

RESEARCH ARTICLE

"Archipelagic Rehearsals" – Attemptive Thinking Through Practicing Textual Artistic Research

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The article is based on a lecture performance titled "Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score" that was presented at the RGS-IBG conference, held jointly by the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers, in Cardiff in 2018. The presentation was an exploration of a possibility to practice, in Édouard Glissant's terms, "archipelagic thinking" by presenting a lecture with interaction from the audience, as a lecture performance. That "archipelagic experiment" is continued in the article through an attempt to format the performance as an academic text. In turn, the text is an attempt to create new imaginaries and storytelling with Spanish slugs through participatory artistic experimental practice. The writing as artistic practice offers the potential for becoming and as such it is unpredictable in its outcome. The article starts with the author's framing of Glissant's poetics and attempts a feminist and more-than-human approach to present the event – the performance of the lecture and the story of the slug in footnotes that were an integral part of the lecture.

Keywords: archipelagic connections; footnote; artistic practice; lecture performance; Spanish slug

Introduction

This article is an exploration of how artistic practice can transform a format such as the lively lecture performance into the format of an academic article (also lively, yet in other ways). I consider the writing of this article an explorative artistic practice. Imagine an archipelago. Its constitutive relations in continuous transformation; cloud, island, water, algae, sea grass, kayak, human, land, crab, ferry, cliff, moon, island, tree, mud and floating petrol moving with the current of sea and air. In an attempt to show, not only tell, this article performs itself through the way it is written as an archipelagic approach to the academic article genre. Through this approach it attempts to stretch beyond common categories, and carry out a project in transformative becoming where the open-ended as form can create new *imaginaires*. The method I perform can be described as a rehearsal where "Transfers between different media and repetition are central aspects in terms of methodology. By transforming material from one medium to another, different aspects emerge. Repetition is applied as a method for change and revolution rather than duplication." (Hessler 2014: 53). I explore how artistic practice can be understood as a web of parts that together constitute a whole where the continuously ongoing relations among them are equally as important as the parts. Or to speak with words from the sculptural realm, the exploration is related to "sculpture which does not merely fill up space, but trembles with it." (Glissant 1961: 10).

A lecture performance merges aspects of both an academic lecture and an artistic performance (Ladnar 2007; 2014). The case in point is my lecture performance titled "Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score". It is an ongoing experiment and artistic method to research in practice what it can mean to perform archipelagic thinking. Coined by poet, philosopher and thinker Édouard Glissant, the term archipelagic thinking is described as, "*la pensée de l'essai*", which in English could be translated as "attemptive thinking".¹ As part of Glissant's own decolonial framework his archipelagic thought is "focusing on and preserving the infinite quantity of all particularities" (Wiedorn 2018: 113). It can be opposed to the categorical dualistic model that in simple terms defines the Western project. In the context of my artistic practice, archipelagic thinking performs a potential resistance to the idea of representational art, or a final end product, and instead embraces a processual, context-sensitive artistic practice. As such, archipelagic thinking supports a politics of coexistence, where "each item and its relation to the additional parts act upon each other." (Hessler 2014: 69). What emerges is a non-centred structure in constant transformation.

¹ "Attemptive thinking" is a translation of the Swedish term "*försökets tänkande*", which Christina Kullberg, a researcher in French and Francophone literature, Uppsala University, suggests may be used for the French expression *la pensée de l'essai* (personal communication, 26 June 2018).

In this artistic textual experiment, as well as in my lecture performances, I attempt to discuss and perform responses to the principal question of how we still can use language and at the same time avoid confirmation of the order we attempt to question. In other words, this text "is built on the assumption that writing, method, methodology, epistemology, ethics and politics are inextricably linked." (Lykke, Brewster, Davis, Koobak, Lie and Petö 2014: 3). The translator of *Poetics of Relation*, Betsy Wing (1997: xii), claims that Édouard Glissant made it clear from his early essays "that he had no interest in rejecting the language he speaks (French); his purpose would be better served by actions within it, by interrogating it". That quotation resonates with the potential of artistic research that naturally probes language, format and material, and sometimes manages to create precise yet unimagined new meanings.

"Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score" was presented at the Royal Geographical Society-Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG) conference in Cardiff, Wales on 30 August 2018. In this lecture performance I employed the conference abstract for my paper as a score. The function of the score in the field of visual arts can be understood to be similar to that of a script. Unlike the traditional theatre script, an art score is not necessarily meant to be manifested in the same way every time it is performed. Through this score, which was built upon an invitation to the audience to interact, it became the means and method of a participatory lecture in sympoiesis² with the audience. Through the audience's choice of interaction, they became co-creators of the composition of the lecture and its content, which consequently created a unique topological journey. Thus, the lecture performance became a live editorial experiment that explored the possibilities for archipelagic thinking as a method to renegotiate and destabilise the common conditions of presenting a paper. Through this, the lecture performance examined how it can unsettle fixed meanings and allow new interconnections between the arts and academia, and furthermore create new knowledge, stories and materialisations in the context of the academic conference.

My interests in performance and expanded awareness of the performativity of all matter have emerged as a consequence of my long-term exploration of possibilities for art to materialise ideas beyond the static concept of a world categorically divided by pre-existing boundaries. In the case of "Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score", this is tied to my research situated in the more-than-human discourse – a discourse that embraces a displacement of the centralities of the human (Braidotti 2018). My focus is on the non-centred, archipelagic, ongoing relations of interconnectivity, rather than on separations such as the nature–culture divide.

Over the course of the last twelve years, I have created artistic research projects from the interconnected relations and stories of encounters between humans and so-called "invasive species". These stories highlight issues of migration, coexistence, and the interconnectivity of all things; as Donna Haraway (2016: 10) has argued, "I am not interested in reconciliation or restoration, but I am deeply committed to the more modest possibilities of partial recuperation and getting on together. Call that staying with the trouble."

From an artistic storytelling perspective, I examine through diverse methods what it can mean to materialise a more-than-human perspective, through the experiences of encounters among diverse beings. One example of several of my long-term projects in which I engage in this examination is my artistic research (Aglert 2008, 2014, 2016, 2017) with the Spanish slug, (*Arion vulgaris*).³ Foundational in my research with slugs is Glissant's archipelagic thought which suggests a way of becoming with the world through attending to particularities and their relations. The stories and material developed from this research formed part of the lecture performance discussed in this text.

Participatory research (PR) is a method I explore both within my lecture performance together with the audience, and within my more-than-human (MtH) research together with Spanish slugs. The method relates to practices of de-centralisation. In the introduction to the volume *Participatory Research in More-than-Human Worlds*, the authors state that more-than-human participatory research is "interested in developing methods that can reveal what matters to those traditionally excluded from dominant knowledge making processes, as well as fostering techniques that challenge hierarchies in the hope of "creating with" in ways that are ethical, socially just and epistemologically open" (Bastian, Jones, Moore and Roe 2017: 5).

Despite the fact that many of us (humans) engage in attempts to create new imaginaries beyond the centralities of the human, we cannot escape the fact that we can only try this from within the systems, perceptions and skins of humans (Aglert, Henriksen, Lykke and Radomska (in prep). Participatory research (human or other) and multispecies storytelling resonate with archipelagic thought through the latter's nature of attemptiveness (the processual), and also in the "poetic and imaginative vision of the world" (Glissant 1999: 120). Perhaps they also do so even in a striving to speak "beyond language". Glissant suggests archipelagic thinking as a philosophy where we "not only look at the river but also feel the stones in it, even the tiniest ones".⁴ Understood in terms of knowledge-making beyond human-centred narratives, "to not only *look at*, but also to *feel*" might allow for new imaginaries beyond human perceptions. In order to provide an example, I now invite you to perform a one-minute score. Here are the instructions:

1. Set the timer on your phone or any time measuring device you might have, to 1 minute.
2. Use a ruler and draw a 4.3 cm line on a piece of paper.

² Sympoiesis is defined as "making-with" (Haraway 2016).

³ In Sweden, the *mördarsnigel* (killer slug) – the Spanish slug (*Arion vulgaris*) – is commonly regarded as an invasive, destructive species.

⁴ Quote translated from Swedish to English by the author Glissant (2009) & Glissant (2012: 41).

3. Put your index finger at one of the ends of the line you have just drawn.
4. Start the timer (with the other finger that is not in position at the line).
5. Now, move your finger slowly along the 4.3 cm line until you reach the other end of the line 1 minute later and the timer stops.

You have now exercised at the average speed of a Spanish slug, which is 4.3 cm per minute (Cameron 2016: 14).

"Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score" at the RGS-IBG Conference in 2018

In this section I focus on the textual translation of the lecture performance "Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score". The lecture performance was accompanied by footnotes, which are listed in the Appendix. The footnotes had a different function from that of traditional textual footnotes that mainly include references and clarification. Rather, they functioned as the main content of the lecture and could be performed at various levels. Each of the footnotes provided what could be imagined as a part of an archipelago that sprawled out in diverse directions, spaces, materials, and times. Each footnote carried its own story and simultaneously displayed an interrelated "ongoingness" with other footnotes.

The lecture performance took place in a specific space – a lecture hall. An abstract written in black letters on a white background was projected onto the screen. The lecture performance began when the audience heard a robotic voice produced by speech synthesis generated by computer software. The voice read the full abstract text aloud, during which I stood silently by the rostrum with my computer. At the side of the rostrum, in front of the audience, there was a table with a range of objects on top of it, including a piece of string, a lump of clay, a pair of scissors, some A4 paper sheets, empty bottles, a sculpture titled "The Killer Slug Figurine", and a plastic bag with sand ...". When the robotic voice stopped, the next slide appeared on the screen with the title of the presentation in black letters and the subtitle "Abstract as Score" written in red. I said:

With "Abstract as Score" as a subtitle and as an experimental method for this paper, I attempt to explore in practice, through the format of the presentation today, how transdisciplinary research can be imagined and performed without reproducing the order it attempts to question.

The next slide appeared on the screen and displayed the words "The score" in black letters. I said:

The function of the score in the field of visual arts can be understood to be similar to that of a script, but is suggested to be interpreted freely, often based on improvisation in front of an audience as here. Unlike a theatre script, which is commonly rehearsed and repeated, a score is usually not rehearsed and is not meant to be manifested in the same way every time it is performed. A means of aligning the considerations of my research with the particular form of presentation used in the context of this conference, I will use my abstract as score. As such, with "Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score", I try, to some extent, to take this opportunity to perform an experiment that might open a door to a potential answer to the question "How can I perform rather than represent the transdisciplinary research and discursive relationships in my artistic research and projects?"

Thereafter, the next and final slide displayed the full abstract again written in black letters on white background. Some of the words in the abstract had a red footnote cue next to them, however, written in numbers. I gave the following instructions to the audience:

It will function as follows. The score is activated through footnotes, which I have added to the abstract in red, as you see here on the screen. The abstract will repeatedly be read out loud by a voice-over. You can follow the voice, text and footnotes simultaneously here on the screen. When the voice-over reaches a footnote that you want to know more about, I invite you to call "Stop!", and I will stop, and respond to the footnote. You are welcome to call "Stop!" at any of the footnotes anywhere at any time. When I am done responding to a footnote, I will start the voice-over again and it will continue reading from where it last stopped. When it approaches another footnote that you want to know more about, you are welcome to call "Stop!" again and so on. Is this clear? OK. Let's start!

The following is the version of the abstract for "Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score" displayed on the screen during the lecture performance presented at the RGS-IBG conference in Cardiff:^{5,6}

⁵ For readers accessing this article this on a computer, the Abstract could be heard by activating the robotic voice function if the appropriate software is installed.

⁶ The numbers in square brackets indicate the position and number of the cue of the footnotes. The corresponding footnotes are listed in the Appendix to this article.

This paper^[1] in the form of a lecture performance^[2] takes as its starting point my transdisciplinary,^[3] artistic^[4] and textual research around multispecies encounters,^[5] centred on^[6] humans and^[7] Spanish slugs. Today, the Spanish slug^[8] *Arion vulgaris*,^[9] in Sweden named "the killer slug"^[10] represents^[11] a being that diverges from perceptions^[12] on the nexus of nature-city, wildlife-^[13]pest. Can we through artistic practice^[14], more-than-human^[15] perspectives, and "storytelling with slugs",^[16] challenge the binary world^[17] view, and create new imaginaries^[18] of the world as we know it?^[19] Building on concepts such as "archipelagic"^[20] (Glissant)^[21] rehearsals^[22] (Glissant) and "SF"^[23] (Haraway), I artistically explore how research situated in the liminal can be imagined, materialised and performed, without reproducing the representationalist order it attempts to trouble. Consequently, my experiments strive to reflect the entanglements^[24] between diverse life-forms, practice-led research discourse, contextualisation,^[25] and critical reflection. Research processed, and manifested, in this form can leak^[26] into another physical or biological reality. (Huyghe. 2013, 22) and account for the paradoxical, altered, non-identificational character of liminality. As such, choosing the hybrid format of a lecture performance^[27] amounts to an experiment with the possibility of aligning the trajectory of choices with the research topic.

The audience listened to the robotic voice as it read the abstract and called "Stop!" for some of the footnotes but not others. Whenever the command was given, I stopped the robotic voice and gave a response to the footnote. During the lecture performance the footnotes were performed through diverse mediums such as images, video, sound, event, and speech. As part of the textual experiment of transforming the lecture performance into this article, I present all of the footnotes as text in the Appendix. The specifics of this transformational practice and its consequences are discussed in the next section.

Archipelagic Thinking in Artistic Practice with Footnotes and Endnotes

The third part of this article consists not so much of a summary but more of what I would describe as an open ending with reflections on the ongoing experiences of the experiment in textual artistic research practice. Similar to Glissant's archipelagic thought, this proposes something that is not fixed but rather in a boundless ongoingness. I address the following question: what relational "ongoings" are performed through the reading, writing (or chewing of the paper, imagined from a slug's presumed relation) of this article? I connect this question to what Michael Wiedorn (2018: xxvii) writes in relation to the work of Glissant:

[...] readers of Glissant might do well to focus not on the *products* of our engagement with his texts, that is, on what we might grasp in them or get out of them, but rather on the *process* of reading them, of experiencing them and experimenting with them.

The approach I have chosen to unfold the meaning of all the footnotes in the abstract is to describe how I would have performed each footnote during the lecture performance. Hence, this article is a textual representation of an event that happened elsewhere rather than a performance-based dialogue between the writer and the reader of this article. This approach seems, however, to offer less for the reader in terms of an archipelagic performative event, although I could have written instructions to the reader with the aim of reiterating the performance in the time and space in which the reader finds herself.

Since the 1960s, conceptual artists have used text in the form of instructions as a strategy to explore new meanings for the relationships between language, visual form and ideas. Among the first to write instructions for art works to be executed by others was American artist Solomon ("Sol") LeWitt (1928–2007). Taking the instructions as form, applied as part of my textual experiment, might have the potential to become the means to perform both on an imaginary level and in concrete terms. Doing so would allow the footnotes to stretch archipelagically out of the textual boundaries into yet-unknown practices.

In my research, I investigate the differences and relations between the representative as form and the performative⁸ (Taylor 2003) as form. A live lecture performance is a vibrant participatory form of archipelagic storytelling practice involving the lecturer–artist, the audience and other factors such as the objects on the table. The participatory archipelagic geography of the footnotes created in dialogue with the audience is "flattened" in a textual format, as shown by the following examples: If, during a live performance, a member of the audience called "Stop! at footnote cue [23] (see the Appendix), I approached someone in the audience, a string around my outstretched hands, and gestured to them to play string figures with me. The performance act invited co-creation to take place in that moment with an open ending, such that it would have been different each time or might have remained unperformed if no one had shouted "Stop!" or if someone had refused to play.

As a further example of the flattening, should the audience call "Stop!" at footnote cue [19], I would turn to them and ask whether they had any questions or whether they wanted to share any thoughts or comments. In the Appendix, I describe what might have happened in the live performance, but I also address the reader directly and invite them to contact me via email in case she/he/they would like to share something with me. This could be a way of opening up the text to the unpredictable.

⁷ Here, I would like to ask whether you, the reader, have any thoughts or questions that you want to share? If so, please, send them to me by email: [mail\(a\)katjaagler.com](mailto:mail(a)katjaagler.com).

⁸ I use the term performative as an adjectival form of performance with reference to how Diana Taylor introduces the term, "to denote the adjectival form of the non-discursive realm of performance."

The lecture performance is usually timed to last 20 minutes, which tends to be the time allocated to one person at an academic conference. In the case of the performance lecture presented in this article there were intentionally too many footnotes to be responded to in a 20-minute performance, which in practice meant that some were never performed. Consequently, it would not have been possible to know in advance which footnotes would be performed, or it might have been the case that the audience would not have called out "Stop!" for any of the footnote cues. In that case, the voice would have read the abstract uninterrupted. Some of the objects on the table were prepared for "activation" in relation to a given footnote, while others were to be "activated" in the minds and imagination of the audience. The idea behind this specific form of erratic, ubiquitous, yet intentionally interrupted sequence was to perform a logic that was not linear, that is with a start and a conclusive end. It would be rather akin to an open-ended rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) with an interconnected "ongoingness" that attempted to stretch beyond the event of the lecture performance. In this respect, my intentions can again be related to Glissant's intentions and to how he combined the discipline of analytical thought with a determined refusal to accept the logic of linear sequences as the only productive logic (Wing 1997).

Naturally, this article has a time dimension. Reading aloud the body of the text of c.3000 words would take 23 minutes on average and reading the Appendix aloud would take about the same amount of time.⁹ The reader can access the descriptions of all of the footnotes, which was not the case during the live lecture performance, when only some were chosen. However, readers of this article will not have access to the materials that were on the table in the lecture hall.

A written description of an event would not afford the same experience of that event as would physical participation in that event. Experiencing an image described with words is not the same as looking at the image itself. Should the audience say "Stop!" at any of the footnote cues [1], [4], [9], [11] or [21] I would present a slide with a photographic image to them. In the Appendix I refer to these images in textual form, while on the other hand complementing the footnote cues [3], [4] and [16] in this article with images. American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth, in his installation "One and Three Chairs" (Kosuth 1965), represented one chair in three ways: as a physically present manufactured chair, in a photograph, and as a copy of a dictionary entry for the word "chair". Kosuth invited viewers to consider relational aspects of an object, an image and a text to explore how art can activate new meanings. Depending on how we give form to something, various imaginaries, interpretations, and stories can be made. The performatic (see Taylor 2003) dimensions between different materialisations and the different connotations they trigger become visible when something is placed in relation to something else. At the same time, there will always be particularities that escape us. This is also the case regarding my artistic attempt to convey the lecture performance in the format of a written article. Both mediums are archipelagic rehearsals that are being performed now, and at the same time they are continuing beyond this context.

Appendix

Footnotes in the abstract available to be used in the lecture performance "Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score" presented at the RGS-IBG conference in Cardiff.

[1] Paper

I present a slide to the audience, showing a photograph of artist Daniel Ladnar in 2018. I read the following from the computer to the audience:

I would like to credit my friend, the artist and researcher in performance studies, Daniel Ladnar. His experimental work on presentation formats based on non-linearity and process have been influential in my own artistic experiments, like the one I am performing here today.

[2] Lecture performance

I read the following from the computer:

Quote, "Artistic research takes emblematic form in the lecture performance—a widespread phenomenon on the international art scene of recent years. The genre has its roots in the performance and conceptual art of the 1960s, and balances on the boundary between art and academia. As a hybrid of research, lecture, visual art, and performative narrative techniques, the lecture performance as format addresses key questions of the status and potential of art in knowledge society, as well as the mechanisms of producing and framing knowledge" end quote, from the introduction of the seminar "Lecture performance, between art and academia" at Overgaaden Institute of Art, Copenhagen, 2013 (Holm 2013).

[3] Transdisciplinary

I walk over to the table with the range of objects on it and pick up an A4 sheet that has text printed in black letters on it. I hold the A4 paper sheet with two hands and read the text to the audience: "TRANSDISCIPLINARY". I then pick up the pair of scissors, cut the A4 sheet in strips, take some sticky tape and attach a piece of it at one end of the strips to bind them together, and then braid the strips into a paper object (**Figure 1**).

⁹ <http://www.speechinminutes.com/>.

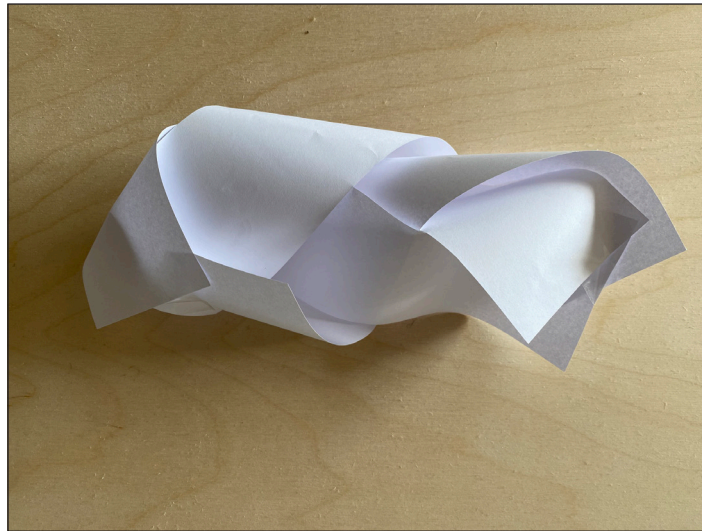


Figure 1: Paper object of the lecture performance *Archipelagic Rehearsals – Abstract as Score*. Photo: Katja Aglert. Reproduced with permission of the artist.

[4] Artistic

I present a slide to the audience, showing a photograph documenting one of my art works, and read the following from the computer:

"Liminal Creature" from 2014 is a sculpture in bronze and sandstone (**Figure 2**). The sculpture is a portrait of the Spanish slug, installed in the outdoor park Marabouparken as part of the permanent historical sculpture collection of the park. I let the slug enter into dialogue with the park's existing sculptures.



Figure 2: *Liminal Creature*, bronze sculpture of a Spanish slug in the outdoor park Marabouparken. Photo: Katja Aglert. Reproduced with permission of the artist.

[5] Multispecies encounters

I present a video on the screen, showing one of my art works titled "Momentary Seizures" from 2008. The audience watch the video for a duration of 5.54 minutes.

[6] Centred on

I walk over to the table with the objects and pick up a blue whiteboard pen. With my back turned to the audience, I write the following on the whiteboard that is positioned to one side of the projection screen: "centred on". I then cross out the words and write "related to".

[7] And

I have not planned how to perform this footnote for the audience and therefore improvise.

[8] Spanish slug

I present a video clip of a Spanish slug that is eating clover and I read the following from the computer:

The Spanish slug, *Arion vulgaris*, AKA *mördarsnigeln*, the killer slug, is perceived in Sweden as a harmful and alien invasive species. In 1975, an individual of this species was shipped, probably by humans, from Spain to Sweden either with a plant or in imported soil, presumably unintentionally and against the slug's own will. This first individual was found close to the city of Helsingborg and, the year after, another was encountered in Gothenburg. Today, Spanish slugs are present from the south to the north of Sweden. In 2014, we could read in the news that they were, in fact, not Spanish but French. We could also read that there were signs to indicate that some Spanish slugs bred with some Swedish forest slug individuals, resulting in an updated version named the "Super slug", which not only coped with the Swedish winters, but also ate just as much as our Spanish or French invader.

[9] *Arion vulgaris*

I present a slide showing a photograph of a painting titled "Arion on a Sea Horse", by William-Adolphe Bouguereau and dated 1855. I read the following from the computer:

Arion was a *kitharode* in Ancient Greece, a professional singer who played the lyre. He was credited for inventing the *dithyramb*, a choral song that, according to Aristotle, was the origin of tragedy and comedy. Despite Arion's musical inventions, he is commonly remembered for the myth of having been kidnapped by pirates and thrown overboard to die in the sea. Miraculously, Arion was saved by a dolphin that carried him back to land. The dolphin died; Arion survived.

A new slide then appears on the screen, a collage that I have made based on the same painting but with a Spanish slug added to the picture, with its mantle formed in the shape of Arion's lyre. I then read the following from the computer:

Arion vulgaris is an air-breathing land slug with a mantle resembling the shape of a lyre. Commonly with the help of humans, *Arion vulgaris* is carried long distances over oceans and land. *Arion vulgaris* is a hermaphrodite and has the capacity for self-fertilisation. According to recent molecular genetics studies, its DNA shows that this slug belongs to a species complex resulting from hybridisation.

[10] the killer slug

I walk over to the table with the range of objects on it, pick up a lump of brown clay and then walk over to a random person in the audience, to who I hand the clay saying, "Please pass this around."

[11] Represents

I present a slide to the audience showing a quote from Karen Barad's article "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter" in red letters against green background. I walk up to the audience and ask a randomly-selected person on the right-hand side of the lecture hall to read the first word aloud and for the person to their left to continue by reading the second word and so forth until the whole of the quote, as follows, has been read aloud:

A *performative* understanding of discursive practices challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent pre-existing things. Performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real. (Barad 2003: 802)

[12] Perceptions

I walk over to the table with the range of objects on it and pick up a sculpture titled "The Killer Slug Figurine" (Aglert 2016). I hold up the sculpture in front of me with two hands, displaying it to the audience, and ask, very slowly, "Whose perceptions?", thus: "www-hhh-ooo-sss-eee ppp-eee-rrr-ccc-eee-ppp-ttt-iii-ooo-nnn-sss?" I then place the sculpture back on the table and walk back to the rostrum to reactivate the robotic voice.

[13] – (hyphen)

I read the following from the computer:

Quote, "When you realise that everything is interconnected, you can't hold on to a concept of a single, solid, present-at-hand thing "over there" called Nature" end quote, from Timothy Morton's website.

[14] Artistic practice

I read the following from the computer:

Quote, "We might ask, where does artistic practice sit within a research project? What is its place in the process? Is it something one starts with to create material, or something one shows at the end as a result, or perhaps something one keeps up throughout the process, a way of thinking? The easiest way to avoid the inherent duality of the "do first–write later" model is to alternate between the two. An exhibition or performance leads to an essay, which leads to a new exhibition or performance, and so on" end quote (Lind 2014).

[15] More-than-human

I present a slide, a snapshot photograph of a human arm with a line drawn on the skin that is approximately four centimetres long, and point to the line with an index finger. I walk towards to the audience, stand in front of them and say:

We will now engage in an exercise. After my short instruction that will follow, I will set my timer on one minute, which is the duration of this exercise. This is the instruction: Put your index finger on your arm and move your fingertip on your skin along a length that you estimate is 4.3 cm. OK, let's start!

I start the timer on a mobile phone and after one minute the alarm goes off and I say:

You have now exercised at the average speed of a Spanish slug, which is 4.3 cm per minute.

[16] "Storytelling with slugs"

I present a video clip documenting the performance "Turning Over the Grounds of sgulS" (Aglert. 2017) and walk over to the table with the objects, where I pick up a newspaper, open it, and show to the audience a full-page photograph documenting the same performance (**Figure 3**), and say:



Figure 3: *Turning Over the Grounds of sgulS*, art work printed in a newspaper as part of Konstfrämjandet + LT. Photo: Katja Aglert. Reproduced with permission of the artist.

In "Turning Over the Grounds of sgulS" (2017), I involved a group of Spanish slugs, investigating multibeings transgressions through performance in the expanded field. A record of the performance, in the form of a photograph, was published as a two-page spread in a local newspaper in Sweden. In "Turning Over the Grounds of sgulS", the viewer encountered another story of the slugs that was "written" in the silvery slime trails by the slugs themselves. What can these lines convey?

I fold the paper, place it back on the table and return to the rostrum with the computer.

[17] World

I walk over to the table with the objects and pick up a A4 paper sheet, which I then crumple into a ball. Thereafter, I place the ball on the table and look at the audience for a moment. I then pick up the ball, straighten out the paper into a sheet again and tear the sheet into smaller pieces, which I then crumple into smaller balls. The balls are subsequently piled on top of each other and the pile eventually take the shape of a larger ball. When all of the smaller balls have been piled into the ball-like shape, I stop and look at the audience for a moment, before I walk back to the rostrum, where I reactivate the robotic voice.

[18] Imaginaries

I play for the audience a two-minute video clip of a silent black-and-white sequence of movement.

[19] ? (question mark)

I ask the audience whether they have any questions or thoughts that they want to share. *Here, I would like to ask whether you, the reader, have any thoughts or questions that you want to share? If so, please, send them to me by email: mail(a)katjaaglert.com*

[20] Archipelagic

I present to the audience a clip showing a close-up view of a Spanish slug as it is moving over blades of grass.

[21] Glissant

I present to the audience a slide showing text in which the font and colour of the letters constantly change. The text is a quote from "Conversation with Édouard Glissant aboard the Queen Mary II (August 2009)" by Manthia Diawara (Glissant et al. 2011):

I believe that Relation is the moment when we realise that there is a definite quantity of all the differences in the world. Just as scientists say that the universe consists of a finite quantity of atoms, and that it doesn't change – well, I say that Relation is made up of all the differences in the world and that we shouldn't forget a single one of them, even the smallest. If you forget the tiniest difference in the world, well, Relation is no longer Relation. Now, what do we do when we believe this? We call into question, in a formal manner, the idea of the universal. The universal is a sublimation, an abstraction that enables us to forget small differences; we drift upon the universal and forget these small differences, and Relation is wonderful because it doesn't allow us to do that.

[22] Rehearsals

I walk up to the audience and stand in front of them, snapping my fingers again and again, and say:

Repetition carries knowledge, Glissant says (2012: 53). In other words, if we understand the world as a mesh of relations, to repeat is not to generate the same thing, but to gradually transform, and through this, generate new knowledge. Repetition as a method for change led me to work with methods of rehearsals. This is how I currently understand my artistic proceedings, as ongoing archipelagic rehearsals.

[23] SF

I walk over to the table with the objects and pick up a length of black string with the ends tied together. Then, I put the string around both of my hands and walk over to a randomly-selected person in the audience, where I stretch out my hands towards that person, gesturing an invitation to play string figures.¹⁰

[24] Entanglements

I read the following from the computer:

Quote, "Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari criticized notions of the root and, even perhaps, notions of being rooted. The root is unique, a stock taking all upon itself and killing all around it. In opposition to this they propose the rhizome, an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either in the ground or in the air, with no predatory

¹⁰ "SF is a sign for science fiction, speculative feminism, science fantasy, speculative fabulation, science fact, and also string figures." (Haraway 2016: 10).

rootstock taking over permanently. The notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root. Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other", end quote (Glissant 1997: 11).

[25] Contextualisation

I read the following from the computer:

I apply contextual specifics as active components in my practice. I relate contextualisation to the feminist discourse of situated knowledges, which reminds us that knowledge is not neutral. In other words, it matters where the research is done, with what technologies (camera, digital, mechanical), when this happens, and who conducts the research, the histories of place, what bodies are included or excluded, and so on. The contextual specifics I gather for a project become the material that guides me in the processing and moulding of the ideas, materialisations and stories developed together with, and from it.

[26] Leak

I walk over to the table with the objects and with one hand pick up a plastic bag filled with sand and with the other hand I pick up a pair of scissors. I make a cut in the bag and the sand runs down to the floor. After a few moments, I put both the bag with the remaining sand and the pair of scissors back on the table and return to the rostrum with the computer.

[27] Performance

I read the following from the computer:

Commonly in my artistic research, performance in the expanded field is part of the methodology and expression, together with a firm interest in the specific contexts and its histories, in which projects are developed. Performance is applied as various forms of durational temporal experiments that explore what it can mean to transgress disciplinary boundaries and reach beyond circular arguments.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my sincere gratitude to (in alphabetic order): Charlotte Bydler, Kira Carpelan, Johanna Dahlin, Christina Kullberg, Nina Lykke, Tiina Peil, Catriona Turner, Michael Wiedorn.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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How to cite this article: Aglert, K 2021 "Archipelagic Rehearsals" – Attemptive Thinking Through Practicing Textual Artistic Research. *Karib – Nordic Journal for Caribbean Studies*, 6(1): 5, 1–11. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16993/karib.80>

Submitted: 26 November 2020 **Accepted:** 13 February 2021 **Published:** 08 March 2021

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Karib – Nordic Journal for Caribbean Studies is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Stockholm University Press.

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