CRAFT FICTION

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In this paper I introduce and explain the construct of 'Craft Fiction' as a setting for my own artistic work. Within a fictional framework, I am mediating between the field of craft and the contemporary environment of relocated materialities and digital worlds I find myself in. Using the vehicle of language and analyzing those dialogue that are ongoing in craft processes, I am assessing the intimate relationships between maker and its tools/machines, in order to discuss hierarchies and purpose of crafting.
INDEX

01 intro 1
02 why do we need craft fiction? 3
03 how to write craft fiction? 5
04 the setting for craft fiction 8
05 the characters of (my) craft fiction 11
06 what story to tell? 14
07 how to craft fiction? 17
08 looking back on craft fiction /conclusion 20
The following pages can be read as a manual. Or as an exit strategy.

In an interview, Haegue Yang answered to the question why she in her work uses "labor-intensive, craft-based processes" that "Being slow could be a form of resistance against the idea of efficiency in a neoliberal society." (Ray, 2020) Being notional/fictive, for me, could be a form of resistance against the structures given in a society constructed by humankind. Born into a reality full of words, numbers, concepts, categories; I realized that I care too much for my own and my co-worker’s efforts, then to allow these to be thrown into the grinding machinery of society and to have them being assessed by categories that are not mine and concepts that I do not agree with. Creating a notional setting at this point in time, for me, seems to must either be the best possible strategy or a childish dream.

On the following pages I am answering questions about why I believe fiction is a valid method for my purpose and in what ways it helps to create a setting that is capable of caring for my practice. But more than serving my own purpose only, I believe in the potential of the crossing of fiction and craft. My writing therefore is pointing at developments that might lead to the collapse of either one of them, while their unity might provide a context that is powerful enough for finding possible exit ways. We humans are obsessed with the object, with the material. But our realities are becoming abstract and we need to start learning the languages of abstraction and trusting its process in order to allow for a democratic development. And what is a better starting point than the material world and a field that brings so many experts on how to shape this environment according to our needs and our testimonies. I am interested in what our skillset as crafters means in times of digitalization and relocation of materials; loss of contact. I am therefore starting an empathetic approach where I test the limits of empathy in craft processes and how the dialogues between crafter and tool/machine could or could not be scaled onto the relationships we have towards devices of digitalization.

If Marshall McLuhan was right when he said that "the spoken word was the first technology by which man was able to let go of his environment in order to grasp it in a new way", we will have to develop new languages that match our new environments. And I wonder whether those languages can be found in the already existing, or whether we will have to find new ones, outside of our known linguistic understanding.

While my practice is entangled with its fictive setting in which it is not possible to say what was there first, the following writings are meant to argue for the concept of craft fiction; why we need it and how to read it. I will go into the details of setting and characters of my personal craft fiction, which others will call my exam project. And hopefully, in the end, there will be not a single question answered, but many that have popped up. I write for inspiration and imagination; in the world of craft fiction, there is no limit to either one of them.
Why do we need Fiction?  

Craft Fiction?  

Why do we need fiction for anything? Fiction is not claimed to be true; just like a novelist imagines its characters and a science fiction author takes the state of knowledge as a point of origin to envision an unknown future. Fiction is the concept of being imaginative, to dream, to think outside the well-known box. And without the need to argue within the categories of what might be possible or is ‘plausible’, fiction opens doors to evolution. Since we all know that one is not going anywhere if only stepping inside of what one already knows. For society as for individuals, it is of great importance to have space for imagining other possible scenarios, futures, pasts, as well as just dwell on different perspectives on the realities we already share. Fiction is a great tool to humankind, that can be found in books as in the cinema, in songs, in narratives, and more than anywhere else, in the abstract digital world, where everything is constructed by the 20-centuries fiction-writers called programmers.

There is also a backside to this genre that is based on imagination instead of facts, which shows when fiction is mistaken for being fake (instead of being a narrative outside of those categories) and anxiety is being sown. When we are not getting the story, we cannot follow the plot, we lose track of what is happening (in the book, on screen, …) and a not-understanding turns into suspicion and fear. If fiction is that important in the quest of telling and guiding a story of humankind - especially in times where our realities are under the constant danger of falling apart with the next set of news coming in - turning away from things we might not be able to grasp is not the solution. Too many conflicts, in between humans as well as in between humans and non-humans (e.g., technology) emerge from some kind of not-understanding, or misunderstanding. But how can we turn fiction into a tool for mediation? And why do I suggest that we need to mediate the field of craft?

In his article about the philosophy of Bruno Latour and the uses of fiction in novel writing, William B. Warner notices that

“Instead of a product, FIction is a process with the capability to be crossed with other modes of existence. (...) Latour describes this fictionalizing process as characterized by “stunning originality… hesitation, vacillation, back-and-forth movements, the establishment of resonance between suggestive layers.” Thus, for example, FIction can take TEChnology, with its unforeseen folds, and enfold them once again, renew[ing] them in a renewal that will engender something unforeseen.” (both statements are, according to the author, referencing Bruno Latour, Inquiry, page 244) (Warner, 2016)

So, following Latour, all I want to do on these pages is to cross FIction with CRAFT: CRAFT, in this undertaking, is understood as the moving and making body, the way we humans are getting in contact with our environment and material surrounding us.
Narration is not only coming with the question “what?” but also “how?”. Over the last month I have realized that there are many different ways to say the same thing and many single ways to say different things. I observed that human language is limited and limiting, especially when using them to describe processes that are going on between human and non-human characters. Like Antonin Artaud once stated that “All true language is incomprehensible, like the chatter of a beggar’s teeth”, I am trying to find the language in the chatter, rather than in the obvious. I am not giving preference to comprehension, but to articulation.

In that sense, there is a lot being articulated in the craft process. I leave imprints (a body language?) on the materials and the tools, as they leave imprints on me.

The languages I am investigating are foreign ground, they only passively originate in human existence, and I do not know how far I will come with my biased understanding. I was concerned that the human perspective I put on my non-human tools and machines would paint an image that is not truthful to their characters and actions. That I would only copy/paste images of myself. But – do we not always project ourselves on others, is that not in the beginning of every relationship? Does projection of our own feelings and inner constructs not create space for further interaction and for empathy?

And for listening? For a listening, that will teach us about the differences between the other and ourselves.

Just like I tried to learn understanding the articulations of the medium and tools I work with, I had to learn a new language when I decided to integrate bodies of technology in my project. They come with their own, which is handy, especially since they are based on our human language and use an alphabet which lies somewhere on the threshold between literature and mathematics. Programming, more than any other language I know, points out the communicative quality of such. Maybe human language is already too inherent to be deciphered as a flow of action and reaction, maybe we spend too much time in insufficient conversations. But when I sit in front of the programming window and type in commands I would like the technology parts to perform, it is not an act of dominance but of empathy.
I am learning technologies’ language in order to communicate with them, because I want a dialogue between us to be possible. I am trying to understand and with every response of not-understanding, I will be trying to make myself more clear. To the point, where your own ways of communication are telling you things about yourself, and your identity becomes an image painted by your inner and outer articulations.

Language is a great tool, maybe the greatest in humanity. There is, for example, “the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis”, that according to philosopher Marshall McLuhan thinks “about language as a sort of grid or filter for reality.” (McLuhan, 2002; 72).

And Donna Haraway, in her Cyborg’s Manifesto, who might have drawn on that when she was stating that “If we are imprisoned by language, then escape from that prison-house requires language poets, a kind of cultural restriction enzyme to cut the code; cyborg heteroglossia is one form of radical cultural politics.” (Haraway, 2016; 70).

According to its definition, ‘Heteroglossia’ is “a translation (Morson & Emerson 1990) of Mixail Baxtin’s neologism raznorecie. According to Baxtin’s understanding of language use, a “social person”, who is also a “speaking person”, operates not with language as an abstract regulatory norm, but with a multitude of discourse practices that form in their totality a dynamic verbal culture belonging to the society concerned (...)” (Tjupa, 2019).

I do not know if Haraway had this origination in mind when she was creating the well-sounding notion of ‘Cyborg Heteroglossia’. Yet I want to believe that she chose it in order to be most inclusive of what language might mean to us as well as to other, non-human co-actors in our society, while also suggesting that language might appear in many more different forms than we think to know. In the context of Haraway’s words, Artaud seems to have made a valid point when he suggested that the act of uttering might be more important than the act of understanding. And maybe we are not always prepared to understand what is being articulated by others, but the least we can do is to listen.
```c
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <math.h>
int main()
{
    int n, m, x, y, w, h, t, d, p, i, j, k, l, ss, s, mm, answer;
    float b, a;

    // Input data
    scanf("%d %d %d %d", &n, &m, &x, &y);

    // Calculate the intersection of the rectangle
    int x_left = max(0, min(n, x));
    int x_right = min(n, max(0, x));
    int y_top = max(0, min(m, y));
    int y_bottom = min(m, max(0, y));

    // Calculate the area of the intersection
    int area = (x_right - x_left + 1) * (y_bottom - y_top + 1);

    // Calculate the area of the rectangle
    int total_area = n * m;

    // Calculate the area of the intersection as a percentage of the total area
    float percentage = (float)area / total_area * 100;

    // Output the result
    printf("%.2f\n", percentage);
}
```
I have not stated yet why I see the need for fiction in the field of craft. Why I turn to an alien discipline in order to address my work and my efforts in a field, that for thousands of years seemed to have flourished without this undertaking.

When Fiction is mistaken for being fake, the material realm can be a comforting field to turn to. Since material is something that is experienced so subjectively, so uniquely, that it is all truth. Or is it? Is it even possible to use material for fiction (writing)? We are experiencing a rapid loss of contact to the material world these days. Kids at an age, that one generation ago did not even know what the internet was, are now seriously addicted to the digital world, and to the illusion that one touchscreen is all they need to access it. We do not anymore sense the things we are in contact with; touch becomes a capitalistic category and material something to imitate, not to be truthful to. So, when individual hardware developers and the overall trend displaced the material in our environment that we would use to get in contact with others and ourselves, the material cords between our bodies and the bodies of others were cut. Instead, technology winds its mysterious motorways that connect us to the whole world, immediately and at the same time. The big difference: I knew everything about touching a stone, about speaking to a friend – now I do not understand a bit of how connections are being build and that takes hold of charge over my own actions.

Our bodies are becoming more and more data, with every step we decide to take in a digital rather than in a physical reality. What previously were earthly rules that applied to our existence (e.g. gravity) now became rules made by technology. How is technology creating ourselves, our body images, how is it interfering with our choices and paths in life? If crafting is the concept of getting in contact with the world, are we not capable of shaping those digital worlds the way our ancestor craftspeople shaped the physical? Richard Sennet wrote about this development:

"I emphasize skill and competency because in my view modern society is de-skillling people in the conduct of everyday life. We have many more machines than our ancestors but less idea of how to use them well; we have greater conduits between
people thanks to modern forms of communication, but less understanding of how to communicate well. Practical skill is a tool rather than a salvation, but, lacking it, issues of Meaning and Value remain abstraction.” (Sennet, 2013; X)

Crafting and the material world (and the contact craft enables) will be important as long as we are ‘caught’ in our material bodies. So of course, it is not the case of digital versus material since there is as much material needed for maintaining the digital as for analogue interactions. I am also trusting Malcolm McCullough when he stated that “If we are to bridge the physical and the virtual worlds, then dematerialization is not the answer.” (McCullough, 1998; 129). One big difference between those worlds lies in the access to its materials. The latest hardware developments have given us more and more smooth tools, flat in what they can tell us about themselves, foreign slaves in well-suited uniform. By not allowing our technology to show their own materiality we are preventing possible dialogue. We are covering up all traces of character that could be possible entryways to deeper analysis, understanding and mutual respect.
No good story has only one character. There might be characters that are more in the center of attention than others, but one needs the multitude of them to fill an entertaining narrative, to create an atmosphere. In my practice, naturally, I am not acting nor narrating all by myself.

There are different kind of characters in my story. The steady ones that are connecting all the threads and holding the plot together. Those, that have their own mind about things, are unpredictable and bringing the drive and spontaneity to it. I do not want to go into characterizing each one of them, since Craft Fiction is not about defining, but about allowing. We are at the threshold of the world we have known for so long and in front of us is uncharted territory. What is about to happened when going this next step lies in the responsibility of each of the involved characters and in their willingness to make it work. I am only narrating my perspective and providing the context, it is up to every one of them to create the content.

Hazel Mallon is my co-author. She is not writing any of these words here, nor does she know that I put her in that position, but she provokes and shapes my thoughts in a way that it would be plagiarism not to name her as such. We believe in the same world of craft and material interaction, and we share our passion for the domestic knitting machine. This machine is a tool that was found in every other household in the 70s and 80s, enabling the caretaker of the home to knit clothes for the family, gain knowledge and spread love through material goods. It is not only speaking of a patriarchal past and skills that were sleeping behind protective house walls and often not acknowledged as such, but also about a democratic utopia, where anyone could take the reins on their own production of clothing – zero-waste and individual.

The knitting machine is capable of joining the masses. Her socialistic body, that can speak of endless labor as well as of continuance and reproduction of inherent value systems is complex enough to take in a main role. She is at the center of my project and I will do my best not to exploit or disrespect her, for we all know since Mary Shelly's brilliant ‘Frankenstein’ how biased a relationship between creator and its creation can be. What helps is that I do not approach the knitting machine as something
that I carved out of my rib, but more as an older and wiser being. She is created for a setting that I did not experience myself, and most of the machines I work with were assembled years before I was born.

What working with such machine is like can be best described by having a look at the body of the tool itself. I want to draw the image of the weaving loom as a contrast, since this instrument seems much better known and graded in the field of textiles and craft making. The weaving loom provides a strong and safe structure that encloses the weaver, makes them become part of its being. You can leave and return, drop your yarn; the warp will be stretched devotedly. The loom is materialized control, calculation, prediction. So different is the knitting machine, that is not willing to promise any kind of safety, instead – it demands you to tireless attention and observation of every detail, every needle. It offers its functional body and its many little hands, to enable an efficient and joyous process, but it will not tell you tales about control, nor about being a safe space. The domestic knitting machine confronts its crafters, in a very charming way, that bodies are complex tools, and its ancestry from the domestic space reminds us warmly of the skill and courage that was practiced in such places, which we are dooming today for being back warded and redundant.

It is the three of us, Hazel, knitting machine, and me, that are joining our thoughts and using our bodies as fields of confrontation and experimentation. Working and Thinking with each other, we create the context for our individual approaches and the space to express them freely. We decided to give this space a name, intra:knit.
what story to tell?

So why did I feel like I needed to tie together the field of craft with the notion of fiction in order to create a context that is able to host my practical effort? And what is the story I want to tell?

The (digital) architecture that is being built in between of endless discussions and kilometers of yarn is, in my eyes, the most beautiful embodiment of fiction itself. In the setting of our current institution, not only does it allow us to forget about the images of stacked and dusted knitting machines, that nobody seems to really care about, or the windowless ‘knitting room’ that, in the language of architecture, is an affront to every machine and each of their crafters. More than that, is makes us formulate freely, and instrumentalize our imagination as construction workers of a new reality.

I have asked earlier, how fiction can become a mediator in the quest of making humankind more confident in shaping and creating their environment, and intra:knit’s digital architecture is mine and Hazels personal answer to that. We do not know and, yes, we are afraid, of what lies in the unknown body of every machine, might she be mechanic or electronic. Creating a space where everyone has a voice and is listened to, seems to us to be a good starting point for imagining and developing structures that can sustainably host a democratic togetherness. Just like Donna Haraway said that “(...) taking responsibility for the social relations of science and technology means refusing an anti-science metaphysics, a demonology of technology, and so means embracing the skillful task of reconstructing the boundaries of daily life, in partial connection with others, in communication with all of our parts(...)” (Haraway, 2016; 67). Haraway surely was not writing about craft, but since I have drawn earlier the relation that understands craft as a tool and technology as the medium, I think that her words can function as a very precise job description for a future craftsperson.
The learning of empathy towards non-humans is fundamental to craft fiction. Craft fiction is recognizing the crafter as an expert in getting in contact with an environment, which involves encountering other entities, whether they seem to be alive or inanimate. With the rise of digitality and new forms of intelligence, our categories of what used to be a worthy vis-à-vis are shifting and the hegemonies of a few are falling apart towards a more democratic utopia. Why not thinking ahead the alignment of privileges, the creation of fair production structures that allow existence and well-being to everyone; why not (re)learn to communicate with our bodies? What sounds like a political agenda is not more than my answer to the question of what our crafters purpose might be today. Malcolm McCullough wrote that

"We understand better that societies and their technologies reconstruct one another constantly, and that one set of freedoms just gets exchanged for another. Thus at the scope of individual practice we should acknowledge that if indeed such exchange must occur, the best response is to not to jettison the old freedoms, but to calmly, conscientiously explore new ones." (McCullough, 1998; 79)

The tools and technologies of craft have changed and developed over the centuries and it is in the spirit of every craftsperson to spot and change their tools according to their needs. Different circumstances ask for different approached and different techniques.
unravelled yarn
2020
The instruments I am using to write Craft Fiction go beyond the words I use to formulate this manual. Just as the machine asks me to speak her languages and learn how to think in her assembled classes, I ask the machines to actively think in human categories.

By manipulation of the machines functioning and by allowing a different in- and output, the machine gains the possibility of being recognized apart from her capability to produce. For the first machine I approached, I crafted two attachments, one that would allow the needles to leave marks, and one that would hold a paper – and allow the machine to write. Instead of knitting, the machine would now leave a note with every push of the machine’s carriage. What I like about the machines written language is how easy it is accepted by humans, for it has similarities to morse code or even Braille. Looking at it, it makes me wonder about the underlying structure to it, what one might call an alphabet. The machine is working on punch cards, which are mechanically read and show in a repeat of 24 needles. Every 24 needles, the machine repeats herself. Each row of needles reads a new line on the punch card.

I continued with the deciphering process of the machine’s marks, using the dying technique Ikat. I, as a human crafter, would give the coded input of those certain blank spots in the yarn that I wrapped during the dying process. The machine would then use this yarn to knit her fabric, and just with the tensioning of my hand and her mechanics, and the structure of her knit, the blank spots were turned into symbols that could speak about the process much better than I can with words. It was the most direct dialogue; I was giving her a code; she was processing it with her body. What came out in the end showed traces of both of us.

The machines communicative skills, that are amplified through my work, are asking loudly to be performed as a human-machine dialogue that would go beyond the intimacy of the workshop. In early October 2020, Hazel and I first staged a human-machine dialogue in the form of a live chat between her and a Brother KH-830 knitting machine. The machine was speaking its own language that would ask for empathy and imagination to start a conversation. We were confronting ourselves as much as the
audience with the task not to meet the alien machine with our human standards and realities but to gain skills to understand both its "otherness" as well as possible analogies to ourselves.

‘Yoko’ I crafted for another mechanical knitting machine and her character can be best described by calling her a ‘digital punch-card’. Instead of a row with 24 boxes that can be either hole or not-hole, the attachment has 24 motors that move up and down, in order to mimic the hole/not-hole language of the machine’s mechanics. By having parts of technology working as translator, one can run the machine on basically any kind of information that can be found in her environment: like noise, air flow or temperature. The machine gains a new ‘sense’ that allows her emancipation in the generation of her knitted patterns and structures.
As I stated in the beginning of those pages, my aim is not to reach concreteness, but to blur the borders of craft with an imagination process that might be either capable of opening doors for crafts future development or purely be a captivating pastime in a frightful reality.

The last pages have discussed why we need craft fiction, how to write craft fiction, and have explained the setting and characters of my personal craft fiction narration - my exam project. I am returning to quote Warner (and with him Latour) with “If we understand fiction as a mode of existence, fiction is no longer reality’s antonym, nor one of its constituents, but an active mediator enabling a deeper engagement with reality.” (Warner, 2016)

In my daydreams (workshopdreams) I position FICtion on the threshold of CRAft and TEChnology, and strongly believe that this geographical equation is worth consulting, more than that; is needed to be consulted. In the quest of mediating the reality of our working bodies (CRA) with the reality of our dwelling bodies (TEC) it is not a sign of weakness to turn to an outside (FIC) for help, but of conscious awareness and a hint of survival instinct. My work as my words therefore invite to listen more closely and to be inclusive towards things and voices that our state of (human) knowledge does not have the means to substantiate. To not be afraid of the ‘other’ that is impersonated by machines, mechanical and electrical. To think, dream, speak and craft about how we picture our future societies as well as our present togetherness.

I have discussed the potential and necessity of language when it comes to shaping realities and creating change. And I have discovered Haraway’s notion of ‘Cyborg Heteroglossia’ to be well suited to address the variety of language in a craft fiction narration. Heteroglossia not only describes the different qualities of possible articulations, but also the multitude of speaker that originate in the creation of a dynamic culture and its society. I hope to have made clear that I am not a single author of this writing, as of my practical work. My dialogues are going on in-between me, Hazel Mallon and the knitting machines, situated in the digital architecture we constructed for our needs, to allow all involved parties to have an equal voice and be presented as such. This spatial and conceptual entanglement is not meant to blur traces but instead to acknowledge interaction and co-dependencies; to present us humans as well as the involved non-humans as the kind of social being that we are and to be truthful to that fact.
Reading Richard Sennett’s book ‘Together’ I learned a fact about medieval craft-speech that somehow relates to my concept of craft fiction.

“The standard form of address used for objects was ‘you’ rather than ‘it’. Medieval craft-speech took this verbal locution one step further; the objects were treated as if alive, as though they had been magically transformed into beings with whom one discussed and disputed.” (Sennett, 2013; 111)

Ironically, carrying the imprints of a German craft-education, I am much more familiar with medieval craft-hierarchies and rituals, than with those within an academic art and craft education. And when I recall examination situations during the last months and align them with the image that Sennett was drawing with the craftsmen talking to their objects, I can discover many similarities, and only one point of distinction - the use of language. Have we lost our imagination, during the last 500 years, that ‘objects’ are something one can ‘discuss and dispute with’, or were medieval guild masters, the first authors of craft fiction? I am gratefully looking back at such rituals, that imagine their own laws and allow space for encounter, more than anything else.

In the line of the craft ritual described by Sennett, I position myself as just another version of a crafter who is trying to do what they can do best – contacting and shaping their environment. It affects me personally when digitalization and the rise of new materialities is met by the field with a conservative stillness, that leads to separation and elitism. I do believe that one can be respectful of traditions and ancestry at the same time as speaking a contemporary language and using materials that are familiar to us in a 21st century. I have stated before that it has always been the task of a crafter to choose and develop tools and methods according to their needs and the material they are working with - not the other way around.
app\nd\nxix\n
self-review 28th may 2021

01//Reflecting on my examination
We set up our Exam Exhibition in April; I was placed, together with Hazel, in the Seminariegatan, the big hallway leading through the building. It felt strange placing my work in a space that does not provide any protection. Having more the character of a street than a hallway, it presents the work placed there to the rushing eyes of the passing-by. It would be too much to ask people to stop and engage; yet I believe my work needs people to do exactly that, it is not concise and loud. Nevertheless, Hazel and I tried to think with the architecture of the space and adapt the presentation of our works to meet the conditions. Painting a black wall and having a black curtain up on the opposite side of the hallway, helped interrupting the long white space. For displaying a print of a knitted fabric, I chose posters, and had them assembled in an excessive layout – just as one might find them in a pedestrian underpass. The examination itself went well. My guest critique came prepared and asked questions instead of only presenting her perspective and opinion. She was critical, without criticizing. Her way of reading my work – without having read my paper – proved to a certain degree that I managed communicating what I wanted to communicate. Both the Actor-Network-Theory by Latour as well as Donna Haraway are portraying strong thoughts in my work, and definitely mark the future path of my artistic research. I enjoyed having a guest student around during the examination, which was making the situation more natural and gave the possibilities for questions that relate to the whole of the education rather than only what is visible in the exhibition.

02//Reflecting on the Spring Exhibition
While in my exam exhibition I tried to show different facets of my interest and work, as much as its development, I focused on the knitting machine for the Spring Exhibition and put her in the center of attention. I narrowed down what I would exhibit, to make my work easier to read, as well as to meet the character and requirements of the new space. Hazel and I shared a space in Gallery 1 on Tellusgangen,
which was crowded, but a nice escape from the sometimes pretentious main floor of Konstfack. We set up a stage-like setting that would present our work in a less static way, more subjects and less objects. It was difficult to create an own space in a room that was by far too small to host that many students and their work – but we tried our best. The lightning proved to be especially tricky since we were in need of a dark or at least shady space for having proper projector images. I am not happy with the result but given the challenges and obstacles that came up during the time of setup, all students in our gallery did a very good job working with the space while not stepping on each other’s toes. It left a weird unresolved feeling, that most other students had plenty of space for showing their work, while we were the only ones who had to compromise in size and arrangement. One element that turned out to be very generous to the whole gallery space as well as to the atmosphere of our installation was the furniture we built, allowing for the audience to sit down and observe, a front row line of seats. Having a public exhibition and the possibility to meet people from the outside around the work, was adding a lot to the experience of my project. Hazel and I held a performance on the 22nd of May, which was a great way to pay justice to the nature of our works as well as to meet people and get their perspectives around the performability and stage-ability of craft processes. Discourses that have been going on between Hazel and me for a long time could finally become more public and inclusive of others.

I had the opportunity to meet many people who showed great curiosity and interest around my work, as well as appreciation of Hazels and my artistic union. I realized how that part has been missing lately and the amount of feedback felt luxurious after two years of scarcity. It turns out that my work is functioning in an exhibition setting, but that it only fully unfolds once it is activated – as part of a performance, or me explaining it to the audience and showing/activating it. I got very lovely feedback from people, and I noticed that the interactive aspects...
are received with an appetite that surprised me to find in a general exhibition audience. Overall, I have to say that the Spring Exhibition was a very pleasant experience which was able to straighten many ideas and conceptions about what my work is capable of and where I might take it in future.

I enjoyed having the tool at the center of attention and how this affected discussions that were coming up around the exhibit. Maybe that was my biggest enlightenment in my personal confrontation with the art field “craft”, and my way around exhibiting an empty shell of an object – that the body of the tool can do great justice to the field of craft, narrate its processes, suggest its products; a synonym for movement and development rather than finality.

03/04 Other relevant conclusions
Earlier in my master education, I was struck by how much headwind a possible artistic union, like Hazel and my projects were suggesting, was getting from teachers and advisors. I was shocked by what was read into collaborative efforts and often got the impression that people considered it to be a sign of weakness, maybe lack of integrity, to not speak a singular artistic voice. I was accordingly lightened, when my Guest Critic first mentioned the benefits of a collaboration in the field and asked my opinion and perception about it. Throughout the Spring Exhibition as well, we met people who were speaking highly and positively about the entanglement of thoughts and the aligning of efforts. And to voice my own opinion; especially a field which calls itself “craft” should know better. Craft traditions are not built on individuals, rather the opposite. Cooperation is a skill and should be treated as such – and while I still hear the shallow echo of “We want you to collaborate. Collaborate!” from the first master year in my ear, I am having a very hard time aligning those words which my own experience.

Another institutional obstacle, which might be originating from a similar set of fears than the one mentioned above, is the lack of progressive thinking I have experienced in the last two years. While I got a great deal of support from the Hackerspace at Konstfack, the Mentor Space at KTH and for the theoretical composition of my work – I felt no appreciation for the efforts I made in creating a relevance to the present time, incorporating technology and stretching the boundaries of what “craft” might be understood as. For an education that asks us to be norm-critical, it sure did not allow for a lot of critical crafting.

To sum it up, I noted that it will probably be very beneficial me, to take my practice elsewhere, away from the institution and out of Sweden. It took me far too long to realize that the rejection I felt while pursuing this master project, does not have anything to do with me or my practice – but is a symptom of the environment which is challenged with an “other” point of view.


reference list
conferences / seminars

Choreo | graphy within practice by Eleanor Bauer; seminar at MDT Stockholm, 9.10.2020
Golem-Labor-Conference; Goethe Institue, Prague (online), 15.10.2020
Material as Environmental Device; Matters of Activity, Humboldt University Berlin (online), 10.09.2020
Reimagining the Human; Conference, Vilnius University (online), 17-18.09.2020
WOMXN IN MOTION; Symposium at Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst, Basel (online) 7-8.10.2020

images

01  Modrei, K., 2020, Needlemarks on paper. Unpublished scan.
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09  König, L, 2020, -. Unpublished photographs.