

Adrian Maidman

## Documentation of Unit 1 Project Work

(Word Count: 1868)

### - **Forced Connections: Darwin's Theory of Evolution + Dismantling + Wood**

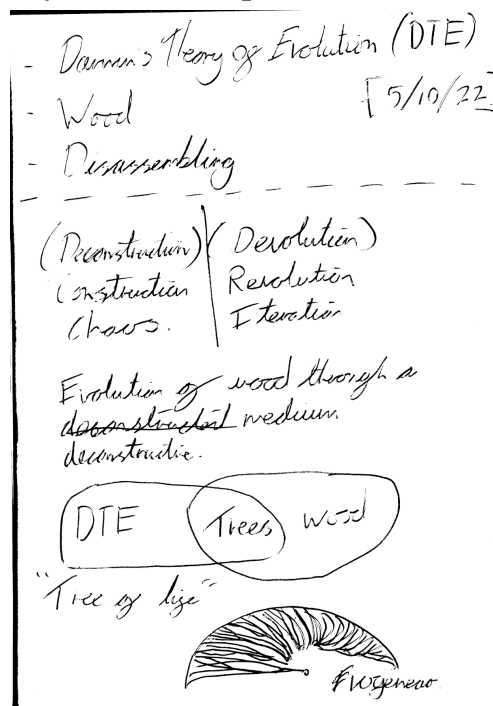
Trees of life: Dismantling Evolutionary Information - A series of photographs accompanied by an essay.

#### **Initial interests and Research.**

Immediately, I noticed a relationship between the terms I was given but was initially unsure of how exactly I can explore these topics through my practice. It presented me with a novel challenge to the purpose and direction of my work. Now I had boundaries given to me that were defined not by myself but by a group of people who chose the topics somewhat randomly.

On a walk to the post office, I noticed a large number of acorns scattered all over the path for the majority of the walk. There were so many that it was a genuine challenge to walk without sliding around on this bed of acorns. With the desire to understand evolutionary theory in order to find a starting point for this project, I found the acorns to be an unavoidable consideration. They are made of wood, or at least in the early stages of becoming a tree which is made of wood. This posed a question about growth, definitions, and the cyclical nature of the evolutionary cycle. The genetic information in the acorn will be realised as a tree, and the genetic information in a tree will be realised as an acorn. A tree is made of wood, but are acorns made of wood? Technically, they are a seed and I would not consider them made of wood, but the fact that I must ask this question presents a new question. Where are the boundaries to definitions in reality if all information is ever-changing in a cyclical motion of growth, decay, then growth? I had no answers, so I felt this would be a great place to begin.

#### **The notes that I made after my walk to the post office:**



DIE

Genetic transfer  $\rightarrow$  chemical medium  
 genetic transfer  $\rightarrow$  information  $\times$  (medium?)

Information  
 genetic  $\rightarrow$  chemical  $\rightarrow$  informational?  
 genetic  $\rightarrow$  cultural  $\rightarrow$  informational?

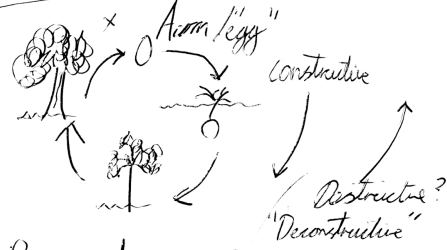
Can genetic transfer cause genetic change? Trauma? Neurological? variation?

Chaos / variation  $\rightarrow$  Order / Predictability  
 confusion knowledge



Transfer of definition / information

Trees  $\rightarrow$  Wood

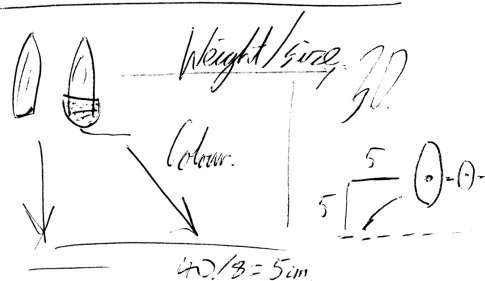
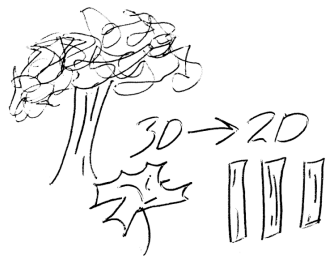


Reversal process?

Information is the ability to predict both the future and the past. Once this is gone, Information is destroyed.

An acorn is all the information for the growth of a tree plus the potential for the variation required for evolution

Acorn under microscope?



$$\sqrt{64} = 8$$

11g  $\rightarrow$  9g

Simon Harrison  
 Leigh - Stuart

Boundary Objects

Disruption to thinking

"Take away the elements in order of apparent non importance"

Essay. Information diminish?

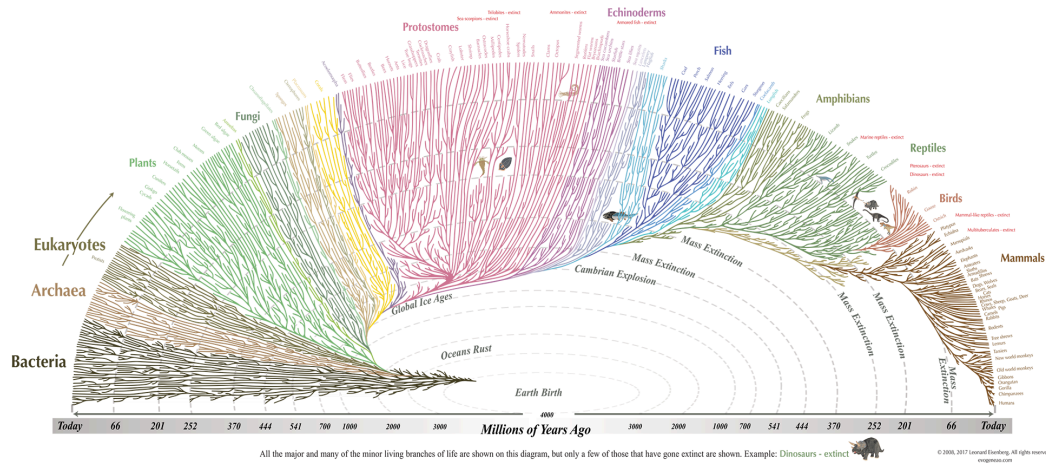
Trees of life. Talk about the photos. Support the photos with a description, support.

"Dismantling wood and Darwin: The Trees of life: Dismantling wood and Darwin" - Peter Gorm.

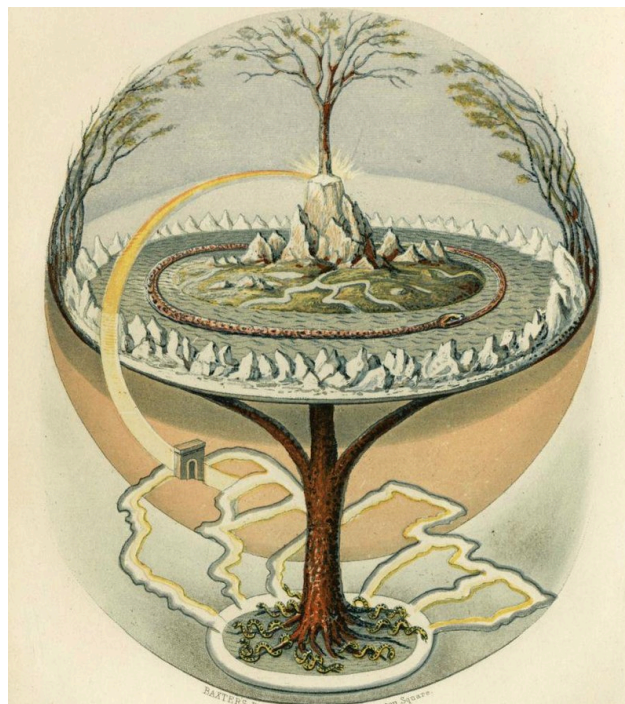
I felt like I had little knowledge of the true technicalities of the process of evolution, which meant I had to do some learning before I would feel comfortable creating a series of works that represented the ideas I outlined roughly in the notes above. I was yet to finalise a direction, but I knew that I wanted to present a rigour and purity similar to that found in a mathematical equation or a schematic diagram for an electrical circuit. Abstraction was a must if I wanted to realize this vision. Agnes Martin's paintings, to me, are the quintessential visual expression of abstraction, and she remains a lighthouse in terms of my creative

orientation. She was the first and only artist I desired to influence this project since my goal was to actively reduce the complexity. I wished to reduce the meaning to a singular, vivid point rather than build upon an idea into something too complex to be understood.

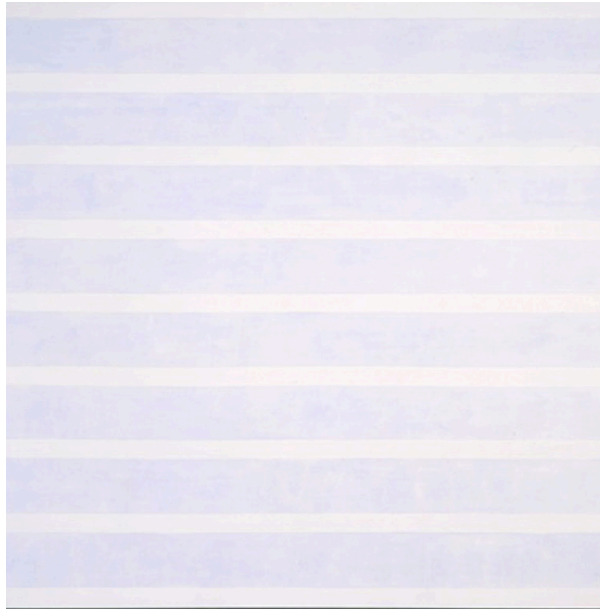
My research began with the abstraction of ‘trees of life’ and reading *The Information* by James Gleick (Gleick, 2011):



*The Evogeneao Tree of Life (Eisenberg, 2008)*



*An 1847 depiction of the Norse Yggdrasil as described in the Icelandic Prose Edda by Oluf Olufsen Bagge (Bagge, 1847)*



*Agnes Martin and The Innocence of Trees (Martin, 1964)*

### **The Serialisation and Catalogue of Natural Phenomena.**

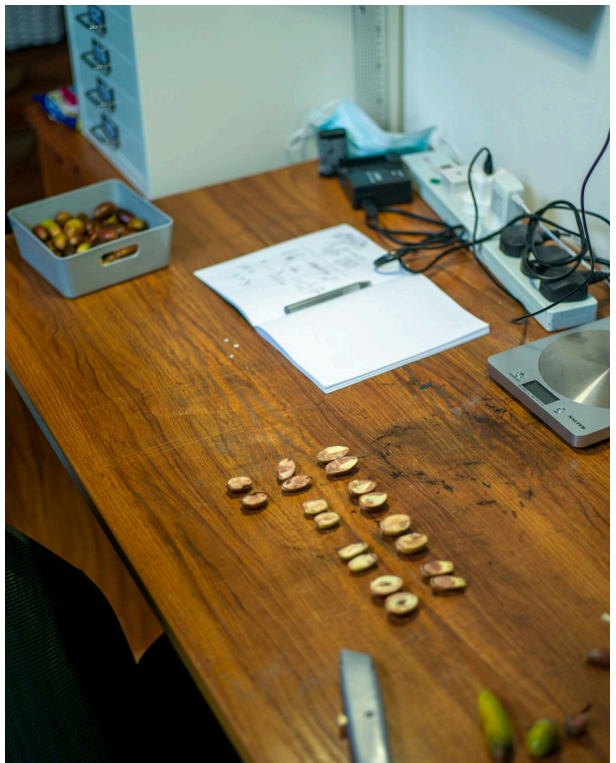
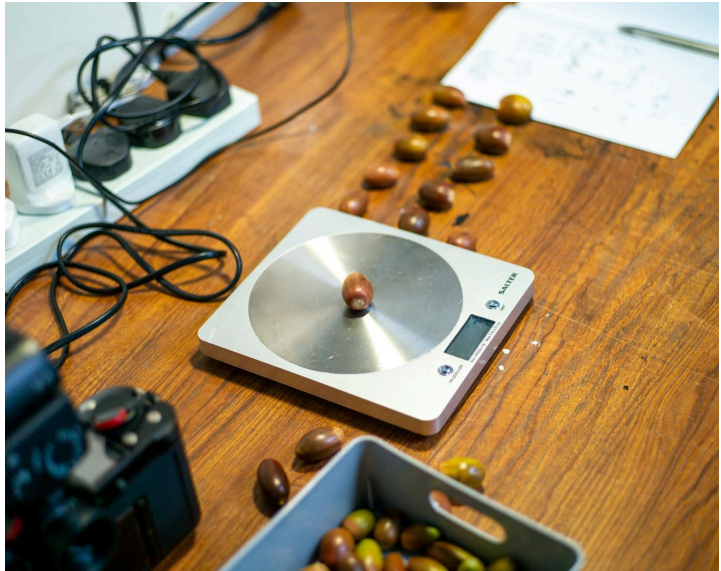
Each of the acorns was placed in weight order to categorise and visualise a trend in variation across the selection of acorns. The selection was not random; I specifically chose acorns that varied in colour, weight, size, and age. Additionally, I wanted to find acorns that were undamaged and not decaying.

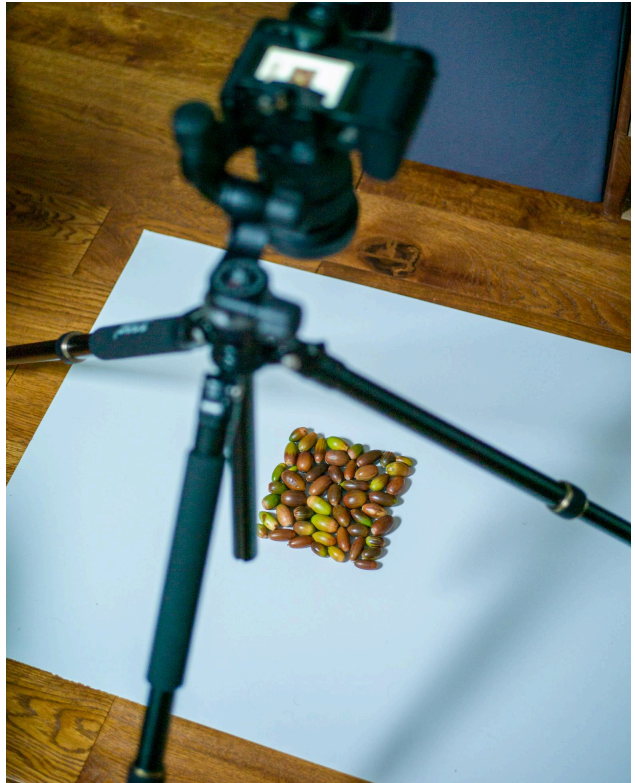
The process of weighing and arranging the acorns was deeply meditative and delicate due to their uneven weight and shape. Each seed had to be carefully balanced in a position that aligned with the others and did not move. While describing the process as meditative implies a spiritual or personal component, I would describe it as deeply practical. It felt like laying out samples for a scientific purpose. However, I deliberately chose not to align each acorn perfectly. I could have photographed each one individually and arranged them digitally, but that felt like falsifying the collective sentiment I was trying to portray. Each acorn was unique, but also unique in its position amongst the others, presenting an organic authenticity as a group rather than on an acorn-by-acorn basis.

As this work focused on evolution, variation stood out as a prime expression I saw in the hundreds of acorns I selected. Variation is not only the result but also the cause of evolutionary progression. The variables that defined each seed allowed some to grow while others did not. One might imagine that variation would become less prevalent as only a few types of seeds survived, but that was not the case. There is a genetic element in DNA that encourages variation in the growth of further seeds.

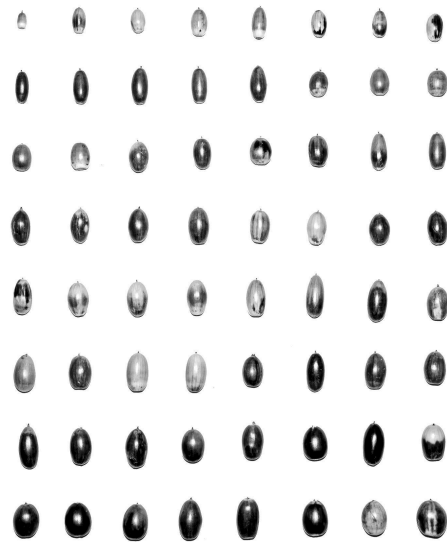
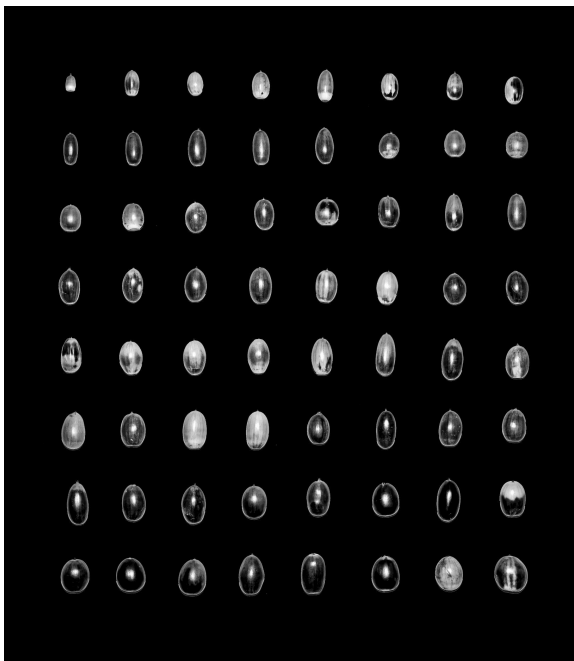
I decided to collectively document the physical characteristics of the selection of acorns using a high-resolution camera and without colour.



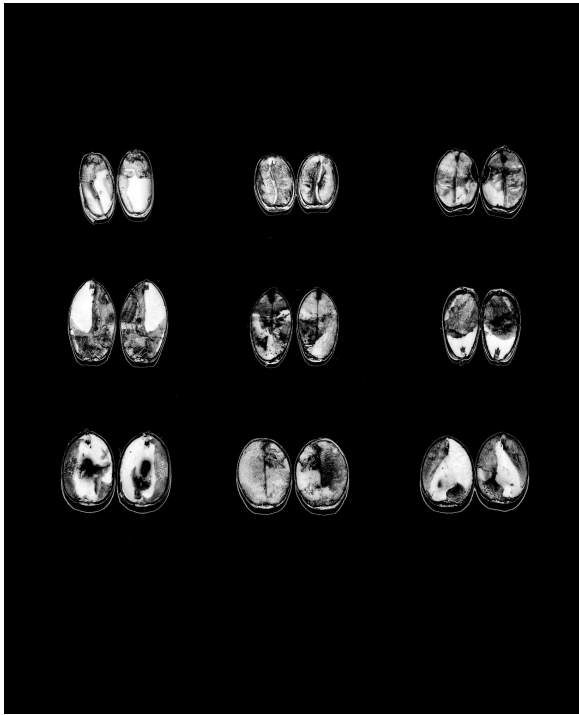




### Final Series and Essay:







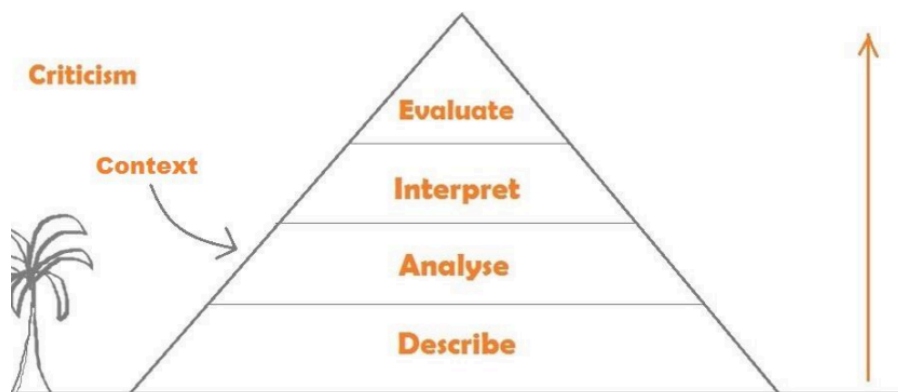
Link to Essay: [Trees of life\\_ The Innocence of Evolutionary Information \(2\).pdf](#)

### - Metacriticism.

#### **Metacriticism of the Metacriticism diagram by Adrian Holmes.**

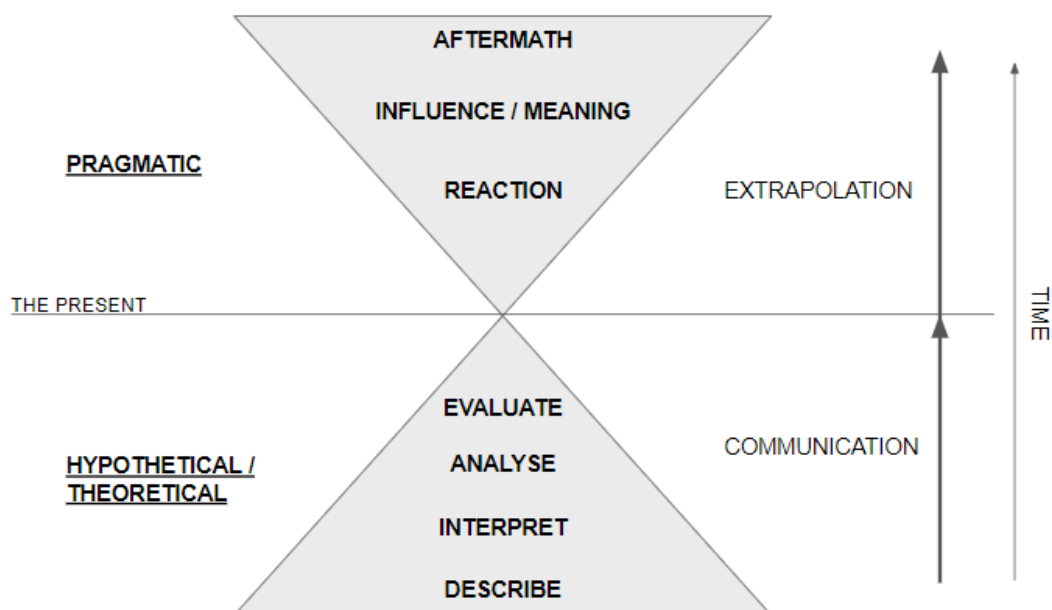
As part of my group's investigation into the experience and meaning behind LuYang Neti Neti's exhibition at the Zabudowicz Collection, we became interested in the actual purpose of criticism itself. This greatly interested me, and I began to consider the philosophical contexts that surround the nature of criticism and what we were doing together in this module. This led me to take meta-criticism to a further level of dissociation by exploring the result of criticism through the lens of the passage of time.

This thought path led me to a place where I wished to expand on Adrian Holme's diagram (shown below) by considering it as a measure of the passage of time and therefore exploring the result of criticism itself.



Adrian Holmes (2022)

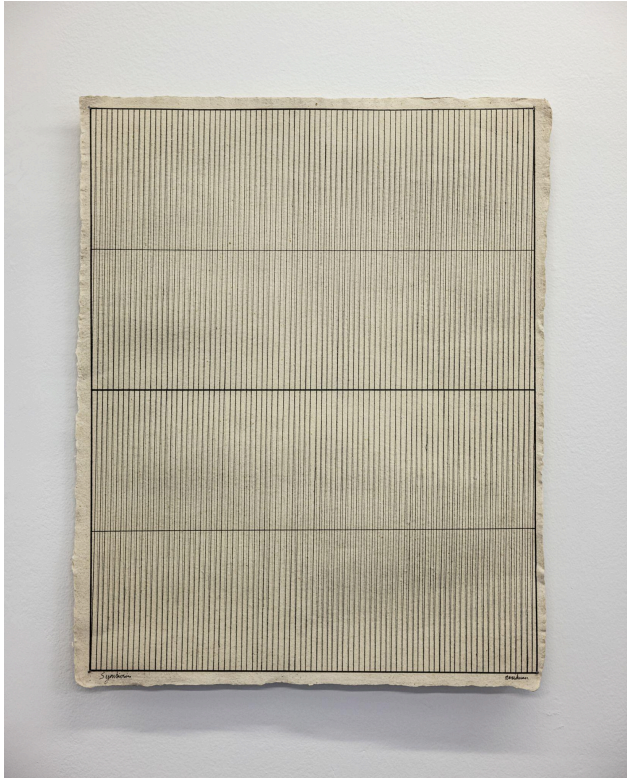
The foundations of my model are loose since it has not been considered in the broader understanding of criticism in grander philosophical contexts. I may explore this further, but for now, I am pleased with how it explains the process of perception, experience, and reaction.



I created this to be the result of our collective realisations as a group. I was unable to attend the visit to Neti Neti's exhibition so I was unable to fully engage with the process of comparison necessary to effectively criticise a journalistic article about the exhibition; So I took upon the task of criticising the critique itself and this is where I found myself.

- **‘Symbiosis’ and ‘Moment of Detonation’. MAAS Open Studio.**

When I was given the opportunity to present some work at the Open Studio, I wanted to bring some of my old painting and drawing practices into the studio. I wanted to draw and paint one piece for display and decided to show both of my attempts. ‘Symbiosis’ is a drawing of harmonic frequencies going in and out of phase, inspired by Agnes Martin. And ‘Moment of detonation’ is a figurative painting of an explosion, inspired by Cornelia Parker’s ‘Cold Dark Matter’.

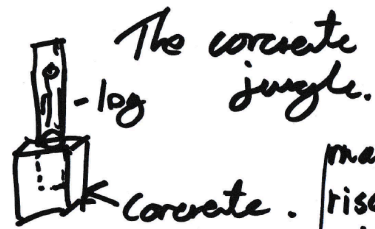


- **Common Ground - responses to Constructive Land, Lethaby Gallery Weds 9 Nov.**

**Concrete Jungle.**

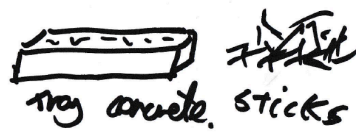
With only two weeks until the exhibition opening, Mahija, Risa, and I began thinking about what we could do that focused on the physical structure of the wood. We wanted to outline the destructive nature of cutting and carving wood in comparison to the constructive nature of building homes out of the cut wood. I personally found the juxtaposition of a tree planted in concrete presented an uncomfortable realisation that we try to control and restrict natural growth through industrial development. Mahija and Risa took this idea and created the sculpture below.





mahija  
risa  
Adrian.

1x log.  
1x casting box (square)  
1x cement / concrete.  
\_\_\_\_\_ corner stone.







#### - Sites of Practice.

#### **In My Area - A series of photographs.**

The Sites of Practice module offered a broad range of opportunities for exploration. As a photographer whose work focuses on documenting industrial growth in various contexts, I had a difficult time choosing a space to engage with. Although we were encouraged to interpret the meaning of "site" as broadly as we wished, my interests consistently leaned towards documenting phenomena through photography rather than creating artwork. I was more inclined towards "taking" photos rather than "making" them.

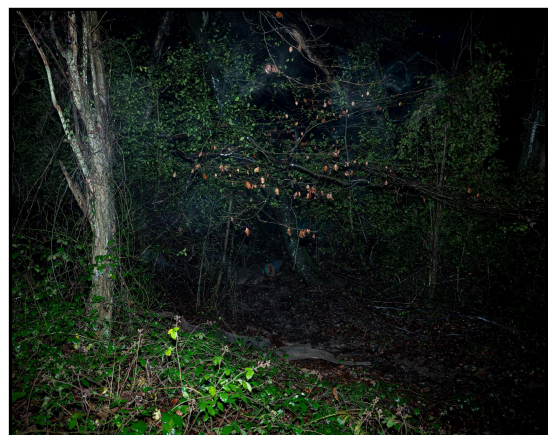
I decided to re-document a location I had visited and photographed in the past: a river bank that was gradually being encroached upon by a large-scale housing development. I was interested in this location because it was having a significant impact on the landscape, and the cause was the growing progression of industrial capital. There seemed to be a conflict without a clear aggressor or victim. Initially, one might assume that the building project was the aggressor, and that is partly true since the project is destructively colonising the space. However, once you understand the purpose of the development, the ethical considerations become more complex. More housing and a school are objective goods in the current climate, and they may justify the permanent alterations to the space. Although this message is vivid in my work, I refrain from critically analysing the ethics of the occurrence since I consider myself very underqualified for the task. My purpose was to document and revisit, and that is what I did.



Above is the original photograph I took in July 2021. My Sites of Practice work was to revisit this space at a later time and from a different perspective. I returned to the site alone at night.







I am very pleased with the results. The experience was chilling and provided a unique and alternate perspective to the conflict occurring on this border. I was very much in a foreign land, I was in nature's home and I felt very unwelcome. I could sense I was stepping on ground that didn't belong to me. I can think what this did for me in terms of understanding what was going on but it definitely made me realise that no matter how hard we try, the chaos of nature will prevail over a long enough time span. Our desire for control will always be met with opposition from nature and entropy.

I tried to take the same photo again but I couldn't find the location in the complete darkness.

### **The Nest Outside My Door.**

The same week I decided to visit the forest at night, I was avoiding going through my front door since a blackbird had made a nest and laid an egg in the bush right outside the door. I couldn't make any significant noise other wise the blackbird would abandon the egg. After a few weeks without activity, I decided to check on the nest. Below is what I found.



This nest and bird had numerous influences on my life. Not only did it control how I used the front door but proved that effort was either a failure or futile from the beginning. The notion that a creature's desire to exist safely had such an emotional influence on me that made I reconsidered the conflict I found at the border of the building site. It is complex and each side has a purpose that is valid and likely without malice, but regardless of the ethical validity of any conscious or unconscious action results in change and potential victims.

## Bibliography:

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