

## Abstract

*Archival Drift: Attention, Performance and Affective Ecologies in Spatial Art Practice* is a practice-led research project consisting of a body of artworks and an exegesis. It explores the potentials of an expanded spatial art practice to contribute to affective ecologies immanent with the biological, social and political spheres.

After the 1960s political activism and the group known as Situationist International, devices of *dérive* (drift) and *détournement* (diversion) suggest ways in which an eccentric archiving in spatial art practice might release it from fixed and/or institutional limits. Positing the vitalism of the verb "to archive" rather than the immutability and sanctity of an official archive, the research seeks out a dynamic archaeological praxis within a process of eccentric archiving.

In opening to the latent potentials in the rhythms and refrains of everyday life, movement between the partially evident previous contexts of artefact components, or *objets trouvés*, and their "becoming" through innovative experimentation and relational processes, are activated in the present milieu. The work thereby enacts an in-between performance; an intermezzo in which virtual and actual forces are harnessed in the production of difference and in the event as a kind of temporal assemblage.

Encompassing aspects of de-territorialisation, an affective ecology entails certain qualities of attention, including paradoxically, intuitive processes of "intentional unintentionality" or diversion, lapsing, looking away, witnessing practices from other fields, and experiencing potentials in the diverse concerns of everyday life. The value of dialogue is also advanced through the writing of Jacques Rancière, requiring the capacity to listen attentively in order to encounter difference productively. Accordingly, an artefact can become a "bridge" between makers and participants producing new understanding and affective responses. This bridge does not collapse differences or seek to convince the other, becoming rather the "cause of knowledge" and works to verify sensations in the material encounter. It sustains the distance in the spectacle and yet invests in the dynamic event of "we", our potential for active social relatedness.

The thesis posits characteristics that might enable affective ecologies of spatial art practice following the ideas and inventions of Erwin Straus, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in advancing the experience of sensation (involving affects, percepts and concepts) through the movement toward a life and of productive desire. Art thereby activates a process of becoming social and political on a molecular, or micro-political level. As in the logic of the art assemblage, whereby material part is locally related to material part and also in the incomplete and aberrant logic of eccentric archiving processes and at the micro-level of nano technologies, localised movements can change the social and political field. In this context, the artist may open their work to (real) opportunities for experimentation and innovation through the actual and also the becoming of the virtual, that is, in the rhizomatic performance between animals, places, and things and the dynamism of relatedness in the spatial field.

The research project examines this proposition through the “performance” of six bodies of work in various spatial contexts, tracking the work’s capacities to sustain art as an archaeological praxis conditioned by the past in the present; in the pressing, chaotic and immanent conditions comprising the verb “to live”.

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