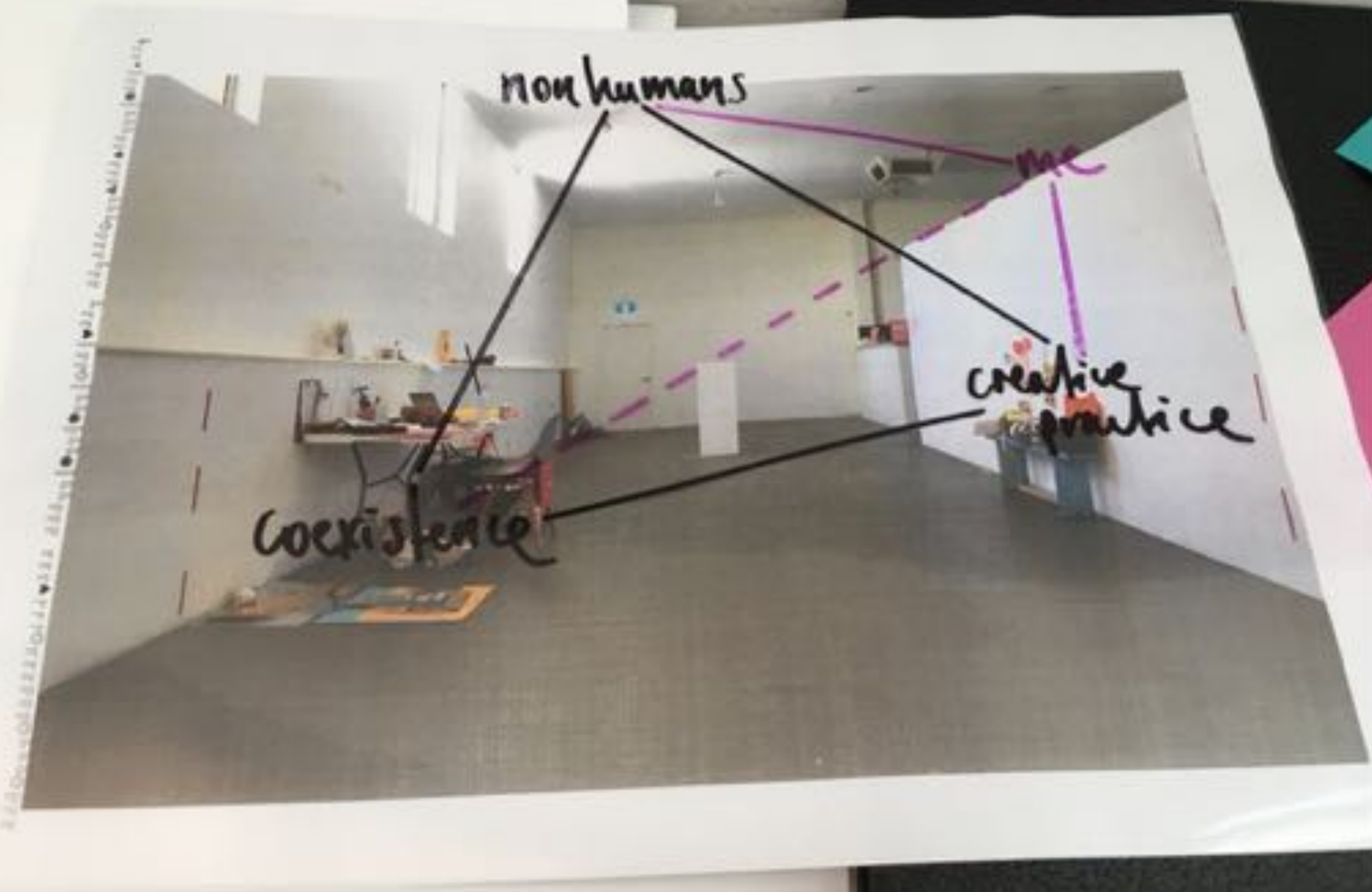
---

[19] Loveless' research-creation argument for universities to recognise that "multiple formal outputs [should] be treated with equal value" (2019, 115) is specific to Canada/North America. In the form of the creative-practice PhD recognised in Australia, this is already occurring through the exegesis and art format. However, what I will take from Loveless as being beneficial to making change here is the approach to the generation and execution of curiosity-driven research questions.

In thinking further about how we construct our research questions and the methodologies we employ in service of them, Carol Taylor's (2016) diffractive reading and thinking of object-oriented ontology via feminist new materialism instantiates the usefulness of letting unknowingness guide research which, in turn, furthers the line of questioning. Positioning this as a generative approach, Taylor openly includes those moments of curiosity and intrigue that led her along the diffracted path: "I had to know how Barad's worlding warped into Bennett's thingly power into Harman's objects" (205). If diffractive methods of engaging with texts or concepts can encourage "thinking otherwise" (201), then Taylor asks how, "if we are thinking otherwise, we might also be reading and writing academic articles otherwise" (ibid). I would extend this thinking to include how methods of diffraction might also open us up to doing creative practice otherwise—what questions might we ask of the objects, things, and materials we engage in studio practice, and would we come to know them in different ways by doing so? The musings Taylor presents in her writing keeps the article in a state of openness, providing access points for readers to share in the process of discovering feminist new materialism and object-oriented ontology through one another. Rather than researching and presenting a final paper that has gone through the process of resolving those questions and queries off paper, left in draft versions, Taylor purposefully includes them, experimenting with "writing academic articles otherwise" (ibid). Likewise, I seek to keep the process of this project open, by including questions and reflections from different points, and mirroring this in the creative practice by not predetermining the physical outcome for this research project. In this way, I hope that the exegesis and constructed form can hold some of its musings intact or continue to lead to new questions.

Not unlike Frichot's and Varda's gleaning, coming to know object/thing/materials happens through the artistic experience Barrett describes "as a continuum with normal processes of living and is derived from an impulse to handle objects and to think and *feel* through their handling. What emerges from this process is the aesthetic image—an image that is heterogeneous in that it permits a *knowing* that exceeds what can be captured by the symbolic" (Barrett 2013, 64; emphasis in original). Engaging with object/thing/materials through creative practice is the vehicle for asking new questions (or old questions in new ways), thereby embedding research in the landscape of specific sites that allow for sensory processes of coming to know the world. Seeing through creative practice possibly heralds the beginnings of the alternative apparatus Tsing hopes for, that may even result in the art Avenessian hopes for, and challenges the methods of research in the way that I hope for.

Image on next page— Figure 3.4 seeing relations in residency spaces at Paper Mountain, 2018.


non humans
me
creative practice
coexistence

Developing Process as Outcome

> I find solutions I might not have thought of or sketched but rather are the result of an open process of playing with materials and elements I like to work with and which help clarify my intuitive process. (Dávila 2018, 39)

Following the practice-led approach meant accepting unknown leads, even if they veered slightly from my original intentions. This is evident by the shift from my initial candidacy proposal in which I diligently and expectantly referred to artwork outcomes as a result of this project. Manoeuvring to where the project arrived at and continues to arrive at did not occur by simply changing my mind; instead, it was through a gradual process of learning-through-doing that often involved different forms of documenting encounters and engagements in attempts to capture what was occurring. Upon realising that resolving my process into finalised art works would render my engagements fixed and resolved, I began to forget about what I was working towards and instead attempted to extend the moments of curiosity. What does staying with the trouble of encountering object/thing/materials we think we know and understand look like in those moments? What is happening in those entangled meetings? What are the materialities that can be observed? Hence, what I want to explore is the idea that the act of asking such curious questions, and spending time together with the object/thing/materials, generate interesting insights that can, in turn, prompt further thoughts and questions regarding processes of engagement.

As I have mentioned before, the way the ideas of this project developed was not in a clean, linear fashion but out of small moments of reading, thinking, and engaging that built up in cycles as things were returned to and re-turned over. What has since become an active distancing from contemporary art and pristine gallery spaces came about because of multiple points converging during the project's undertaking. Querying the type of space most conducive to free exploration in processes of thinking, making, and showing art was triggered in New York and then strengthened during my residency at Another Project Space (discussed in the following chapter). It became apparent that traditional gallery spaces might not be what is needed for this project and that working in other spaces could be the locus for undertaking a more open-ended exploratory cycle of thinking, making, and showing art. The more I followed this path that the practice had set me on, the more the notion of artwork that presented a final outcome of the research journey seemed to undermine the process. If "knowledge occurs as material process through interaction and action" (Barret 2013, 64), then why is it expected that the art gallery is the best format for disseminating such knowledge? Shifting focus from presenting works of art that connect to the notion of a "finished" outcome, to an expanded understanding of what constitutes such a final state, this project has come to consider processes undertaken as a result of practice-led research as an equally successful outcome, and this is reflected in the re-articulation of the research question. The acknowledgment that the processes of creative thinking, making, and showing constitute rigorous research output does not suggest that "finished" works of art made through practice-led research are not valid, but rather that the practice-led research has meant revisiting the need and appropriateness of producing such an object.

It is not about simply presenting process as process—as that which is permanently situated within the confines of a studio or space of making, as staged, stationary ephemera—but instead locating it in such a way that the very process becomes the subject matter of the art making. The idea here is that process is something in the midst of occurring, which shows its inner workings and exists in a state of greater potential than a "finished" work. The juxtaposition of process and outcome in this project is akin to Barad's phenomenological "cutting together-apart", which is an action that "produces the very boundaries through which something is made 'inside' and 'outside', 'this' and 'that'" (Sauzet 2018, para 15). This tension of process as outcome can be made generative through diffraction that attunes us to the differences, so that in somewhat of a dialectical move, their opposition provides for another option—for example, by constructing a form that utilises vibrant, multi-modal documentation of processes put into proximity with the very object/thing/material the documentation captures. This constructed form is unlike an art object made for the contemporary art market and is instead a dynamic expression of the process. Such a move is unpacked in *Processorial Object/thing/material* where the matter of the process of encountering the nonhuman object/thing/material undergoes concrescence.

Documenting instances of proximity and engagement through observation and interaction has been necessary to trace the process of learning through curiosity. Ways of capturing the occurrences in studio and residency spaces developed from habitual image-taking to conscientious attempts at using images to *get at* the object/thing/material, whether to vicariously and indirectly access it, or to closely observe its micro becomings. These attempts saw photos taken from numerous angles and positions, with various focal points and lighting changes, to try to apprehend the temporal encounters. Actions, like squeezing and tearing sponges, or standing on disco balls, were driven by asking ‘what happens if…?’ and ‘what might I learn if…?’ At the same time, however, outside the event in which such actions were occurring, these moments were at risk of being lost. While these types of questions are not wholly unusual in contemporary artistic practices, they are commonly undertaken in the act of working towards the creation of a “finished” artwork at the perceived end of the process. The common practice of resolving research in the form of artwork outcomes comes back to the types of questions we are asking in our research projects. If, as Despret does, we try to reimagine what the right questions are, and, like Taylor, what doing otherwise might engender, such a desired outcome might not be as prevalent.

What I emphasise as being *process* Bianca Hester frames as *event* in her PhD thesis “Material Adventures, Spatial Productions: Manoeuvring Sculpture towards a Proliferating Event” (2007). My project performs some similar steps even though our paths have different start and end points. As Hester explains, "My motivation is not a dialectical or moral opposition to the production of objects, but is sparked by an interest in engaging in the production of art in ways that promotes complexity, rather than reducing it into recognisable forms of object (and subject) and related forms of reception, narration, commodification and knowledge/meaning generation” (9-10). Where Hester’s desire to produce art that promotes complexity leads her to sculptural installations, I regard the extrapolation of the messy coming together-apart with object/thing/materials into a processorial construct as producing complexity. Positioning sculpture as a proliferating event in which “a myriad of relations, processes and layers converge” (7) reflects the aim of my project—to make such processes be recognised as outcome. Modes of seeing and learning through interaction, in relation to object/thing/materials, converge with the subject matter proper into something which promotes complexity by way of attempting to not be “display-ready” (9).

By focussing on the instances of learning through proximity with object/thing/materials in a creative practice, I am performing the type of entanglement Haraway (2016) acknowledges as necessary for working towards liveable futures with the world in a way that acknowledges our problematic attitude towards the nonhuman. Doing so, however, requires more than one or two interactions with object/thing/materials to learn from or through them; rather, the learning comes from ongoing entanglements, beyond art object outcomes. This learning-through-doing has occurred through practice-led research, leading me to realise that creative processes for engaging with the nonhuman object/thing/material are fundamental to understanding them in ways that may engender new modes of entanglement.

Though this practice-led research project presents a non “display-ready” art object outcome, a tangible *something* still comes into existence from engagements with object/thing/materials, while the documentation of such occurrences performs a type of constructed form. Such a form would likely be classed by Candy and Edmonds as an “artifact”, even though it was not a known outcome at the onset of this research and it does not exist for consumption by the public. Exemplifying art's ability to be comfortable with unknowns, Barrett and Bolt say that "innovation is derived from methods that cannot always be pre-determined and 'outcomes' of artistic research are necessarily unpredictable" (2007, 3). The fact that there is, somewhat inevitably, a *something* to have come out of such a materially focussed exploration does not equate to practice-*based* research, but rather, perhaps it is, contrarily, the "new art", which Avenessian spoke of, that can come from this type of practice-led research.

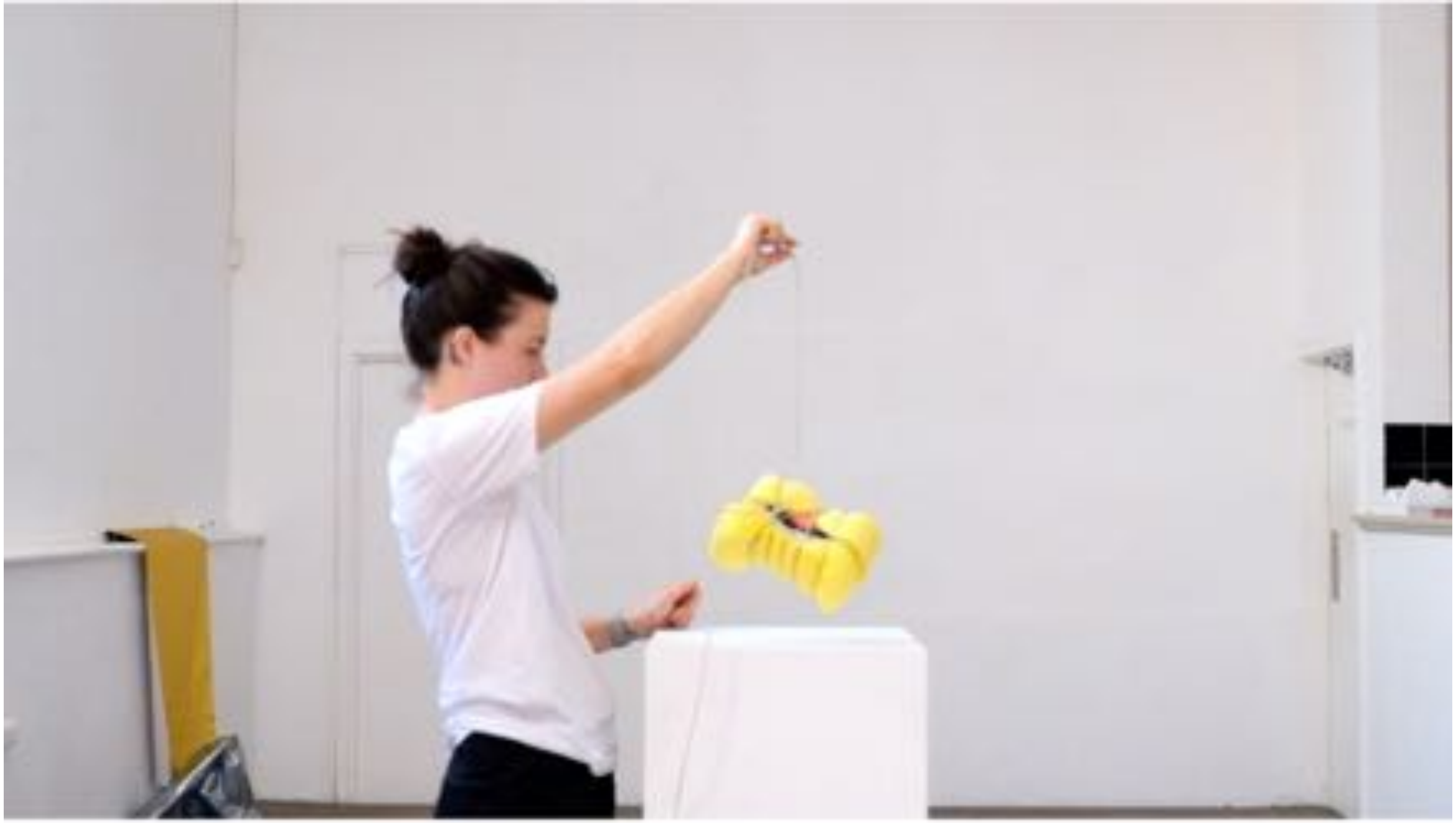


Figure 3.5 interacting with types of sponge at Paper Mountain, 2018.

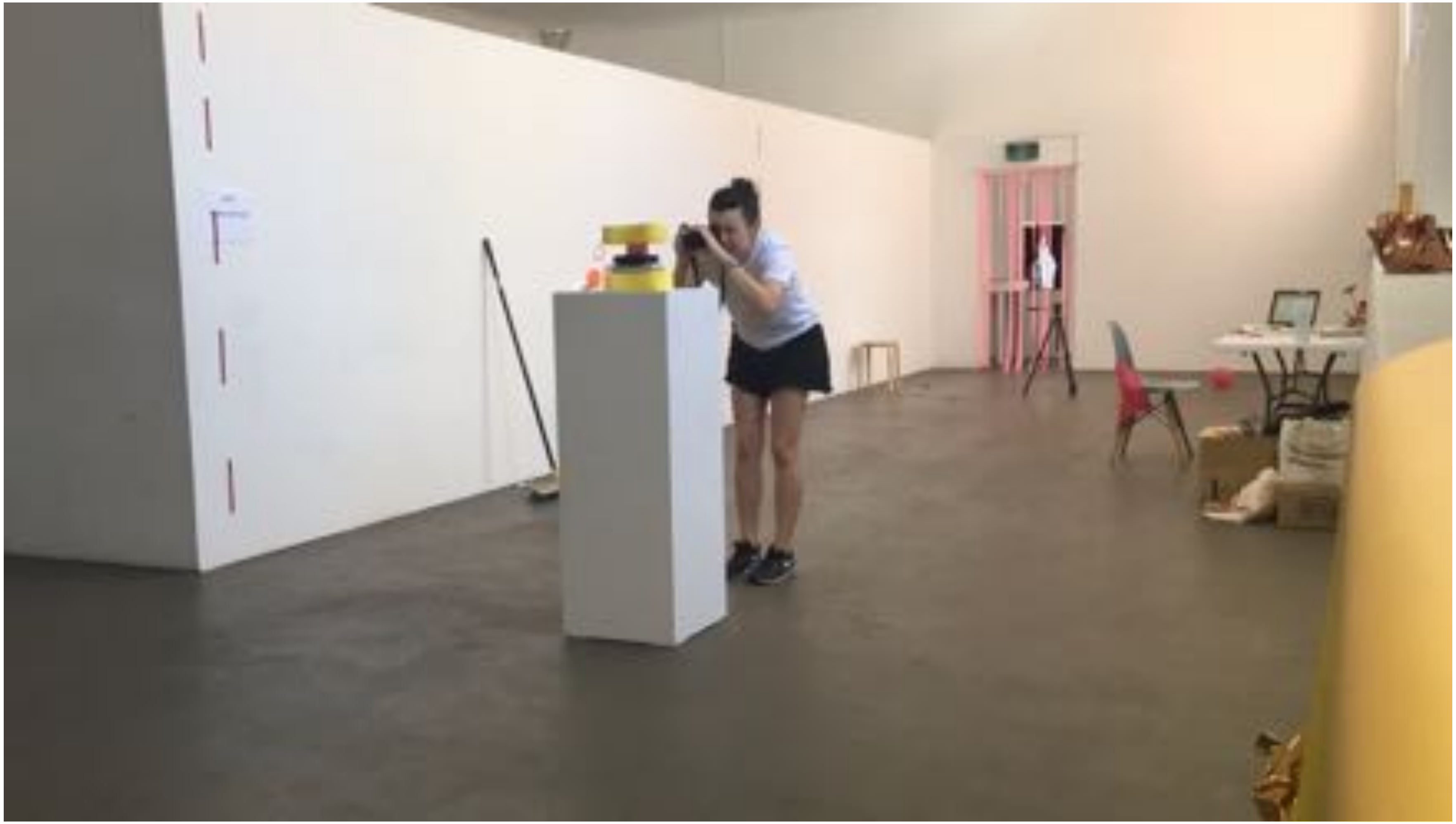


Figure 3.6 screen shot of video in space at Paper Mountain, 2018.

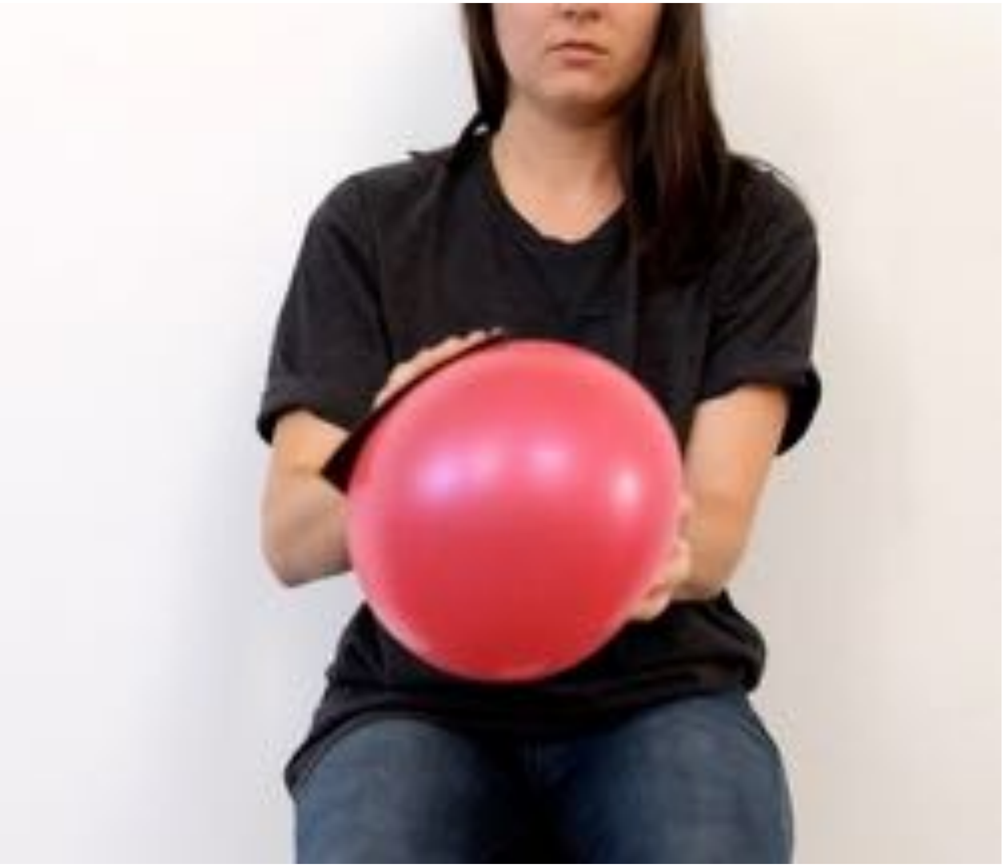


Figure 3.7 sanding a balloon at Paper Mountain, 2018.

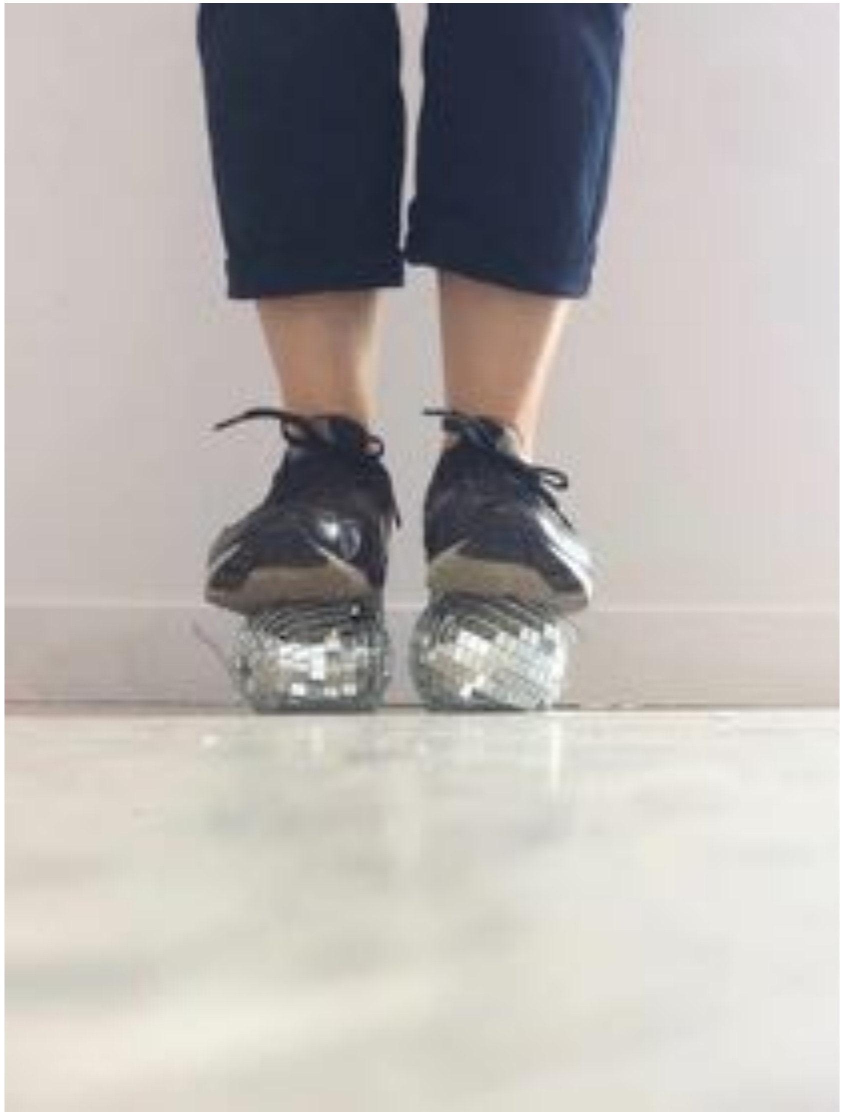


Figure 3.8 balancing on disco balls at Another residency, 2017.

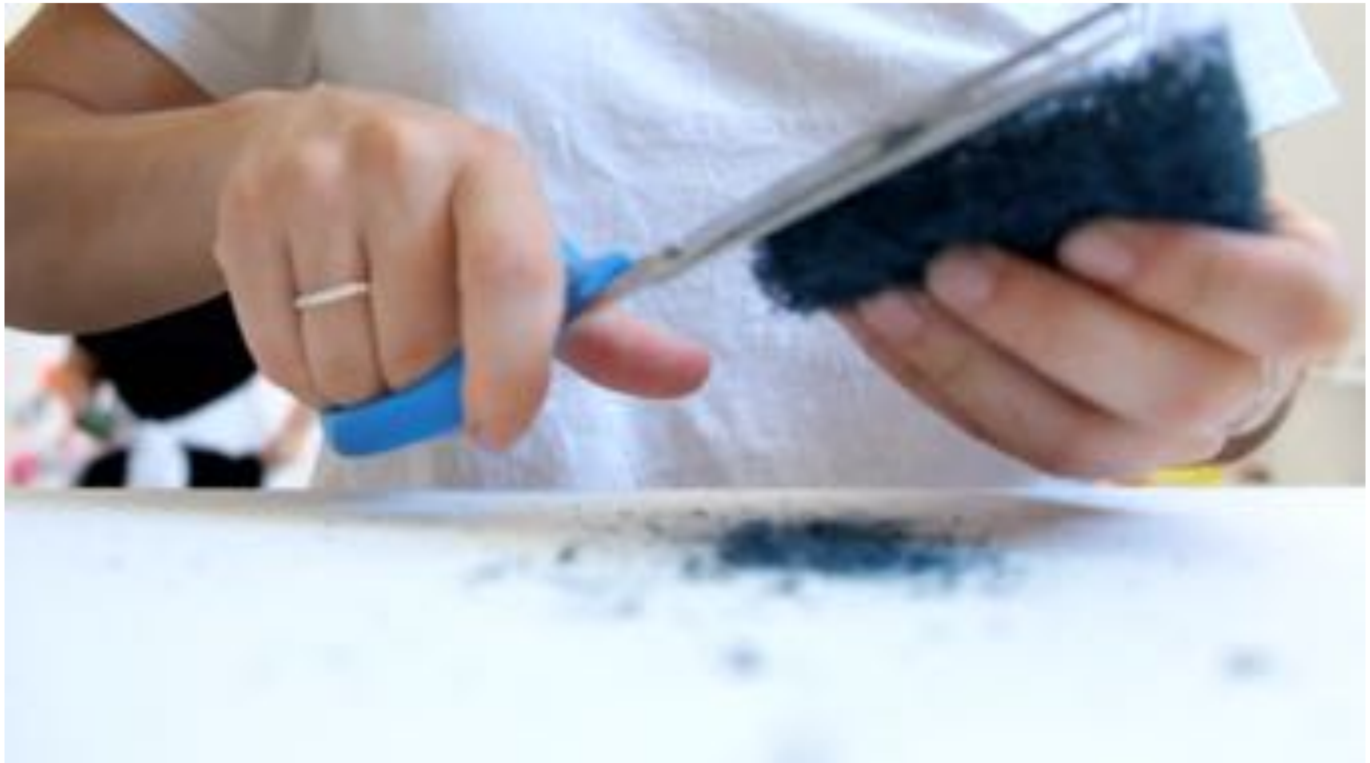


Figure 3.9 cutting a scouring sponge at Paper Mountain, 2018.

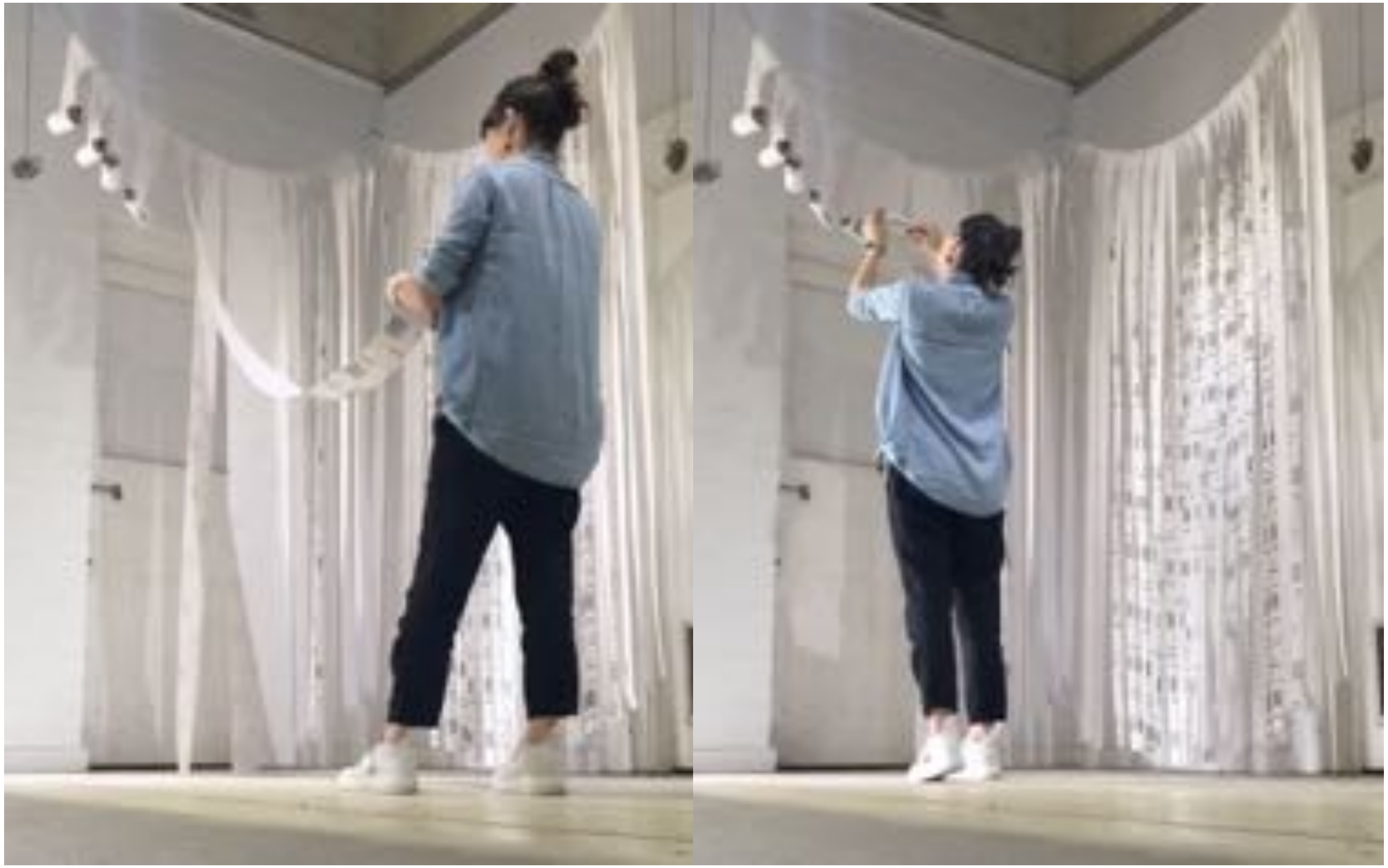


Figure 3.10 deinstalling sandpaper blinds from a group show, 2017.

Thinking about disco balls as an object, thinking about latex balloons and square mirror pieces as similar in shape and type for making my own. As soon as a balloon is inflated, I want to deflate it, and back again—a curious object/thing/material that invites interaction. So I glue the mirror to the inflated balloon, hang it from the ceiling and prick it so it slowly deflates. The glue crackles and the mirror pieces pop from it onto the floor. I do it again with silver vinyl. The results differ by degrees, but the deflated forms created in the loose image of a disco ball now no longer recall its origins. Transformed to crumpled, empty, shiny vessels. In the act of doing I didn't pause to wonder what it would look like. Small variations—different reflective materials on balloons, different types of attaching and hanging, different light at different times of day. Reflecting but not resolving, because resolving into what? and why?

Image on next page—Figure 4.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016.

CHAPTER 4.

CONFIGURING RESIDENCY AS A THINKING, MAKING, SHOWING SPACE

While residency often refers to states of extended stays—being a resident, having residency status, residing in—it denotes a certain fixed-ness; the artist residency is largely temporary in nature. The artist residency is a many and varied event offered by institutions and organisations but can also be an autonomous occasion of particular intention or discovery. The artist residency, as I have come to include in this project, refers to a bracketed period of time that provides mental and physical space for locating, expanding, and experimenting with art practice. Not necessarily fixed to a location, I retrospectively consider my time spent in New York a residency because of its finite nature and impact on my project for understanding research parameters and object/thing/materials. Similarly, a short trip to Japan, where I thought through object/thing/materials while attending the Okayama Art Summit—viewing works by Pierre Huyghe, Anicka Yi, and Fischli and Weiss—as well as locating artist books in Tokyo (that I discuss further in the next chapter), was transformative for this project.

The artist residency exists as a place where the processes of thinking and/or making and/or showing art occur, and it can be fixed in one location or undertaken across sites. As a delineated space it can offer a clean slate (or semi-clean, often in the context of sites with high turnover and minimal funding) instead of a stark, pristine, private gallery or a full studio space, and as an activity it can be particularly conducive to expanding and experimenting with unformed ideas and intuitions. A residency's in-between-ness and its malleability of form and function make it particularly generative for a project that is open to discovery and seeks to make sense of non-fixedness. In the residencies I have undertaken connected to art institutions, time pressures resulted in the need to jump into thinking, making, showing without overly labouring on outcomes. Doing so created an environment of intra-actions, learning-through-doing rather than more distanced, reflective action (that would often occur in my studio space). The event of a residency is a finite activity used in this project to apprehend moments of an infinite practice.

The artist's studio is usually a specifically designated space for art production and creation. In some instances it can reflect habits of working, go-to materials, and thought processes, yet it can also be a dynamic and changing space. In the book *Studio and Cube* (2012)—that I bought at the Dia Beacon bookstore—O'Doherty says that the studio "exist[s] under the sign of process, which in turn defines the nature of studio time, very different from the even, white, present tense of the gallery. Studio time is defined by this mobile cluster of tenses, quotas of past embodied in completed works, some abandoned, others waiting for resurrection, at least one in process occupying a nervous present" (18). Yet, the studio is not always this place where creation is constantly in process. It can become stagnant, sterile, storage; a place where dust gathers and admin is conducted. While a studio can be a place where productivity flourishes, it is often a removed and semi-private space where completed artwork emigrates out of, sometimes returns to and yet always remains somewhat disconnected from.

Daniel Buren defines the studio as a space where “we generally find finished work, work in progress, abandoned work, sketches—a collection of visible evidence viewed simultaneously that allows an understanding of process” (1979, 56). The studio of contemporary art can be elusive and exist across multiple sites and involve numerous participants. However, during this practice-led research project, I worked as an emerging artist without the luxury of large, multi-use spaces and my use of the occasional studio space saw it becoming a site for storage. The institutional studio sometimes utilised for this particular project held the remnants of past projects and past habits that made it hard to see a path to *thinking* or *doing otherwise*. Instead, the designated (and restrictive) blocks of time at new sites and locations of residencies have provided the scaffolding for my object/thing/material encounters.

The residency has been the format for working intensely with object/thing/materials in which acts of engagement are framed by the cyclical process of thinking, making, showing. Though the artist’s studio can be, for some, a similar space of action in which they locate their practice and examine their intuitive process, this project has required intentional moments of explicit and undiluted observational and interactive engagement which the studio could not give me. In earlier chapters I have unpacked the turn away from fixed art objects and towards considering the process of such engagements as the outcome. Such a move has involved confronting the broader artworld context that thrives on commodifiable projects and yet it is the gallery space, embodying the white cube aesthetic, that undermines attempts at continued engagement and creation. O'Doherty says, "The preservation of the white gallery as a grand boutique was necessary for commerce and enabled museums to show their holdings" (2012, 39). Thus, even if we have now moved beyond the white cube gallery—as is evident in an "anti-white-cube-mentality" (40)—and even if such an institution can be explored as a medium in itself, the ties the gallery has to the commodified art object or the commercialisation of exhibitions cannot be prised apart. Work experienced in a gallery predominantly signals its state of readiness, its presentation by the artist to the world for consumption. Because of the gallery's indelible role in the functioning of the artworld, bypassing it has become necessary to enable engagement with object/thing/materials and for this process to remain vibrant and open-ended.

> Artists themselves are not confined, but their output is. Museums, like asylums and jails, have wards and cells—in other words, neutral rooms called 'galleries'. A work of art when placed in a gallery loses its charge, and becomes a portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world. A vacant white room with lights is still a submission to the neutral. Works of art seen in such spaces seem to be going through a kind of esthetic convalescence.
> (Smithson, quoted in Voorhies 2017, 21)

This quote is from a statement that Robert Smithson wrote to Harald Szeemann regarding the intended curation of his work in dOCUMENTA (5). His feeling of galleries as spaces of confinement further connects with my time in New York—

thinking about enclosures of art while at the zoo and seeing Smithson’s work at Dia Beacon—to my persistence for locating the project within spaces other than a gallery. The works exhibited at Dia Beacon are indicative of Smithson’s non-sites, which presented within one space a site located elsewhere. “Smithson’s non-sites physically performed his challenges to Fried’s modernist dictum by asking spectators to take time looking, walking, seeing, reading, and thinking about the meaning of the arrangements and combinations of objects, texts, and images he placed inside a gallery” (Voorhies 2017, 13). Voorhies says that through his non-sites Smithson “negotiated an art free from the authority and confinement of critics and exhibitions” (ibid). It was such a desire to be free of the restrictions of the artworld that led to Smithson’s statement above to Szeemann. While Smithson utilised the troubled gallery space of the 1960s as a medium for his practice, I position the space and action of a residency as a medium that bypass the institutional framing of the gallery.

My criticism of the gallery comes from the finality it provides for any object/thing/material placed within its walls. By comparison, an object/thing/material that was thought and made within a residency can be shown and experienced in proximity to the processes and matter of its conception. Continuing the tradition of criticism of the gallery, Anton Vidokle and Brian Kuan Wood (2012) reiterated the gallery as a confining space at dOCUMENTA (13) by suggesting that even the most political or socially engaged art has been suffocated by the stifling grasp of the gallery. This, Vidokle and Kuan Wood say,

> has produced an entire generation of amazing artists who opt for hyper-formalism that borders on the arcane, because they know that the only option available to them is to advance the enclosure of the art context by adopting a museological format within their very own exhibition-ready works—employing plinths, shelves, and vitrines as artistic forms par excellence. They know, like Duchamp perhaps did, that their freedom must be bought using the currency of the regime that governs them. (2012, para 11)

Not wanting to fall back to easy habits of enlisting plinths and white cube gallery spaces to contextualise my project, I employ the format of residency to think/make/show in. Asking interesting questions and following curiosity can help avoid the restrictive formalism Vidokle and Kuan Wood criticise because doing so can point towards manifestations beyond restrictions. As positioned in this project, a residency:

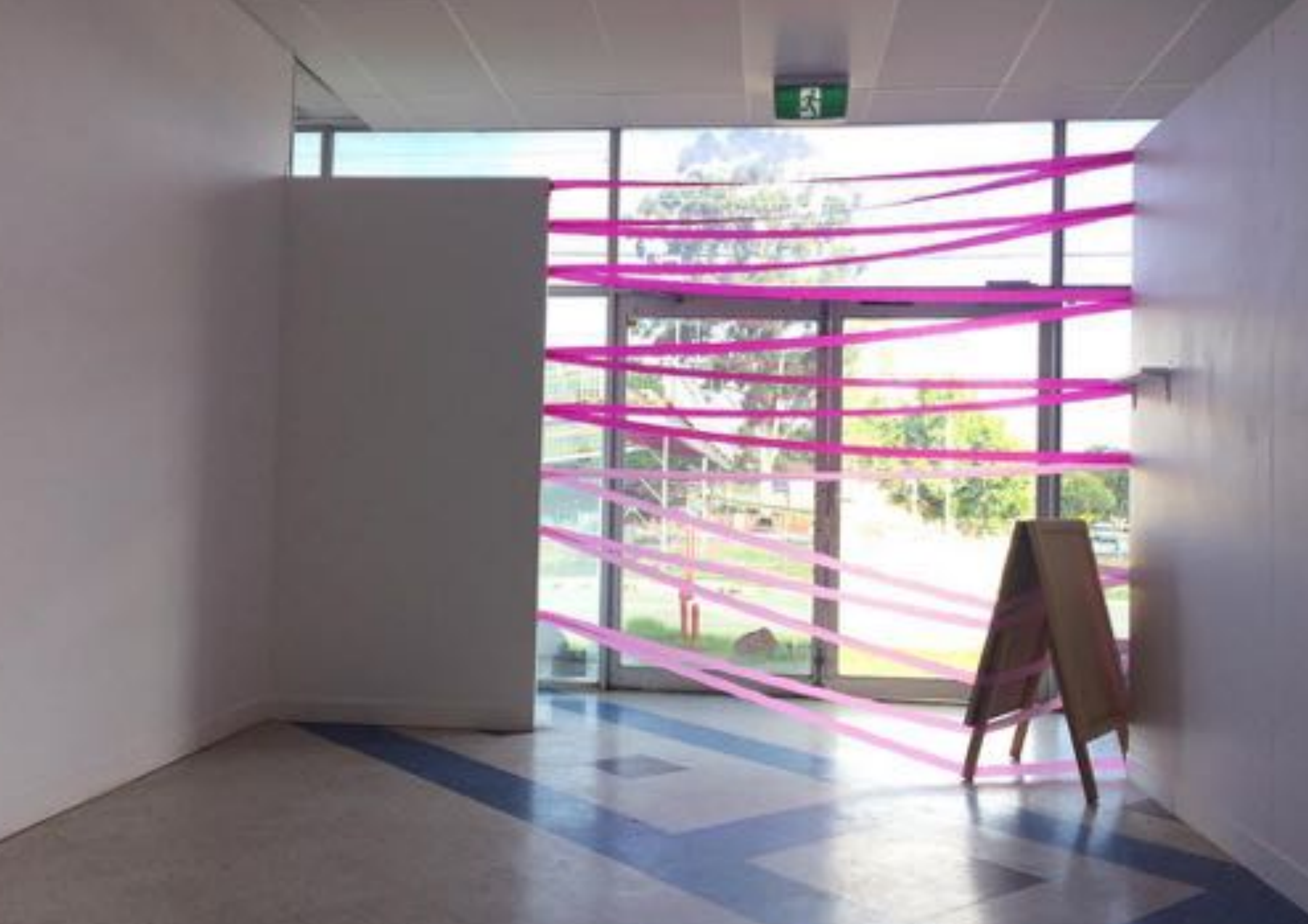
- is one way in which a public display of practice may not restrict a work's capacity to remain vibrant and can instead create another iterative cycle of thinking, making, and showing.
- provides instability to challenge the habitual practices of studio production while also interrogating the finality that the gallery produces.
- exists as an environment for attentively turning to the subject matter, enabling heightened engagement with the myriad relations unfolding.

Another. October 2017

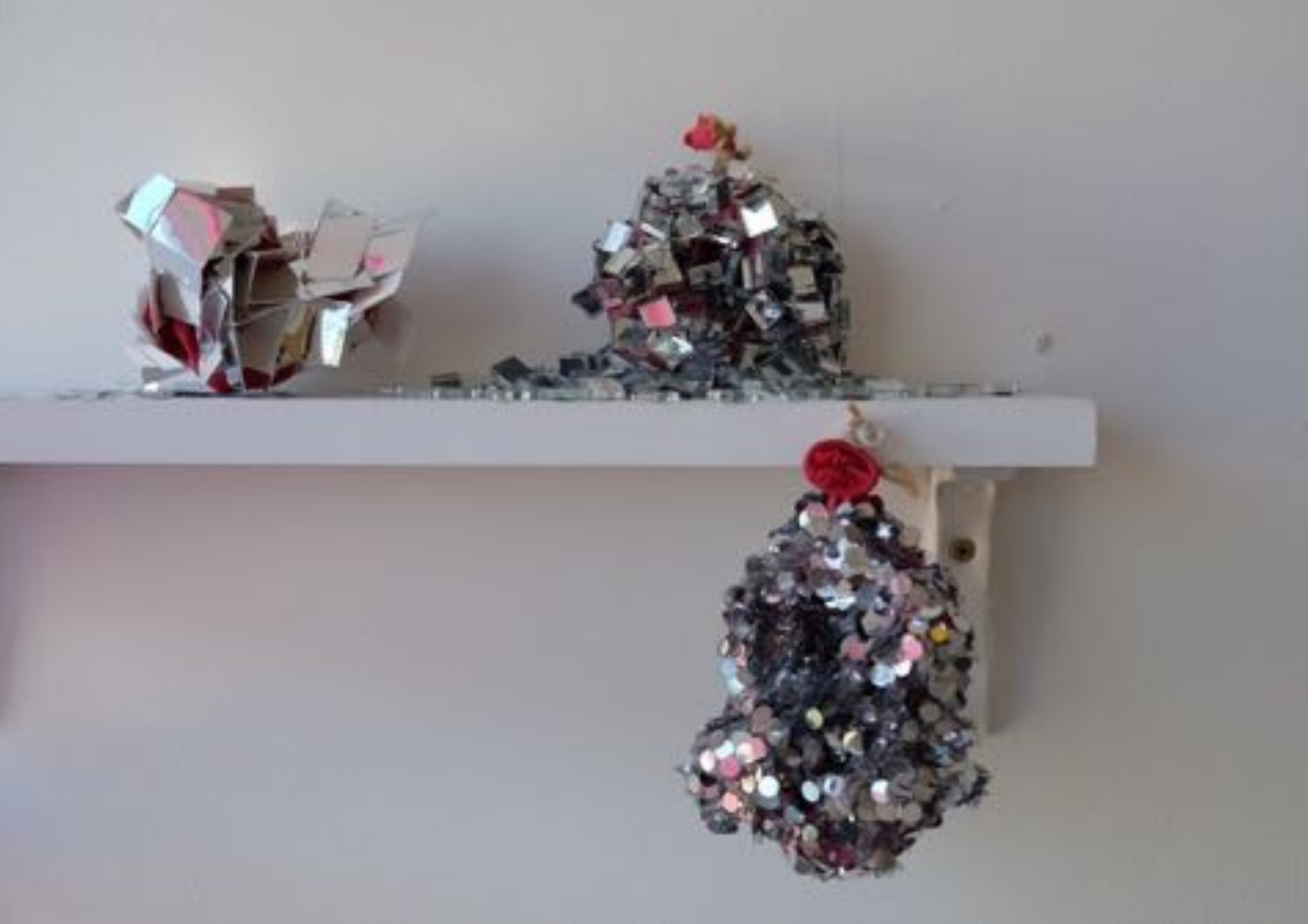
In 2017 I undertook an intensive six-week residency at Another, a small artist-run space housed within a larger building of artist studios in Perth. Being the first planned block of time away from my small studio space at Curtin University, I was yet to know how this time would fit with the rest of the project. Within the loosely converted office building, the rooms with doors were the artist's studios—carpeted, furnished, stocked full of supplies and "stuff"—while the residency area was the foyer space with makeshift walls and office lino floor. This residency offered semi-furnishing comprising a trestle table, an office chair, a ladder, and a desk fan. On the first day of the residency, I added a coffee cup, a toolbox, journals, and the last thing I had worked on—a semi-deflated balloon dressed as a disco ball. Over the course of the residency, I scrunched, hung, nailed, coated, flattened, and taped; by all accounts, I *gleaned*. I often made audio and video recordings of myself and took pictures almost as a reflex to anything that happened in the space. This residency, while four years ago now, still comes back to me and I can recall the space clearly—the light, the quiet, my feelings of apprehension yet excitement. I already felt that this residency would enable me to jump in and get to know object/thing/materials without too many concerns for aesthetic outcomes, instead supporting development.

The space became full of reflective materials like wrapping paper, adhesive vinyl, sequins, and mirrors, as well as miscellaneous things like streamers, balloons, coloured card, various types of tape, and aluminium foil. At this stage in the project, I was still uncertain about the types of object/thing/material that might appear more than others. It became clear through my time in the residency space that I was encountering the object/thing/materials at hand in a neutral environment due to its retrofitting in a previously occupied space. Its slightly awkward angles, less than solid walls, discoloured linoleum floor—in other words, its inconveniences—made it innocuous and more neutral than the designed neutrality of a white cube gallery space. The object/thing/materials didn't become something more just by being in the space; they weren't elevated to demand attention, and the space didn't change their reading like a gallery might. I could be in proximity with the object/thing/materials anew, and allow intuition and curiosity to drive interactions that helped shift my relationship with and to them. But while I can recall the space, the materiality of those moments of proximity are harder to conjure and harder again to express. It is within the images and recordings from the six weeks that some of those moments come back to me, and that can be repurposed and extended in order to generate new ones.

Images on following pages—Figure 4.2 streamer doorway, first day at Another residency, 2017.
Figure 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6 space view during Another residency, 2017.
Figure 4.7 disco ball balloons deflated and left in place, 2017.



The anyspac
whatever...



Gallery as Residency. January 2018

Coming from an architecture background and without any formal training in visual art, Jose Dávila developed a studio practice later in his professional life. In a residency Davila undertook in 2000, in which he struggled to connect to a project in the two short weeks, he constructed for himself a studio which was to be the result of the residency. He says the project came to be "[a] kind of duality in which the result would be the process and the process would be the result" (Craddock & Dávila 2018, 41). Situated outdoors, as a play on the practice of having "open studios", *Open Studio*, 2000, consisted of wooden walls and floor, mismatched chairs, a table, and studio paraphernalia. "While I was building, [it] had also become a process of thinking about what a studio is for and all the issues around that. I wasn't really creating a studio but a 'stage' of a studio, a faux studio, a sculpture that resembled a studio" (ibid).

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 4.8 Jose Dávila, installation view, *Open Studio*, 2000.

Having begun to explore the notion of a residency as a space where all three actions of thinking, making, and showing could take place, I wondered if I could wrestle back some vibrant potential from the uniformity and prosaic nature of a white cube type gallery space. This type of question led to the project *Gallery as Residency* in which I would think about the role of the residency and the gallery and, like Dávila, "the result would be the process and the process would be the result". *Gallery as Residency* took place at the Paper Mountain gallery, an artist-run initiative that has revolving exhibitions and, while open to a range of experimental and unique projects, nonetheless it still follows the white wall, concrete floor, and white plinth guideline. Within the gallery space I put a desk, a chair, a fan and a coffee cup—objects which are, to me, synonymous with the bare essentials of any artist's making space. The premise of the project was that for the two weeks the "exhibition" was open to the public, I would be interacting with and observing the object/thing/materials that had become involved in my PhD project—at that stage it was beginning to loosely form around flat and scrunched, a little reflective, a little DIY-esque. Surveyor's tape, rubber mats, soft metal, party streamers, duct tape, sponges, clothesline, wire, soft PVC, wrapping paper, and sandpaper were at that stage a cross-section of object/thing/materials in their various states of predetermined functionality. This format of working in a publicly accessible space that is usually presumed to house exhibition-ready work very quickly felt performative. Visitors to the gallery, and galleries more broadly, are trained to expect a particular range of modalities and so the space I presented destabilised them to the point where they presumed they were witnessing a performance (this came from subsequent discussions with visitors and volunteers). Does this show a public's acceptance of performance art, or an aversion to seeing how art is made?

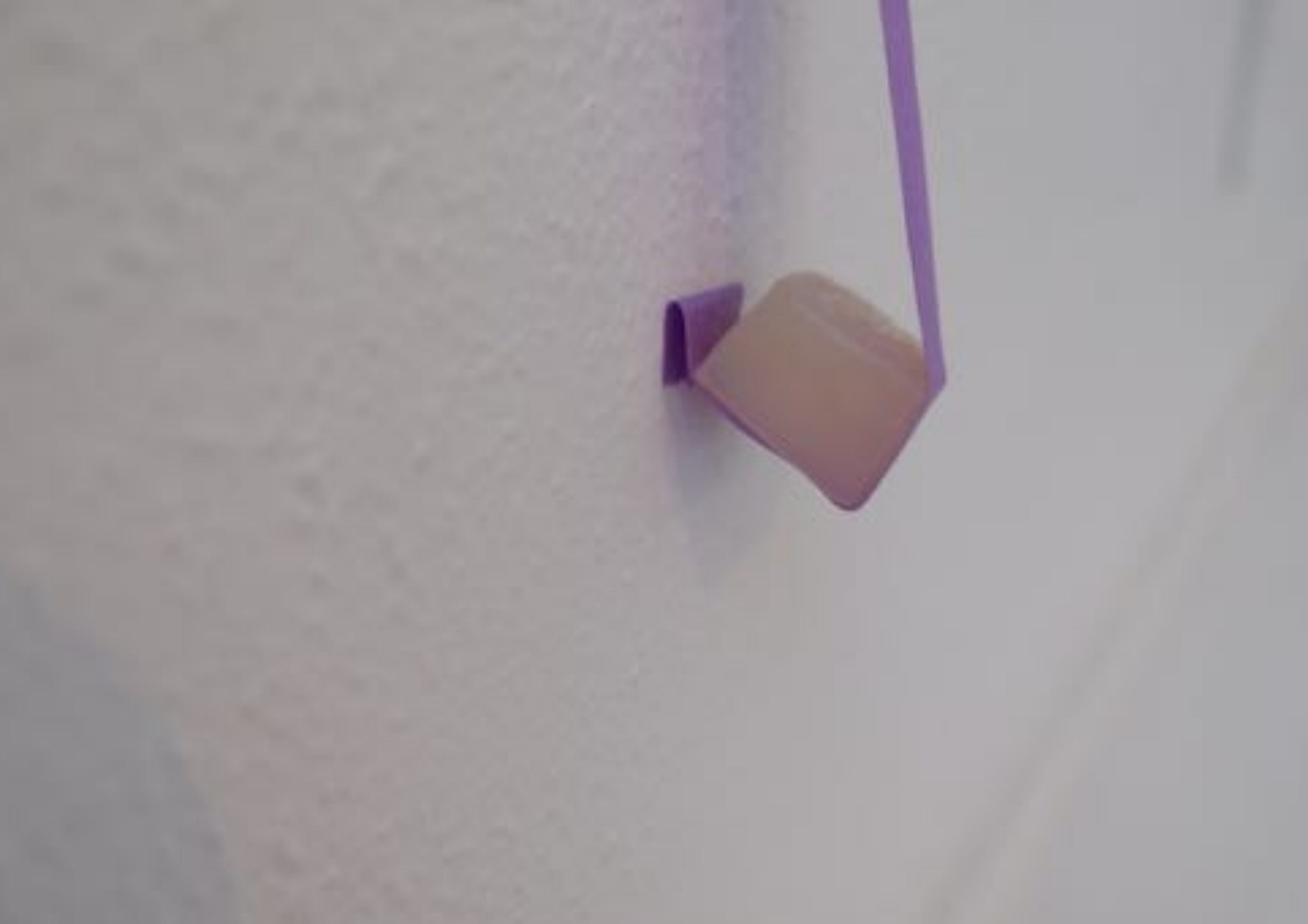
The formulation of a residency space able to contain all aspects of the creative process resulted in explicitly labelling the thinking, making, showing triangle. Early on in *Gallery as Residency* I played with delineating the gallery space into thirds, using tape to mark out the spaces on the floor and walls, and I attempted to only conduct actions in their corresponding sections. In a rudimentary fashion I placed a chair, a notepad and books in the first part (thinking); in the second, a desk and the object/thing/materials (making); and in the third, the plinths (showing). Janneke Wesseling states that "the exceptional thing about research in and through art is that practical action (the making) and theoretical reflection (the thinking) go hand in hand. The one cannot exist without the other, in the same way action and thought are inextricably linked in artistic practice" (2011, 2). Delineating the space in the gallery wasn't to say that these stages of thinking, making, and showing occur in this fixed order, but in acting out the actions that a residency encourages, I could externally visualise the process of my practice as these boundaries became increasingly blurred. Presenting the space in thirds that broke down made visible the way creative practice cuts across all three aspects blurring their clear demarcations (think cutting across transversally). In the context of the public nature of Paper Mountain, the separation of space alluded to the processes involved in leading up to what would usually be seen in the "showing" stage of a project, therefore presenting to a public what most projects in the space would withhold.

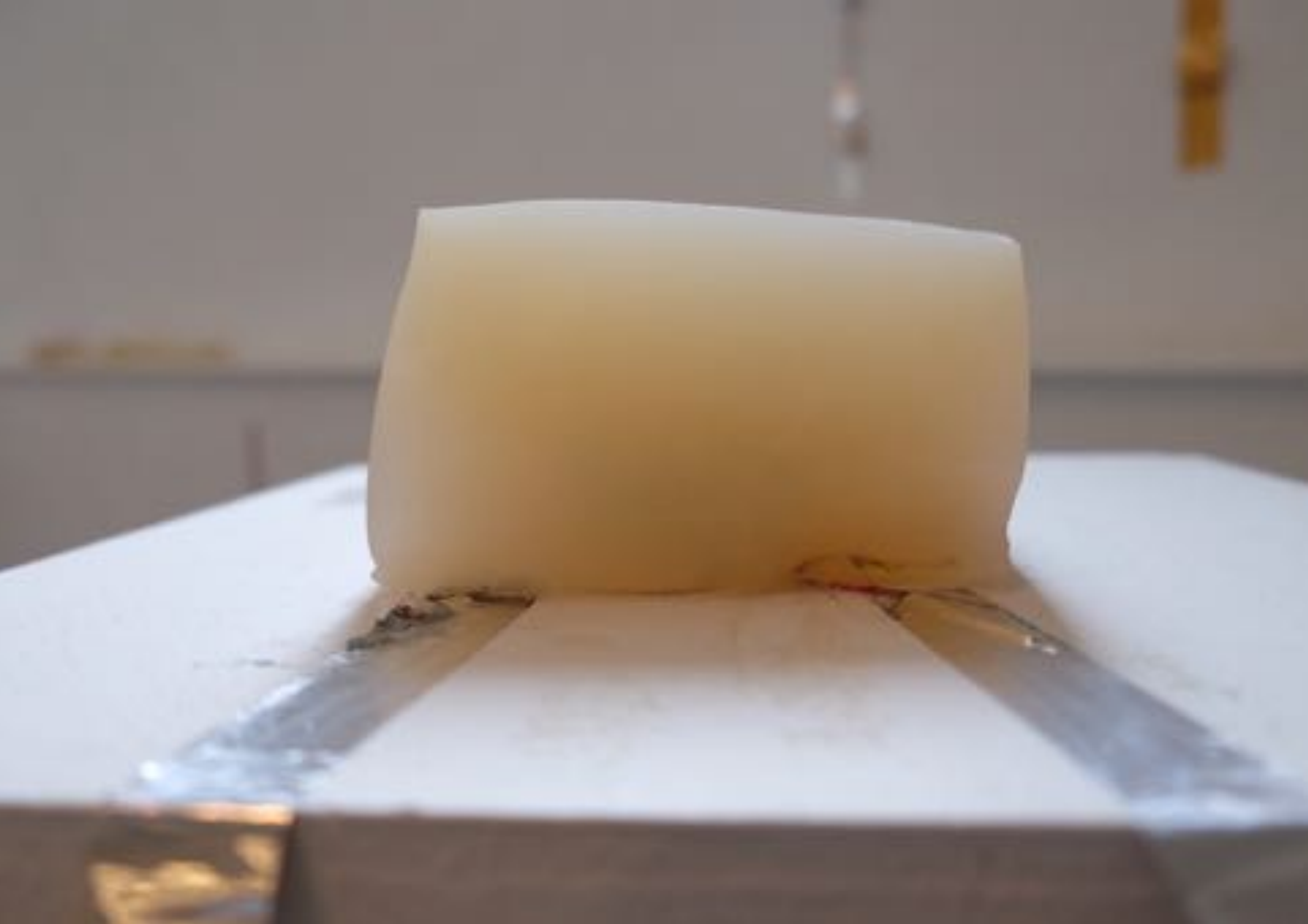
During this residency in the gallery I reflected back on the project so far—the formulation of object/thing/material, the consideration of thinking, making, showing, the dialectical juncture of the human-nonhuman, and the recurrence of this three-pronged cyclical model. I thought this through in the space by drawing diagrams of triangles that connected and, in this way, visualised the connections between myself and the other actors in this project. This exercise further demonstrated the undefinable nature of the object/thing/materials but it did help me to see the emerging patterns. The project at Paper Mountain generated an intense amount of working across all three phases of the art practice triumvirate of thinking, making, and showing. Over the course of the two short weeks my encounters with object/thing/materials intensified and coming to know again, or otherwise, the common understandings of utilitarian manufactured goods was a central focus.

In the time spent investigating the materiality of object/thing/materials I became perplexed by agar, a natural gelatine obtained from algae. My initial curiosity for it had come from knowing of its wide application in different industries as well as being a natural substance unlike so many other object/thing/materials I was engaging with. Once mixed with water and set the agar forms were a muted yellow, grey colour. Tacky and bouncy, the association with jelly type foods was strong but it also had an unsettling feel to it, both to look at and touch. When left at room temperature the agar slowly melted, not in a slimy, deformed manner but in a way that saw the water leech out of it, slowly deflating the shape, while exposure to the air will made the surface a site for mould to flourish. In following a tangent during the Paper Mountain project (which had seen me previously submerge rocks, balloons, and mirror pieces into the agar while setting) I connected two blocks of agar with aluminium tape that carried a current between them from a battery pack immersed on one end. Over time, the meeting point of melting agar, wire, and metal tape corroded stopping the intermittent flash from occurring. The diffused light that emanated from the agar was almost otherworldly, adding to the strangeness of the experience of engaging with the agar. The Paper Mountain project occurred in somewhat of a middle point for the project where closer attention was being paid to the object/thing/materials as well as methods for coming to know them and it was the agar that helped me to draw some useful conclusions. The agar blocks were confounding, their qualities obfuscated by a quick deterioration—much faster than other object/thing/materials I had found so far. Because of this it was difficult to metaphorically hold onto some aspect of it that could be teased out or explored. As an object/thing/material the agar strayed too far into a realm where my curiosity was no longer enough to apprehend it for attentive interaction and although its existence as matter is dynamic, the mysterious nature feels more akin to a science experiment than an opportunity to encounter something anew.

As an attempt at reinvigorating gallery spaces as somewhere active and dynamic spaces rather than showrooms, *Gallery as Residency* was a rather small gesture. In the end I could not avoid the gallery's expectation of public involvement and so, I had a closing night event, where I experienced the power of the white cube gallery in creating conformity. My confidence in disrupting the usual interaction of the space waned from the frequent required explanations the visitors and I felt the pressure from the white walls and concrete floor to present my time in the space as amounting to something tangible and so the space was transformed somewhat by the inclusion of plinths and video work. Hoping to maintain a semblance of activity and continuation, the furniture and object/thing/materials were left in their varying states of being engaged with, while plinths held aloft curious forms of sponge, disco balls, and agar blocks. Wall spaces were covered up with video projection and still images of balloons being sanded. Along one of the tape lines meant to demarcate the thinking and making thirds, I installed a five-meter-long curtain of sandpaper that needed to be moved through. Such a wall of gritty, rough sandpaper presented a jarring experience. Not the joy of walking through the beaded curtains of González-Torres but a scratchy, rigid blockade. The sandpaper is forceful and clingy, making the occasion of coming into bodily proximity with it an unsettling one.

Images on following pages—Figure 4.9; 4.10 Paper Mountain gallery space, 2018.
Figure 4.11; 4.12; 4.13 progression of space, 2018.
Figure 4.14; 4.15 triangle connections, 2018.
Figure 4.16; 4.17; 4.18; 4.19 agar detail, 2018.
Figure 4.20; 4.21 space on last day of project, 2018.





Is it a feeling? September 2018

The third project, *Is it a feeling?*, continued to expand on working in places other than the studio and played with the idea of emphasising process while including outcomes (as is common in gallery shows). It also used the notion of process as subject matter explicitly in attempts to extend previous engagements with object/thing/materials beyond the studio or residency environment they originally occurred in. *Is it a feeling?* incorporated images of previous interactions in order to continue the vibrant nature of the encounters from elsewhere, in this way attempting to continue the encounters rather than consigning them to past events. Doing so was a challenge to the finished, resolved, ultimate version of artworks usually exhibited in a gallery. For this project I focussed on using photographic documentation of the coming together of the moments of flat and scrunched—that were also predominantly fluoro and reflective—object/thing/material forms, as by this stage these pairings were materialising more noticeably. This meant referencing in the photos some of the encounters from *Gallery as Residency* and also the moments between projects where almost accidental combinations of object/thing/materials created juxtaposing forms.

By relying heavily on printed images to be the focal point of the works and presenting them in ways that didn't hide their characteristics as photography paper—robust, tacky, resistant—the pictures' material qualities were expressed rather than made invisible. This proposed that the printed images should be seen as object/thing/materials like everything else. The foundational question as to whether the images in their digital form constitute an object/thing/material, and how this might impact understandings of their materiality or the modes within which we come to understand the material world we live in, emanated from this project and continue to linger. These considerations perhaps reflect Despret's method of question asking, or the way undertaking art research generates more questions than it answers; either way, the generative cycle of thinking, making, showing continues.

Is it a feeling? occurred within a space that was uniquely positioned to continue my thinking about how the space art is situated in can affect interactions and understandings of, and with, it. Of the projects so far, this one most reflected an exhibition in that the art object/thing/materials were installed and left for the duration of the show; hanging rails and track lights were utilised; and an opening night and floor sheet were included. However, the space of The Lobby itself offered somewhat of an alternative to the traditional white cube space because it had been purpose-built into the plans for a residential house—not a house turned gallery, but a house-gallery with attendees gathering in living and kitchen spaces around the corner from designated exhibition space. The gallery's boundary begins at the front door, bypasses the stairs leading to the second floor bedrooms, follows the wall around to the left, through a small hallway and into a rectangular space before entering the kitchen and dining space on the right. This hybrid space, while different to a gallery in its purest sense, still employs the many visual cues of one. By purposely undertaking *Is it a feeling?* at this boundary space, I was able to test the limits of displaying previous processes beyond their place of conception. I also wanted to pass on to others the feelings of curiosity I encounter when engaging with the object/thing/materials.

Unlike the other two projects—at Another and in *Gallery as Residency*—work (or art object/thing/material) for this show was created mostly prior to being put in the space. While I engaged in a more typical process of thinking and making in a space separate to the showing space, the object/thing/materials themselves were intended to challenge the notion of "finished" works ready for public consideration, and instead included works in various stages and states of presentation. Picture frames were reorganised so that the images sat on the outside rather than barricaded behind glass; mounting became fluoro rather than neutral; and wooden framing became disrupted by coloured tapes. These allusions to exhibition-ready states of art further unfolded in the space. A3-sized images of fluoro and reflective proximities were bookended by rudimentary 40 x 20 mm pine, and held together with duct tape, and hung with fluoro cord. Alternatively, versions of them were not hung at all, and instead placed on the floor, perhaps waiting to be raised to eye level. Object/thing/materials strewn on the floor from a previous time are printed in A0—making images that were almost to scale—then scrunched, and, in a last vestige of framing, were attached to two offcuts of 40 x 20 mm, causing the hanging system to suspend the images diagonally.

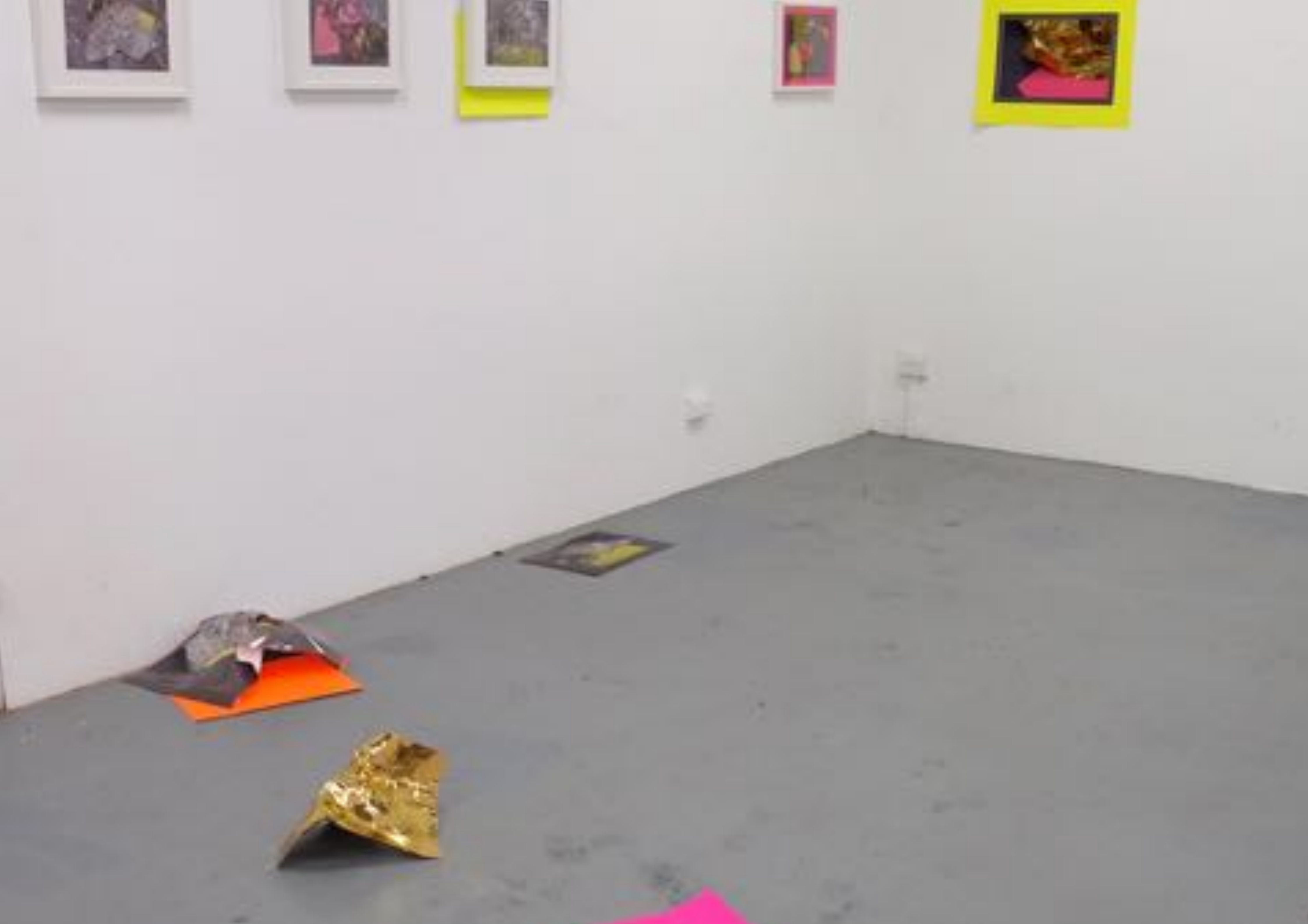
The first time I saw all components together was at the time of exhibition. The process of filling out the space, in the context of this research project, became as important as the exhibited outcome. The exhibition turned into a thinking and working space up until it opened to the public. In *Is it a feeling?,* the "elsewhere" making space was physically brought into the gallery through the inclusion of those pieces that had come to be synonymous with the residency—desk, chair, coffee cup, fan. The desk area also included object/thing/materials from the lead up to the exhibition—other images, unused frames, tape, cord, etc., that were representative of the making process. Once the small residency-like space was set up, it quickly became a prop and did not stand up as providing an access point to the space of creation as was hoped for. While my intention had been to gesture towards the space beyond the gallery, where the works had been thought of and made, the desk set-up only managed to enact the staging of a studio much like Dávila's during his residency. Such an inert intervention in *Is it a feeling?* reminded me of seeing Dieter Roth's studio at Hauser and Wirth gallery in New York. After Roth's death his son had packed up and catalogued every aspect of the studio with the intention of displaying it elsewhere. Having gone there to see Roni Horn's *Water Double v.1* and *Water Double v.2* (2013-15), it seemed somewhat of an imposition to have to go through Roth's studio recreation to reach the upstairs gallery that held Horn's work. The idea of placing a studio in its fullness in a gallery is interesting but as this recreation was unable to be interacted with, it felt relegated to being a prop, a relic that reflected the finality of Roth's practice following his death rather than a celebration of his studio practice. Having realised this connection, the staging of my making space at The Lobby undermined the art object/thing/materials' states of process and made them seem more "finished" than perhaps they would have without the reminder of their being made.

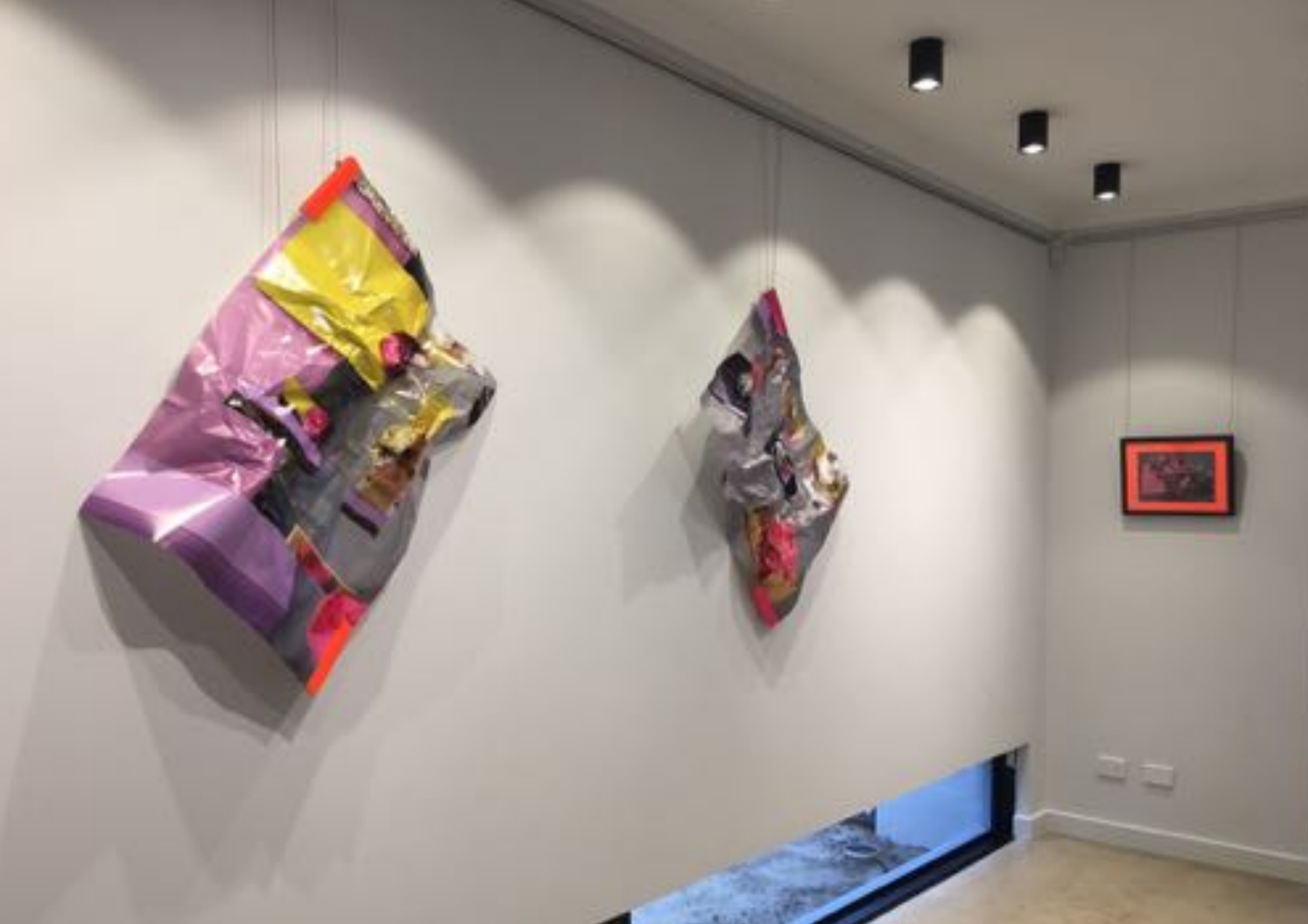
This image has been removed for copyright reasons

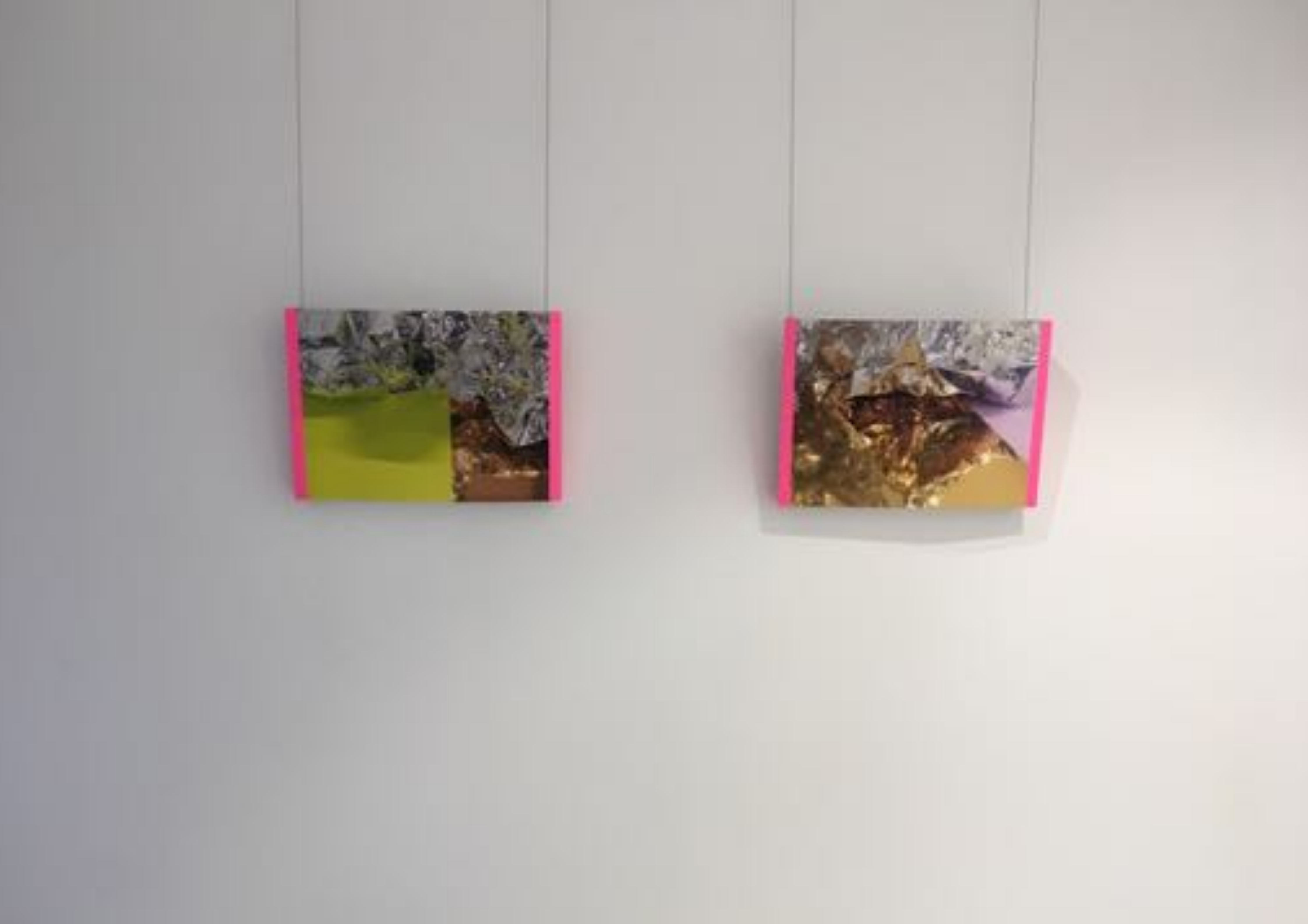
Figure 4.21 Dieter Roth & Björn Roth, installation view, *Books. Dieter Roth. Bjorn Roth. Studio*, 2017.

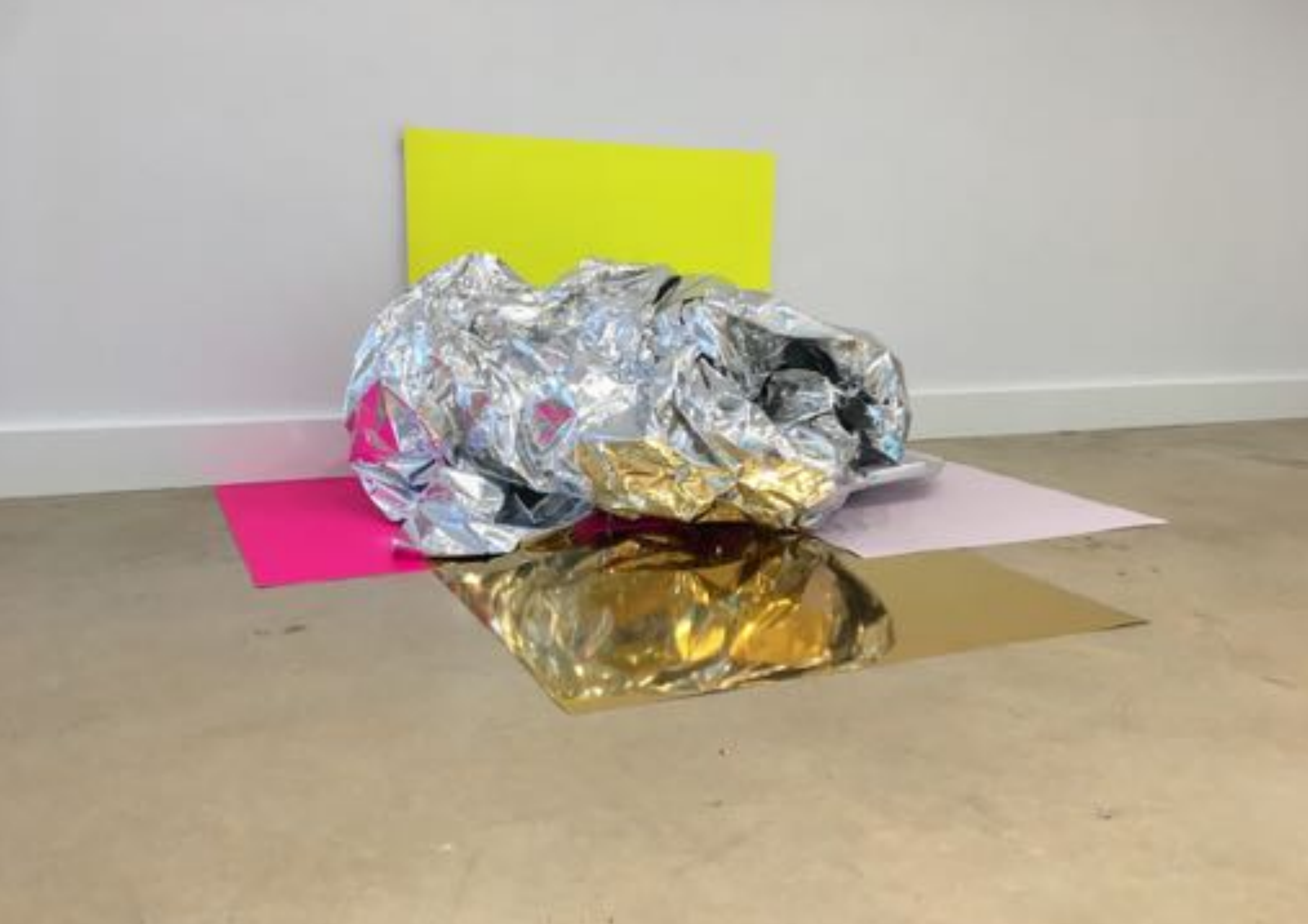
The Lobby became a testing site to see how work in various stages of undoing, or conversely, creation, would or could transcend the gallery limitations. While it was a step towards using documentation of previous encounters as subject matter, the gradual removal of the signifiers of finished works became a futile gesture. The visual framing devices of white walls, grey floor, directional lighting, and hanging rails overpower subtle attempts to review presentation modes. This project also became a point of departure going forwards. Even though the images used were brought back into the cycle of thinking, making, showing and would continue to be used beyond the exhibition, their existence as intentional forms strayed too close to commodifiable artworld objects. It was also in their making that curiosity was waylaid and replaced with known outcomes. While personal and different for everyone, working with object/thing/materials artwork ideas would nonetheless make them known in my mind. Regardless of whether it is a form, a material, an idea, or a purpose, the steps involved in making it manifest would come to mind, drawing from my mental toolbox of methods and habits. Since I could see the stages in advance and envisage the how and the what, curiosity is removed, and as a result, producing an artwork becomes methodical. Of course, there is immense room for change and accident, and learning-through-doing is key to the joy of the undertaking. However, even if the act of making the end product was changed, the premise of working towards a knowable end removes vitality and curiosity because the function and purpose of the object/thing/materials utilised would have been presupposed.

In following where the practice had been leading, my attention turned to ways of presenting the processes of thinking, making, showing (of object/thing/materials) in a vibrant way that could transcend the finality of an act of showing, and continue to be open ended and curious. The processorial object/thing/material mentioned in earlier chapters is what began to manifest, is what took me to two further residencies to tease out its potential and is what I focus on in the following chapter. The residency at Another provided the first consideration of the usefulness, and potential, of the format of the residency. The project at the Paper Mountain focussed on the types of object/thing/materials while contesting gallery and residency spaces. The exhibition at The Lobby took up the challenge of presenting process as outcome but fell short of bringing with it the charged encounters and curiosity I felt when engaging with the object/thing/materials elsewhere. What I did have was a vast amount of documentation of these encounters, both the initial ones and from the subsequent projects, that attempted to arrest those moments.









Images on previous pages—Figure 4.22; 4.23 developing ideas for *Is it a feeling?*, 2018.
Figure 4.24; 4.25 laying out works in the Lobby space, 2018.
Figure 4.26; 4.27; 4.28; 4.29 images in the Lobby space for *Is it a feeling?* 2018.
Figure 4.30; installation of desk space at the Lobby, 2018.
Figure 4.31 detail of desk set-up at the Lobby, 2018.

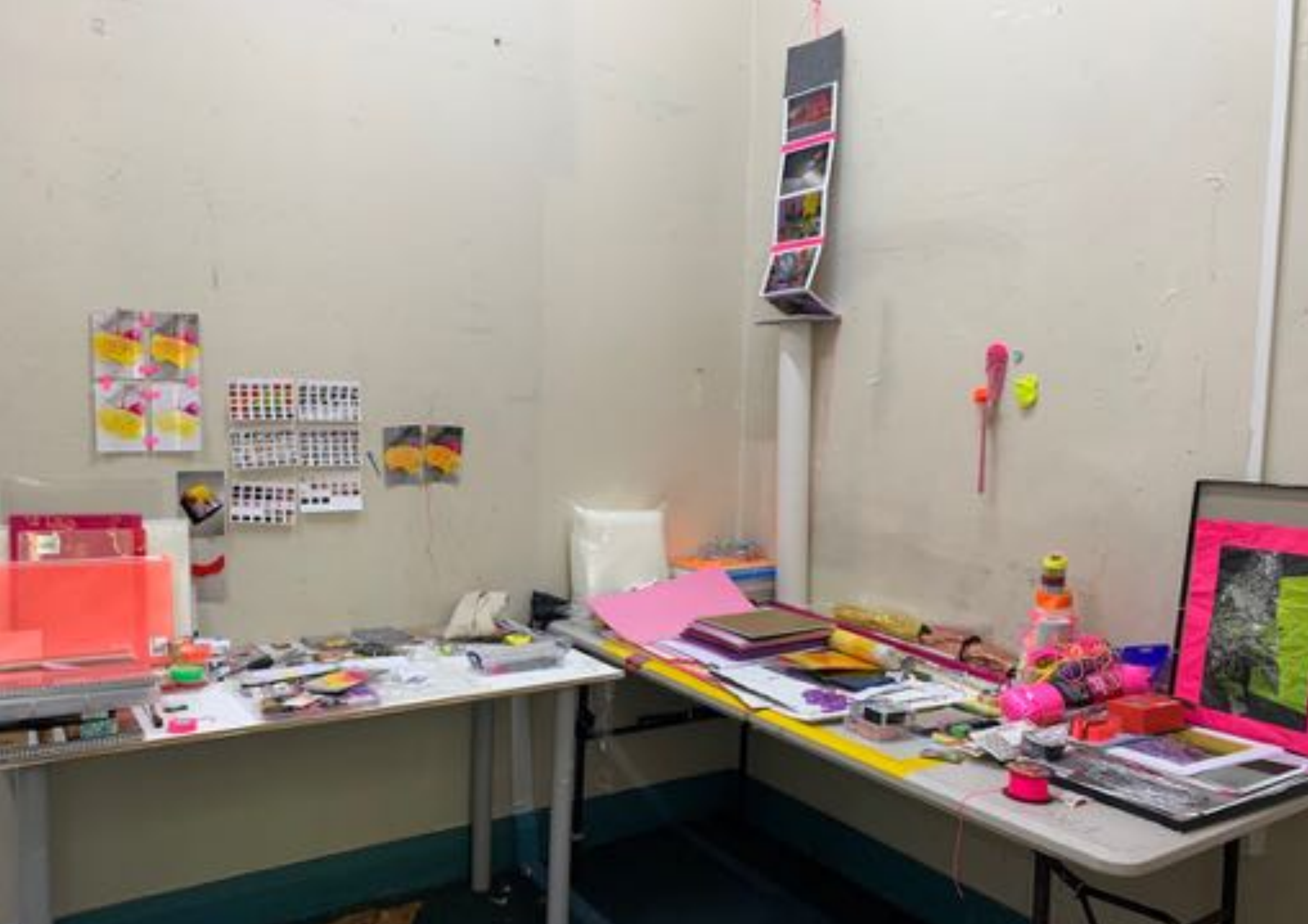
Image on following page—Figure 5.1 detail of object/thing/material exploration, 2016.

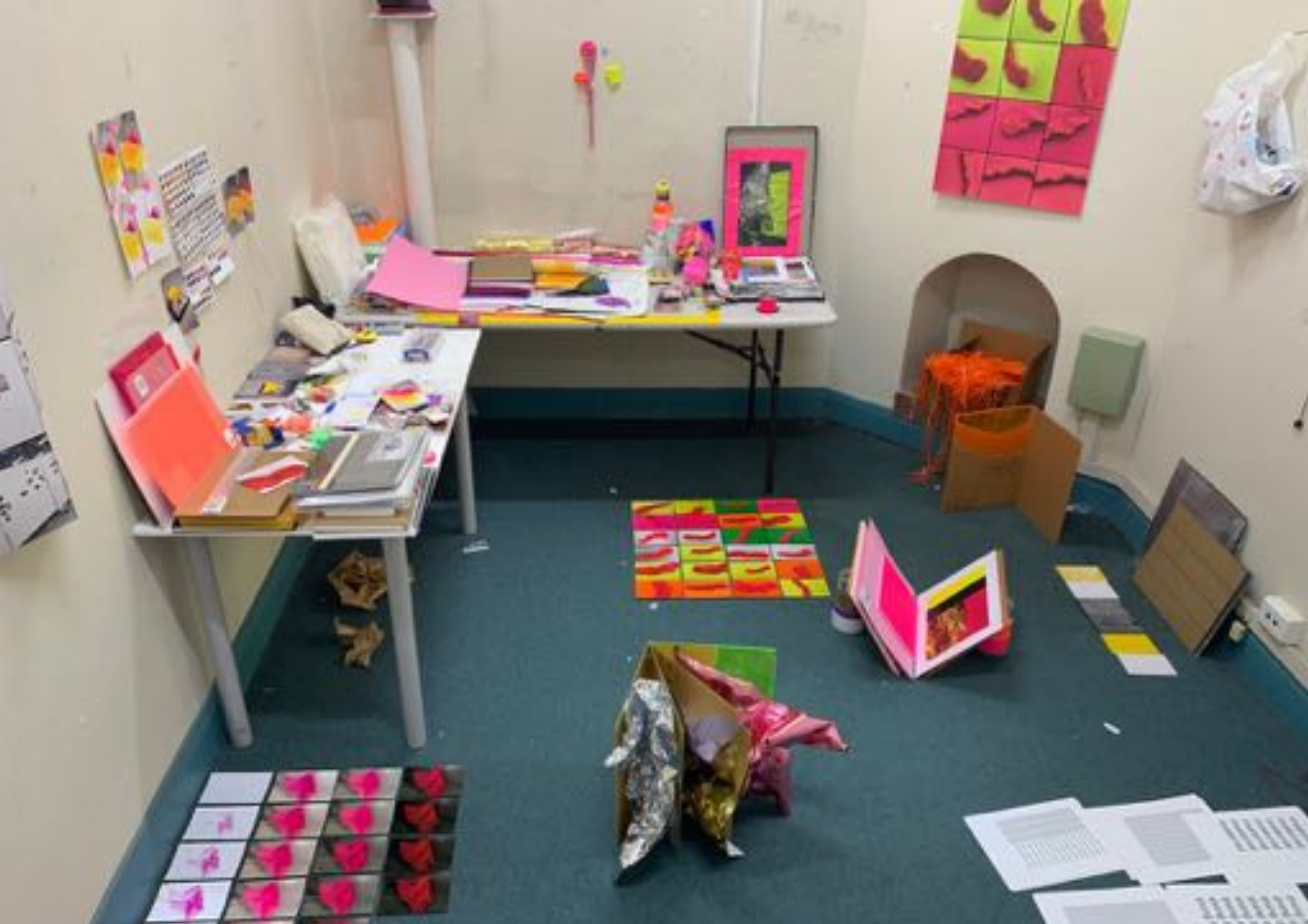
CHAPTER 5.

PROCESSORIAL OBJECT/THING/MATERIAL

The development of the processorial object/thing/material manifested gradually from the slow process of following the practice-led lead and incorporating notions of intra-action and staying with the trouble, as well as embracing the undefinability of certain aspects of the material world. It is difficult to pinpoint where and when this conception was fully realised; it came to make sense only after a long time following the path of discovery and curiosity. Even then, this conception still remains amorphous and indeterminate by nature—a processorial form only remains as such as long as it is not fixed, not resolutely completed and declared the ultimate version of itself. In this chapter lies the remaining pieces that influenced the growth and understanding of what such a form could be, and how its constituent parts could be experienced. A processorial form comes to be the conglomeration of research in practice, or learning-through-doing; the documentation of those moments that involve proximity with objects, things, and materials in the studio and residency spaces; and the documentation of the formation of the form itself. This reiterates the cycle of practice-led research and, while reminiscent of Smith and Dean's iterative cyclic web, it nonetheless has a momentum that moves it beyond being stuck in time and place. Following the discoveries from the first three residencies, I began a six-week residency at the Fremantle Arts Centre (FAC) in late 2019. Taking into the space a large cross-section of printed images of the object/thing/material encounters from the previous few years in conjunction with the fluoro, reflective, flat, scrunched, DIY, and stationery object/thing/materials gathered to date, this residency at FAC became a site of congregation for all content of the PhD project. The residency was an attempt at finding balance between construction and assemblage, between the expected and unexpected, and the intentional and the unintended. In one past encounter I assembled an image with a piece of fluoro acrylic, under a scrunched piece of mylar, taped to corflute board, wrapped with metallic purple chain link, propped up by a tower of duct tape rolls. In this combination, the image became an object/thing/material like the others and its specific subject matter was not particularly important; more significantly, using the printed image of this event from a previous time brought it into relation with the object/thing/materials of the present residency. The object/thing/materials at the FAC residency were largely unaffected by transformative methods and instead were brought into proximity with one another in semi-permanent ways—loosely combined, gently held, individually placed, taped but not glued, joined but always with an exit, an undoing available. This opportunity for change allowed for a rearranging or rethinking of component parts while also leaving space for new cycles of their own becoming to be integrated.

Images on following pages—Figure 5.2; 5.3; 5.4 Studio 3 at the Fremantle Arts Centre with accumulated object/thing/materials, 2019.





Vibrant Documentation

Often, documentation is used in place of something, a representation instead of the real version. Having come to rely so much on the images of encounters with object/thing/materials to capture moments of learning and curiosity, my aim for the documentation is to extend beyond itself, to be a present form and not a historical representation. In chapter 4, I briefly touched on Robert Smithson's critique of the use and limits of the gallery via his non-sites. In these works, documentation was used as visual material connecting back to off-site places, and matter from the site used as another way of documenting a place somewhere outside the gallery. In *Beyond Objecthood*, Voorhies says that Smithson's incorporation of such extensive supplementary content "satisfied the need to present something to an art-going public" (2017, 31) but it also acted as "something more substantive presented in their totality" (ibid). It was less that the photos, maps, and mineral samples were second-order representations placed there to provide context for the public, but more so that Smithson had created an environment for that public to get immersed in, become curious about, and experience, where "he achieved the kind of durational engagement with a work that Fried condemned and [Tony] Smith thought impossible in art" (ibid). Documentation of projects was also vital for artist Michael Asher who, similarly to Smithson, challenged the elevated space of the gallery through intervention. With Asher, however, there was no lasting ephemera to come from his works and, as such, they largely avoided the commercial side of conceptual art in the late 1960s and early 70s. "Asher did not re-recreate installations; doing so, he believed, allowed the work to become an object for consumption ready on the demand of institutions, curators, or collectors who select it" (ibid, 39). If not experienced at the time of creation, Asher's work is only visible via its few documentation images. Both like and unlike Asher, I don't recreate the residency projects or the object/thing/material encounters, yet I rely on documentation of the engagements to be the lasting form of such proximities. And yet, in line with Smithson, I utilise such documented moments to generate something more than themselves. In bringing images and object/thing/materials to exist together, I am extending my moments of engagement to others who might encounter this new, cumulative, and tangible form. Utilising the full breadth of imagery and object/thing/materials that have come to be present in this project produces something more than its constitutive parts.

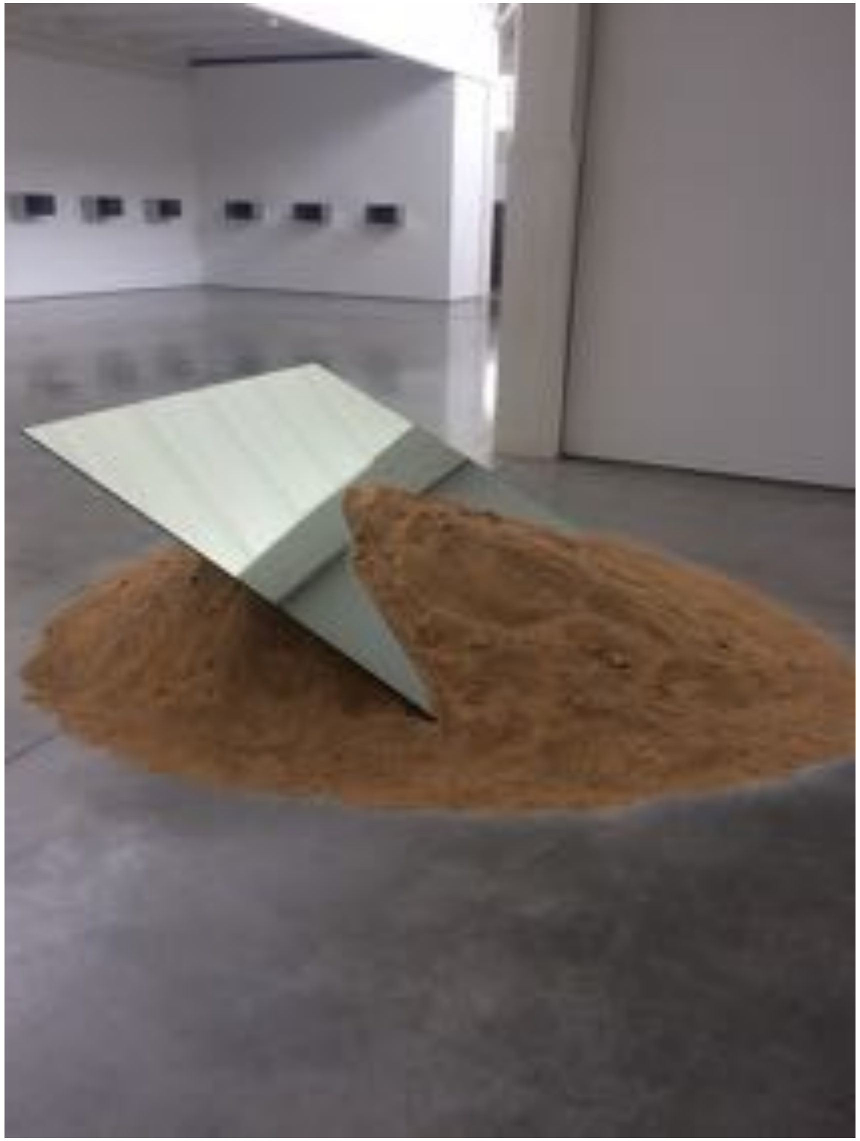


Figure 5.5 Robert Smithson, *Leaning Mirror*, 1969, Dia, Beacon, 2017.

For visual artist Jagna Ciuchta, documentation is used as a way to connect her projects, moving from exhibition to exhibition, building on the content of previous iterations. Employing documentation imagery as well as re-using material from previous shows, Ciuchta manifests the exhibition as subject matter, the exhibition as material. Images of material explorations inside gallery spaces appear in her installations within other spaces, expanding from past moments into being ever present. "The collection of these occurrences come together in a single project, their paths cross again later, forming patterns…chapter after chapter—from exhibition to exhibition—the work unfolds, is stratified and ramified, affirming its organic nature" (Desbords 2017). Ciuchta's re-use of printed images as object/thing/materials for further work creates an open-ended engagement with the subject matter, even though her projects are predominantly gallery or white cube space based. The format of working with subject matter in such a continuous way blurs the distinction between having a beginning and an ending in a project or work; rather, Ciuchta's whole practice is an open-ended investigation into ideas that are similar to mine. This understanding of practice is informative for positioning my project as one that has no fully determined end point. "The work of art is not the end product of the artist's thinking, or just for a moment at best; it is an intermediate stage, a temporary halting of a never-ending thought process" (Wesseling 2011, 12). I have employed documentation as a way to present this thought process and process of practice as a continuation of those earlier moments of proximity, reflecting Ciuchta's cycle of re-use.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 5.6 Jagna Ciuchta, deinstall image, *Missing Alina (Grand Palais)*, 2014.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 5.7 Jagna Ciuchta, installation image, *Goats and Marble*, 2016.

As discussed in the previous chapter in relation to *Is it a feeling?*, documentation images can become tools for turning situational moments and encounters with object/thing/materials into forms for further engagement, not unlike Ciuchta's approach. Seeing in Ciuchta's practice a parallel to Bianca Hester's previously discussed process of mapping, I position my usage of documentation as existing somewhere along the continuous line that connects us. Hester sees the excess of research processes—the notes and ideas, images, and objects that she calls residues—as going beyond their role of archiving an event, and are "affirmed as possessing the potential for other kinds of projects to develop" (2007, 101). This documentation then "becomes a mapping that unleashes potential for a work to be extended or to change and produce other contexts for engagement" (ibid). The throughline between these uses of documentation images by Smithson, Ciuchta, Hester, and me is in their employment as extensions rather than historical records. I extend on the images from past encounters and place them in proximity to their subject matter so that they intra-act, generating a dynamism that keeps the printed form vibrant and open to further change.

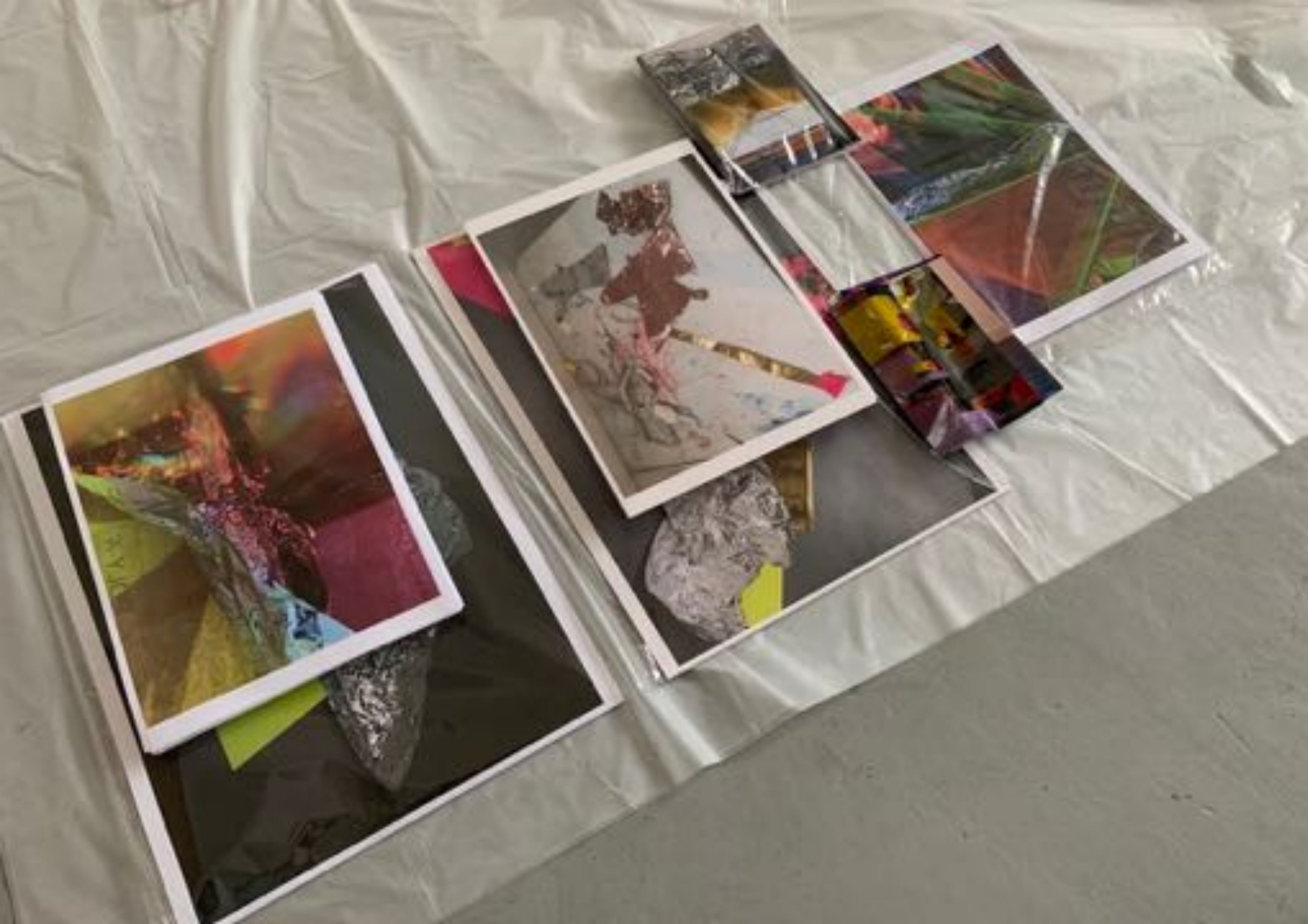
The immense number of photographs of object/thing/materials from this project exist on the one hand as a permanent record (in as much as something can be permanent, given that even in a digital format their existence is not without potential complications) and on the other as new object/thing/materials themselves. Printed out—flat, of course—they came back into the project during my residency at the Fremantle Arts Centre and again for my last residency at a converted warehouse in Singapore. Thousands of digital images and hundreds of printed ones had been accumulated by then, spanning the projects at Another, Paper Mountain, and The Lobby as well as studio time in between them and across sites during travel. In following the practice-led lead, I identified the need to focus on process rather than a completed, final outcome and so it was a task of the FAC residency to continue teasing out a form within which the documentation of those earlier encounters could remain vibrant and lively. This proceeded to revolve somewhat around the printed images in paper, poster, or card forms, and saw a sharp increase in the inclusion of stationery object/thing/materials with which to hold, file, and attach them.

The utilisation, or re-use, of images as object/thing/materials and my discussion so far that places them as documentation projects implies a certain degree of discernability in relation to the subject matter within them. In fact, the images used have all been taken by me in various states of urgency and immediacy.[20] I have at times used an SLR camera; however, for the most part, my phone has captured the moments of coming to know nonhuman object/thing/materials. The images are not staged occurrences but are taken in the moment to arrest curious sensations and learning-through-doing. In the *e-flux* article "In Defence of the Poor Image" (2009), Hito Steyerl says, "The poor image tends towards abstraction: it is a visual idea in its very becoming" (para 2). The images I have taken of object/thing/materials often isolate aspects of proximity, capturing surface effects or juxtaposing forms, abstracting qualities and characteristics from its whole, from an object/thing/material's intended function. "The poor image is no longer about the real thing—the originary original. Instead it is about its own real conditions of existence…" (para 31). It was never an intention to capture, in order to re-create, the events from the residencies as this would only serve to create ghosts of lively and intense encounters. Steyerl's notion of the poor image extends into my occasional use of screen grabbing indexed views of the pictures I've taken, predominantly of the object/thing/material I have tried to "get at" via multiples with minor changes in positioning. Screen grabbing on a phone or computer unavoidably lowers image resolution and therefore perceived quality. As Steyerl says, "The contemporary hierarchy of images, however, is not only based on sharpness, but also and primarily on resolution" (para 6).

---

[20] With the exception of The Lobby project where I additionally employed a photographer to document the project à la a real exhibition. Any of those images that have been used are attributed accordingly, however none are used in my practice as object/thing/materials.

Images on following pages—Figure 5.8 screen shot from video sorting through images, Singapore residency, 2021.
Figure 5.9 stack of 6x4in photos with testing combinations of object/thing/materials, Singapore residency, 2021.
Figure 5.10 stacks of images printed in various sizes, Singapore residency, 2021.



Presenting Process as Outcome

Extending the encounters and curiosity within those documented moments of interaction with object/thing/materials involved a turn to a tangible, physical form rather than an ephemeral, digital encounter. While I have within the cache of documentation, multiple media formats including audio and video, they do not provide the opportunity for further material encounters and remain largely as representations of past events. The residency at Fremantle Arts Centre was a turn to exploring modes of presentation that could embody the complexity and entwined nature of the encounters with object/thing/materials. On the trip to Japan that I now frame as a residency, which preceded the one in New York, I found a book by Japanese artist Motohiro Tomii called *Interact* on a display table at Daikanyama Tsutaya Books. It was amongst a grouping of contemporary art books that would have been lost if placed on a shelf, but on the table their surface textures and construction materials were highly visible. Locating this book in 2016 would go on to have an impact on the type of form I would develop in the Fremantle Arts Centre residency and so I expand on it and others in the following short sections before returning to the residency.

Interact is a Muji A4 binder file filled with images from Tomii's practice of almost 20 years.[21] Comprising folded pages, cut outs, and text with a clean design style, the book works as both monograph and interactive sculptural object. Each page is a different size and the slight shifts in paper stock makes turning them a sensory experience. The variation in materials as well page size and orientation provides an experience for the reader that moves beyond the visual content and becomes an act of interaction, of manoeuvring through the content of the book in a tactile, physical manner. Each page turned creates a fleeting moment of curiosity as to what the next one will be. The images themselves are of Tomii's materially focussed practice that often involves visual contradictions and distortions in the functionality of the everyday things he engages with—paper, pins, plastic, rope, wire, tape, and found discarded objects. As the name suggests, Tomii's focus is on interacting with the materials himself as well as the materials' interaction with each other, therefore the format of the binder file—that makes flicking over pages both engaging and playful—represents, in its form, his practice. This book has been carried around to each residency I have undertaken during this project and I have thumbed through the pages enough that some of the punched holes are tearing and the corners of a few images are bent, changing the book's existence with every engagement and becoming processorial.

---

[21] That the folder is known to be from Muji, a Japanese stationery, homewares, and clothing retailer with stores globally, denotes the book's everydayness, its ease of accessibility as an object/thing/material.

On the same table at Tsutaya Books was a grey, felt pouch filled with loose-leaf pages and small booklets. I photographed the "book" as an example of a unique presentation and employment of a utilitarian material. Shifting focus from 2016 to 2020, I saw an exhibition at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI) about paper. Handmade fluoro paper works by Japanese artist Shinro Ohtake were on display and with further research, I was able to locate his unruly sculptures like

Scrapbook #66, 2010-2012. In a moment quintessential to this project's unfolding, it wasn't until drawing together the last of these loose threads in 2021 that I would come to realise the previously photographed book at Tsutaya Books was an exhibition catalogue called *Velocity of Memory*, 2013, for Shinro Ohtake's project at the Takamatsu Art Museum. Discovering that Ohtake was already connected to the project brought back to me, at the end, an awareness that this project's latent potential was already present in many ways.

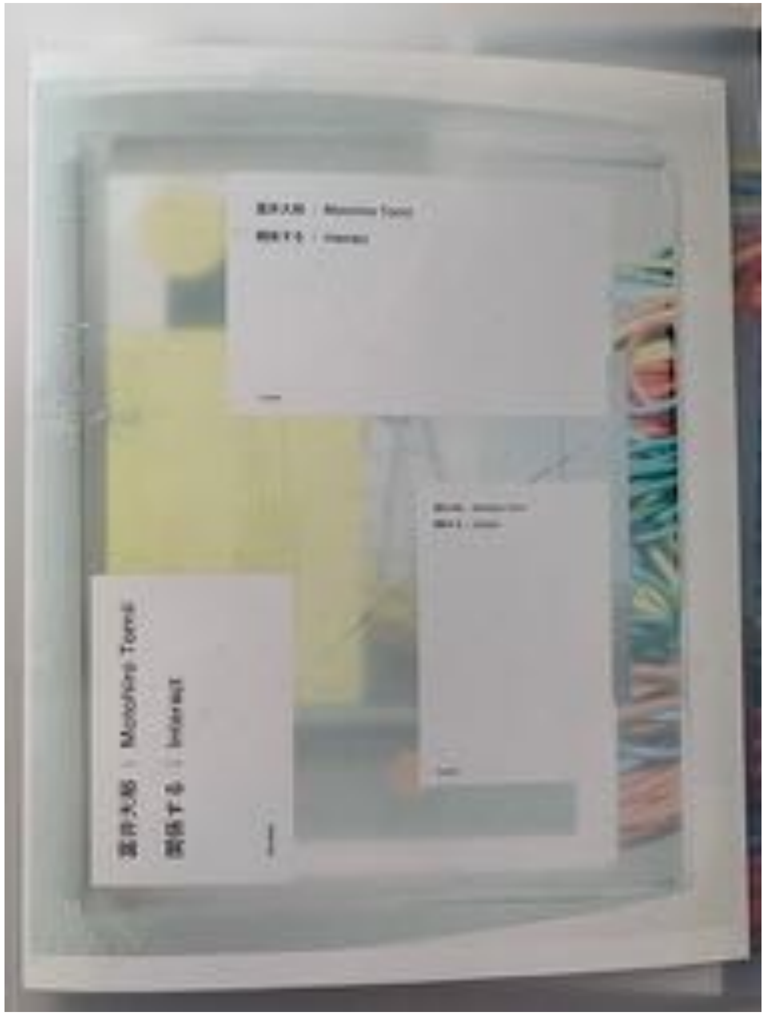

富井大裕 | Motohiro Tomii
関係する | Interact

Figure 5.11 Motohiro Tomii folder book, 2021.

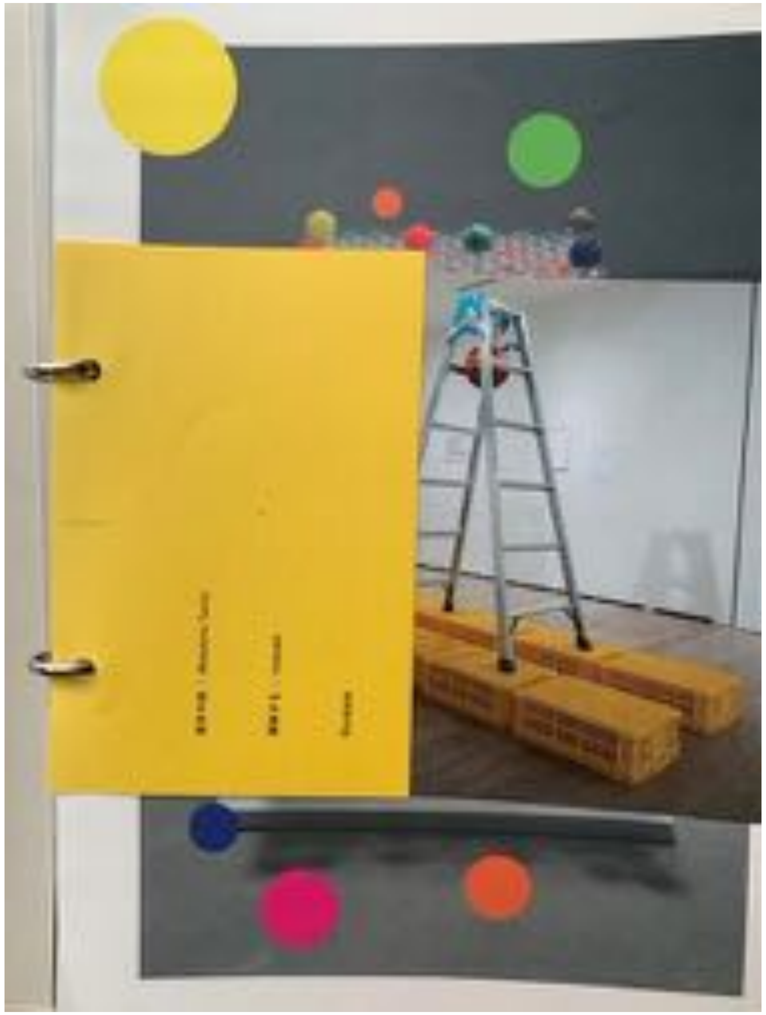


Figure 5.12 Motohiro Tomii inside folder book, 2021.

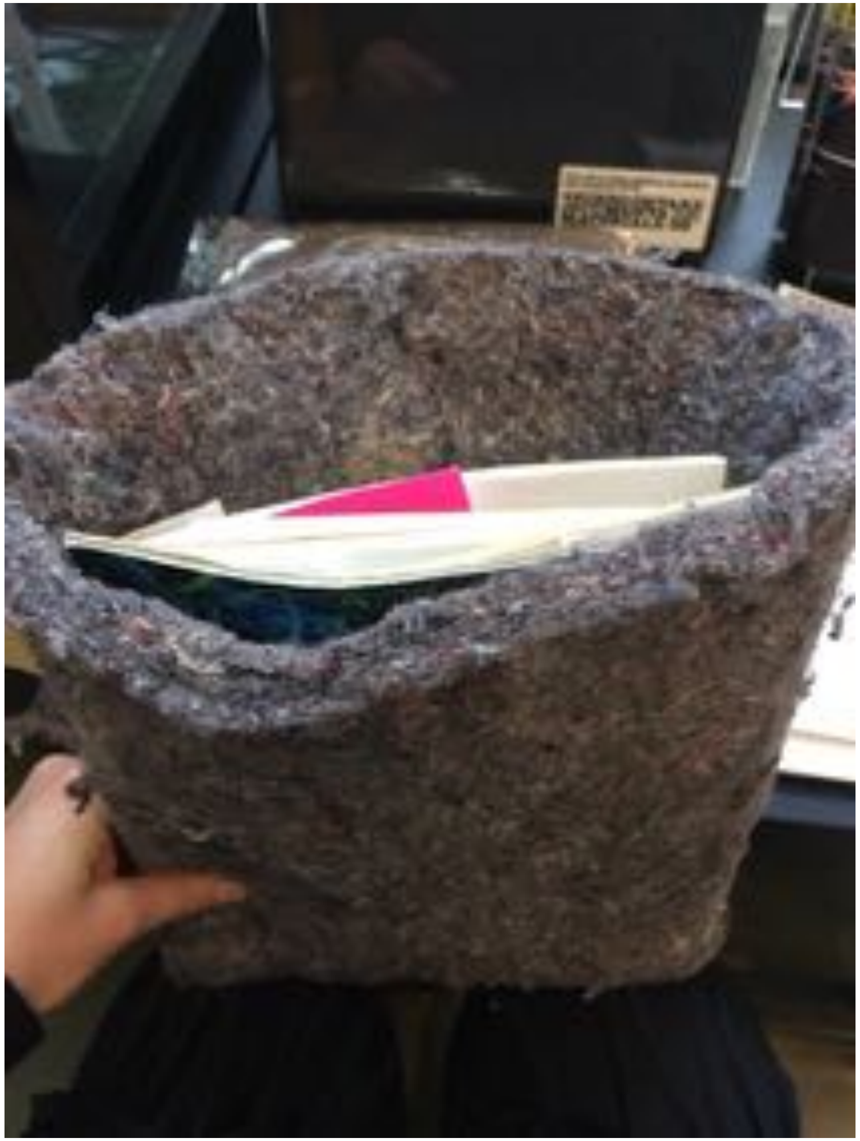


Figure 5.13 felt case for Shinro Ohtake book at Daikanyama Tsutaya Books, 2016.

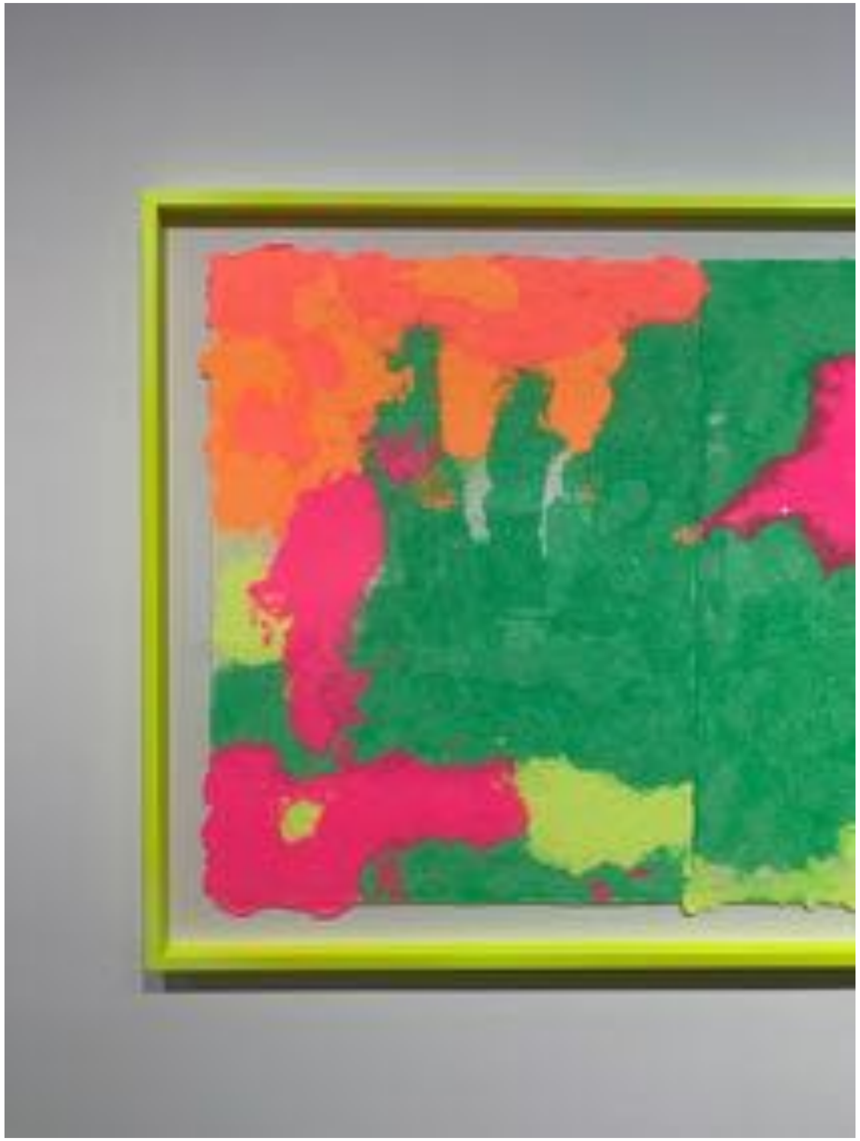


Figure 5.14 seeing Shinro Ohtake's *Pink Tree*, at STPI Gallery, 2020.

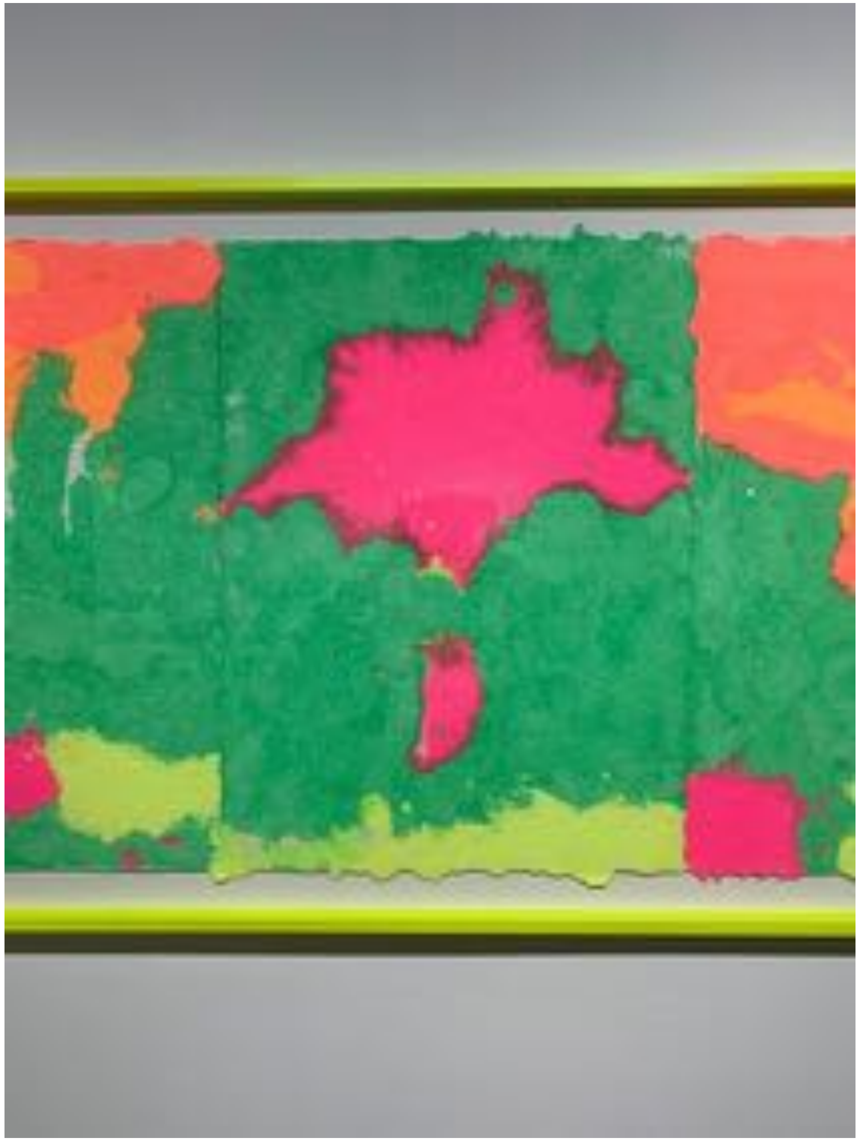


Figure 5.15 seeing Shinro Ohtake’s *Pink Tree*, at STPI Gallery, 2020.

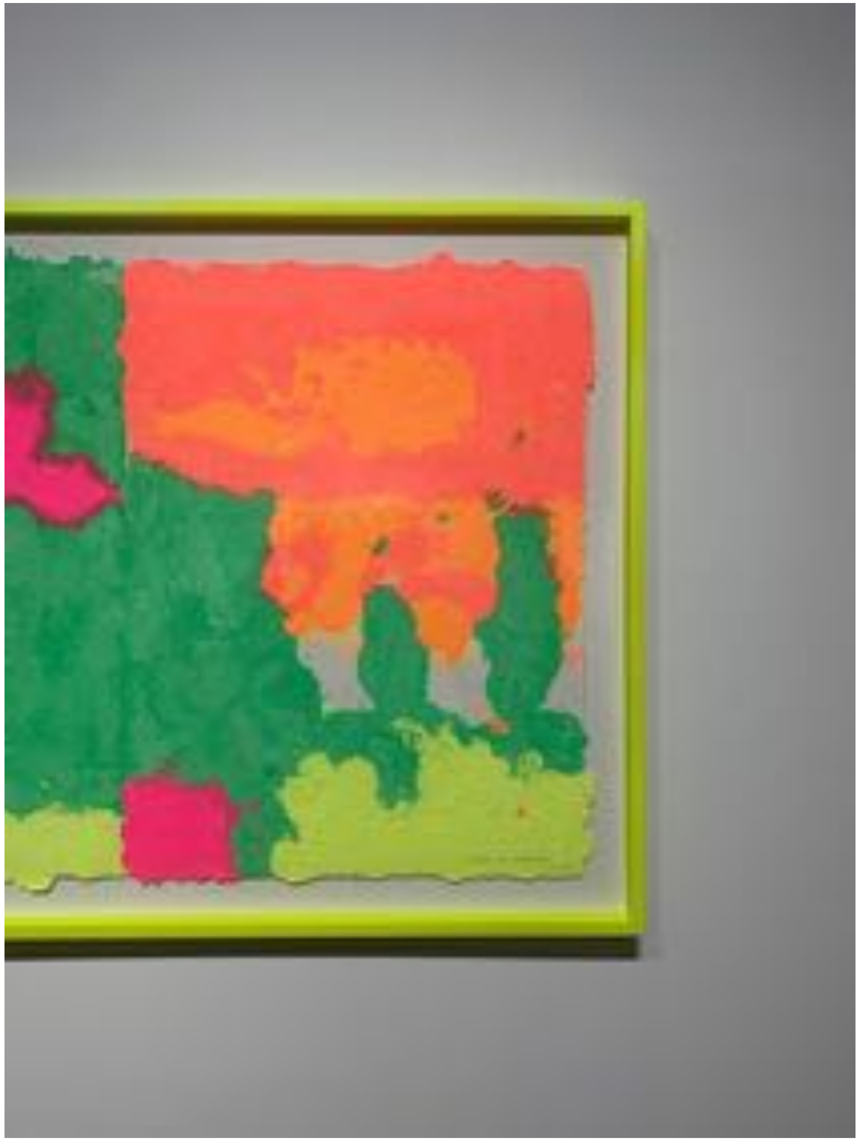


Figure 5.16 seeing Shinro Ohtake's *Pink Tree*, at STPI Gallery, 2020.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 5.17 Shinro Ohtake, *Scrapbook #66*, 2010-2012.

In chapter 2*, Object/thing/material*, Guillermo Faivovich and Nicolás Goldberg's involvement in dOCUMENTA (13) was included among the projects connected to object-oriented ontology and while most of those that I discussed in that context resulted in artwork outcomes, the Argentinian duo's project was never realised. Instead, what existed was an extensive documentational book project published by dOCUMENTA. Faivovich and Goldberg documented their research on and practice with the Campo del Cielo meteorite site in two volumes—*El Taco* and *Chaco*, both published in 2012. *El Taco* (2012a) was the visual and textual story of the artists' journey in reuniting two halves of a long-separated meteorite from the Campo del Cielo site, while *Chaco* (2012b) focussed on the specific challenges and process of the artists' proposed work to be shown in Kassel for the 100 days of the exhibition. While their planned project of transporting almost 34 tonnes of meteorite from Argentina to Germany was logistically complicated, it was a long string of contentions regarding the meteorite's cultural significance that eventually stopped it from continuing its journey after arriving on earth.[22] As Faivovich and Goldberg's work on the meteorite site spanned years, any planned physical artwork outcome would only capture a fraction of the project, their research, and the process that led to the art object outcome. These books, Volumes 1 and 2, can be read on their own without having seen the artwork output. The books don't describe the art object outcome as if they are substitute for it but exist more as a collaborative exegesis that both supports the object and exists as its own entity. *Chaco* (2012b) is the outcome of a vast undertaking that extends beyond its occurrence in time and space, yet its presentation as documentational book makes its processorial potential more apparent, compared to *Interact*.

---

[22] An independent union consisting of the Moqoit community and spiritual leaders, teachers, artists, and elders vehemently opposed the meteorite's displacement, while the official line the Moqoit Council took was to be in support of the transfer (see *Chaco* 2012b, 192-197, for the two opposing positions).

Similarly created to exist in a way that highlights the process of the project, but more in line with Smithson's use of documentation paraphernalia and also Hester's extension of content, *Cosmo-Eggs* moves beyond a series of images and notes and becomes its own work. For the 2019 Venice Biennale, the Japan pavilion exhibited *Cosmo-Eggs*—an installation project for speculation about the coexistence of humans and nonhumans. It was a collaborative project involving visual art, music, anthropology, and architecture. "Through a 'collaboration' that opens up a place for continuous generation and change utilizing overlaying heterogenous creations by individuals of different areas of expertise, the exhibition serves to question the ecology of symbiosis and coexistence" (Bianchini 2019). The book published to coincide with the pavilion contains some images from the installation but is largely focussed on images, sketches, and text from the collaborative research process leading up to the pavilion opening. Similar to Tomii's *Interact* book, *Cosmo-Eggs* is made up of different postcards, scanned journal pages, heavy card, glossy and matt images, and plastic sleeves, and, as such, the act of reading the book is playful and engaging. This book offers me a midway reference for a project that incorporates tactility and curiosity in its conception while still pointing back to something that occurred across multiple sites—in the field and in the gallery.

By the end of the Fremantle Arts Centre residency, I had early physical forms composed from the printed documentation and new moments of learning-through-doing with object/thing/materials, as well new images from this process that could be printed and brought back into the cycle. Bringing these new printed images back into the forms from which they had come reiterated the cyclical nature of the project's unfolding and continuation beyond its formation. Re-using documentation images—as in Ciuchta's exhibition installations—works to move beyond the act of reflecting (on practice and process) and instead makes messy the relations between matter and form, process and outcome. The residency at the Fremantle Arts Centre culminated in processorial object/thing/materials with book-like tendencies, but rather than being an end point was taken up again in another time and place, being more like Wesseling's pause in the artist's process than a resolution.

Images on following pages—Figure 5.18 concertina book on table, 2018.
Figure 5.19 concertina book hung up, 2018.

Artist Bookish

Interact, *Velocity of Memory*, *Chaco* (2012b), and *Cosmo-Eggs*, as materially focussed or text/image combinations, can be defined as artists' books. In positioning the artists' book as a key feature of 20th century art, artist Johanna Drucker states, "In some cases artists have made use of the documentary potential of the book form, while in others they have engaged with the more subtle and complicated fact of the books' capacity to be a highly malleable, versatile form of expression" (2004, 9). To demonstrate that defining an artists' book is not just complicated but also perhaps counterproductive, Drucker presents them as being "at the intersection of a number of different disciplines, fields, and ideas—rather than at their limits" (1). The potential of artists' books to cut across disciplinary boundaries is representative of their transversality—artists' books, in their indefinability, present the opportunity for perpetuating entanglements with subject matter and form, becoming extended forms of practice. These potentialities support my aim for a processorial object/thing/material that can exist in perpetuity and be a vibrant entity.

Throughout his practice, Richard Tuttle has created artists' books, or bookish forms, that exist as separate expressions and not merely book forms of sculptural or installation works. Often small, sometimes involving his poetry alongside mark making or drawings, and sometimes combined with physical material like wire or card, "Tuttle takes the traditional book and dismantles its internal functioning. In his hands it ceases to be a support for explaining ideas in words to become a medium, a material that is articulated afresh and that needs to be discovered in both semantic contents and its plastic possibilities" (Fernández-Cid 2002, 8). His book projects are not containers preserving his material and sculptural actions, but rather they exist as one form of his practice. "When they are made we have a turn of the wrist, an enveloping; when they are individually experienced we have surprise and discovery; when they actually occupy space and are regarded as plastic objects we sense a final release from [t]he laws that govern books" (ibid). When presented in their "plastic object" state, the artists' books exist as still, sculptural forms, denying much desired interaction.

One of my early experiments with presenting images of the residency projects somewhat followed the three stages of Tuttle's books—that of its making being transformational and an embodied action, experienced as a book with pages whose purpose is inherently known yet may still surprise, and as an object/thing/material that surpasses its medium. Using a concertina layout, the object/thing/material I constructed as a test "book" included images from engagements in residencies and was constructed with fluoro duct tape, felt, and fluoro rope. If encountered in its flat state, it could be "read" in a continuous flow of beginning to end to beginning via the concertinaed paper. However, once the long rope lengths were engaged to hang the book in various manners, it became a plastic object that needed to be encountered and negotiated in space. In plastic form, it is book-like, but no longer holds the same opportunity for physical engagement, demarcating boundary lines between book as activity and book as elevated sculpture. Relegating such a form to exist as a sculptural art object, installed via a support or system (like in the case of Tuttle's exhibited books or my hanging concertina book), removes the experience of coming to know again or anew the subject matter. The processes of engagement with the object/thing/material are stalled at fixed plastic object rather than continual becoming. Encountering it becomes a static activity rather than an intra-action.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 5.20 Richard Tuttle, The Missing Portrait, 2008, handmade book, 45.72 x 41.91 x 20.32cm

In examining such a sprawling notion of artists' books, Drucker creates a loose category around the book as private archive in which Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (The Green Box)*, 1934, is included. Consisting of loose-leaf pages and notes from the development of *The Bride Striped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, 1934, the box houses research and process paraphernalia. The book as private archive has "a nostalgic quality—as of something preserved from a past whose only traces are these material bits and pieces" (Drucker 2004, 99). So while in my project I favour the extension of process, the archival act of preserving my journal notes, sketches, and text are intentionally excluded so as to focus on the materiality of the object/thing/materials in their present-moment existence. A bookish form constructed from images of past and ongoing engagements extends beyond archiving and moves into being an object/thing/material of perpetual process. This processorial form does not replace the processes undertaken, superseding them, but is something that can move those encounters into new actions and considerations elsewhere.

Alongside the book as private archive, Drucker refers to another possible type of book that exist as "auratic objects". She positions these as books with a vibrancy and vitality: "They seem to bear meaning just in their being, their appearance, and their form through their iconography and materials. It is as though they have been imbued with a power which animates them beyond their material limits generating a metaphysically charged atmosphere which surrounds the work" (2004, 93-94). Artists' books push at the boundaries of disciplines and definitions: "Attention to materials, their interactions, and the content bound within the book are an integral feature of a book, but as with other aspects of production, artists' books tend to bend and stretch all the rules and conventions of craft decorum" (10). My time at the Fremantle Arts Centre at the end of 2019 had brought back into the fold occurrences from 2016 and all the time in between. Tomii's *Interact* book and the printed images of the object/thing/materials I came into proximity with, as well as the flat/scrunched combination came together to solidify the book-ish form as being able to propel the project beyond its own boundary. While the processorial object/thing/material defies strict definition, it is the "charged presence" of the auratic object that I locate in my extension of the FAC book-type forms and which manifested in its most tangible state during the last residency of this practice-led PhD project.

In April 2021 I undertook a four-week residency at a warehouse in Singapore which had previously been used for manufacturing umbrellas and was now converted into temporary spaces for creative projects. Of course, having such a space required a few items to mark the beginning of the residency—desk, chair, table fan, mug. It was also quickly filled with the object/thing/materials that had been accumulated and needed to be stored—printed images, rolls of soft fluoro plastic, mylar in pink, silver, gold, blue, reflective card, acetate, soft book coverings, fluoro duct tape, coloured wires, metallic hobby tapes, plastic sleeves for all paper sizes, fluoro elastic, Velcro, parachute cord, rope, ring binders, D-rings, webbing straps. The four weeks saw me combine and bring into proximity printed images with like object/thing/materials, building up and out and into a form with bulk and presence. Doing so presented its own challenges that were attentively noticed, considered, and responded to. Ring binders became both a functional object/thing/material with which other object/thing/materials could be assembled around and remain a curious fixture in themselves.

The sheer number of images present by this stage of the residency in Singapore created pictorial friction when laid out and seen all at once. Some printed images combined again with scrunched or reflective object/thing/materials, photographed in place, and printed before adding back into the mix, building up a collective of shapes and colours. Individual components became harder to discern and instead of formulating clear presentations of instances of interaction in residency, the images became fields of vibrant colours pushing against each other, reflective surfaces and fluoro forms on top of other images and object/thing/materials. The abstracted image field is further amplified through the communal anchoring point provided by the ring binders. Edges of images allude to other occasions of engagement driven by curiosity accessed by turning a "page". The familiarity of such an action associated with reading is coupled with the unfamiliarity of what is it that is being "read". The act of moving through and within such a form requires attention and slowness, openness to unknowns and a willingness to stay with the trouble of it.

Extrapolating on the previously discussed dynamic aspects of the books or bookish forms, a processorial object/thing/material entwines together in the residency, referencing its process of arriving while continuing to do so through impermanent fixings that encourage interaction. But even though the constructed object/thing/material contains bookish moments of ring binders, plastic sleeves, and page-like flat forms, it surpasses artists' books as a category by its state of continual becoming, its continued manifestation. Its existence as processorial can be amended and returned to, and therefore defies a level of resolution that could see it become commodifiable as an object of contemporary art; seeing it thus provides encounters based on curiosity and thinking otherwise for those who come to it. The assembled object/thing/material form is closest to being a combination of Drucker's auratic object and personal archive—something that both extends the moments of the past while maintaining a charged presence. In doing so, it ensures that the form of the processorial object/thing/material can exist in a way that would generate curiosity in those it encounters or who encounter it, a way that could remain in a state of becoming rather than being.

As discussed in chapter 3, *Entangled Practice*, it has been the learning-through-doing that has resulted in entangled comings together with the nonhuman object/thing/material, yet this process is not a single occurrence or undertaking. The slow, attentive engagements fuelled by curiosity traverse back and forth, between myself and the subject matter, between the proximities of object/thing/materials, and between processes and outcomes. In this way, working across two versions of the processorial form in the Singapore residency created a visual extension of this process—attending to one image and object/thing/material proximity in a particular way is translated inexactly while attending to a second image and object/thing/material of the same type. This is because there are infinite potentialities within the object/thing/material at hand and new discoveries are made in every re-turning. Oscillating between two separate yet entangled processorial object/thing/material forms perpetuated their cycle of becoming, with one form affecting the other. In this way, there is no processorial object/thing/material #1 and processorial object/thing/material #2; rather, they may even come to exist in proximity again at a time and place to come.

At the beginning of a paper on diffraction, Karen Barad offers the following:

> I want to begin by re-turning—not by returning as in reflecting on or going back to a past that was, re-turning as in turning it over and over again—iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetimemattering), new diffraction patterns. We might imagine re-turning as a multiplicity of processes, such as the kinds earthworms revel in while helping to make compost or otherwise being busy at work and play: turning the soil over and over—ingesting and excreting it, tunnelling through it, burrowing, all means of aerating the soil, allowing oxygen in, opening it up and breathing new life into it… Re-turning as a mode of intra-acting with diffraction—diffracting diffraction—is particularly apt since the temporality of re-turning is integral to the phenomenon of diffraction. (2014, 168)

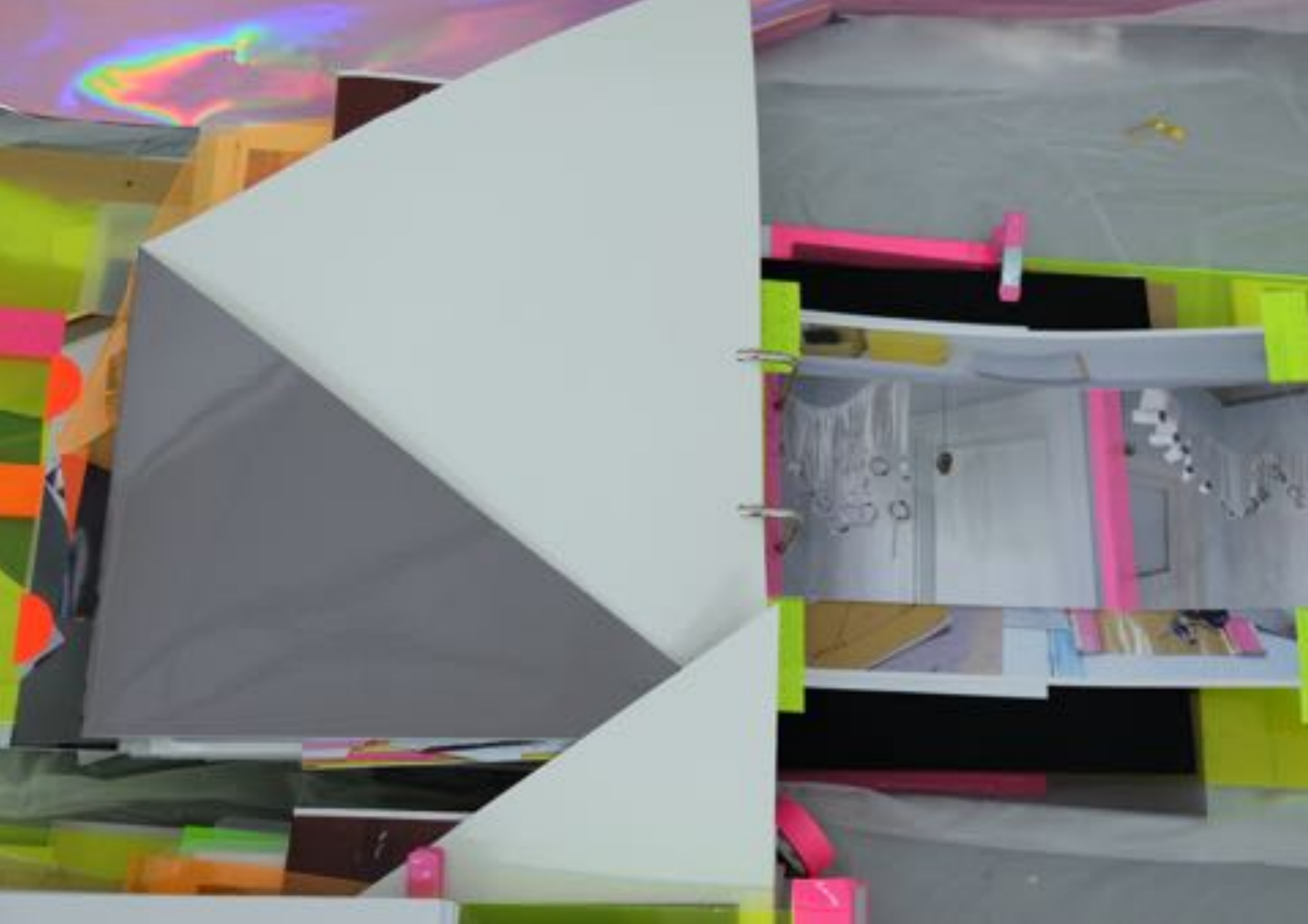
I hold onto this idea of re-turning, over and over, through the reappearance of images from previous encounters and through a form of combined object/thing/material that grew out of following curiosity and open-ended questions. This process is constantly documented and feeds back into the cycle of turning over, aerating the practice, bringing new life into it. I continue to entangle myself in the process and with the object/thing/materials to generate something that exists beyond the documentation, something that allows for others to encounter with a sense of curiosity and which continues to allude to an open-ended practice, one that really considers the process as the integral outcome.

Images on following pages—Figure 5.21; 5.22; 5.23; 5.24; 5.25; 5.26 progression of processorial object/thing/material, Singapore residency, 2021.

DUCK TAPE

DUCK TAPE
DUCK TAPE

DUCK TAPE



CONCLUSION / /

EXPANDING OUT AGAIN

Within this practice-led research project I have considered what the actions I undertake within creative practice do for our continued and expanded understanding of the nonhuman in relation to ourselves and the material world. I also specifically look at how approaching an engagement to the nonhuman with these considerations present in thinking, making, and showing cycles may exemplify object-oriented and new materialist underpinnings so that the project is charged with a greater potentiality than it would be without such foundations. This project comes out of an attentiveness to the world of object/thing/materials artists can use to make their art, which in turn becomes an orientation to the object/thing/material experienced in everyday contexts and framed by the material world. These two locations converge in my art practice in which I come to consider the nominally utilitarian object/thing/materials found to be curious and reconsider them in moments of interaction and observation. As a result, this project transversally negotiates both the theoretical and practical aspects to result in a processorial object/thing/material that is open ended and difficult to define.

This project didn’t start out like this. There have been a lot of productive changes from candidacy to this point by way of using practice-led research. Being open to curiosity and discovery meant being prepared to be open to shifts in the project, and not be put off by moments that challenged my position. In 2016 my driving interest was to understand the relationship between object-oriented ontology and art, and whether a creative practice informed by such theoretical considerations would present object-oriented ontological art projects. This was also connected to a desire to do more with and through art than what the philosophy was doing purely theoretically. As described in the introduction, it was my trip to New York that helped rattle such a position. By shifting from the initial intentions in the project, I set the stakes higher and claimed a space more assertively. Now, I care less about decentering the human via artworks within the gallery, and more about reorienting the practice of art towards object/thing/materials and learning what I can from that act. The challenge to hierarchies is implicit in this. The time after achieving candidacy felt somewhat like starting again, being allowed space to breath and give life to the project. Leaving behind the stress of how to get from where I was to an exhibition of art at the end was the beginning of what would inevitably become the focus of the project—the process of doing art in this space, not the art object outcome.

Throughout the project I have identified and then utilised the themes of journey, discovery, curiosity, troubling, learning-through-doing, doing otherwise, and doing again in both practice and the exegetical writing. *Problem One / / Establishing Useful Parameters* grappled with the need to establish workable boundaries from inside a project that actively wanted to think and do otherwise with what was to be found in them. In a project that has used open-endedness and discovery, discerning the parameters to work within happened in the midst of the project, developing over a period of time through the research and practice, rather than setting them from the outset. Chapters 1 and 2, which sit within the first problem, laid out a lot of the theoretical groundwork from which the rest of the exegesis develops and it is in them that I synthesise the theory pertaining to the nonhuman so that I can claim the object/thing/materials as such. Working from the presupposition that everyday, mass manufactured, utilitarian object/things/materials are nonhuman, I move to position object-oriented ontology and new materialism as supporting bookends to this claim, diffractively engaging their alignments and divergences regarding ontology and epistemology.

In chapter 1, *Between an Object-Oriented Rock and a New Materialist Hard Place*, I pulled together feminist new materialisms that acknowledge difference—not as alterity and an act of "othering", but as productive and generative. It includes a mixed bag of references. I lean on Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Vivienne Bozalek, and Katherine Behar. I include Rosi Braidotti, Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, and Diana Coole. I discuss Graham Harman; mention Levi Bryant and Tim Morton; employ Hélène Frichot; and come to Armen Avenessian. This process becomes less a mapping of where the nonhuman sits in their work but rather, I highlight what I have had to draw from to locate the nonhuman object/thing/material within visual art. The end of this chapter sees a revisiting of the theories used to establish those early parameters, with the need arising as the project progressed, following the circuitous paths of practice-led research. Ultimately, the further Graham Harman encroached on visual art through his philosophy, the clearer I was able to see the tension his argument placed on an art that wanted to expand and be otherwise.

In chapter 2, *Object/thing/material*, I laid out both the problem and then provided my solution to the indistinguishable nature of the three terms encountered individually. The semantic discussion soon gives way to a dialectical move of exceeding problematic labelling for a heterogenous concept of object/thing/material. The act of coming to know the object/thing/material in the world is through a knowledge apparatus that engages the method of learning-through-doing and that seeks to turn our attention to creative practice as generator of valuable insight. And yet, the potential of such an epistemological strength is confounded by the risk of it being absorbed and diluted by an artworld that continues to move through the 21st century by commodifying everything it comes into proximity with. Following a coalescing of other factors uncovered through the project (namely, that the residency offers greater freedom of thinking, making, and showing art, and that process is established as the important outcome of the research), this project turns away from an art that strives for a resolute and ultimate version of its manifestations.

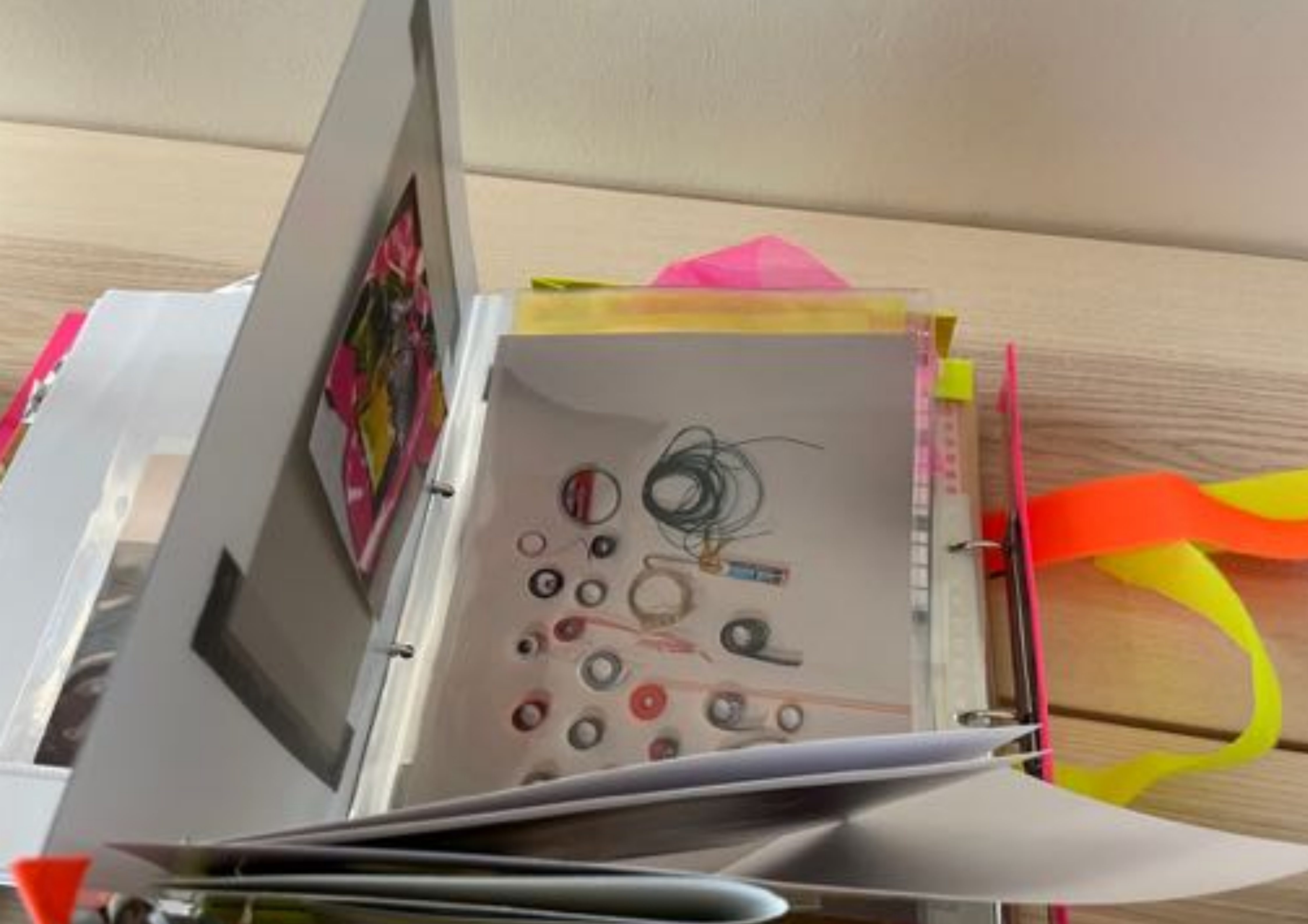
Problem Two / / Moving Beyond Established Boundaries framed the three chapters that built on and out from the theoretical grounding of the first problem. These overarching sections are labelled as problems because they have consisted of many difficulties in both conceptualising the stages involved and bringing together in generative entanglements the many and varied threads in this project. Chapter 3, *Entangled Practice*, unravelled some of these threads to provide a path through the convergences of theory and practice, and the chapter's placement in the exegesis serves to bridge the heavy theoretical propositions with the explorations in practice that follow. The expansion of the notion of practice-led research from one of the iterative cyclic web to a method that not only oscillates between practice and theory, but also proliferates new areas of critical, creative practice led by curiosity, is a challenge to the type of institution that employs practice-led research in order to categorise and therefore quantify art research output. Rather than a research framework that eats itself by perpetually referencing the other, the practice-led lead I follow propels across disciplinary boundaries, transversally cutting across them, so that creative practice can move beyond its bounds.

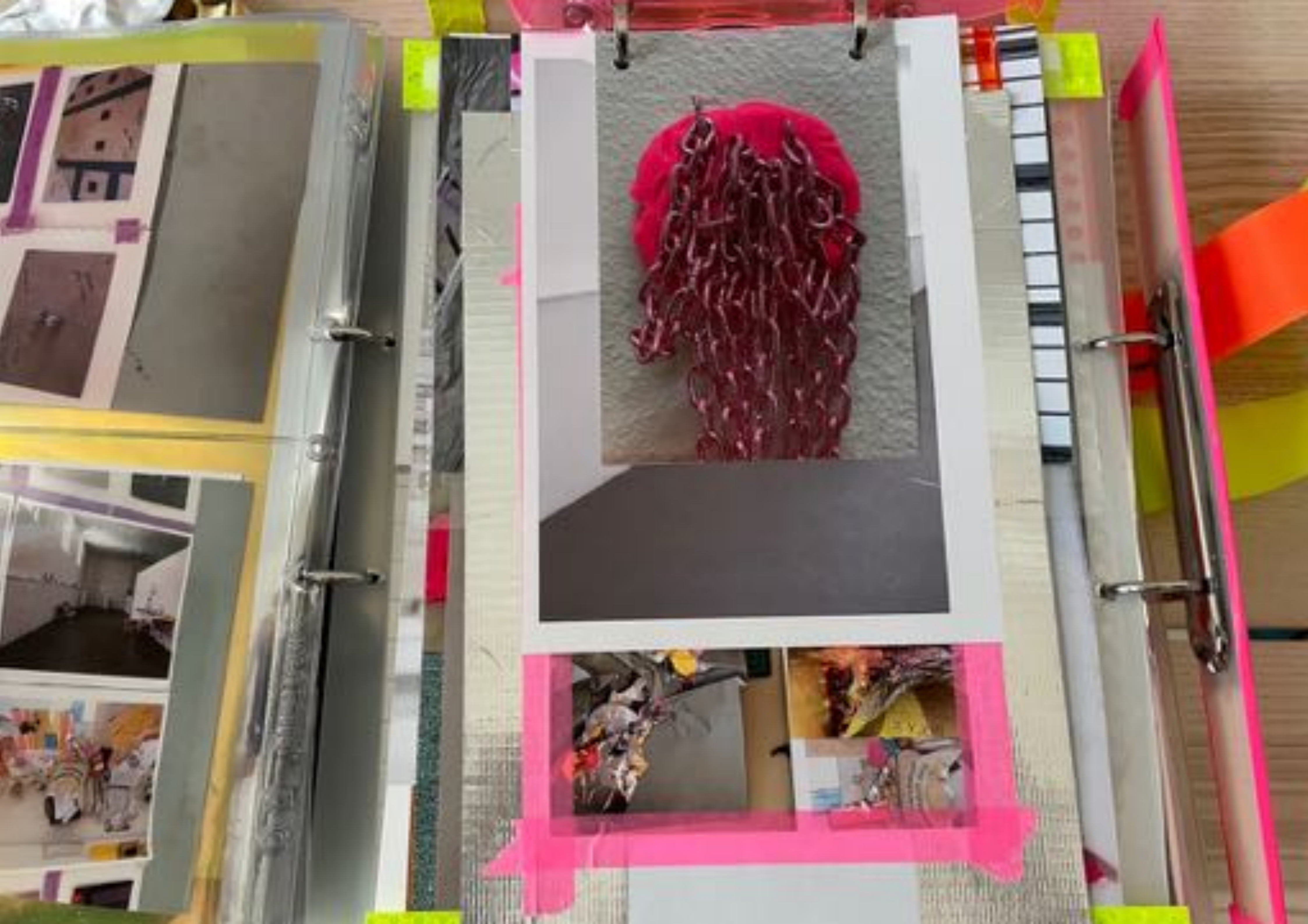
The residencies undertaken at Another, Paper Mountain, and The Lobby have been used as occasions for research, rather than as art activities constituting the creative practice component of this project. In chapter 4, *Configuring Residency as a Thinking, Making, Showing Space* I reflected on the residencies as acts of learning-through-doing that move each subsequent part of the project forward and used this to think through the nonhuman object/thing/materials as situated in creative practice. It is in the establishment of the artist residency as a method for encountering the nonhuman object/thing/material that the success lies. The notion of the residency as a dynamic space that can support the actions of thinking, making, and showing art as they come together and move apart again provides an alternative to the white cube gallery space already identified as part of the mechanism of the commodified artworld.

These chapters and problems and discoveries have led, somewhat unknowingly, to a conception of a form that comes to be, and continues to become, unending in nature. Its composition is a mixture of object/thing/materials with roots in previous time and places, and object/thing/material encounters that occur at the site of its forming. Apprehending the processorial form's becoming through quickly shot images provides further object/thing/materials when printed out that are brought back into the process of further comings together. This dynamic, continuous, indefinable, indeterminate form exists in a constant state of process—it is a processorial object/thing/material. Chapter 5, duly named *Processorial Object/thing/material*, attempts to arrest its being in order to provide some scaffolding to such a malleable concept. I have had to retrain myself to not see the processorial object/thing/material created as the emphasised outcome of this research project and instead see it as one of many potential forms to have arisen as a result of the methods developed to come to experience the nonhuman.

The experience of developing such a multitudinous form was deliberately paced to ensure attentiveness and discernment at all stages. This resulted in accumulating an overabundance of object/thing/materials throughout the project that did not come to exist in the processorial form as it currently sits however, the temporary closures of ring binders and Velcro ensure that they may come to be there or that those in place may come out to exist in proximity to object/thing/materials in future residency projects. Such flexibility of construction has meant that even the processorial form as it is now, in an artist's pause, has remained in constant flux, ensuring even the most up to date printed images are always slightly behind its real time manifestation. The object/thing/materials in the processorial form are not to be place holders but form part of an auratic constellation extending beyond their constituent parts. The activity of continuously turning over and out the form as it folds in many directions reflects the cycles this practice-led research project has undergone and can continue to go through. In arriving here at the end of the exegesis with an open-ended object/thing/material form, I have found my practice in the interstices between definitions, in those spaces of messy entanglements that spark curiosity and that lead down unknowable paths in order to expand out again. Through both the exegetical component and the processorial form it is my hope that the project enables a re-appraisal of the nonhuman and that the object/thing/materials we experience through this framing can generate new ways of thinking and engaging otherwise.

Images on following pages—Figure viii; ix; x; xi; xii; xiii; xiv; xv; xvi; xvii; xviii; xix processorial object/thing/material, 2021.





REFERENCE LIST

Ahmed, Sara. 2017. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Aristarkhova, Irina. 2016. “A Feminist Object” in *Object-Oriented Feminism*, edited by Katherine Behar, 39-63. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Avenessian, Armen, and Suhail Malik, eds. 2016. *Genealogies of Speculative Realism*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Ballroom Marfa. “Hyperobjects.” 2018. Ballroom Marfa. April 13–November 4, 2018. https://www.ballroommarfa.org/program/hyperobjects/#section-1.

Barad, Karen. 2014. “Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart.” *Parallax* 20 (3): 168-187. https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2014.927623.

Barrett, Estelle. 2013. “Materiality, Affect, and the Aesthetic Image.” In *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a “New Materialism” Through the Arts*, edited by Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, 63-72. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

Barrett, Estelle, and Barbara Bolt, eds. 2007. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Barrett, Estelle, and Barbara Bolt. 2013. *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a “New Materialism” Through the Arts*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Barrett, Estelle, Barbara Bolt, and Katve-Kaisa Konturri. 2017. “Editorial.” “Transversal Practices: Matter, Ecology and Relationality” special issue. *Studies in Material Thinking* 16: 1-10.

Behar, Katherine. n.d. “Art: Building Blocks.” Katherine Behar. Author website. Accessed October 12, 2020. http://www.katherinebehar.com/art/buildingblocks/index.html.

Behar, Katherine, ed. 2016. *Object-Oriented Feminism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Behar, Katherine. 2016. “An Introduction to OOF” in *Object-Oriented Feminism*, edited by Katherine Behar, 1-36. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Behar, Katherine, and Emmy Mikelson. 2011. “And Another Thing”. In *And Another Thing*, 5-6. New York: The James Gallery. https://www.centerforthehumanities.org/files/downloads/And-Another-Thing-Program-Booklet.pdf.

Bennett, Jane. 2010. *Vibrant Matter*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bennett, Jane. 2012. “Systems and Things: A Response to Graham Harman and Timothy Morton.” *New Literary History* 43 (2): 225–33. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23259373 .

Bianchini, Riccardo. 2019. “‘Cosmo-Eggs’—The Japan Pavilion at the 58th Venice Art Biennale 2019.” Inexhibit. https://www.inexhibit.com/case-studies/cosmo-eggs-the-japan-pavilion-at-the-58th-venice-art-biennale-2019/.

Biggs, I (2009) *Art as Research: Creative Practice and Academic Authority*. Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag

Billy, Vanessa, and Mousse Magazine. 2019. “Substance and Its Behavior: Vanessa Billy.” Mousse Magazine. http://moussemagazine.it/vanessa-billy-the-white-goddess-galleria-gentili-2019/.

Bogost, Ian. 2009. “What Is Object-Oriented Ontology?” Ian Bogost. Blog. December 8, 2009. http://bogost.com/writing/blog/what_is_objectoriented_ontolog/.

Bogost, Ian. 2012. *Alien Phenomenology, or What It’s Like to Be a Thing*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bolt, Barbara. 2013. “Towards a ‘New Materialism’ Through the Arts.” In *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a “New Materialism” Through the Arts,* edited by Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, 1-16. London: I.B. Tauris.

Bolter, Jay David. 2016. “Posthumanism.” *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect220.

Boscagli, Maurizia. 2014. *Stuff Theory: Everyday Objects, Radical Materialism*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Boulous Walker, Michelle. 2017. *Slow Philosophy: Reading Against the Institution*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. 2014. “The Great Acceleration: Art in the Anthropocene.” Taipei Biennial. https://www.taipeibiennial.org/2014/en/tb20142c65.html.

Boutet, Danielle. 2013. “Metaphors of The Mind: Art Forms As Modes Of Thinking And Ways Of Being.” In *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a “New Materialism” through the Arts*, edited by Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, 29-40. London: I.B. Tauris.

Bozalek, Vivienne, and Michalinos Zembylas. 2016. “Critical Posthumanism, New Materialisms and the Affective Turn for Socially Just Pedagogies in Higher Education.” *South African Journal of Higher Education* 30 (3): 193–200. http://dx.doi.org/10.20853/30-3-652.

Braidotti, Rosi. 2002. *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*. Malden: Polity.

Braidotti, Rosi, and Timotheus Vermeulen. 2014. “Borrowed Energy.” Frieze. September, 2014. http://www.frieze.com/article/borrowed-energy.

Brassier, Ray, Iain Hamilton Grant, Graham Harman, and Quentin Meillassoux. 2007. “Speculative Realism” in *Collapse Volume III*, 307–450. Cornwall: Urbanomic.

Brown, Bill. 2001. “Thing Theory.” *Critical Inquiry* 28 (1): 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1086/449030.

Bryant, Levi. 2010. “Onticology—A Manifesto for Object-Oriented Ontology Part I.” Larval Subjects. Blog. January 12, 2010. https://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2010/01/12/object-oriented-ontology-a-manifesto-part-i/

Bryant, Levi. 2020. “Flat Ontology, Questions, and Assemblages.” Larval Subjects. Blog. February 17, 2020. https://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2020/02/17/flat-ontology-questions-and-assemblages/

Bryant, Levi, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman, eds. 2011. *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*. Melbourne: re.press Melbourne. http://www.re-press.org/book-files/OA_Version_Speculative_Turn_9780980668346.pdf.

Buren, Daniel. 1979. "The Function of the Studio." Translated by Thomas Repensek. *October* 10: 51–58. http://www.jstor.org/stable/778628.

Candy, Linda. 2006. *Practice Based Research: A Guide*. Sydney: University of Technology Sydney. https://www.creativityandcognition.com/resources/PBR%20Guide-1.1-2006.pdf

Chrulew, Matthew. 2020. "Reconstructing the Worlds of Wildlife: Uexküll, Hediger, and Beyond." *Biosemiotics* 13: 137–49. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12304-020-09376-x.

Clough, Patricia Ticineto. 2016. "Notes for 'And They Were Dancing.'" In *After the "Speculative Turn": Realism, Philosophy, and Feminism*, edited by Katerina Kolozova and Eileen A. Joy, 59-70. Santa Barbara: Punctum Books.

Cole, Andrew. 2015. “Those Obscure Objects of Desire: The Uses and Abuses of Object-Oriented Ontology and Speculative Realism.” *Artforum* 53 (10): 318-323.

Colebrook, Claire. 2019. “A Cut in Relationality: Art at the End of the World.” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 24 (3): 175–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2019.1620469.

Coole, Diana. 2015. ”From Within the Midst of Things: New Sensibility, New Alchemy, and the Renewal of Critical Theory.” In *Realism Materialism Art,* edited by Christoph Cox, Jenny Jaskey and Suhail Malik, 41–46. Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Coole, Diana, and Samantha Frost, eds. 2010. *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Craddock, Sacha, and Jose Dávila. 2018. “Backward and Forward.” In Jose Dávila, *The Feather & the Elephant*, 39–46. Berlin: Hatje Cantz.

Dávila, Jose. 2018. *The Feather & the Elephant*. Berlin: Hatje Cantz.

Davis, Heather, and Etienne Turpin, eds. 2015. *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*. London: Open Humanities Press. http://openhumanitiespress.org/books/download/Davis-Turpin_2015_Art-in-the-Anthropocene.pdf.

Deitcher, David. 2016. *Stone's Throw*. Secretary Press: New York

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateus*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 2004. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. London: Continuum.

Desbordes, Chrystelle. 2017. "About." Jagna Ciuchta. 2017. https://www.jagnaciuchta.com/About.

Despret, Vinciane. 2016. *What would Animals Say if We Asked the Right Questions?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dolphijn, Rick, and Iris van der Tuin. 2012. *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*. London: Open Humanities Press.

Drucker, Johanna. 2004. *The Century of Artists' Books*. New York: Granary Books.

Faivovich, Guillermo, and Nicolás Goldberg. 2012a. *The Campo Del Cielo Meteorites—Vol. 1: El Taco*. Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König.

Faivovich, Guillermo, and Nicolás Goldberg. 2012b. *The Campo Del Cielo Meteorites—Vol. 2: Chaco*. Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König.

Fernández-Cid, Miguel. 2002. "Words on Images." In Miguel Fernández-Cid and Dieter Shwarz *Field of Stars: A Book on the Books,* 12-14. Santiago de Campostela: Centro Galego de Arte Contempornea.

Foster, Hal, ed. 2009. “Questionnaire on ‘The Contemporary.’” *October* 130: 3–124. https://doi.org/10.1162/octo.2009.130.1.3.

Frichot, Hélène. 2019. *Creative Ecologies: Theorizing the Practice of Architecture*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

Fried, Michael. 1967. “Art and Objecthood.” Artforum. https://www.artforum.com/print/196706/art-and-objecthood-36708

Gallery Weekend Berlin. 2020. *Meet Nina Canell—Gallery Weekend Berlin 2020*. https://vimeo.com/450515374.

Geerts, Evelien. 2016. “Ethico-onto-Epistem-Ology.” New Materialism: How Matter Comes to Matter. August 14, 2016. https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/e/ethico-onto-epistem-ology.html

Geerts, Evelien, and Iris van der Tuin. 2016. “Diffraction & Reading Diffractively.” New Materialism: How Matter Comes to Matter. July, 27 2016. https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/d/diffraction.html

González-Torres, Félix, and Tim Rollins. 1993. “Interview by Tim Rollins.” The Félix González-Torres Foundation. 1993. https://www.felixgonzalez-torresfoundation.org/attachment/en/5b844b306aa72cea5f8b4567/DownloadableItem/5ee26da35fc1389477e5dc66

Grosz, Elizabeth. 2001. *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Grusin, Richard. 2015. “Introduction” in *The Nonhuman Turn,* edited by Richard Grusin. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Guattari, Felix. 2015. *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews 1955-1971*. Translated by Ames Hodges. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Haraway, Donna J. 1991. Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna J. 2008. *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press. https://www.scribd.com/document/319647500/Staying-with-the-Trouble-by-Donna-Haraway.

Harman, Graham. 2007. “On Vicarious Causation.” *Collapse* 2: 187–221. https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-010-0059-7.

Harman, Graham. 2010. “Brief SR/OOO Tutorial.” Object Oriented Philosophy. July 23, 2010. https://doctorzamalek2.wordpress.com/2010/07/23/brief-srooo-tutorial/.

Harman, Graham. 2012a. “The Misconception by Which I am Most Frequently Haunted.” Object-Oriented Philosophy. January 18, 2012. https://doctorzamalek2.wordpress.com/2012/01/18/the-misconception-by-which-i-am-most-frequently-haunted/

Harman, Graham. 2012b. *The Third Table*. 100 Notes—100 Thoughts. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz.

Harman, Graham. 2014. “Materialism Is Not the Solution: On Matter, Form, and Mimesis.” *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 24 (47): 94–110.

Harman, Graham. 2018. Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything. London: Pelican Books.

Harman, Graham. 2020. *Art and Objects*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hessler, Stefanie. n.d. “The Return of the Object.” Stefanie Hessler. Accessed February 9, 2021. http://stefaniehessler.com/entries/the-return-of-the-object.

Hester, Bianca. 2007. “Material Adventures, Spatial Productions: Manoeuvring Sculpture towards a Proliferating Event.” PhD diss., Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne. http://www.biancahester.net/files/publications/Hester_full_PHD_text_small.pdf

Hickey-Moody, Anna. 2015. “Manifesto: The Rhizomatics of Practice as Research.” In *Arts, Pedagogy and Cultural Resistance*, edited by Anna Hickey-Moody and Tara Page, 169-192. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Hird, Myra J., and Celia Roberts. 2011. “Feminism Theorises the Nonhuman.” *Feminist Theory* 12 (2): 109–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700111404365.

Hudek, Antony. 2014. *The Object*. Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press.

Ingold, Tim. 2015. “An Ecology of Materials.” In *Power of Material/Politics of Materiality*, edited by Susanne Witzgall and Kerstin Stakemeier, 59-66. Zurich: Diaphanes. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=2127895&ppg=6.

Ingold, Tim. 2010. *Realities Working Papers #15: Bringing Things to Life*. Manchester: ESCR National Centre for Research Methods. http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1306/1/0510_creative_entanglements.pdf

Ingold, Tim. 2019. “169—Tim Ingold.” Episode #169. *Cultures of Energy*. Podcast audio. CENHS. Houston: Rice University. http://culturesofenergy.com/169-tim-ingold/.

Jackson, Robert. 2014. “If Materialism Is Not the Solution, Then What Was the Problem?: A Response to Harman.” *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 24 (47): 111–24.

Joselit, David, Carrie Lambert-Beatty, and Hal Foster, eds. 2016. “A Questionnaire on Materialisms.” *October* 155: 3–110. https://doi.org/10.1162/OCTO_a_00243.

Kasprzak, Michelle. 2013. “Speculative Realities.” Blowup Reader #6. 2013. https://v2.nl/files/2013/ebooks/speculative-realities-blowup-reader-6-pdf.

Kerr, Dylan. 2016. “What Is Object-Oriented Ontology? A Quick-and-Dirty Guide to the Philosophical Movement Sweeping the Art World.” Artspace. April 8, 2016. https://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/the_big_idea/a-guide-to-object-oriented-ontology-art-53690.

Kolozova, Katerina. 2015. “Concepts that Surrender to Materiality and to the Real.” In *Realism Materialism Art*, edited by Christoph Cox, Jenny Jaskey, and Suhail Malik, 253–62. Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Lemke, Thomas. 2017. “Materialism without Matter: The Recurrence of Subjectivisim in Object-Oriented Ontology.” *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* 18 (2): 133–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2017.1373686.

Liboiron, Max. 2021. “Firsting in Research.” Environmental Media Lab. March 3, 2021. https://environmentalmedialab.com/heliotrope/firsting-in-research

Loukola, Maiju. 2017. “Flying Backwards into the Future.” In *Futures of Artistic Research: At the Intersection of Utopia, Academia and Power*, edited by Jan Kaila, Anita Seppä and Henk Slager, 83–92. Helsinki: The Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki.

Loveless, Natalie. 2019. *How to Make Art at the End of the World*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Malik, Suhail. 2013. *2. The Problem with Contemporary Art is not the Contemporary.* YouTube video, 1:46:37. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJkHb0YsdLM

Malik, Suhail. 2015. “Reason to Destroy Contemporary Art.” In *Realism Materialism Art*, edited by Christoph Cox, Jenny Jaskey and Suhail Malik, 185–91. Sternberg Press.

Marder, Michael. 2011. “Vegetal Anti-Metaphysics: Learning from Plants.” *Continental Philosophy Review* 44: 469–89. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-011-9201-x.

McLean-Ferris, Laura. 2013. “Indifferent Objects.” *Art Monthly* 368. http://www.artmonthly.co.uk/magazine/site/article/indifferent-objects-by-laura-mclean-ferris-july-august-2013.

Morton, Timothy. 2016. “All Objects Are Deviant: Feminism and Ecological Intimacy” in *Object-Oriented Feminism,* edited by Katherine Behar. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Morton, Timothy. 2018. “Hyperobjects and Creativity.” In *Hyperobjects for Artists*, edited by Timothy Morton, Laura Copelin, and Peyton Gardner. Marfa: Ballroom Marfa. https://tciassets.s3.amazonaws.com/pdfs/library/hyperobjects-for-artists.pdf.

O’Doherty, Brian. 2012. Studio and Cube: On the Relationship between Where Art is Made and Where Art is Displayed. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Palmer, Helen, and Stanimir Panayotov. 2016. “Transversality.” New Materialism: How Matter Comes to Matter. September 13, 2016. https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/t/transversality.html.

Rollins, Tim, and Félix González-Torres. 1993. “Interview with Tim Rollins.” Edited by Bill Bartman. https://www.felixgonzalez-torresfoundation.org/attachment/en/5b844b306aa72cea5f8b4567/DownloadableItem/5ee26da35fc1389477e5dc66.

Sauzet, Sofie. 2018. “Phenomena—Agential Realism.” New Materialism: How Matter Comes to Matter. March 13, 2018. https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/p/phenomena-agential-realism.html

Schwab, Michael, ed. 2018. *Transpositions: Aesthetico-Epistemic Operators in Artistic Research*. Leuven: Leuven University Press. http://oapen.org/viewer/web/viewer.html?file=http://oapen.org/document/1000226.

Sheldon, Rebekah. 2015. “Form/Matter/Chora: Object-Oriented Ontology and Feminist New Materialism.” In *The Nonhuman Turn*, edited by Richard Grusin, 193–222. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Smith, Hazel, and Roger T. Dean, eds. 2009. *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g0b594.

Stengers, Isabelle. 2015. *In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism*. Translated by Andrew Goffey. London: Open Humanities Press. http://openhumanitiespress.org/books/download/Stengers_2015_In-Catastrophic-Times.pdf.

Steyerl, Hito. 2009. “In Defense of the Poor Image.” *e-flux* 10 (10): 1–9.

Storr, Robert. 2006. “Félix González-Torres: Être Un Espion.” In *Félix González-Torres*, edited by Julie Ault, 229-239. Göttingen: Steidldangin Publishers.

Sullivan, Graeme. 2010. “Art Practice as Research.” In *Art Practice as Research*, 95–120. California: SAGE Publications.

Taylor, Carol A. 2016. "Close Encounters of a Critical Kind: A Diffractive Musing In/Between New Material Feminism and Object-Oriented Ontology." *Cultural Studies—Critical Methodologies* 16 (2): 201–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708616636145.

Truman, Sarah E., Natalie Loveless, Erin Manning, Natasha Myers, and Stephanie Springgay. 2019. "The Intimacies of Doing Research Creation." In *Knowing and Knots*, edited by Natalie Loveless, 221-249. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2020. "When the Things We Study Respond to Each Other: Tools for Unpacking 'the Material.'" In *More-than-Human* edited by Andrés Jaque, Marina Otero Verzier and Lucia Pietroiusti. Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt, Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena, and Feifei Zhou, eds. 2021. *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press. 2021 https://doi.org/DOI 10.21627/2020fa.

Turner, Michael. 2013. "Things' Matter Sets Thoughts in Motion at Or Gallery." Canadian Art. January 3, 2013. https://canadianart.ca/reviews/things-matter-or-gallery/.

Tuin, Iris van der. 2014. "Diffraction as a Methodology for Feminist Onto-Epistemology: On Encountering Chantal Chawaf and Posthuman Interpellation." *Parallax* 20 (3): 231–44. https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/13534645.2014.927631.

Urbanomic. 2010. "Late at Tate: The Real Thing." Urbanomic. September 3, 2010. https://www.urbanomic.com/event/late- at-tate-the-real-thing/.

Vidokle, Anton, and Brian Kuan Wood. 2012. "Breaking the Contract." *e-flux* 37. https://www.e-flux.com/journal/37/61241/breaking-the-contract/.

Voorhies, James. 2017. *Beyond Objecthood*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Walsh, Maria. 2013. "I Object." *Art Monthly* (371) (November): 9–12. http://search.proquest.com/docview/1458730152?accountid=10382.

Wesseling, Janneke. 2011. See It Again, Say It Again: The Artist as Researcher. Amsterdam: Valiz.

Wolfendale, Peter. n.d. “Phase 1” Deontologistics. Accessed June 20, 2021. https://deontologistics.co/phase-1/

Wolfendale, Peter. 2014. Object-Oriented Ontology: The Noumenon’s New Clothes. Cornwall: Urbanomic.