Heinrich Ehnert
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Konstfack, University of Arts, Crafts and Design

Stilles Design: A pursuit for creating conditions for openness
Preface

This essay accompanies the practical part of my master thesis. It is also a collection of thoughts, discussions and theoretical concepts I have been dwelling on while I was studying for my Master’s degree at Konstfack. They are in some parts closely connected to the practical part of my thesis but also discuss important more fundamental topics and realisations that led me into the given proposal. The following text fragments thus attempt to loosely span an arc from discussing theoretical concepts to the more descriptive and documentary aspects of this thesis. Considering this, I would like to emphasise that the single parts of the essay do not need to be read in a specific or linear order.
Abstract

The present work represents both a design proposal and a proposal for design. Today we are exposed to more and louder noise than ever before in all areas of human life, which alters the environment, our health and the quality of social interaction to the worse. Therefore, this project takes its departure point in the concept of Stille (German for stillness and silence) in order to oppose this culture of noise. Our surroundings influence our actions and vice versa we alter these surroundings with our actions. However, since constructed within every detail, they do not allow a transient feedback to take place naturally. A possible otherness is hardly attainable in an overly planned reality.

This thesis seeks to transcend the boundaries where descriptive language ceases to function and introduces materiality and interactive devices to evoke other avenues of reflection where the boundaries of actor, context and artefact converge.

The proposal at hand embodies the fundamental principles of Stille in order to exploit aspects of parametric design and contingency. It imagines and materialises alternative ways of a potentially open process in which our physical environment could continuously constitute itself. Both hidden and apparent aspects of reality are unravelled and transformed into artifacts. The work depicts the transient complexity of reality and the contingent influence of everyone on our surroundings.

How is our behaviour altered by the materialisation of ideas?
How receptive is the current design practice to a constantly changing reality?
Introduction to my strategy

Everything and everyone is in a state of constant transition. Inevitably we age, something is always transformed, modified, altered, created and destroyed. Simultaneously we as human beings create, render and surround ourselves with artefacts, structures and systems that are to certain degrees defined and fixed. This is of course due to the fact that we have to adjust to the imperatives of life itself. We have to eat, sleep, are born into differently privileged societal environments, exposed to harmful or pleasant influences and our bodies are biologically equipped with unique limited capabilities. As such we are for example not able to fly with our mere bodies. However, we expand our possibilities through our ability to creatively react, develop and design ourselves away from the mere imperatives of life. In this sense I believe we strive towards an emancipation of these imperatives. In expanding our scope or radius of action we constantly cross the baseline of the impossible. In doing so we are always facing an in some sense infinite amount of bifurcations. Which means everything that is “neither necessary nor impossible...” is given (to be experienced, expected, thought; fantasized) with regard to possible otherness; it refers to objects in the horizon of possible variations.4

Luhmann coined the term contingency also in regard to the subjective perception of the world. No one can claim that their perception is the only possible and correct one. No one can predict how the other perceives due to the contingency of the other. Contingency is therefore based on distinctions and constructions, which could always be done in a different way. This contingent aspect of life itself, the notion of a possible otherness, triggers my curiosity and imagination and has a major impact on to my work. In his theory time is conceptualized not as a single linear strand, but in terms of reversibility and irreversibility in a system. Processes are irreversible, singular events in time. Of all possibilities something is eventual- ly happening always in a particular way. Whereas structure can make time reversible or repeatable to a certain degree.

Both depend on each other in so far as the conditioned structure is created procedurally in time and thus captures unconditioned, contingent moments. A structure therefore potentially creates a vision of the perpetual.

With my work I try to question these conditions or norms and the way we look upon our realities by means of objects and installations. To me this is not necessarily bound to a previously defined context. On the contrary it allows opportunities to work on a project and apply meaning to it through the interaction with it after the exploration has been carried out. I believe this way of working opens for a way of understanding that is not too constrained out. I believe this way of working opens for a way of understanding how the new perceptible element in a speculative design proposal can then catalyse reflection about our surroundings in a different way.

Kenya Hara’s concept of ex-formation strengthens this idea when he comments on the information supply that has exceed a critical mass so knowledge ceased functioning as a medium to activate thought:

“What constantly invigorates the human mind is the unknown; we aren’t animated by what we already know, but we are eager to make the world known.”

He aims towards disregarding the cycle of already known information to create an entrance for curiosity. In exchanging the prefix “in” with “ex” he argues how important it is not to simply make things known but to understand how little we know.

In my point of view design proposals move between dependencies and imagination, in other words necessities and contingent aspects of life, which constitute the underlying conditions for emerging areas of action. In doing so, as Friedrich von Borries describes, they inherit both a liberating design character (in the sense of removing oneself from chains) and a subjugating character in different ratios7 and thus reflect the potentially deliberate ability of me as a designer to what extent I impose my ideas onto the world or in contrast how empathically I envision new areas of action, or improve existing ones.

1  Luhmann, 2006
2  Bredie, 2015
3  Luhmann, 1998
4  Jonas and Meyer-Veden, 2004
5  Jonas and Meyer-Veden, 2004
6  Jonas and Meyer-Veden, 2004
7  Borries, 2017
Background

The exploration started off with the realisation of my situation. I live in a loud and fast environment in a major European city. Here I often find myself entangled in meaningless activities that are camouflaged meaningful. In most activities I am rendered merely as a consumer. In a sense I feel alienated and detached from natural processes that surround us and these very surroundings. Instead we are highly dependent on technology and human made systems. Simultaneously happens a process of an anaestheticisation through design in prettifying the surfaces of these surroundings. What happens when our senses lose track of that which has been excluded through critical design? Wolfgang Welch writes:

“Total aesthetization results in its opposite. Where everything becomes beautiful, nothing is beautiful anymore. Continued excitement leads to indifference, aesthetization breaks into anaesthetization. It is, then, precisely aesthetic reasons which speak in favor of breaking through the turmoil of aesthetization. Amidst the hyper-aesthetization aesthetically fallow areas are necessary.”

I wondered how little is possible to leave space for the unseen, unexpected and unplanned? How can I re-sensitize through my work?

I would like to borrow from Ludwig Wittgenstein, the philosopher, who coined the phrase “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.” He coined this phrase with respect to the limits of language. Wittgenstein was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century. He did not only think and write about the big questions in philosophy. He also designed an entire house including even the the unseen, unexpected and unplanned? How can I re-sensitize through my work? the repetition of those (old) patterns. He coined this phrase with respect to the limits of language. Wittgenstein was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century. He did not only think and write about the big questions in philosophy. He also designed an entire house including even the surroundings. Instead we are highly connected to the aesthetic treatment and creation of the surfaces I am surrounded by. It is part of the design profession to create those surfaces. What triggers me is the repetition in which this acts of creating are happening. I found myself criticising the current design capitalism (in non-academic contexts) where a modern extended design term seems to be absent surfaces. I am surrounded by. It is part of the design profession to create those surfaces. What triggers me is the repetition in which this acts of creating are happening. I found myself criticising the current design capitalism (in non-academic contexts) where a modern extended design term seems to be absent. This work would not have come into being within a commercial context. The system rather reinforces the repetition of those (old) patterns. I enjoy to create spaces, objects or experiences for our everyday life experience. Something concrete and applicable yet facing towards and opening for a transitional self-conception.

As a designer and craftsperson, I am drawn to both fields. I would like in a manner of Wittgenstein not allow myself being paralysed by this two, how I perceive them, opposing worlds of design. You may think big, but you still can and should work and think about the small details like a door handle. The world manifests itself also in the small things which are part of the whole. To me this is a very revealing thought, but it also implies a portion of responsibility about the ethical decision what is included and what is othered in every piece of my work.

This brings me to the question of my own position within design and the aspects I would like highlight in my work. Previously I have often been working in a discursive way following somewhat the path of critical design. One aspect I found frustrating was that I rather pointed at issues/problems than solving them. However, I enjoy this kind of discursive work in and with design since it offers some great tools to deal with complex and messy topics. Specifically the possibility of asking and addressing questions through materialisations I find a relevant way of working. I understand design as a question asking activity rather than a merely problem solving activity: communicating through propositional artefacts, as Stuart Walker proposes, understood as specific but non-definative constitutuents of a continually unfolding process.

The other direction is quite the opposite: the field of materials, techniques and products which is connected to the aesthetic treatment and creation of the surfaces I am surrounded by. It is part of the design profession to create those surfaces. What triggers me is the repetition in which this acts of creating are happening. I found myself criticising the current design capitalism (in non-academic contexts) where a modern extended design term seems to be absent. This work would not have come into being within a commercial context. The system rather reinforces the repetition of those (old) patterns. I enjoy to create spaces, objects or experiences for our everyday life experience. Something concrete and applicable yet facing towards and opening for a transitional self-conception.

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Self-conception of design

My thoughts around artefacts are characterized by a no longer supportable superfuous materialistic environment. Modern western lifestyle is based on consumption that is constituted to a great extent on constructed needs and desires. When thinking about our physical environment today it is important to question what kind of norms any newly introduced artefact reinforces and what role it may play in an everyday life. With my work I would like to constantly poke the norms on what we have agreed on since our surroundings are in a continuous transition. To me it is no longer sufficient in the design practice to just recombine manufacturing methods and materials into new desirable shapes and new products-instead a focus needs to be on facilitating behavioural change: not only of the ones we are designing for or together with. Design itself needs to reposition its own role and behaviour in the consumerist system of overproduction and consumption, which to a big extend has been caused and promoted by design itself. The design role needs to be reinvented-away from the role as a catalyst for economic growth. John Wood proposes a direction away from discrete proposals, towards focusing on a relational and interactive approach in order to find synergies. In this project I investigate how materialised synergies could support a paradigm shift in behaviour in relation to the chosen issue Stille (german for silence, stillness) together with its inevitably entangled sibling sound.

18 Wood, 2013
17 Metadesigners Network, 2018
15 Rampell, 2016
14 Walker, 2014
13 Dunne and Raby, 2013
11 Wittgenstein, 1964
10 Ibid.
9 Buwert, 2015
8 Rampell, 2016

![Door handle as found in the Wittgestein house in Vienna](image)
Stille (Issue)

I began my work with the theoretical examination of the subject of silence and stillness. I found this very fitting, as this topic was in strong contrast, but also alignment, with the issues and thoughts described above. The German expression Stille is used for the phenomenon of silence. It includes both auditory and visual conditions of the phenomenon. Obviously, Stille and silence are related to the world of noise and sound but there are more dimensions to it that I wanted to address in my work.

The issue I explored is a highly ambivalent and subjective one to which everyone has a very individual approach. Something that I regard as Stille may be very uncomfortable for someone else.

That is why I think it is important to look at this concept from the design point of view.

Silence is an abstract concept of a state. It is not possible to experience complete silence. Your own blood flow, breathing, heartbeat or the inner voice grows louder—up to a point that most of us who do not use hand to hang out with the own thoughts for a while will find this very challenging. The cacophony takes place both inside and outside of ourselves. The human being can feel calm inside when everything around seems loud and vice versa we sometimes feel loud and chaotic inside, when everything else becomes quiet. Hardly anyone has access to places of total, artificial environmental silence like an anechoic chamber provides. What defines this abstract concept and what are representations of it in a common reality, apart from the fact that today it seems to be a luxurious commodity that can be bought through appropriate equipment in form of noise-cancelling headphones or in places for retreat and meditation?

"There is no such thing as silence. Something is always happening that makes a sound...Silence is not acoustics. It is a change of mind, a turning around."—John Cage

The mind of you as the reader opens to that which you enter and from which you constantly withdraw to validate my reasoning and conclusions.

talking about the etymological roots of silence one can find two good explanations. The first one is rooting in the gothic verb anslian, which means wind that is dying down.

The second one deduce from the Latin word desine- re, describing a complete stop of motion. Both are showing a connection to the idea of interruption not just sound but, of the imposition of our egos onto the world.

To understand the different notions of Stille one needs to experience it. I believe everyone can relate to it from memories of a specific situation, like visiting the forest or in contrast to its opposite—noise in a crowded street or the moment someone turns off the constantly running air conditioner.

Stille is a notion that can be looked upon from different angles. To support this it is helpful to differentiate the notion unfold into four intertwined paths that include different contexts.

Stille as a condition (in nature, places of refuge...), Stille as a response (in social interaction, shift of attention, flow experiences...), Stille as an environmental issue (accessibility, information/ex-formation, imposition...), Stille as a metaphysical issue (in spirituality, meditation, reflection, sufficiency...).

These distinctions are of course overlapping with each other but they supported me to structure the exploration and helped to demarcate what I have been working on in the physical part of this thesis.

I believe Stille can be described as a state of self sufficiency and one of non consumption. It is a concept that challenges the prevailing paradigm of constant innovation. Stille is a topic that in its relational nature reveals the subjectivity in which each individual relates to it. In this exploration I tried to work towards a design approach that imagines a focus on spiritual well-being rather than on consumption.

Speaking rather imagining desirable futures than precisely the surfaces of my surroundings.

Stille is a very practical requirement in our everyday life where it offers enlightenment of various kinds, not just the spiritual. Everyone is affected by the politics and culture of noise. I understand silence not as a withdrawal from the world or social surroundings rather it supports to engage more fully within it.

The travel writer Pico Iyer states:

"Retreating from the cacophony of the world is stepping towards everything that is essential, stepping towards the world and really to learn to love the world again. Silence is where we hear something deeper than our chatter; silence where we speak something deeper than our words, the things we cannot express. Our relation to faith, to love, death and divinity. Silence is a resting place for everything essential." [24]

I believe a design approach that draws its principles from Stille also relates to an ethic design approach regarding a responsibility towards natural resources and physical resources of human beings.

Surf sends us to sleep, so sound affects us physiologically. Also psychologically it changes our moods and feelings (music, bird songs, construction sites), sound effects us cognitively since our hearing bandwidth is limited and it is affecting us behaviourally: we tend to move away from unpleasant sound towards pleasant sound. Noise is thoroughly integrated as a key part in business ethics not only in the auditory but also the visual content that drives our culture as a means of capturing and holding our attention. The lack of Stille—imposing our lives since the ability to think reflect, create are to a certain degree dependent on being able to access silence and quiet on a regular and predictable basis. The question is if and how we could adjust our environments towards silence?

Stuart Sim writes about the exploitation of noise in our society

"...by the business world, for whom silence and quiet are generally anathema, being states of reflection and, in most cases, of non-consumption. In such an avowedly consumerist society as ours the latter state will always be a target of attention, a test for the marketing temperament." [25]

Urbanisation and cities that never sleep make it harder to find places of true silence and it seems to become a luxury good within our societies whilst technological development accelerates and continues propagating and supporting a constant connected life, featuring visual and audible noise as ways of stimulating consumption. [26, 27] The decision to go off the grid for a while is seemingly hard to make since one could miss out the once in a lifetime opportunity. Paradoxically it seems in times of individualism the possibility of temporal retreat to personal innermost places is constantly challenged.

I do not intend to demonise noise with my exploration. Rather the opposite since noise and sound are constituting the “materials” I am working with. What excites me about the topic is that it can generate such a wide range of response: both from extremely positive to negative. One can always argue for more noise or less noise depending on a mixture of aesthetic and psychological considerations. Our social interaction naturally always involves noise. [28]
Representations of Stille
Stille has played a crucial role in the human history in areas such as literature, language, music, art, all major religions and philosophy.32

In the arts and its aesthetic Stille has been employed as a refusal to conform with conventions seen in paintings of Suprematist artists like Kazimir Malevich’s White and Black Square. His works on the non-representational allow for interpretation as representation of silence. He stated this painting depicted and expressed nothing. What interests me is that it is hardly possible to say if it represents silence or if it has silence as a subject.33

The difference between silence as subject and that which simply leaves me as beholder speechless can be very subtle within the visual arts. In Ingmar Bergman’s movie “The Seventh Seal” some situations occur where Death leaves questions from the main protagonist Antonius Block unanswered. Scenes such as this succeed in revealing what is often taken to be the central concern of Bergman’s early films, “the silence of God”.34

Music starts and ends in silence and in general it is unthinkable without silence. John Cage puts this reality in his piece 4’33’’ to the next level. His piece consists of three separate movements in which simply nothing happens compared to a piece of classical music: the three movements are separated from each other through an act of closing and opening the piano lid. The incidental unintentional noise that occurs constitutes the work’s content. For Cage sounds are bubbles on the surface of silence. And all sounds are of value to him. I understand silence as the starting point, the level on which reality takes place thus this plane is, according to Cage, never empty.35 Cage describes it as “no silence exists that is not pregnant with sound”. Paradoxically, the basic principle behind Cage’s aesthetics of silence is to sensitize us to noise - the noise that surrounds us at every moment of our lives all over the world. Cage shows us is that there are many types and degrees of silence, and that silence itself is highly relative. Silence as a condition and silence as a response, for example, must always be distinguished from each other.36

Changing soundscapes
We inhabit a world with an acoustic environment radically different from any formerly known. Sounds differ in quality and intensity from those in the past.37 We have more and louder sounds in every aspect of human life. Noise is altering the environment for the worse (on land, under water, in the air). The WHO states noise pollution is a major environmental and public health burden, secondly only to air pollution. It results when we do not listen carefully. We have learned to ignore but our bodies are by nature not able to get used to high noise levels - we barely cope with it. Eventually this leads to stress, anxiety, high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases and heart attacks.39 Maybe this development is due to the difficulty of formulating an exact impression of a soundscape - one can find nothing corresponding to the instantaneous impression of a photography. A microphone can only give us a close up since it samples details. How could we provide a holistically convincing image of a soundscape without the need of reading a sophisticated chart on a silent page? A soundscape represents what we hear not what we see. However, I would argue that some visual and materialised projections could assist in re-sensitising to noise and stimulating clairaudience.40

29 Sim, 2007
30 Biguenet, 2015
31 Biguenet, 2015
32 Sim, 2007
33 Biguenet, 2015
34 Det sjunde inseglet, 1957
35 Sim, 2007
36 Latour, 2008
37 Sim, 2007
Forest bathing (Shinrin-yoku in Japanese) is an element of climate therapy which can be used specifically for preventive and therapeutic, but also rehabilitative purposes. There are numerous international studies documenting the health-promoting aspects on the body and psyche: it is proven to prevent illness, reduce stress and strengthen the immune system. Forest bathing has a long tradition in Japan and South Korea. During a stay in the forest, people are addressed with all their senses. An essential criterion for the designated areas in the forest is a prevailing quality in the sense of silence — respectively the absence of artificial noises.

Erling Kagge, a Norwegian adventurer and editor, describes in 33 short essays his very own experiences and thoughts on the topic. His stories span from his 52 days trip to the South Pole on his own, to remarks about music from composer Beethoven, deaf in his later years, or the earlier mentioned John Cage.

His writing made me realize that there are no artefacts per se required to experience or to be able to relate to Stille as a condition.

However, how we relate to the artefacts that constitute our surroundings, how they shape and influence our behaviour and constitution on a physiological, psychological and behavioural level is an important subject for discussion. For example have smartphones changed our way of communicating with each other and how we access information. Also the shape of a chair defines the way we interact. A comfortable arrangement of lounge chairs versus dining chairs carefully aligned around a dining table let us relate and communicate differently to each other. We are inevitably entangled with the artefacts that surround us. This entanglement I wanted to promote in my work.

Since each individual perceives and evaluates silence differently, I would like to express this uniqueness, like every moment that is fleeting. How can we adjust — should we adjust our approach in design to different issues in order to act more empathetically? It feels necessary to me as a designer to develop a constant feeling for the fact that everything is in a continuous flux.
Comments on Meaning

The designer inscribes messages and meaning into an object which is understood during interaction with it. The artefact becomes meaningful through this interaction of the stakeholder. Therefore they have no notable identity outside of that which we confer upon them. This is a controversial statement. If their value is entirely a product of the interaction that we have with them, then as Duchamp’s urinal for example, things become artworks (or other potential carriers of meaning) not because they contain value per se, but because we are prepared to see them as such and such. We allow ourselves to have a specific experience and emotions from them and we allow ourselves to put them into contexts that bestow meaning to them.

"Sensations do not mean that the object carries meaning like water in a bucket; instead meaning is constructed in the present when the object is ‘read’. The interpretation of the object is always dependent on the context and the background. We connect brief events to compose meaning and create a larger whole — an everyday story." 43

In Actor Network Theory44 relations between different actors and actants are constantly created and renegotiated. The presence of and affordance for interaction provides for possible meanings that is inscribed into the objects upon interaction. I understand interaction in two different ways. Interaction may be understood as a conscious act in a sense of acting out together with... but it also includes the moment information is comprehended and processes are followed and embodied. The latter therefore does not necessarily involve physical interaction. However, I see both as an act of adding to or complementing a given situation in a physical or mental way.

We decide how our physical reality in form of material structure is made visible and what stays hidden. Our sensual perception of the world is influencing our experience of it. A receptive mind finds oneself in a feedback loop influenced through the physical surroundings which we as human beings shaped, shape and will shape. I agree with Katharina Bredies who argues that design that disrupts existing meanings is meaningful and what is not?

I am interested in employing the design practice to change the conditions that help us to decipher the available data of our surrounding. I claim that every conceivable information is already available in cryptic form. Figuratively speaking, perhaps the easiest way to illustrate this is through the process of materializing or actualizing thoughts; a thought becomes a concept that is developed into a design and finally materialized.

We assemble data as information by choosing interpretations in an understandable and meaningful context in order to create knowledge. Sanders and Stappers who introduced this contested transition from phenomena to wisdom are, as I am, interested in an open-ended design context and on “exploration and identification of presumably positive future opportunities.” Their suggestion to achieve this openness is co-creation that involves users in the design process. 45 During my studies I realised I do not share these beliefs, at least I do not think that is the only possible path to pursue in design. Design innovation is independent from and does not necessarily need to be guided by user study, whether in a participatory way or otherwise. 46

I am interested in the generative capacity of a projective design practice to conceive and synthesize future situations, contexts, or artefacts. As Krippendorff points out, designers also seek opportunities to create something new, even when there is no problem. 47 In this scenario I hope meaning is created through meaningful interaction within a given situation since, as I have argued, the artefacts and devices can’t provide meaning themselves.

Imagine a line, connecting two extremes, with a roller coaster defining one extreme and an open meadow the other one. Both ends symbolize opposition, closed and open design approaches. The latter does not imply a prescribed set of instructions, rather it embodies a infinite set of possibilities to be carried out at this very spot. Whereas the roller coaster embodies a concise set of instruction with a defined storyline, I would like to position the intention of my work closely towards the imaginary meadow. With my thesis I want to comment on what is predestined by our environment and where is space for uniqueness and the possible others.5

Concerning design I believe here lies a great pragmatic use of the concept Stille as an underlying guideline. I connect this thought closely to a post-consumerist and non dualistic design profession which strictly divides the rational from the spiritual. Walker describes that by highlighting an ideological shift from disproportionate emphasis on noisy rationalistic patterns of thought towards silence and reflectiveness that are taking also, together with rational aspects, emotional, intuitive and spiritual patterns into account.52

"Our present course, characterized by a consumption-oriented economic system that sees no value in the idea of sufficiency, is not only socially and environmentally harmful but also largely deficient in qualities that give a deeper sense of fulfillment and meaning to one’s life. One cannot purchase meaningfulness and spiritual well-being; each of us has to find them for ourselves." 53

Which reality is potentially meaningful, worth to be illustrated and recorded? And who decides for what is meaningful and what is not?
The Unfinished / Openness / Open-endedness

In regard to the topic at hand I asked myself if something physical can trigger Stille in individuals in order to provide space for reflective thought. Initially I have been thinking of the concepts whitespace, the white canvas, Tabula Rasa and Uncoded spaces. How to design as little as possible? I argue those ideas do not exist but as highly questionable theoretical constructs when we relate it to design. Design to me is nothing that is executed in or into a void. Design as a human activity always relates to other human and non-human beings and environments. In this project I reflect on creating conditions for systems and rules that allow materialise artefacts that “our sense of taste would never have allowed us to do. But then a sense of taste may expands to accommodate them.” Brian Eno refers to the functional identity of things as a product of our interaction with them and our own identities are products of our interaction with everything else. A prior irritation has allowed us to open for potential meaningfulness. In a continuous flow of events taking place that never rends something as finished at a specific point in time. Natural limitations or physical constraints and personal decisions set the frame for this thought experiment in a real life context.

Open-ended is here naturally constraint, through the imperatives of life, since everything eventually is finite. However, what I can propose is translating the theoretical open-endedness into a possible openness of our constructed surroundings. I imagine cultural artefacts and the people who use them as constantly open-ended. Our cultural heritage says things have a “nature,” and that this nature is fixed and describable. On the contrary we know that this nature is in a constant transition, whether it is natural or mostly human induced as for example the decimation of species to which we then adjust our baselines to define what is “normal.” We slowly realise that this idea is insupportable – the “nature” of something is not by any means singular, and depends on where and when you find it, and what you want it for. Taking its (historical) story into account.

“Now a lot of cultures far more “primitive” than ours takes this entirely for granted – surely it is the whole basis of animism that the universe is a living, changing, changeable place. It’s not nostalgia or admiration of the exotic – it’s saying, here is a bundle of ideas that we would do well to learn from.” Brian Eno

To me open-endedness implies the interactive: to take part in something for a specific period of time.

Contextualisation

My attempt is to comment on designed conditions of our surroundings and present their interplay between subjectivity and objectivity. A central role is played by the interaction of humans and devices. Therefore I contextualise this project in the broad field of interaction design since it focuses, besides an aesthetic translation of transient, invisible qualities of our soundscapes into visible, physical form, to a big extent on behaviour.

In design proposals the context defines the core of the project and gives constraints to gestalt, materials used and stakeholders involved. A context oriented design practice may lead to highly applicable and relevant results. However, during my Studies in the Masters program at Konstfack I tried to position my own work as an open and explorative way reflecting and relating to my surroundings. My intention in this project was to conclusively continue this way of working.

In a proposal that emphasises openness, form and context are blurred and inevitably entangled. It may be interesting to highlight the form-context distinction which may be seen as two different aspects to take into consideration when it comes to proposals in design. It is the distinction of what is considered part of the design exploration and that which is not. Following Katharina Bredies arguments, the boundary where the “form” ends and the “context” begins, for design artefacts, is anything but obvious. Within every design proposal we also have to consider who and what is affected and included in the periphery of the work. Bredies example is very apt: Does the “form” of a radio include radio stations, emission infrastructures, Dis, and listeners, or not? The discussion around the distinction of form and context shows the importance of an integrated view in a design approach.

Design attempts to generate proposals that are generally valid and applicable to a group of stakeholders. Such approaches play with a balance of generalisation and specification. My investigation of the topic Stille was initially also characterized by holistic and generalizing approaches, with the attempt to find a definition and a representation of that which is generally fair to the term. But any definition of a term automatically excludes all other possible definitions one may think of. For example, it is of course possible to describe the phenomenon Stille in physical quantities. However, such a definition makes no meaningful contribution in order to make the degrees of abstraction of this “relational concept” more tangible. I found the materialisation of the physical phenomenon Stille less useful for communicating my insights since I am not after creating a space in which simply Stille prevails that is to be experienced. What kept my intention instead were the very relative and subjective aspects of Stille.

My intention with that was based on my idea of consciously working towards the topic at hand from different perspectives specifying the context as I explore. Of course this carried the risk of remaining vague and not differentiating the work from any other context. This decision was deliberately made in an attempt to work exploratory emphasising a projective design practice that imagines “what if’s” and that proposes a more emotional access for feeling and being engaged with our surroundings. The work developed into combining parametric production methods, visualisations of data and interactive aspects in regard to the initial issue Stille. Potentially the physical context could be any place on this planet where humankind is intervening or interaction could take place.

53 Lattouf, 2008
54 Eno, 2006
55 Latour, 2008
56 Eno, 2008
57 Ibid.
58 Eno, 2018
59 Luhmann, 2006
60 Bredies, 2015
61 Eriksson, Atienza and Pareto, 2017
Strategic detouring (Process)

This part of the essay is more descriptive than the previous remarks and contains both practical stages of the work and terminologies.

I would like to emphasise the word “individual” in the course programme I was allowed to study. I enjoyed developing my own strategy throughout the course of the thesis project; that is a non-linear process where I let myself ponder with the influences I get during the ongoing exploration. This process I named “strategic detouring”. Embracing the detours in my process allowed me to stay susceptible for possible shifts in my focus for anything relevant I would not have imagined before.

My process is characterised by a search for materialisations and representations of Stille which led me into the given synthesised proposal.

Absolute silence

As an appropriate start into my exploration I visited Lisa Abrahamsson who works as a sound technician for the Swedish Radio. Together we experienced the anechoic chamber that is located in the basement of the facilities. In the chamber it is silent. So silent that the ears adapt and eventually we could hear our own heart beating and the gurgling of our stomachs. It seemed as if the anechoic chamber we became the sound and we agreed that it felt like a very disorientating experience which goes along with the fact that people who suffer from sudden hearing loss are often experiencing a sense of "Where am I?". After staying for about 15 minutes in the chamber “re-entering” the “real” world felt like waking up: everyday sounds became a crisp salvation.

62 Biguerret, 2015
Some terminology of sound

Since the main “material” I use is sound I would like to give a short summary to notions I needed to comprehend. This is delimited to the human sense of hearing since I focus on human behaviour.

Our ears allow us to hear sounds as quiet as whisper and as loud as a jet engine. Sound waves are transmitted to our ears through a vibration in the air. Whisper only vibrates the air a little bit while a jet engine vibrates a great deal more intense.

This vibration creates a pressure wave that passes through the air, spreading out in all directions as it goes. Sound pressure is the pressure measured within the wave relative to the surrounding air pressure. Loud sounds produce sound waves with relatively large sound pressures, while quiet sounds produce sound waves with relatively small sound pressures.

If the pressure variations are highly erratic, the resulting sound is noise. Recurrent, regular pressure variations, produce distinct tones with an observable musical pitch. The pressure of the sound wave corresponds to how loudly we hear the sound. As the sound pressure increases, the pressure on the eardrum increases as well, making the sound seem louder. When the frequency increases, the pitch of the sound rises.\cite{64}

The decibel (dB) is a logarithmic unit used to quantify sound pressure levels (SPL), by comparing a physical quantity to a reference level. In acoustics, since I talk about human perception, the decibel is quantified relative to a reference which has been set at a sound pressure level of 20 micropascals (which is the lowest sound audible with a normal hearing) and is called a 0 dB. The human ear has a standard sound threshold of 120 dB, which is considered as painful.\cite{65}

The limits of human hearing depend on both frequency and intensity of the sound and both are measured in dB. Hertz is the standard measure of the frequency of oscillations in a wave motion. The sensitivity of the hearing range is commonly defined between 20 and 20,000 Hz. This limit is more or less approximate and depends on a variety of factors, such as the intensity of the sound and age of the listener. The upper limit of the hearing range falls inevitably with age.

A certain range, the octave, is interesting to examine separately. For example, the range between 110 and 220 Hz forms an octave. The two tones at both ends of the range are recognised as the same regardless of the culture of the listener. The numerical values of the frequencies have a simple numerical ratio: the frequency of the higher sound is twice the frequency of the lower sound. The mathematical ratio and the perception of sameness are related.\cite{65}
Visualisation of sound

To explore the translation of sounds into another quality I experimented with vibrations of membranes caused by sound. Since I was not after Chladni figures that visualise single frequencies I used an experimental setup with a loudspeaker in a bowl and covered with a balloon that is forming the membrane. A tiny mirrored piece glued to the membrane reflects a laser point to a wall where it creates a complex visualisation when sound is being played. Light, with a dot representing silence, was not the right physicality to materialise what was on my mind. Oversimplification would not be an appropriate representation of the multilayered issue Stille. Even though fascinating this was merely an effective way of simultaneously seeing what we hear. I saw no potential in adding a transient layer- rather I strived for capturing what happens.

Addressing subjectivity

In a workshop I asked the participants to slip into the role of emotional robots and individually map their environment on seven spots within a given frame. These spots were gradually less busy or noisy. I constrained the conditions under which each spot was supposed to be documented and expected comparable outcomes. Maybe also due the creative backgrounds of the participants I got all kind of results which were hard to compare, very personal and abstract. This felt like a failure. However, it was rewarding to listen to the participants in a short debriefing session afterwards. Even though the individual records were so different the participant agreed on certain similar feelings and observations each of them experienced. I realised the topic that I was about to explore is a highly ambivalent and subjective one and everyone relates to it individually.
Materialising contingency

In a series of material explorations I looked into aspects of contingency. In repetitive experiments I tried to materialise concrete, yet contingent, elements of everyday life: a droplet resolving in water, a pile of rice, a crumpled piece of paper. I found the results poetically expressive, for although each showed the particular, they pointed at the possible otherness. The experiments illustrated Wittgenstein’s phrase and showed how confined and generalistic concise language can be. We call it “a” crumpled “piece” of paper whereas it shows unique qualities. Of course this is a very simple example, however, it works well for a conclusive metaphor. I believe possible otherness (and openness) is often “othered” in our common reality since we simply cannot express it in words. I think to introduce artefacts as mediators that support us to learn how openness can be reintroduced in our culture.

I continued to experiment with paper as a material and employed papermaking that allows for unique variations of the same thing to evolve. In adding charcoal to the process I intended to magnify this contingent process.

66 Huber and Stoellger, 2013
67 Wittgenstein, 1964
Contemplative objects

With simple rearrangements of everyday objects I wanted to create an aesthetic disruption that cause a silent moment of pause and offer a place for reflection. The Arrangements within a picture frame were proposed to simply invite the mind to think and dwell about elements of our surrounding. Every rearrangement exposes a question rather than displaying things. I thought of creating an inner dialogue within the beholder. I perceived this idea as too passive, too closely related to art and undirected even, I continued to reflect about how to achieve a more active engagement between artefact and beholder.
Approaching interactivity

I was inspired by sound artist Yuri Suzuki whose work is situated in the realms of sound through exquisitely designed pieces and installations. His work comments on the relationship between sound and people, and how music and sound effect their minds.

Arduino based microcontroller units offer all kinds of possibilities when it comes to interactivity. Since my project developed at a fairly early stage towards capturing sounds and sound pressure levels of different surroundings I decided to familiarise myself with it in order to expand my creative freedom. I experienced this as very challenging— to simultaneously teach myself to code, get acquainted with electronics and apply the gained knowledge to my very specific issue.

At some points I felt nervous because the learning curve was very time-consuming and I still did not know whether this would enrich the project in the long term. However, I realised it is a very useful craft to have since it offers so many opportunities to enrich a design proposal. For my purpose I focused on programming how to read environmental data (sounds) and use this to control motors in speed and direction.

Since Stille can be experienced in a myriad of ways I decided to step back from searching for subjective representations of Stille. I now looked into the more measurable and objective aspects of the soundscape of my surroundings. I thought of a device that captures prevailing degrees of noise and silence.

```c
#include <AccelStepper.h>
#include <MultiStepper.h>
#define SoundSensorPin A1
#define VREF  5.0
#define home_switch 2
AccelStepper stepper(1, 6, 7);
AccelStepper stepper2(1, 8, 9);
long TravelX;
int move_finished = 1;
long initial_homing = -1;
int previous = 0;
int interval = 2000;
unsigned long previousMillis = 0;
int smoothInterval = 500;
unsigned long smoothMillis = 0;
int sensitivity = 8;
const int numReadings = 30;
int readings[numReadings];
int readIndex = 0;
float total = 0;
float dbAverage = 0;

void setup() {
delay (100);
Serial.begin(115200);
pinMode(3, OUTPUT);
pinMode(4, OUTPUT);
pinMode(5, OUTPUT);
digitalWrite(3, LOW);
digitalWrite(4, LOW);
digitalWrite(5, LOW);
pinMode(home_switch, INPUT_PULLUP);
delay(5);
stepper.setMaxSpeed(1000.0);
stepper.setAcceleration(1000.0);
Serial.print("Stepper is Homing . . . . . . . . . . . ");
while (digitalRead(home_switch)) {
stepper.moveTo(initial_homing);
initial_homing++;
stepper.run();
}
delay(500);
stepper.setCurrentPosition(0);
stepper.setMaxSpeed(500.0);
stepper.setAcceleration(500.0);
initial_homing = 1;
while (!digitalRead(home_switch)) {
stepper.moveTo(initial_homing);
stepper.run();
initial_homing--;
}
delay(500);
stepper.setCurrentPosition(360000);
digitalWrite(3, HIGH);
digitalWrite(4, HIGH);
digitalWrite(5, HIGH);
Serial.println("Homing Completed");
Serial.println();
stepper.setMaxSpeed(5000);
stepper.setAcceleration(5000);
stepper2.setAcceleration(1500);
delay(4000);
for (int thisReading = 0; thisReading < numReadings; thisReading++) {
readings[thisReading] = 0;
}
}
void loop() {
stepper2.moveTo(900000);
float stepperValue;
float voltageValue, dbValue;
voltageValue = analogRead(SoundSensorPin) / 1024.0 * VREF ;
dbValue = voltageValue * 50.0;
if ( millis() - smoothMillis > smoothInterval ) {
total = total - readings[readIndex];
readings[readIndex] = dbValue;
total = total + readings[readIndex];
readIndex++;
if (readIndex >= numReadings) readIndex = 0;
dbAverage = total / numReadings;
smoothMillis = millis();
}
if ( millis() - previousMillis >= interval) {
previousMillis = millis();
//if ((dbAverage > previous + sensitivity) || (dbAverage < previous - sensitivity)) {
dbAverage = constrain(dbAverage, 25, 130);
stepperValue = map(dbAverage, 25, 130, 0, 360000);
stepper.moveTo(stepperValue);
previous = dbAverage;
Serial.println(dbAverage, 1);
Serial.println(stepperValue);
//}
}
stepper.run();
stepper2.runSpeed();
}
```
Sound level recorder

Placed in a space where human interaction is likely to happen the question appears how the machine influences the behaviour of the actors. And vice versa: actors may change the prevailing condition of the surrounding. The result of the record is hereby altered as well. I believe there is a fascination to the moments we look at the machine whilst it is recording. It captures the transient moment and draws the attention into a conscious act of comparing the own perception of reality with what the device is actually doing.

The probe I worked on is capturing sound pressure levels of its surrounding and inscribing this life feed into a record. It represents the translation of a sequence of transient and contingent states and creates ever changing artefacts. This is depending on the materials used and the surroundings it is placed in. I realised that the artefacts resulting from this process, distilled and captured moments which are shaped through the surroundings and individual interaction. They inherit democratic qualities since everyone could interact with them during the device is running.

I draw Inspiration by Dunne’s and Raby’s “Placebo project” in which they are taking prototypes into peoples home to investigate the interaction of people and objects to receive narratives people develop to explain and relate to their proposals. Participants kept products in their homes and they became a part of their everyday life. I placed the device in Jelena and Rodi’s living room simply explaining what the device does and how to set it up. After a week hosting it they were pointing out that it should be easier to change the paper records. That was unexpected feedback since I expected we would rather talk about the oddity of the device. This is not scientific, but apparently the threshold for incorporating this device into their daily lives was very low. They explained that they became more aware of the soundscape of their living room and that they enjoyed varying the volume to manipulate the recording. What I was missing from this experiment was the democratic involvement of more actors and I thought this process is better to happen in a rather exposed surrounding and not a domestic context.
About recording
To me a record can be represented by various artefacts. This could be a picture, a tape, an imprint, a trace, a text, a drawing, a stone, a hand. It could be a tire or any object of commodity as long as it has been in use or has been exposed to an environment. This environment could be the workshop or a machine in a production line processing a material, it could also be a snow-covered landscape, a highway or a carpet being walked upon in the entry hall of a building.
I am recording sounds of my surroundings and inscribe them into a record. The record will hardly appear in the same way twice since the prevailing conditions are ever changing. Also the materials in use afford different results. Pen on paper will show a very detailed translation of what just happened.

Peaks and tiny amplitudes will be documented with a high level of detail whereas a wire drawing in sand produces a more subtle trace.

Depending on the grain size tiny amplitudes are evened out. As the needle moves, a tiny bit of just recorded sound will always be overwritten by small amounts of grain falling back into the just carved valley the wire has passed. To me this opens some questions regarding leaving traces through manipulation of my environment. How big or small is my impact? How do we relate to unremarkable impacts? Could they be of value to someone else?
When visualising merely the quantitative SPL of a surrounding one misses out on the qualities of the respective soundscape. Our perception allows us to distinguish between the soundscape of a major waterfall and a construction site, or between the whispering of the woods and a whispering heater—even though they probably show similar SPL quantities. The human ear automatically and involuntarily formulates a transform by converting sound into a spectrum, a description of the sound as a series of volumes at distinct pitches. The brain then turns this information into perceived distinct sound.

In order to also take the qualities of a soundscape into account, I employed a similar conversion using mathematical methods that can be executed by microcontrollers. The Fourier transform (FFT) is the mathematical tool used to make this conversion.

It converts waveform data in the time domain into the frequency domain. This is accomplished by breaking down the original time-based waveform into a series of sinusoidal terms, each with a unique magnitude, frequency, and phase. This process, in effect, converts a waveform in the time domain that is difficult to describe mathematically into a more manageable series of sinusoidal functions that when added together, exactly reproduce the original waveform. Plotting the amplitude of each sinusoidal term versus its frequency creates a power spectrum, which is the response of the original waveform in the frequency domain.

The FFT is characterised by a resolution in “Bins”. Each Bin represents a range of frequencies (e.g., from 1-20 Hz, 21-40 Hz, 40-61 Hz, ...). More Bins provide a more detailed picture of the recorded soundscape since different frequencies are more likely to appear in different bins.
Expanding the dimensions (Proposal)

For my proposal I have designed an array of devices that generate three-dimensional artifacts to complement the device that visualizes the sound pressure levels in form of two-dimensional recordings. The aim is to extend the quantitative level of reflection by the qualitative level. I have divided the entire sensitivity range of hearing (between 20 and 20,000 hz) into five frequency ranges, each representing a specific bin. Each range is assigned to one of five devices. Together, the devices produce a series of vessels by slowly coiling veneer. The recorded soundscape runs through an FFT, which constantly calculates the intensity of all five frequency ranges. This intensity determines how fast each vessel grows in diameter. For example, the vessel representing one of the higher frequencies grows faster in diameter when the devices are placed in an environment where this frequency range is more prevalent, e.g. at a station or when an actor speaks with a bright voice. In this scenario, the vessels representing the lower frequencies appear more uniform and have a smaller diameter.

Both proposals include a mixture of parametric design and aspects of contingency. From a pragmatic point of view they materialize phenomena within a given surrounding that are available in form of ambient noises that are measured in sound pressure levels and frequency analysis. This transfer into data is used to parametrically generate vessels through slowly coiling veneer stripes into vessel like shapes and creating pen-drawn paper records. To me it was of importance to imagine artefacts – the vessel and the paper record – that anyone could easily relate to. Also, the process of making (coiling up veneer into vessels, drawing with pen on paper) needed to be easily accessible. A common ground of understanding what is happening then allows for further comprehension of the ongoing process which includes interaction.
A multilayered encounter with reality

I argued that Stillet design offers entry points to allow for possible otherness. As an integrated strategy, it transcends differences in reality in order to be receptive to the transitional present. Considering the theoretical insights and the practical process I propose a synthesis of my research which ties together the levels of abstraction and concrete relatable physical artefacts.

The arrangement of openly designed conditions in form of this interactive devices allow for a process to lead into an infinite number of unique outcomes. It comments on the possible entanglement of actor, artefact and context in envisioning surroundings where the borders of these three aspects are blurred whilst the contingent transient line of moments are being materialised. The materialisation that result from this open process inherits all three aspects: physical constraints of the devices and materials used, the placement in any surrounding and possible interactions.

The devices deconstruct a part of an objective, however, individually influenced reality to record what was previously transient. As the designer of the artefact, I tried to take a stand back to rather design the conditions under which unique information is taken up and used for capturing the infinite line of transient moments. These conditions, are supposed to make a physical artefact I cannot predict. That’s to say, the devices would make the artefacts for anyone who participates, together with everyone else whilst actors do not necessarily know of each other’s participation. In this democratic process the devices translate transient soundscapes into physical shapes. The devices keep making new variations of artefacts with the ever-changing influences of their surroundings. Thus, the artefacts become tokens of a specific time in space-like traces in the sand.
The proposed devices and their resulting artefacts always relate to a specific place during a specific frame of time. Their gestalt result from the production process but are to a high extent dependent on how the specific surrounding is activated (through actors). As I argued nothing happens in a void: something always happens. The story that is perceived and recorded is constantly shaped through a meandering encounter between actors, the devices and their surroundings. I encourage participants to become an embodied part of the process of making whilst they are finding themselves within a feedback loop between object, device and surrounding. The mere button-pressing consumer becomes an actor in an engaging experience that potentially is supportive to reflect their role and impact in certain surroundings. The artefacts that evolve are ever changing and translate the time dimension into an artefact that is physically perceptible— even after the devices finished producing.

As Loove Broms points out the design of meaningful and engaging experiences has direct implications for human health and the extent to which one feels that life makes sense emotionally. When emotionally engaged, we feel as though this part of life is worth investing energy in and that it is worthy of commitment and engagement. Since the devices are picking up everything that happens in a rather neutral manner the proposal is not favouring silent or quiet environments over loud and noisy ones. Without evaluation, all intensity levels of interaction will be part of the artifact.

Through an emotional involvement I want to raise the awareness for the soundscapes to which we are being subjected (which ultimately also leave traces in our bodies), but at the same time also for the fact that we are inevitably part of the cause through our everyday interactions with the world. The artefacts that come to being support a direct reflection of whatever situations we experience since it is a direct representation of what has happened. They inherit and display a unique operational sequence during a specific timeframe. This is even more obvious when comparing the recordings to a previous one or recordings from other places.

The proposal suggests openness for a constructed reality. The interactive process has a certain starting point, but the decision as to whether the object is finished remains undefined yet limited. Potentially, the process of slowly coiling the veneer into a vessel-like shape and the pen writing on the record will never be complete— open-ended. Sheer materialistic constraints force a moment during the process that defines a break that renders the vessels and the paper record as “unfinished-finished”. Initiation (Conclusion)
right: each vessel shows unique characteristics of rings of a tree

details of the device
With regard to the impact of the project, I have to evaluate, under consideration of my assumptions, to what extent the degree of abstraction of the work is understood and has an emotional impact on the stakeholder that goes beyond a purely aesthetic experience or fascination. The idea to employ interaction in this project as catalyst for creating deeper meaning and understanding is yet to be proven. For the first time this will happen in the environment of the spring exhibition at Konstfack. The unbiased visitor may then wonder about the initial connection of Stille to the presented proposal in form of the devices and the generated artefacts since what I define as Stilles Design is a rather underlying concept of thought. To me this is of lesser importance to be communicated directly. Ultimately, the idea is to propose a speculative way to understand the in parts invisible complexity of reality and to create a sense of consciousness within the viewer that goes beyond an aesthetic nature. To trigger the realisation that every action, word, potentially every thought even, leaves a trace. I hope to create accessibility into the layers of the theoretical backdrop in materialising these concepts in an everyday object. Potentially the modular nature of the installation could be extended by any amount of devices which would allow for an even more detailed tracing of soundscapes in time in a given surrounding. I see the artefacts that result from the proposals as carriers for further discussion but also as what they are: functional objects that belong to a specific place telling its (hi)story.

I thoroughly enjoyed working on this exploration also since it opened a lot of interesting and important fields of further and future inquiry for me. I hope to be able to pursue my investigation of how the design of physicality can transcend distinctions of our constructed reality and allow for openness in order to be inclusive and imagine futures where transience and contingency play important roles in any decision making process.
50 51

4420-20000 Hz, 5+4h, 14:00-19:00 and 12:00-16:00, 25. and 26.05.2018

940-4420, 2+2,5h, 13:30-16:00, 19. and 20.05.2018
Reflections

In this part of my thesis I am going to elaborate and reflect on the insights and discussions I experienced during the exhibition of the work at Konstfack’s Spring Exhibition. It also includes thoughts I got on the topic through trying out the finished devices in this context.

To me it is important to mention that the proposal is primarily not meant to be part of an exhibition context. Unfortunately the materialisation of the idea was ready just in time for the opening of the exhibition. The initial idea was to show a recording of another soundscape in form of the vessels to use them as a conversational piece and to compare different soundscapes with each other. I believe this would have made the project easier to understand for the visitors. To support my intention to use the devices in other contexts my approach therefore was to be present at the running installation and to actuate the space in the exhibition in order to act as if I would have recorded a more exciting soundscape than the one of the exhibition space.

I decided to keep the explanatory part of the exhibition as reduced as possible since my intention was to not alter the behaviour of visitors artificially which I realised was most likely impossible in this context. People are very curious to understand what is happening and with the explanation given they experimented how to alter the movement of each device. This goes well along with my thought about how materialised ideas influence our behavior. If I would have the possibility of a financial support to continue with this project I would like to record different soundscapes and see how different the artifacts are not exactly comparable to each other. Materialising the idea of another soundscape in form of the vessels successfully implemented how to alter the movement of each device. That is why the resulting soundscapes were not generated by the devices but the visitors

The idea to employ the story of a soundscape being the form-giving factor in my work kept the attention and the interest of the visitors. A process and artefacts with an inscribed togetherness aroused emotional reactions. This also raised the question of ownership of the resulting artefacts that I have otherted until now within my thesis. Openly spoken, I do not yet have an appropriate suggestion to solve this tricky question. Also every recording is resulting in five artefacts which belong together since only as a whole they embody the recorded soundscape. However, we understand an artefact as one self-contained unit. Through the materialisation and resulting separation of simultaneous processes the idea of an artefact as one self-contained unit is stressed. Here one artefact actually consists of five units. What would happen to the validity of the work if one single unit is being sold separately?

My project offers multiple entry points to allow for various levels of comprehension. I found my idea to create something easy relatable from the process (the vessels) successfully implemented in so far since I tried to relate the vessels to the archaic objects that have been used ever since also as story tellers (see also ancient greek vase painting for example). I am referring to Le Guin who reflects about how stories in human history were selected and told in her short essay “The Carrier Bag Theory Of Fiction”. Who’s story is being told what is otherted and how does this affect our reality?

Le Guin, 2006

She writes: “If it is a human thing to do to put something you want, because it is useful, edible, or beautiful, into a bag, or a basket, or a bit of rolled bark or leaf, or a net woven of your own hair, or what have you, and then take it home with you, home being another, larger kind of pouch or bag, a container for people, and then later on you take it out and eat it or share it or store it up for winter in a bigger container or put it in the medicine bundle or the shrine or the museum, the holy place, the area that contains what is sacred, and then the next day you probably do much the same again—if to do that is human, if that’s what it takes, then I am a human being after all. Fully, freely, gladly, for the first time..”

The proper fitting shape of the novel might be that of a sack, a bag. A book holds words. Words hold things. They bear meanings. A novel is a medicine bundle, holding things in a particular, powerful relation to one another and to us.”
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References


