



**OUR  
FUTURE  
IS  
ELSEWHERE**

OUR FUTURE IS ELSEWHERE is a collective project. It is a withdrawal from the space where you found this poster, the space of formal curatorial education in an academic institution and its potentiality as yet another exhibition space during the MFA Fine Art Degree Show. Instead of putting our energies into producing a public outcome the graduating class of MFA Curating organised a rural retreat at The Owl Barn residency in Gloucestershire from Friday 8th - Sunday 10th July 2016. This was an act of mutual care, of tending to our needs in order to better care for the needs of others - for artists and for publics. The aim was to share experiences and anxieties, as well as tactics and plans, to catch up with each other, to talk and to listen as we push our horizons back, as we make our futures present tense.

The texts below are collections of writing produced during the three day self-funded residency. They act as windows into the discussions and experiences had during that time and offer a glimpse into the concerns, interests and ideals of the graduating curators.

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I. Squash-Spinach-Chickpea-Curry, The hum inside the belly, Mouths of mortars, The blow across the body, Threads of music ascend, A block away and four stories below, periscopic insights, At night, the body escapes the soul, The clack-clack of a small-arty fire, Long unopened, letters we never read, David Foster Wallace.

II. Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure, you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before it finally plants you. Worship your intellect in being seen as smart. You will end up feeling stupid, a fraud always on the verge of being found out.

III. Dear thinking partners,

To go back to our conversation last night about what shapes contemporary curating (yes Ashlee I'm thinking of you ;)). That conversation reminded me of this class I had way back in my past life where the professor asked us to destroy Philosophy - which maybe relates to curating-withdrawing (I'm not sure). I wrote something about the end of the world being a curated event - like when a paparazzi snaps Hillary Clinton's vagina, or Kanye West killing himself for desperate artistic pursuits, or Marina Abramović locking herself in a toilet at the Serpentine and calling it performance art, or having a second referendum on the Brexit debacle which is very undemocratic but very necessary, or just a group of young curators winning a golden ticket to curator heaven and then fuckin' up everything because they didn't shake hands with Hans Ulrich Obrist (aka God) or something. So essentially an event, or shall I say, curating is an effect that seems to exceed its cause and the space of an event that opens up the gap that separates an effect from those causes. So in destroying philosophy/ re-inventing what curating can or will be, we have to get ourselves wet in the cesspool of problems it deals with, by asking: are all things/ objects connected with links? Is everything a fucking curatorial constellation? Or do these things just somehow happen out of nowhere, forged organically? So it goes to this line of thinking about quantum cosmology, the brain sciences and evolutionism. And maybe I have to quote Stephen Hawking's grand claim that 'philosophy is dead' in his book 'The Grand Design'. Maybe we should all declare that 'curating is dead', to be noticed and to be taken seriously by the art world. Something radical. Something Anthropocentric. Something sexy. Sounds so complex right? But basically what I'm arguing is that killing philosophy is a form of curating that happens in the mental sphere. That departing from philosophy is arriving yet again to another territory which is still in the realm of the intellect. Like curating happening in the brain and staying in the brain, and the only way to let it out is telling stories at a dinner party? Anyway, I'm pretty sure you've encountered lots of these things in your adventures and quest for love and solitude, OH, and critical studies! It would be really great if we could hang out again elsewhere, in the future.

Lovingly.

LEXICON 'Ali Meijas introduces the "paranode," a term that conceptualizes that which is other - or an alternative to - a network configuration. The paranode is an antidote to "nodecentrism," which argues Meijas, is the dominant model for organising and assembling the social. Derived from neuroscience, the paranode is the space that networks leave out, the negative space of networks, the noise between nodes and edges. It is the space that lies "beyond the topological and conceptual limits of the node."" (Z. Blas, 'Contra-Internet', 2016) RESPONSE Is the future countless wrinkles around your eye balls, or creases on your five-head? Is the future the routine of a 9:5 j-o-b, or cleaning your not-so-dirty jeans everyday? Does the future exist in becoming an adult? If the future was that adult, would it tell you to get a life? QUESTIONS Does stuff come from things? Is it Internet or internet? Are there any Pokémon's around? Are you developing a lot of muscles on your fingers? Should Betty Boop + Bertold Brecht ever be mentioned in the same sentence? Is this where all the Brexit voters live? Is the core of the earth metal? Where does the internet end and the real world begin? PEOPLE WHO SAY THIS ARE THE PEOPLE TO FOLLOW THROUGH THE GATES OF HELL "Follow me! The cool sculpture is over here!" (anonymous Filipino) THE END Let's go full fucking femme.

Pace, a barometer of environmental pressure to produce. Arriving with an overwhelming obsession with time, its instrumentation, cultural and physical implications ZZZzzzzhSSSS Among flora and fauna from dusk to dawn, we are reduced to these basic measurements of its passing. An ease floats intimate reflections on what has been delivered; a seemingly impossible list of immaterial labour and collaborations born out of good faith. While considering where our individual futures lie causes continues lulls and long stares toward the ceiling, fire, plate or sky, the heavy impatience of the city, for a moment, *l i f t* s. Rare is a group pulled out of step, able to maintain its atten-

tion and avoid dissipating in overindulgence. Shared passion is not to be underestimated - given space - necessity and time steady.

I think of the earlier collectives we now observe through polaroids under glass. Images of loose fitting clothing - if any- costumed tribes wandering through fields and questioning the border between production and party. Perhaps as radicants we are only piecing fragments together in a form of best intentioned appropriation. But how encouraging to discover a space for Bar to march to the beat of his own drum into intellectualized fields while we scatter reflecting in the sun.

A rural retreat for rest and reflection but lives are busy. Diaries and dates. Planning and planning. Because we care. Because each subject matters. Because together it's good.

We've withdrawn. This time our work is not public. Our work is not work. This isn't immaterial labour. This is care. This is support. This is a better way to build.

Finally we are many. We eat and drink and light a fire, sprawl comfortably in the silence of the rural night. The cat joins. Worries, plans, passions, ideas. It gets late. Sleep is deep.

On the grass in the sunshine. Dylan sings. Trying to write these words. There is meaning here. The food made. The words spoken. The time shared. How can I convey to you the lack of self-interest; the desire to do good, make change, question, support, build?

From The Owl Barn down Dark Lane to the woods. City dwellers meet trees and fields of wheat. Beyond the noise we think clearly. Beyond ambition we share. We write to remember this.

1. A notebook is found on the table when we arrive, as if it waited for us. Upon opening we see two lined-pages, an illustration of a bird on the top left upper corner, a nest of eggs bottom right. Scrawled in pencil on the top of the right-hand page reads: 'We will not follow, we will not lead.' There is space outside leading and following, so much space. Echoing Feminist Art Gallery: 'We can't compete, we won't compete, we can't keep up, we won't keep down.' We can be in this space together, outside.

2. Pickles is following us down the driveway. What if Pickles follows us on the hike and runs off? Turning the corner obscures the sight lines between us. On our walk we talk about our future and hug tress and feel the wheat sway in our hands.

3. While listening, stare up at the unfinished mural on the ceiling. Between the swirls of colour and figures: 'Dans mon jardin d'hiver' and 'Fuck the Police.' The latter in tune with FB posts about #Black-LivesMatter and recent atrocities and more deaths. Scroll for more, Baghdad bombings, Orlando shooting, refugees fleeing and meeting resistance, and more. How do we make our efforts count? How do we make the future a collective project?

4. Marching through the field, the five stop at a natural clearing, a rock uncovered on which to stand. The five start talking: What's next? What's after the after? Jobs, definitions of roles, labour conditions and the value of time, the familiar precarity, and its exhaustion. Also to look forward to: the support of those who stand on the solid stone, through what's to come. Turning back on the path, one is stung by a stinging nettle. Another finds a dock leaf for a compress.

5. Why won't the fire take? Its foundations built in reverse order, then rebuilt forward. Still, the damp hinders ignition. The damp, its tired weight of all that lies ahead can be lifted though. It takes more than one to try.

6. The blade is missing from the blender. The soup remains clear, chunky, part meshed together. The group likes it this way. Its like them, a semi-solid amalgam of subjectivities, sharing so much, yet retaining individual structural integrity, at least in part. Not blended or erased: glad the blade is missing.

7. Ham's internal clock is set for waking hours between late afternoon and late evening. Over-hearing many of our discussions, Ham is part of the group and can come out of his cage when Pickles isn't around. When held in hands, Ham doesn't stop moving: climbing out of grasp, the holder needs to be quick to keep Ham. Break. Hold. Break. Hold. Break. Hold. Ham's boulder is ever rolling down, but Ham always pushes back, up the hill.

8. There's an odd protrusion in the waves of wheat. Looks like the stubby sticks of a long dead bush. It tilts, then the body previously un-seen emerges, fur spotted. The bounds of the young deer captivate our gaze. Wheat too tall to walk through, the obstacle can be overcome with a different type of movement.

9. In the loft, a bird flies through the window on one side, past the canvas and the placard reading 'The belatedness of painting' and slams into the window on the other side. Interrupting a planning session, curators ask "how do we care for a bird?" Kind hands catch the fluttering wings, trapped for only moments, extended briefly for the mobile phone cameras, then released from the window of its entry.

A bug flies in circles around my head and sits down on my glasses, it starts for another round and lands on my screen. "Hide it in a hiding place where no one ever goes," Simon & Garfunkel sing. A four-leaf clover grows next to me, my body on the ground. Legs, belly and chest leaving their mark on the ground. Stranded here? What does the present bear? What does the future bring? Am I lucky? An airplane in a distance, a cars engine sounds. "Man searching for Pokémon at 3am caught up in drug deal," it says. I put my iPhone away. The bug still crawls around my masked webcam. Following its way to these lines I wonder what to write. A skeptical frown accompanies my little pleasure trip, me starting anew, going elsewhere.

"Frankie is the Future. She is the generation that will replace me." Ashlee to Frankie. "The rooster woke up quite late." "Yes, this is because he is chasing the birds." Ashlee and Nathalie. "I'm just play-

ing the Devil's Advocate here." Ken to himself. "He had a vision of me." Nathalie about Bar. "When do we shave our hair... Undercut?" Christian to the group. "Maybe we should shave our eyebrows..." Erik to the group. "And then maybe we get babies to wear our hair as wigs." Tami to the group. "Or we mix everyone's blood to make a super-curator." Frankie to the group. "Is this phallic?" Nathalie about a clay sculpture. "I obviously did not do what all of you did. For some reason I can never do what is required." Frankie about her text. "How did you catch it?" Ashlee to Bar who rescued a bird. "We should all watch Aladin together!" Ken to the group.

We had a long walk from here to there and I have been thinking of what you said:

"When someone is not doing art, and they come into your life, you suddenly realise that there's another life in this world and you would love to get into it." Yet we are consistently standing on the same stage and expecting the next plot to follow. This particular period of time is somehow suspended. During that period, we long to hear the end of the story.

So we remain on the stage - never leaving; never getting rid of what we care about, what we do and what we are passionate about. And yes, the future is the time that we anticipate 'what is to come'.

A place, an accumulation of histories, I think as I pass between the rooms of this house. The spirits are strong here.

At night, I have a vision of Nathalie. She is standing on a mountain cliff, her chest is hollow and in her center, stands a drum. In her hands, she holds two enormous drumsticks that she then uses to beat her heart-drum from behind, creating waves of vibrating and pulsing sounds that flow into the mounty landscape around her.

In the morning, I go to the attic and find a large piece of paper with a quote by Jung written on it: "...in a cosmos where everything is already born and everything has already died."

Our future is elsewhere. But where exactly? Elsewhere implies a location, a geographic coordinate, a specific yet mischievous place. However, for me, elsewhere is located in stories. It is more than a destiny, it is an immaterial and non-existent place that implies possibility. It is simultaneously anywhere and nowhere, as it moves constantly in order to postpone its realization: elsewhere is never here. Precisely because its lack of place, it can be a figment of our imagination, a desire, a dream a utopia. I myself believe that I have found this place located in the relationship between literature and art - narrations, tales and wishful thinking - those alterities that can reconstruct reality. Elsewhere lies in our stories, the old and the ones to come - and as Gilda Williams always says: 'When in doubt, tell a story'.

The sound we heard from the hollow stage seems to tell where our future is. But, how if we together step down the ground? That we don't need the stage anymore; we play nothing but ourselves.

Who says about future again? It's just something that gonna happen but not yet. Or, as we say, it has happened when you dreamed.

It's weird that your future has already shown in someone's vision. But whatever it is, I like it. At least, I have nothing to worry about, but others.

I very strongly feel that life can't be planned. You only can make the choices that feel right in that moment, and eventually you end up where you need to be. I don't want to be tied down by one subject. What I'm focusing my research on now does not solely define my future path. I'd like to be led by artists and their ideas, and see where my interest takes me.

With everything going on in the world, with reports of conflict and death on our news feed and television screens day after day it is easy to be disillusioned. I have found humour to be a comforting and illuminating companion. Crying, while a completely natural and valid form of catharsis, must sometimes be replaced by laughter or else the weight of the world will just be too much. Humour is complex, nuanced, and often able to shed light onto serious issues in unexpected ways. As an emerging curator, this is something that I hope to continue exploring.

Lean back. Feet on the ground. Double the time. Stretch it times three. Never equals what it was supposed to be. Four for the red. Five for the white. Provisions. Padding around. Testing it out. Coming together. Drifting apart. Elsewhere is else-ever Immanent but vague No set plans but suggestions. Eeking out. Bends and mudtracks. Striving towards a resolution. Someone make coffee. One more to go. Lean in. Sistine all around us. – What comes after the break? Roses for sale.

What's the new normcore? How much for a coffee? Did you get paid yet? Can we still talk? Here's to us. Here's to you. Here's to them Here's to the future.

£250 day rate Negotiations begin. To curate or not to curate. That is the question. Or how to curate. That is the question. Whether to join the institution Corporate yourself Or go non-profit and un-hierarchy bound But all the while still be about the art. And touching the art.

Cock crows. We got there in the end. Curator 3.0 Feedback loop Circular arrangements Interlaced movements

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