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SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU
AKADEMIJA LIKOVNIH UMJETNOSTI
ODSJEK ZA ANIMIRANI FILM I NOVE MEDIJE

Jiao Guo

Piknik pokraj puta
DIPLOMSKI RAD

Mentorica: Ana Hušman

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A small lexicon of weird

Introduction

“If the entity or object *is* here, then the categories which we have up until now used to make sense of the world cannot be valid. The weird thing is not wrong, after all: it is our conceptions that must be inadequate.”

- Mark Fischer

It is hard to explain why something is weird. The information is incomplete, the narrative doesn't somehow make sense. The neurons are flashing but no pathways are connecting, or too many at the same time. The weird has a purpose, it is not randomness, it follows a logic beyond our understanding, some dimension of the world is invisible to us. The possible understanding may turn what we know upside down, from there we will not know the difference between reality and madness. No matter how small and subtle the weird is, it holds the promise that if you keep tugging at it, the universe may come unravelled. Sometimes this is an enjoyable feeling, something that pulls us in. But more often it is discomforting, something that has the potential to be dangerous, dangerous in the physical sense, or dangerous to the understanding. The weird has its own world, its own logic, its own time, and we are outside of it. We feel left out, we come upon it but have no means to control it nor explain it. Knowing this impossibility, this lexicon is an attempt to connect some impressions, reflections, and experiences that attach themselves to this strange feeling that I am calling weird. They also function as anchors to my thought process, to which I always try to come back to while working on “Roadside Picnic”, a work in which I try to trace and explore the elusive scent of weird, that through time culminates in an installation in space.

The process of it coming together was open and meandering. I was not able to pin down the feelings I am after, nor was I able to verbalise it initially. I started by recollecting moments where these feelings came to me, and trying to find things and materials that unlock those feelings. Those things are then brought together in the workspace, where I can play with them and see if they will call out to me and each other. Alongside these experiments with material, I also researched and read about specific substances and processes, such as plastic, cardboard, rice, rusting, fermentation. Learning about them facilitates more experimentation. With time it also expanded to more abstract materials, sound, language, algorithm. Some research ended up branching off, like a series of photographs I made recording how things are scattered in the environment through time. I made them into diagrams, they show a pattern of a specific moment in time, eventually it felt like it drifted away from that initial feeling. Things were going in and out through the whole process. At a certain point it felt like there was a logic to all the parts, they have formed a network of relationships that are not stable but all point to that feeling that I was searching for. I do not consider this process to be over, but it has now paused at a point where things are telling me something fascinating, like those diagrams of a specific pattern at a specific time, it will keep changing into another moment.

Human beings are often limited and lazy, or our brains are. There needs to be some explanation for everything, when there cannot be, it either fascinates or threatens. Often there are everyday things and situations that suddenly feel strange to me. I wonder if maybe my sense filters have automatically filtered these out most of the time to adhere to a narrative I constructed of what reality of my life is, and somehow there was a glitch, and only now I see them as strange. Is that a fear? If we can keep

our senses open, we would find ghosts and monsters all around? To compile this lexicon, I tried to tug at these moments when things feel weird to me, and peek at what is behind that may have caused it.

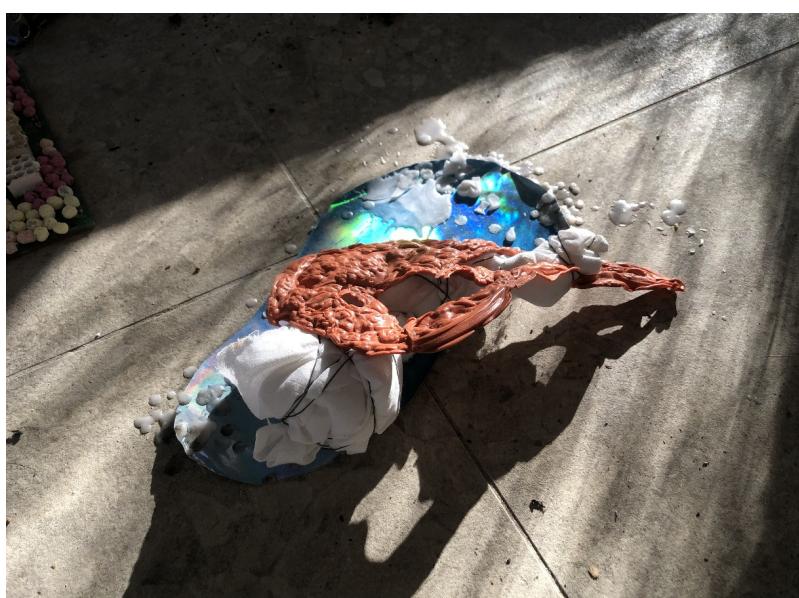
Alchemy

How do we confront a thing we encounter? Often we have a name for it, with that name are various forms of classifications. These classifications help us to place things into a map of pre-established relationships, that is how we understand. The name is the signifier for this shortcut, once it is evoked, we think we know, no need to investigate it more. What it really looks like, feels like, how it interacts with other things? To ask these questions brings me back to an outmoded system of knowledge of “alchemy”, when clear boundaries between different properties have yet to be drawn. For an alchemist it is less important what it is than what it does.

In the book “What Painting Is: How to Think about Oil Painting, Using the Language of Alchemy”, James Elkins analyses how paint as material was perceived and understood, and how the physicality of the paint is not just raw material, but is also the meaning or the idea, the two are unable to be separated. For a painter, the process of painting is initial thoughts and ideas, as well as blurry memories of pushing paints, mixing colours, feeling the resistance of the canvas surface, negotiating with the light. Often these memories are bodily, the painter knows it when the gesture is made. Everything happens in the same moment, in the same thought, with the same stroke. The process is an experiment, the knowledge and the skill involved are based on previous interaction with the material. The meaning only becomes what it is within this push and pull between the painter and the material. The idea and the physicality of the paint and traces of the forces involved cannot be separated, this pushing of the paint is as much as the idea as the initial thoughts that started the process.

To understand artwork from the perspective of the material was largely ignored by art historians. For Elkins to explain paint through the lens of alchemy is a fascinating attempt, and the new perspective also brings a strangeness when we consider the paint. They are no longer “paint” or “painting medium”. It is about powdered stones, animal by-products, resins, insects, grind up, mixed with strange liquids. They are combined to create certain effects, and the painter often does not understand the chemical processes taking place, but the experimenter knows how they will leave traces, how they shine under certain light, and how they behave combined with other materials. Like in alchemy, to know paint is to think in processes and in substances.

When we come across a weird object, we cannot replace it with a shorthand, so we are pushed to engage with it alchemically, to observe its properties and how it reacts with things around it. If they had a Platonic ideal form, then that form is beyond us, we cannot know what it is supposed to be like, we are pulled and pushed by our imagination, using the clues we pick up with our senses. We need to imagine how it comes to be, and a world that could bring about something like it.



Assemblage

Everything starts within my own body. Like the paint as material, matter is not separated from form, and I cannot separate my cognition, thinking and experience from my body. So when I start to think about this work in space, I have to think about it with all my senses, how it scales, how it relates to the body. I do not think of these things as structures nor objects in themselves, as objects tend to suggest something closed and complete, while structure suggests a plan or order. To me they are *things*, they are arranged in space in groups, and they are piles of things, and each of them is some kind of hybrid thing. Some of these piles are large, and I wanted them so because we experience things through our own human scale, to be large is not the goal, but when things are large in relation to our own body, they entice us differently, we empathise and feel threatened by them intuitively. I think of them as assemblages, and piling, adhering, tangling into bigger assemblages. Piles of things made of more things that are becoming other things. Each part is an unstable body with unstable identity, as hybrids they belong to different systems, and create different relations with different other parts constantly, yet persistent in their existence. I want to create numerous details, reiterations of similar instances, so the composition in space is not the main focus, but constantly become distracted by details, and piling of the details, of too many perspectives and connotations, to subvert an overarching whole.

Assemblage is a concept proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, and it serves to explain the system when the old model of how the parts relate to the whole is no longer adequate. In the book “Vibrant Matter” by Jane Bennet, she uses this concept for its openness, and the capacity to contain friction. Assemblage is an open-ended collective, with each actant-member slightly off of the assemblage. The agency within assemblage is more loose, and we cannot identify the individual doer. It advocates for a system that reveals how any interaction is composed with elements that have already entered the situation, stemming from different times, places, and sources of agency.

The process of putting things together needs time, to bring things together, and wait to see if relationships form in any interesting ways, to see if they will spill into each other. Materials I am using are from many sources, but most of them I have foraged, organic and inorganic, natural and cultural objects. I like the disposable quality from these found things, they were discarded as waste but found again and brought together to some degree by chance. The twice estrangement of these things makes them intimate to me and reminds me of the journey every material is on. I think they are suitable for this work because I want the meaning of these objects to shift as the viewer spends time with it, like when Bennet gazed upon a collection of trash, and what she sees shimmies between being debris and things. And all of a sudden she notices how these things possess power and how they react with each other, with the street, with the weather, with her.



I want the work to seem incomplete, so it can be open. To grow and decay all at once. A process of construction and destruction, at the moment of exhibition, it is not concluded, but at a point where the process is being paused. There is not a fixed narrative or meaning to it, but they grew out of a system of how I encourage certain tendencies for these things to relate. What was challenging was to find ways to lose some type of control, so the things don't look crafted, but to let them find a certain logic they can follow, and go to a place where their meanings are not determined.

Animism

A mechanical creature with rusted metal body, small foamy legs and an animal jaw bone that paddles it slowly across the floor, producing a scratching noise as it crawls. The scratching and crawling exhaust the creature, leaving dust of rust and powdered bone. The clumsiness of the movement seems to accentuate its effort, and it seems to possess a will, though it was not constructed for achieving it. Did it also leave the other traces around the floor, the patterns? Did it collect these objects and pile them together? When something seems to possess agency of movement, it is easy to project life onto it. It is animated, to give life to the non-living.

The division between life and non-life seems at first glance straight forward, but it is a most unstable division. Even putting aside the different philosophical and theological discussions of life, soul, energy or spirit. Science also has difficulties defining life. Usually it is defined descriptively by possessing the capacity for organisation, metabolism, growth, response to stimuli and reproduction. Eventually all lives reach the state of death, nothing is immortal and nothing resists entropy. But definition already becomes problematic when it comes to viruses, since they replicate only in host cells, and in between hosts it appears to be in a death-like state. Some also propose definitions of living systems, these tend to be more open and self organised, and shift the focus on the flow of information, energy and matter instead of defining life as enclosed. Geological formations such as reefs and limestone may appear as non-living, but in deep time, they were also once living systems. So why is this division so insistently articulated when it is so hard to define?



Anselm Franke in his essay on animism points out that the concept animism can be used as a knot to unpack modernity, which has a series of “Great Divides”. The positivism of the modern relies on imagining a negative, the concept of animism has been constructed according to the needs of the modern. On one side, is what is natural, the universal law of matter, where everything is objectified, and on the other side, society, subjective impressions, symbolic meaning and relations. The removal of animism is the disenchantment of the world. Throughout modernity there have been imaginations of animism in different fields, but without dismantling the boundaries between the divisions of what is real and what is fictional, animism is set aside and conserved, it can not challenge the unity of modernity.

Despite that, practices in animism can still give insight to mediation, translation and networks in between the boundaries of the divides. Because to be either entirely of objective world or of subjective representation, this division can only be maintained conceptually, in practice it is always transgressed. To give kinetic capacity to non living things is a practice related to animism, but so is the approach I try to adopt in creating relationships between the things.

In China there is a practice, where objects such as unglazed teapots are purposefully rubbed continuously with hands, during everyday use, so the skin oil and human “grime” slowly sinks into the clay, and over time the object gains a waxy, muted shine, and this is considered beautiful. This is also done to jade jewellery and decorative walnut shells and other objects which have a porous surface, they become objects of significance not because of the initial value, but from the time and attention spent with them. There is an element of bodily exchange, what flows between the two bodies is not only the oil or grime, but also a common essence that all things are believed to possess. The verb “yang” is used for this practice, and it means grow or bring up, and it is used on children, kept animals, kept plants (though not crops), indiscriminately. I have mostly never questioned this growing up, since it seemed like anything else, just things people do. With some distance, it also can seem strange to me. To pose the question “Is treating an object as a pet strange?” already means there is a division between living and nonliving, and what are the livings that are companions and what are not. Before this question, there was a moment when things were accepted as they are. To have this different perspective, helps me imagine what unexpected relationship I can have with the things I have collected for this work. In the process of working with them, I try to think of what else they can be. Are they pets? Enemies? Spies? Teachers? Surveillance? Friends?

Function

Walking around the forest areas around Zagreb I will often come across piles of junk dumped far away from the road and residences. Sometimes they are of such large items and so deep in the forest it seems to me absurd that someone would bother to transport them there. I can hardly imagine how it was done, besides maybe dropping them from a helicopter. Occasionally I will take some pieces back with me, these man-made objects that are abandoned can be particularly attractive. Is it because they hold some mystery as to their origin? and what have they been through as they lie in the woods lost of their functions? Some metal pieces seem ancient, like the rusty can now the body of a kinetic creature. I have done some experiments growing rust patina, with the right conditions of moisture, acidity and sun, the rusting process can be surprisingly fast. So I can not estimate when this can was thrown away.

Looking at these thrown away motherboards, it is hard to imagine the metal bits used to be buried deep underground, that production chains, economies, and exploitation are built on top of it. Digging up this stuff, and then making it into this strange object, an assemblage object with different bits attached to a piece of green plastic. I collected them from the junkyard and left them with all the other stuff I collected at the work space. At one moment I saw a small snail crawling slowly on the motherboard, so strange, the speed of the calculation made on the back of this object, and now discarded, a bed for snails.

At a lake I saw an object around a metre in diameter submerged in the water. The entire object was overgrown by algae, except one part, made seemingly out of plastic. A small concave part in the size of a human hand. It seems to be a handle of some sort, growing out of an unrecognisable object covered in its own little ecosystem, with insects and small fish zooming in and out of it. This handle indicates that this object used to be something designed to interact with human beings possessing hands, but now its former function is completely lost to me. But I feel an acceptance of it, I am really not so curious at that moment, somehow having a continuous identity did not seem so important. It is always becoming something else, its function is transient and depending on what it is relating to at that instant.

When I collect junk, that is what they are, things that have lost their predetermined function. Sometimes I feel like the world is so old that everything must have already lost its functions many times over. So maybe accepting junks is just to accept that things are open, and changing, and maybe forgotten, then found again.



Hybrid

Hybrid presumes the existence of a type of categorization, to be hybrid means there must be two or more separate and different groups. In biology, hybrids seem to be a category that bridges the liminal grey area between species, a glitch when the analogue world has been packed into the world of categories. A species in biology is a group of organisms that can reproduce and produce fertile offspring. While hybrids are the offspring of two species that are usually infertile. There is something queer about being hybrid. Scientists often deem reproduction success as the ultimate goal of all living organisms. Hybrids with no means to reproduce its own genetic code, are doomed to limit themselves to a lived experience.

Beyond biology, we call things that are composed of different elements hybrid. What constitute different elements? To imagine hybrid objects I wanted to involve chance. A large amount of materials, foraged and found, formed and bought, are brought together, they are given time to be in the same space, given time to play, slowly different pieces find each other and join together.

There is nothing unusual about the branch, taken for the convenience of being near the workspace. It is entirely dried up, even without movement one can imagine the crackling sound it produced with its frail body. The wheel is silver in colour with dried mud caked onto it, it is the kind from a large shopping trolley. They are then bound together with wires, and reminds one of a kind of children's toy, meant to be pulled around. For now it cannot stand on its own, the weight of metal overturns the whole structure. A thin stick is added on one side to prop it up, the balance is fragile, but it holds, for the moment. There is an awkwardness to it. The functional design of the wheel seems to suggest that this was at some point an intelligent contraption, but the thoughtless, clumsy structure makes it a dysfunctional remnant.



Honeycomb cardboard's internal structure is made of hexagons, it has a great rigidity with the lowest possible weight, it cushions impacts and provides thermal and acoustic insulation. When finding a piece of wasp hive in the wild, it is very similar to the inside of cardboard, both in structure and texture. Wasp queen uses chewed wood pulp mixed with her saliva to construct the nest. What comes out of her body becomes the house around her, the inner and outer space is blurred. Wasps and bees need to make the most cost effective structure, producing excretion and wax from body exhaust. This relationship of food, body and shelter reminds me of rice mortar. Rice, an important grain for the Chinese, both as food and as glue that holds structures. Sticky rice mortar was invented in ancient China utilising organic materials in inorganic mortar. Around 500 CE, sticky rice soup was mixed with slaked lime to make an inorganic-organic composite mortar that had more strength and water resistance than lime mortar. Rice played a major role in maintaining the durability of the Great Wall, as well as tombs, pagodas, and city walls. It fuels the body, and the body uses it to produce shelter to protect the body. During my experimentation I made a geometric dome, reminiscent of beehives, from rice. The rice was cooked and I chewed it into a paste, the saliva and rice was then beaten further to become more sticky. With time pink, green and brown mould started to grow on the inner side of the dome, the bacteria from my saliva fed by the rice started their own culture.

Landscape

The bigger group of hikers have moved onwards, on the slippery rocky road up to the top of the mountain, to have the best view of the land around. I decided to stay back because of the lack of preparation, I have not brought my hiking shoes, so I opt for exploring the area around off the road instead of continuing climbing. The area is a plateau in a high altitude mountain region, the land is mostly rocky with short bushes of plants. I walked among the seemingly barren planes, the vegetation so sparse, and when present, only as low tufts near the surface of the ground, a road is not needed to explore. As I wandered aimlessly, I started to pay more attention to these minuscule plants. Some pollinating insects flew and landed on these tiny swarms of flowers in midsummer, and suddenly they were in bloom all over.

I watched in a documentary series once, that a certain species of fly from cold mountainous region will hibernate in an almost death like state most of the year, emerging as larvae for a short time in summer to intake nutrients, and they do this for years, until enough energy is stored for metamorphosis, and then in a short and frenzied summer, they mate and pass on the genes. Life adapts to the most harsh living conditions, and when the moment for life appears, they live intensely. The line between life and lifeless seems most blurry, and at the same time most contrasting.

People come to the tallest mountains to have a view of the land. The word landscape often suggests a passive, inert place, "nature" as background, people as actors. Resting among these intensely living, minuscule insects and flowers, they start to possess a strange sense of agency, an almost cruel strength in their desire for life. And all these individual desires are knitted together, the insects, the rocks, the plants, tangled up and emerging from each other, a forceful presence that startles me. Landscape also describes a wide view, a whole picture, a composition. But when you start to melt into the landscape, it is made up of an infinite amount of things, to think about them all at once feels like being swallowed. It feels like the hierarchical structure of landscape composition is being dispersed, flattened, so everything is

now flickering in and out of focus and all at once. I try to keep in mind this moment of dispersion, breaking down and disorientation when I deal with the objects in my work. I want the gaze to discover new details constantly but also to move on.

Meaning

A glitch, fragmented sound is heard from a pair of old speakers. The sound barely registers as words, some parts of it echoes, and bounces around, or reiterates itself, then slowly decays into noise. Occasionally a word is registered, you have to listen quite attentively to recognize it. Then it says, “backpack”.

A friend of mine told me she listens to ASMR podcasts to help her sleep. Besides sounds, some of them will speak words, they usually choose words that have a certain tonal or rhythmic quality, yet their meanings should be neutral and least triggering for people. Words such as “backpack”, “cornfield”, “cupcake”. Somehow her explanation intrigued me, these words have “low narrative potential”. Words are units of language to store and evoke meaning, and here we are looking for words that evoke the least meaning. On top of that, their sound quality seems to want to further reduce them to rhythmic noises. The repetition destroys the meaning even further, as people always say, that if you repeat a word too many times it no longer feels like a word.

This tension between meaning and destruction of meaning gave me a strange feeling. I know something is meant to have meaning, but somehow I am unable to connect to it. I have witnessed people suffering from seizures, and in the confused state, they would start to speak, thinking they are talking in legible sentences. The tone of their voice, the intonation of the sentences, their body language, all indicating they are speaking and communicating, but the words are stringed together nonsensically, the occasional phrase that relates to the situation at hand only makes it more absurd to me. I sometimes have a strange feeling that it is not them that is unable to communicate meaning, but I have suddenly lost the ability to grasp meaning. This is a similar kind of feeling when I approach the weird. The grasp for meaning while the thing I am grasping is in itself unstable. In this soundtrack I want to translate that feeling, by applying different effects onto these words, I want them to be broken and their meaning to scatter.

Materiality

According to Tim Ingold in his essay “Toward an Ecology of Materials”, how artefacts are understood within the western tradition has always prevented materiality to be understood as an entangled part with form or the idea. Aristotle believed that things consisted of matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*), in this hylomorphic model, form is seen as the active force, the idea, something to be imposed onto matter, which is passive and lacks agency. The hylomorphic model led to a separation in the studies of material, either from the “hard physicality” angle, or from the social historical condition of how things form angle, where the central agency is how human beings are situated within it.

To understand material in a hylomorphic model is understanding separated from doing, the “mind’s eye” of an observer rather than that of a maker. To illustrate this, Ingold used an example in brickmaking. Observing the process, it looks as the clay,

being the raw material, is pressed into the mold that gives the form. But this is not so simple when examined closely. The mold is not an abstract geometric idea, it is a physical construction made out of wood, while clay is also not a fundamental element, but dug out, separated from soil, a complex mixture, then sieved and kneaded. These two parts are both on a journey of transformation when they come to a point of interaction. Then the brickmaker's expressive force, through the gesture, presses the clay against the compressive resistance of the mold to form a brick. The doer's experience with the material has acknowledged the gesture, and the process is a correspondence. Ingold brings up Deleuze and Guattari's "treatise on nomadology", where they assert that matter is always in movement, in flux and in variation.

For the craftsman or doer, the form or the idea is not something that was given or conceptualised in advance, rather it is a process of emerging. The relationship between a craftsman and the material is a process of expanding and extending, to read the material's response carefully, and adapt to it. I've heard from many others and felt it myself, an erotic tension of the desire to extend myself into the material, or feel a level of interpenetration with it. In Vivian Sobchack's "Carnal Thoughts", she speaks of the passionate devotion that expresses our desire to enfold other subjects and objects. This desire is bodily, to embrace the alterity as our own. This is compared to what Walter Benjamin calls "mimetic faculty", mimesis is not identification or desire, but the imitation of the "self" of an "other", to first act within, to be the other, and only later desire. For Sobchack, this is the key to how we gain the insight of how it is for our own body to be material, to know itself as others. It opens up a horizontal relationship with other things in the world, a sense of commonality with all others. A common materiality is what Merleau-Ponty calls "flesh". Flesh is not consisting of common particles, but it describes an intertwining and porous nature between body and the world. To think along this line allows me to consider elements that are sometimes overlooked in thinking of materiality, such as sunlight, air, moisture, sound... things I am working with are never isolated from these. To work in a space is to stay open to these influences. The rice structure's surface dried up and started to crack from the warm wind, but the inner hollow of it quickly became mouldy from the warmth. The aluminium structure glued together with polyurethane foam was first a pale yellow, in time sunlight turned the part closest to the window to a deep orange gradient, which now reminds me of dried lion's mane mushroom.



Metaphor

Hybrid, montage, juxtaposition, these concepts are about placing different, contrasting or absurd elements together. Why is this important? What happens in us when these elements are brought together? An explanation is offered to me in Jose Ortega y Gasset's essay "An Essay in Aesthetics by Way of a Preface". The essay is written to discuss poetry, but its principles have implications to all forms of art. He asserts that we can be utilitarian with all things but 'I'. When we really empathise, the other ceases to be a thing, a means. To explain in terms of how language is used, when a verb is used in the first person, or the third, the meanings are completely different, and in fact exclude one another. I "Pain" is a sensation we feel in our body, while "pains" is observed from gestures or deduced from context. When we say in the third person, it is an image, but in the first person, it is an embodied feeling/experience. The moment it becomes an image that 'I' can observe, it is no longer felt in our body. Here 'image' is used as a mental image, an impression in the mind. So when objects are in the 'I' form, they are occurring, being, executing themselves. Here 'object' is used to mean all things, including ideas and concepts

Ortega y Gasset believes that we cannot hold an object in our mind without it being an image, a concept, an idea. Yet the inaccessible inwardness, the being as it is occurring, the object as "I", is the only satisfying contemplation, which is also the key function of art for him. When we see something, it appears to us as a visual image, and functions as a narrative, of what it appears as. Narrative language can never show that inwardness, it makes a ghost, what is narrated is what was. While art is a system that shows things in the act of executing themselves, things as 'I'.

How then, does art present this being in occurring? Something that cannot be shown, without immediately becoming a ghost of itself. For Ortega y Gasset, metaphor is the key. He claims that the metaphoric object is the elementary aesthetic object. "metaphor means both a process and a result, a form of mental activity and the object attained." The goal is to obtain a new object, to do this, the object in question needs to go through two operations. First, to be freed of the visual and physical reality, to destroy the real object. Second, to give the new image a delicate quality, that in the author's word, beauty.

He defines Metaphor as a figure of speech that directly refers to one thing by mentioning another, it may provide or obscure clarity, or identify hidden similarities between two different ideas. But metaphor is not a simile, in metaphor a similarity is point out, but this has to be an aspect that is non-essential to both things referred, yet it is asserted as an absolute identity, this absurdity helps to push us to a new world where this fusion is possible, and in such a way a new object is created. Here we can argue that the metaphor functions in a similar way to montage, Mark Fisher recognises montage as the method most closely related to weird. It is about placing images that don't belong in the same world together, and forcing the creation of a new world, which often results in the feeling of weirdness.

For Ortega y Gasset the process that created this new object which holds the impression of the two previously separate things, is how art alludes to the 'being in occurring' that is worthy of contemplation. It needs to first destroy the image and the reality of the thing we behold, then by forcing another unstable and impossible identity onto it, a new inner world is being created. To think about this in context of weird, hybrid, montage, glitch, all these methods are about juxtaposition or remixing in unconventional ways, and through these processes to encourage alternative imagining of the world, a world that has not yet stabilised, but becoming.

Narrative

The work is coming together in such a way that I follow a set of impressions and logic, then juxtaposition things against each other, slowly letting everything interact with everything else. I find this way of working helps to deviate from any predetermined narrative, I do not think it can provide any answers, but maybe multiple, in flux narratives that are playful and perplexing. It is clear that we need an alternative imagination of the future, but how to practise it?

In “Staying with the Trouble”, Donna Haraway weaves together concepts from biology, anthropology, literature, critical theory and philosophy, to create a meandering story of living, surviving and dying in a damaged world. It attempts to shift away from simplistic narrative about modern/capitalistic exploration, with the dualistic ending of either adopting a harmonious equilibrium with nature or a desolate dystopian world. Haraway advocates for something more imaginative but also harder to be defined, she tells stories of multispecies survival, and moving forward as entangled assemblages.

For Haraway it is important How the story is told. “It matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories.” (2016, p. 35) Using concepts drawn from different disciplines, a patterning of possible new modes of existence in the becoming.

Haraway’s writing can be difficult to read when first came upon, the stories are not straight forward, concepts from different disciplines, different cultures and made up words are used indiscriminately. That feeling of weirdness is evoked, this way of montaging different concepts that do not belong together, makes me alert, my mind wants to make sense of it all, and engage with it as if something new is possible.

The way Haraway tells the story and what the stories were shows a certain methodology. How and why these stories are told, they have to be concrete and specific, and not abstract. This kind of storytelling insists that we expand what we think of as an ‘environmental’ question. It is becoming clear that the trouble cannot be confined to traditional ecological issues, it cannot be isolated from the broader social political injustices. The trouble as Haraway describes it, is tentacular, it reaches everywhere and binds all. The tools in Haraway’s messkit are many: sympoiesis, to think about collective system that has no defined boundaries; being open to learning surprising things from unsuspected companions; gathering and putting in relation and response-ability, to respond compassionately to the messiness that we are all entangled in. These tools provide some guidelines in thinking of this work and how to build a practice in general.



Plastiglomerate

In 2012, geologist Patricia Corcoran and sculptor Kelly Jazvac discovered a plastic-sand conglomerate that covered Kamilo Beach, Hawai'i. "an indurated, multi-composite material made hard by agglutination of rock and molten plastic. This material is subdivided into an *in situ* type, in which plastic is adhered to rock outcrops, and a clastic type, in which combinations of basalt, coral, shells, and local woody debris are cemented with grains of sand in a plastic matrix." (2016) They named it "plastiglomerate". A new substance, its strangeness is undeniably a charismatic one. Writing about Plastiglomerate, Kirsty Robertson comments on the danger of using plastiglomerate as a narcissistic metaphor for the Anthropocene, a symbol for coming together of the dualistic nature and culture, of "nature finding a way", while ignoring of the devastating reality behind the thing. To me, it also points to what Haraway advocates by "staying with the trouble". Plastiglomerate encompasses and connects many different substances and stories, with their relations to geology, colonial history, fossil economy and climate change. The substance is an assemblage both physically and philosophically. Its impossibility to be de-tangled is naked to the eye, to separate the parts will no doubt destroy the object in the process, and create more pollution.

We need to find new modes of living that do not start by reducing the complexity, and reject the way stories of things were told. To reduce the identity of plastic or any man-made objects as "man-made" is to repeat the old story. What the weird is good at is existing in the intersection of different ideas, and can be different things at once. In this work I used plastic as a binding material many times. Plastic as a material holds so many stories, it is also omnipresent in contemporary life. Seen at times as a miracle material, its properties can be adjusted for different uses, a most versatile material. Because of its availability it also feels "cheap" to people, and discussions on how to deal with them after they become trash is also ever present. When I work with these plastic parts, I try to know them again by learning their properties, and try to imagine something beyond all the narratives it holds. I look at how they wrinkle, shrink, become elastic, become more rigid, how they are shiny or matt.



Species

Biologists say that the earlier a species branches off from our genetic ancestry, the stranger and harder it is for human beings to empathise with it. So arthropods, our most distant kin of the animal kin(g)dom has often been dubbed creepy crawlly. I am often not comfortable with insects and spiders. The reason for it comes from the agencies of both sides. On the one hand I am uncomfortable with the agencies they possess, the way many of them move erratically, the potential for bites, stings, and possibly toxic. Their bizarre anatomy is intuitively threatening. On the other hand I am uncomfortable with my own agency around them, how vulnerable they are compared to me. I remember once in my childhood, I wanted to catch a particularly large grasshopper, my hands swiftly cupped it on the ground, but as I slowly opened my hands to reveal it, one of its legs had already fallen off. I remember that moment of discomfort and shock at my own careless violence.

Insects are everywhere around me. After all, arthropods make up the largest part of animal biomass on Earth. Whenever I spend some time investigating my surroundings, I always find traces they left. These traces fascinate me (also I feel safe to investigate closely since they have already left the scene), a transparent shell of one that is newly molten, tiny circles of dirt dug up, mesmerising maze carved into tree trucks, sparkling slime trail on the grass. They seem alien to me yet it is clear that they are trances of function, logic, organisation, but so different from my own.

There is an urban legend that claims that at any moment there is always at least one spider within six feet of a person. This is clearly false, but the fact that it is so widely spread speaks to the paranoia of people when it comes to spiders and how ever present they are. I sometimes imagine the spiders and insects weave nets between all things, and make everything more connected and filled with more wrinkles. That they are just in the space, often unnoticeable adding more relations to all the things around. So numerous, that individuals are not singled out but all together as invisible forces that glue everything. I find a lot of inspiration for this work from these traces. I try to mimic some of their logic. Adding details that bridges the bigger piles, imagining tiny actants that connect everything. The piling of minuscule details help to disperse the feeling of a centralised force that moves things, but a network of efforts.



There are different traces on the ground that are made with sawdust, sand, grind up spices and soil. Some formed into patterns, and these are inspired by the patterns I find out and about, often made by insects or interaction between insects and environment. Ants often leave small rings of soil around the tunnels they dug, but sometimes in urban environment, where ground is by stone blocks, they would dig between the blocks and the trace would form into rectangles with rounded edge instead. I used a piece of wood I found that was mostly hollowed out by worms. During the time it was in the work space, I would find tiny piles of sawdust form around it, the insects within it were still doing their work. When spider webs become too dense, it stop looking like webs, but almost cotton like. I used cotton candy to recreate this on spots.

Web

Weird allows us to learn about the physicality of the material without having the shorthand of a ready name, as well as to force the mind into thinking in new worlds by placing images that do not belong together. It also has the effect of understanding things in relations.

In recent years there is a booming interest in fungi, as the mycelium network seems to be a perfect reflection on the internet, cyberspace, and the virtual reality that people are increasingly living in. Fungi consist of two parts, one, the visible mushrooms, and the other, the hidden, esoteric part that connects the entire ecology. To think that human beings have an invisible, incorporeal part that is connected and in relation to a great whole is usually reserved to new-Agey, primitive, and magical thinking. But with the internet, when information can be measured, and big data collected, this hidden relation seems to be easier to imagine for many.

Nothing exists outside its relations with others. A strange thing may feel out of place, but it points to the existence of interactions, maybe how things are related is obscured, but we can still have some recognition of what they could be. Deleuze and Guattari use the concept of “agencement”, which is the establishment and dismantling of linkages between multiple concrete elements whose exact modes of interaction and functionality are obscure or unobservable.

To reflect that things are connected and have relations to each other, I try to create reiterations of the same instances, with some alteration throughout the work. This could be the same material used on different objects, or the repetition of a pattern. It can appear as the same thing but shown in different times, or as different things manifesting in similar ways because there is a commonality of materiality and forces present in all things. The sand patterns on the ground can reappear as carved patterns on the wood. The web-like elements are made from plastic, but also paper, or cotton candy.

Conclusion: Weird

I have been using the working title “Roadside Picnic” for this work. It comes from the science fiction novel by the same name by Boris Strugatsky. The title is an analogy that compares alien visitation to a picnic. A car drives off a country road into the woods, a group of people with food, drinks, radios and cameras come and have a picnic. The next day nervous animals come and inspect these strange remnants left behind, having no context, no understanding of them. This imagery really stayed with me, the everyday, carelessness of the picnic, and the existential dread left for the animals, the juxtaposition of the two images, that weird feeling.

Mark Fisher in his book “The Weird and the Eerie” identifies the weird as a fascination of the outside, it has something to do with what is right around the corner, but beyond our cognition. Often it evokes feelings of apprehension or even dread. Thus, weird is something that does not belong. The conjuring of two or more things that do not belong together is usually what leads to the experience of weird.

Even though feelings of terror and distress are often associated with the weird, Fisher points out that this is not necessarily so. When we experience an experimental work, at the first instance it often strikes us as weird. This encounter may produce feelings of unease, but at the same time there is pleasurable fascination that pulls us. Fisher argues that this feeling of weird signals the experiencing of something new, and there is a joy in opening to a new mode of seeing and thinking that has something in common with Lacan's Jouissance. So, when something is weird to us it pushes us to create new narratives, these narratives reveal something about us, and the world we exist in. So what is about the weird that fascinates? The possibility for different answers? The unknown, or the unknowable?

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Mali leksikon čudnog

Uvod

„Ako entitet ili objekt postoji ondje, tada kategorije koje smo dosad koristili za razumijevanje svijeta više ne vrijede. Čudna stvar nije pogrešna, u konačnici: naše su predodžbe te koje su neadekvatne.“

- Mark Fisher

Teško je objasniti zašto je nešto čudno. Informacije su fragmentirane, a narativ se čini nepovezanim. Neuroni se pale, ali nijedan put ih ne povezuje, ili ih ima previše odjednom. Čudno ima svoju svrhu, to nije nasumičnost, već slijedi neku logiku izvan našeg razumijevanja, dimenziju svijeta koja nam ostaje skrivena. Moguće razumijevanje čudnog može preokrenuti naše znanje naglavačke, a tada više nećemo razlikovati stvarnost od ludila. Bez obzira na to koliko malo i suptilno čudno bilo, ono nosi obećanje da bi, ako nastavimo povlačiti te niti, svemir mogao nestati. Ponekad je taj osjećaj ugodan, nešto što nas privlači. No, češće je neugodan, nešto što ima potencijal biti opasno – fizički ili za naše razumijevanje. Čudno ima svoj svijet, svoju logiku, svoje vrijeme, a mi smo izvan njega. Osjećamo se isključenima; nailazimo na to, ali nemamo načina kontrolirati ga niti objasniti. Svjesni te nemogućnosti, ovaj leksikon je pokušaj povezivanja dojmova, refleksija i iskustava koja se vežu uz taj čudni osjećaj. Oni također funkcionišu kao sidra mog misaonog procesa, kojemu se uvijek pokušavam vratiti dok radim na „Pikniku pokraj puta“. One također djeluju kao sidra za moj misaoni proces, kojem se uvijek pokušavam vratiti dok radim na ‘Pikniku pored puta’, radu u kojem pokušavam pratiti i istražiti neuvhvatljiv miris neobičnog, koji s vremenom kulminira u instalaciji u prostoru.

Proces njegovog nastanka bio je otvoren i vijugav. Nisam mogla definirati osjećaje koje tražim, niti sam ih u početku mogla verbalizirati. Počela sam prisjećanjem trenutaka kada su mi ti osjećaji dolazili i pokušajem pronalaska stvari i materijala koji bi ih probudili. Te stvari su zatim donesene u radni prostor, gdje se mogu igrati s njima i vidjeti hoće li me dozvati, kao i međusobno. Paralelno s ovim eksperimentima s materijalom, istraživala sam i čitala o određenim tvarima i procesima, kao što su plastika, karton, riža, hrđanje, fermentacija. Učenje o njima olakšava daljnje eksperimentiranje. S vremenom se istraživanje proširilo na apstraktnije materijale, poput zvuka, jezika, algoritma. Neka su istraživanja skrenula u druge smjerove, poput serije fotografija koje sam snimila bilježeći kako su stvari rasprštene u okolišu kroz vrijeme. Pretvorila sam ih u dijagrame, oni pokazuju obrazac specifičnog trenutka u vremenu, ali na kraju se činilo da se udaljilo od tog prvobitnog osjećaja. Kroz cijeli proces stvari su dolazile i odlazile. U jednom trenutku činilo se da postoji logika u svim dijelovima, formirali su mrežu odnosa koji nisu stabilni, ali svi ukazuju na taj osjećaj koji sam tražila. Ne smatram da je ovaj proces završen, ali sada je pauziran na točki gdje mi stvari govore nešto fascinantno, poput tih dijagrama specifičnog uzorka u specifičnom vremenu, on će se nastaviti mijenjati u neki drugi trenutak.

Ljudi su često ograničeni i skloni lijenosti, ili su to naši mozgovi. Mora postojati neko objašnjenje za sve, a kada ga nema, to ili fascinira ili prijeti. Često se dogodi da svakodnevni predmeti i situacije iznenada postanu čudni, što me navodi na pitanje: filtrira li moj senzorni sustav te fenomene kako bi se prilagodio narativu o stvarnosti koju sam izgradila? I dogodio se propust, pa ih tek sada vidim kao čudne? Je li to strah? Ako bismo mogli držati svoja osjetila otvorenima, bismo li posvuda otkrili duhove i čudovišta? Kako bih sastavila ovaj leksikon, pokušala sam povući te trenutke kada mi stvari izgledaju čudno i zaviriti iza onoga što je moglo uzrokovati taj dojam.

Alkemija

Kako se suočavamo s nečim što susretnemo? Često za to imamo ime, a uz to ime dolaze različiti oblici klasifikacija. Klasifikacije nam pomažu smjestiti pojave unutar unaprijed uspostavljenih odnosa, čime stječemo razumijevanje svijeta. Ime je označitelj za ovu prečicu – kada ga prizovemo, mislimo da znamo, nema potrebe dalje istraživati. Kako zapravo izgleda, kakav je osjećaj, kako djeluje s drugim stvarima? Postavljanje tih pitanja vraća me na zastarjeli sustav znanja – "alkemiju" – u kojem još nisu bile povučene jasne granice između različitih svojstava. Za alkemičara je manje važno što nešto jest, nego što ono čini.

U knjizi „Što je slikanje: Kako razmišljati o ulju na platnu koristeći jezik alkemije“, James Elkins analizira kako je boja kao materijal bila percipirana i shvaćena, te kako fizičnost boje nije samo sirovina, već i značenje ili ideja – te dvije stvari se ne mogu odvojiti. Za slikara, proces slikanja uključuje početne misli i ideje, kao i mutne uspomene na razmazivanje boje, miješanje boja, osjećaj otpora površine platna, pregovaranje sa svjetлом. Često su te uspomene tjelesne, slikar zna da je pokret ispravan kad ga izvede. Sve se događa u istom trenutku, u istoj misli, jednim potezom. Proces je eksperiment, a znanje i vještina temelje se na prethodnoj interakciji s materijalom. Značenje postaje ono što jest unutar tog odnosa povlačenja i guranja između slikara i materijala. Ideja, fizičnost boje i tragovi sila uključenih u proces ne mogu se razdvojiti – guranje boje jednako je važno kao i početne misli koje su započele proces.

Perspektiva materijala u analizi umjetničkih djela često je bila zanemarena u povijesti umjetnosti. Elkinsovo objašnjenje boje kroz prizmu alkemije fascinantno je pokušaj, a nova perspektiva također donosi dozu čudnosti kada razmatramo boju. Ona više nije samo „boja“ ili „slikarsko sredstvo“. Radi se o mljevenom kamenu, životinjskim nusproizvodima, smolama, insektima – sve to je samljeveno, pomiješano s čudnim tekućinama. Kombiniraju se kako bi stvorili određene učinke, a slikar često ne razumije kemijske procese koji se odvijaju, ali eksperimentator zna kako će ostaviti trage, kako će sjajiti pod određenim svjetlom i kako će se ponašati u kombinaciji s drugim materijalima. Kao u alkemiji, poznavati boju znači razmišljati u procesima i supstancama.

Kada naiđemo na čudan objekt, ne možemo ga zamijeniti prečicom, pa smo prisiljeni angažirati se s njim alkemično, promatraljući njegova svojstva i kako reagira s okolinom. Ako postoji njegova Platonova idealna forma, ona je izvan našeg dosega, ne možemo znati kako bi trebala izgledati; povlače nas i guraju naša mašta i tragovi koje pokupimo svojim osjetilima. Moramo zamisliti kako je nastao i svijet koji bi mogao stvoriti nešto takvo.

Assemblage

Sve počinje unutar mog vlastitog tijela. Kao što boja nije odvojena od forme, tako ni ja ne mogu odvojiti svoju spoznaju, razmišljanje i iskustvo od svog tijela. Dakle, kada počnem razmišljati o ovom radu u prostoru, moram ga promišljati svim svojim osjetilima – kako se mjeri, kako se odnosi prema tijelu. Ne promatram te stvari kao strukture niti kao objekte same po sebi, jer objekt često sugerira nešto zatvoreno i dovršeno, dok struktura sugerira plan ili red. Meni su to stvari, postavljene u prostor u grupama, hrpama stvari, a svaka od njih je neka vrsta hibridne pojave. Neke od tih hrpa su velike, i željela sam da budu takve jer predmete doživljavamo kroz vlastitu ljudsku mjeru. Biti velik nije cilj, ali kada su stvari velike u odnosu na naše tijelo, one nas drugačije privlače; intuitivno se s njima poistovjećujemo ili ih se bojimo. Promišljam ih kao sklopove – hrpe stvari koje se priljubljuju, zapliču i stvaraju veće

strukture. Hrpe sastavljene od drugih stvari koje postaju nešto drugo. Svaki dio je nestabilno tijelo s nestabilnim identitetom, poput hibrida koji pripadaju različitim sustavima i stvaraju raznolike odnose s drugim dijelovima. Ti odnosi se neprestano mijenjaju, a ipak su postojani u svom obliku.

Želim stvoriti bezbroj detalja, ponavljanja sličnih instanci, tako da kompozicija u prostoru ne bude glavni fokus, nego da promatrač stalno biva odvlačen na pojedinosti, hrpe detalja, previše perspektiva i konotacija, čime se potkopava cjelokupna slika.

Sklop je koncept koji su predložili Deleuze i Guattari, a koristi se za objašnjavanje sustava kada stari model odnosa dijelova prema cjelini više nije primjenjen. U knjizi "Vibrant Matter" Jane Bennett koristi ovaj koncept zbog njegove otvorenosti i kapaciteta da sadrži trenje. Sklop je kolektiv otvorenog kraja, pri čemu je svaki akter-član donekle izvan samog sklopa. Agencija unutar sklopa je labava, te nije moguće identificirati pojedinca koji djeluje. Bennett zagovara sustav koji otkriva kako je svaka interakcija sastavljena od elemenata koji su već ušli u situaciju, dolazeći iz različitih vremena, mjesto i izvora agencije.

Proces slaganja stvari zahtijeva vrijeme – dovesti stvari zajedno i čekati da se vidi hoće li se odnosi formirati na zanimljiv način, hoće li se preliti jedno u drugo. Materijali koje koristim dolaze iz različitih izvora, ali većinu sam pronašla sama – organski i anorganski, prirodni i kulturni objekti. Sviđa mi se ta prolazna kvaliteta pronađenih predmeta; bili su odbačeni kao otpad, ali ponovno pronađeni i slučajno spojeni. Dvostruko otuđenje tih stvari čini ih intimnima za mene i podsjeća me na putovanje svakog materijala. Mislim da su prikladni za ovaj rad jer želim da se značenje tih objekata mijenja s vremenom, dok ih promatrač istražuje. Kao što Bennett promatra hrpu smeća i vidi kako se ono preljeva između ostataka i objekata, primjećujući kako te stvari posjeduju moć i međusobno reagiraju s ulicom, s vremenom, i s njom.

Želim da rad djeluje nedovršeno, kako bi ostao otvoren. Da raste i propada istovremeno. Proces konstrukcije i destrukcije. U trenutku izlaganja, rad nije zaključen, već se nalazi u točki u kojoj je proces privremeno pauziran. Nema fiksнog narativa ili značenja; oni izniču iz sustava u kojem potičem određene tendencije da se stvari povezuju. Izazov je bio pronaći načine da izgubim određenu vrstu kontrole, kako stvari ne bi izgledale previše oblikovane, nego da pronađu vlastitu logiku i stignu na mjesto gdje njihova značenja nisu unaprijed određena.

Animizam

Mehaničko stvorenje s hrđavim metalnim tijelom, malim pjenastim nogama i čeljustima koje ga polako pokreću po podu, proizvodi zvuk grebanja dok se vuče. To grebanje i kretanje iscrpljuju stvorenje, ostavljajući za sobom tragove hrđe i samljevene kosti. Nespretnost pokreta naglašava njegov napor, čineći da se čini kao da posjeduje volju, iako nije bilo konstruirano s ciljem da je razvije. Je li ono ostavilo i druge tragove po podu, uzorke? Je li skupilo ove predmete i složilo ih zajedno? Kada nešto izgleda kao da ima agenciju pokreta, lako je projicirati život na to. Ono je animirano, dano mu je življenje koje ne posjeduje.

Podjela između života i neživota na prvi se pogled čini jednostavnom, ali ta granica vrlo je nestabilna. Čak i ako zanemarimo filozofske i teološke rasprave o životu, duši, energiji ili duhu, znanost također nailazi na poteškoće u definiranju života. Obično se definira opisno – posjedovanjem kapaciteta za organizaciju, metabolizam, rast, reakciju na podražaje i reprodukciju. Na kraju, svi životi dosežu stanje smrti; ništa nije besmrtno i sve podliježe entropiji. Međutim, definicija postaje problematična kad su u pitanju virusi, jer se repliciraju samo unutar stanica domaćina, dok izvan domaćina djeluju kao da su u stanju nalik smrti. Neki također predlažu definicije živih

sustava, koje su otvoreni i samoorganizirane, te usmjeravaju pozornost na protok informacija, energije i tvari, umjesto da život definiraju kao zatvoren sustav. Geološke formacije poput grebena i vapnenca mogu izgledati neživo, ali u dubokom vremenu, i one su nekoć bile živi sustavi. Zašto se onda ova podjela tako uporno održava kad ju je tako teško definirati?

Anselm Franke u svom eseju o animizmu ističe da se koncept animizma može koristiti kao sredstvo za razgradnju moderniteta, koji počiva na nizu „velikih podjela“. Pozitivizam modernog oslanja se na zamišljanje negativnog, a koncept animizma konstruiran je prema potrebama modernog. S jedne strane stoji priroda, univerzalni zakon materije gdje je sve objektivizirano, dok s druge strane stoji društvo, subjektivne impresije, simboličko značenje i odnosi. Uklanjanje animizma predstavlja razočaranje svijeta. Iako su kroz modernitet različita područja zamišljala animizam, bez razgradnje granica između podjela – što je stvarno, a što je fikcionalno – animizam se stavlja na stranu i konzervira, ne izazivajući jedinstvo moderniteta.

Unatoč tome, prakse animizma i dalje mogu pružiti uvid u posredovanje, prevodenje i mreže između podjela. Podjela na potpuno objektivan ili subjektivan svijet održava se samo konceptualno, dok se u praksi uvijek krši. Davanje kinetičke sposobnosti neživim stvarima praksa je povezana s animizmom, ali to je i pristup koji nastojim primijeniti u stvaranju odnosa među stvarima.

U Kini postoji praksa gdje se predmeti poput neglaziranih čajnika namjerno trljaju rukama tijekom svakodnevne uporabe, kako bi se ulje iz kože i ljudska „prljavština“ upili u glinu, te bi s vremenom predmet dobio voštani, prigušeni sjaj, koji se smatra lijepim. To se također radi s nakitom od žada, dekorativnim ljkuskama oraha i drugim predmetima s poroznom površinom. Ti predmeti postaju značajni ne zbog svoje početne vrijednosti, već zbog vremena i pažnje posvećene njima. U toj praksi postoji element tjelesne razmjene – ono što teče između dvaju tijela nije samo ulje ili prljavština, već i zajednička esencija koju svi predmeti posjeduju. Glagol „yang“ koristi se za ovu praksu, a znači rasti ili odgajati, te se koristi za djecu, kućne životinje, čuvane biljke (iako ne usjeve), bez razlike. Nikada nisam mnogo preispitivala taj rast jer mi se činio kao bilo što drugo – samo stvari koje ljudi rade. S distance, to mi može izgledati čudno. Postavljanje pitanja „Je li tretiranje predmeta kao kućnog ljubimca čudno?“ već implicira podjelu između živog i neživog te tko su živa bića koja su naši pratioci, a koja nisu. Prije tog pitanja, postojalo je prihvaćanje stvari kakve jesu. Ova drugačija perspektiva pomaže mi zamisliti kakve neočekivane odnose mogu razviti s predmetima koje sam prikupila za ovaj rad. U procesu rada s njima, razmišljam o tome što bi još mogli biti. Jesu li kućni ljubimci? Neprijatelji? Špijuni? Učitelji? Nadzornik? Prijatelji?

Funkcija

Dok šetam šumskim područjima oko Zagreba, često najđem na hrpe smeća odbačene daleko od ceste i naselja. Ponekad su ti predmeti toliko veliki i duboko u šumi da mi se čini absurdnim da bi se netko potrudio dovesti ih tamo. Teško mogu zamisliti kako je to učinjeno, osim možda bacanjem iz helikoptera. Povremeno uzmem nekoliko komada sa sobom, jer ti umjetno stvoreni predmeti, koji su napušteni, mogu biti posebno privlačni. Je li to zato što skrivaju neku misteriju o svom podrijetlu? Što su prošli dok su ležali u šumi, izgubljeni u svojoj funkciji? Neki metalni komadi izgledaju drevno, poput zahrđale konzerve koja je sada tijelo kinetičkog stvorenja. Radila sam neke eksperimente s patinom od hrde – pod pravim uvjetima vlage, kiselosti i sunca, proces hrđanja može biti iznenadujuće brz. Stoga ne mogu procijeniti kada je ta konzerva odbačena.

Gledajući te odbačene matične ploče, teško je zamisliti da su ti metalni dijelovi nekada bili zakopani duboko pod zemljom, da su proizvodni lanci, ekonomije i

eksploatacija izgrađeni na njima. Iskopani su i pretvoreni u ovaj čudni objekt – objekt sklopa s različitim dijelovima pričvršćenim za komad zelene plastike. Skupljam ih s otpada i ostavljam ih sa svim ostalim stvarima koje sam prikupila u radnom prostoru. U jednom trenutku vidjela sam malog puža kako polako puzi po matičnoj ploči – tako čudno – brzina računanja koja se odvijala na stražnjoj strani ovog predmeta, a sada odbačen, postao je krevet za puževe.

Na jezeru sam vidjela objekt promjera oko jednog metra, potopljen u vodi. Cijeli je objekt bio obrasao algama, osim jednog dijela, koji je izgledao kao da je napravljen od plastike. Mala konkavna površina veličine ljudske ruke sugerirala je da je to nekakva ručka, koja raste iz neprepoznatljivog predmeta prekrivenog vlastitim malim ekosustavom, dok insekti i male ribe jurcaju unutra i van. Ta ručka sugerira da je taj objekt nekada bio dizajniran za interakciju s ljudima, ali sada je njegova prijašnja funkcija potpuno izgubljena za mene. No, prihvaćam to; nisam bila toliko znatiželjna u tom trenutku, jer mi se činilo da kontinuirani identitet nije toliko važan. Objekt se stalno mijenja, njegova funkcija je prolazna i ovisi o tome s čime je u tom trenutku u odnosu.

Kad skupljam otpad, to su upravo to – stvari koje su izgubile svoju unaprijed određenu funkciju. Ponekad osjećam kao da je svijet toliko star da su sve stvari već mnogo puta izgubile svoje funkcije. Možda prihvatanje otpada znači jednostavno prihvatići da su stvari otvorene, promjenjive i možda zaboravljene, a onda ponovno pronađene.

Hibrid

Hibrid prepostavlja postojanje neke vrste kategorizacije; biti hibrid znači da moraju postojati dvije ili više odvojenih i različitih grupa. U biologiji, hibrid se smatra kategorijom koja premošćuje liminalno, sivo područje između vrsta, kao greška koja nastaje kada se analogni svijet pokušava uklopiti u svijet kategorizacija. Vrsta u biologiji definira se kao skupina organizama koji se mogu reproducirati i proizvoditi plodno potomstvo, dok je hibrid potomak dviju vrsta koji je obično neplodan. Postoji nešto čudno u hibridu. Znanstvenici često smatraju da je reproduktivni uspjeh krajnji cilj svih živih organizama. Hibridi, bez mogućnosti prijenosa vlastitog genetskog koda, ograničeni su na iskustvo života bez produženja kroz potomstvo.

Izvan biologije, nazivamo hibridima predmete sastavljene od različitih elemenata. Što čini različite elemente? Kada zamisljam hibridne objekte, želim uključiti element slučajnosti. Velika količina materijala, sakupljenih i pronađenih, oblikovanih i kupljenih, donosi se zajedno i dobiva vrijeme da koegzistira u istom prostoru, prostor za igru. Polako, različiti dijelovi pronalaze jedni druge i spajaju se.

Primjerice, grana koja je blizu radnog prostora uzeta je iz praktičnosti. Potpuno je osušena, iako nepomična, može se zamisliti pucketanje koje proizvodi njezinu lomljivo tijelo. Kotač srebrne boje, s osušenim blatom, podsjeća na velika kolica iz trgovina. Spojeni su žicama, stvarajući objekt nalik dječjoj igrački koja se vuče okolo. Trenutno ne može stajati samostalno; težina metalna prevrće cijelu strukturu. Tanku grančicu dodana je na jednu stranu kako bi pružila podršku; ravnoteža je krhka, ali održiva, barem za sada. Postoji nespretnost u cijeloj strukturi. Kotač, čiji funkcionalni dizajn sugerira da je nekad bio koristan, sada postaje dio disfunkcionalnih ostataka.

Unutarnja struktura kartona u obliku saća, sastavljena od heksagona, pruža izuzetnu čvrstoću uz minimalnu težinu, ublažava udarce i pruža toplinsku i zvučnu izolaciju. U prirodi, osišnja gnijezda imaju sličnu strukturu, izrađenu od sažvakane drvene kaše pomiješane sa slinom kraljice osa. Ono što izlazi iz njezina tijela postaje kuća oko nje, zamagljujući granicu između unutarnjeg i vanjskog prostora. Ose i pčele stvaraju najisplativije strukture jer proizvodnja izlučevina iscrpljuje njihovo tijelo. Ovaj odnos hrane, tijela i skloništa podsjeća me na rižin mort – ljepilo koje je imalo ključnu ulogu

u drevnoj kineskoj arhitekturi. Rižina juha miješala se s gašenim vapnom, stvarajući kompozitni mort koji je imao veću snagu i otpornost na vodu od običnog vapnenog morta. Riža hrani tijelo, a tijelo je koristi za stvaranje skloništa koje ga štiti.

U svojim eksperimentima napravila sam geometrijsku kupolu nalik pčelinjem saču, od riže. Skuhana riža, sažvakana u pastu, pomiješana sa slinom, pretvorila se u ljepljivu tvar. S vremenom su se na unutarnjoj strani kupole počele razvijati ružičasta, zelena i smeđa pljesan; bakterije iz moje sline, hranjene rižom, započele su vlastitu kulturu.

Pejzaž

Veća grupa planinara nastavila je dalje, slijedeći sklisku kamenitu stazu prema vrhu planine, u potrazi za najboljim pogledom na okolni krajolik. Odlučila sam ostati iza, zbog nedostatka pripreme – nisam imala odgovarajuću obuću – pa sam umjesto toga istraživala područje izvan staze. To područje je plato na visokoj nadmorskoj visini, pretežno kamenito, s niskim grmljem. Hodala sam po naizgled neplodnim ravnicama, gdje je vegetacija rijetka, a kada je prisutna, pojavljuje se samo u obliku niskih busena blizu površine tla. Kako sam lutala, počela sam obraćati pažnju na te minijature biljke, a mali opašivači su letjeli oko cvjetova koji su, unatoč surovom ljetu, bili u punom cvatu.

Jednom sam u dokumentarcu vidjela da određena vrsta muhe iz hladnih planinskih predjela hibernira u stanju nalik smrti većinu godine, izlazeći nakratko ljeti kako bi unosila hranjive tvari. To traje godinama, dok ne skupe dovoljno energije za metamorfozu, nakon čega, u kratkom i užurbanom ljetu, pare se i prenose gene. Život se prilagođava najtežim uvjetima, a kada se ukaže prilika, intenzivno se živi. Granica između živog i neživog čini se najnejasnijom, a istovremeno i najkontrastnijom.

Ljudi dolaze na najviše planine kako bi vidjeli krajolik. Riječ "pejzaž" često sugerira pasivno, inertno mjesto, "prirodu" kao pozadinu, dok su ljudi akteri. No, odmarajući se među ovim intenzivno živim, minijaturnim insektima i cvjetovima, počela sam osjećati njihovu snažnu prisutnost, gotovo okrutnu želju za životom. Sve te individualne želje isprepletene su, insekti, kamenje, biljke – svi međusobno povezani. Pejzaž opisuje široki pogled, no kada se počnemo stapati s njim, on se sastoji od beskonačne količine detalja. Razmišljanje o svima njima odjednom daje osjećaj kao da te nešto proždire. Hiperarhija pejzaža se raspada, titra izvan i unutar fokusa, sve odjednom. U radu sa svojim objektima pokušavam uhvatiti taj trenutak raspršivanja i dezorientacije, želeći da promatrač otkriva nove detalje stalno, ali i da bude potaknut na istraživanje dalje.

Značenje

Iz starih zvučnika dopire isprekidan, fragmentiran zvuk. Zvuk se jedva registrira kao riječi, neki njegovi dijelovi odjekuju, odbijaju se ili ponavljaju, polako prelazeći u šum. Povremeno se može prepoznati neka riječ, no morate pažljivo slušati kako biste je uhvatili. Zatim se čuje: „backpack“.

Prijateljica mi je rekla da sluša ASMR podcaste kako bi lakše zaspala. Neki od njih izgovaraju riječi s određenom tonalnom ili ritmičkom kvalitetom, ali značenja su im neutralna i izazivaju minimalan emocionalni odgovor. Riječi poput „backpack“, „cornfield“, „cookie“. Njezino objašnjenje zaintrigiralo me – te riječi imaju „nizak narativni potencijal“. Riječi, koje su jedinice značenja u jeziku, ovdje se koriste kako bi evocirale što manje moguće značenje. Njihova zvučna kvaliteta dodatno reducira riječi na ritmičke šumove. Ponavljanje uništava značenje, jer se kaže da, ako ponavljate neku riječ previše puta, ona prestaje zvučati kao riječ.

Ova napetost između značenja i uništenja značenja izaziva čudan osjećaj u meni. Znam da nešto treba imati značenje, ali ga ne mogu uhvatiti. Sjetila sam se ljudi koji su doživjeli napadaje, a u stanju konfuzije govorili su, misleći da izgovaraju razumljive rečenice. Njihova intonacija, ton glasa, govor tijela – sve je upućivalo na to da komuniciraju, ali riječi su bile nasumične. Povremena fraza koja se odnosila na trenutnu situaciju samo bi pojačala absurdnost za mene. Ponekad sam imala osjećaj da nisam izgubila značenje, već da sam ja iznenada postala nesposobna razumjeti. Taj osjećaj prepoznajem i kada se susrećem s nečim čudnim. Hvatom se za značenje, dok je ono što pokušavam uhvatiti nestabilno. U svojoj zvučnoj snimci želim prevesti taj osjećaj, primjenjujući različite efekte na riječi, tako da se one razbiju i njihovo značenje rasprši.

Materijalnost

Prema Timu Ingoldu u njegovom eseju „Prema ekologiji materijala“, način na koji se artefakti shvaćaju unutar zapadne tradicije uvijek je sprječavao da se materijalnost razumije kao isprepleteni dio s formom ili idejom. Aristotel je vjerovao da su stvari sastavljene od materije (hyle) i forme (morphe); u ovom hylomorfnom modelu, forma se vidi kao aktivna sila, ideja, nešto što se nameće materiji, koja je pasivna i lišena agencije. Hylomorfni model doveo je do odvajanja u proučavanju materijala, bilo s aspekta „tvrde fizičnosti“, bilo s aspekta društveno-povijesnih uvjeta u kojima stvari nastaju, gdje je središnja agencija usmjerena na to kako su ljudi smješteni unutar tog konteksta.

Razumijevanje materijala u hylomorfnom modelu podrazumijeva razdvajanje promišljanja od činjenja, „oko uma“ promatrača, a ne onoga tko stvara. Kako bi to ilustrirao, Ingold je upotrijebio primjer izrade cigle. Promatrujući proces, čini se da se glina, kao sirovi materijal, utiskuje u kalup koji joj daje oblik. Ali to nije tako jednostavno kada se promatra izbliza. Kalup nije apstraktna geometrijska ideja, već fizička konstrukcija napravljena od drveta, dok glina također nije temeljni element, već iskopana, odvojena od tla, složena mješavina, zatim prosijana i umiješena. Ovi dijelovi su oboje na svom putu transformacije kada dolaze u točku interakcije. Tada izrađivač cigle, kroz gestu, izražava svoju silu, pritiskujući glinu prema otporu kalupa kako bi formirao ciglu. Iskustvo izrađivača s materijalom prepoznaće tu gestu, a proces postaje korespondencija. Ingold se poziva na Deleuzea i Guattarija u „Traktatu o nomadologiji“, gdje oni tvrde da je materija uvijek u pokretu, u fluktuaciji i varijaciji.

Za obrtnika ili onoga tko čini, forma ili ideja nije nešto što je unaprijed dano ili konceptualizirano, već je to proces nastajanja. Odnos između obrtnika i materijala je proces proširivanja i produljenja, pažljivog čitanja odgovora materijala i prilagođavanja njemu. Čula sam od mnogih, a i sama osjetila, erotsku napetost u želji da se proširim u materijal ili osjetim razinu prožimanja s njim. U Sobchackovim „Misli kanala“, ona govori o strastvenoj posvećenosti koja izražava našu želju da obuhvatimo druge subjekte i objekte. Ta želja je tjelesna, da prigrimo drugost kao vlastitu. To se uspoređuje s onim što Walter Benjamin naziva „mimetičkom sposobnošću“; mimesis nije identifikacija niti želja, već oponašanje „sebe“ nekog „drugog“ – prvo djelovanje unutar, biti taj drugi, a tek kasnije željeti. Za Sobchack, to je ključ za uvid u to kako naše tijelo može doživjeti sebe kao materijal, kako bi se znalo kao drugo. Otvara se horizontalni odnos s drugim stvarima u svijetu, osjećaj zajedništva sa svim drugima. Zajednička materijalnost koju Merleau-Ponty naziva „meso“. Meso se ne sastoji od zajedničkih čestica, već opisuje isprepletenu i poroznu prirodu između tijela i svijeta. Razmišljanje na ovaj način omogućuje mi da uzmem u obzir elemente koji su ponekad zanemareni pri razmišljanju o materijalnosti, kao što su sunčeva svjetlost, zrak, vлага, zvuk... Stvari s kojima radim nikada nisu izolirane od

tih utjecaja. Površina strukture od riže osušila se i počela pucati zbog toplog vjetra, ali unutarnja šupljina brzo se upljesnivila zbog topline. Aluminijkska struktura zalipljena poliuretanskom pjenom isprva je bila blijedožuta, a s vremenom ju je sunčeva svjetlost, najbliži dio prozoru, obojila u duboku narančastu nijansu, koja me sada podsjeća na sušene gljive lavlje grive.

Metafora

Hibridnost, montaža, jukstapozicija – ovi koncepti odnose se na postavljanje različitih, kontrastnih ili absurdnih elemenata zajedno. Zašto je to važno? Što se događa u nama kad se ti elementi spoje? Objasnjenje mi je ponuđeno u eseju Ortege y Gasseta „Esej o estetici kroz uvod“. Esej je napisan kako bi raspravljao o poeziji, ali njegovi principi imaju implikacije na sve oblike umjetnosti. On tvrdi da možemo biti utilitarni prema svim stvarima osim prema „Ja“. Kada se zaista empatiziramo, drugo prestaje biti stvar, sredstvo. Ako to objasnímo u terminima kako se jezik koristi, kada se glagol koristi u prvom licu ili u trećem, značenja su potpuno različita i zapravo se međusobno isključuju. Ja „bolim“ je senzacija koju osjećamo u našem tijelu, dok on „boli“ se promatra iz gesta ili zaključuje iz konteksta. Kada kažemo u trećem licu, to je slika, ali u prvom licu, to je utjelovljeni osjećaj/iskustvo. U trenutku kada postane slika koju „Ja“ mogu promatrati, više se ne osjeća u našem tijelu. Ovdje se „slika“ koristi kao mentalna slika, dojam u umu. Dakle, kada su objekti u „Ja“ formi, oni se događaju, bivaju, sami se izvršavaju. Ovdje se „objekt“ koristi da označi sve stvari, uključujući ideje i koncepte.

Y Gasset vjeruje da ne možemo držati objekt u našem umu a da on ne postane slika, koncept, ideja. Ipak, nedostupna unutrašnjost, biće koje se događa, objekt kao „Ja“, jedina je zadovoljavajuća kontemplacija, što je za njega ključna funkcija umjetnosti. Kada nešto vidimo, to nam se pojavljuje kao vizualna slika i funkcioniра kao narativ, onoga što izgleda kao. Narativni jezik nikada ne može pokazati tu unutrašnjost, on stvara duha; ono što je ispričano je ono što je bilo. Dok je umjetnost sustav koji pokazuje stvari u činu njihova izvršavanja, stvari kao „Ja“.

Kako onda umjetnost predstavlja to biće u događanju? Nešto što se ne može pokazati, a da se odmah ne pretvori u duh sebe. Za Ortegu y Gasseta, metafora je ključ. On tvrdi da je metaforički objekt elementarni estetski objekt. „Metafora znači i proces i rezultat, oblik mentalne aktivnosti i objekt koji se postiže.“ Cilj je dobiti novi objekt, a da bi se to postiglo, objekt o kojem je riječ mora proći kroz dvije operacije. Prvo, mora se oslobođiti vizualne i fizičke stvarnosti, uništiti stvarni objekt. Drugo, treba novoj slici dati delikatnu kvalitetu, koja se prema autorovim riječima naziva ljepota.

On definira metaforu kao figurativni izraz koji izravno spominje jednu stvar pozivanjem na drugu; može pružiti ili zamagliti jasnoću, ili identificirati skrivene sličnosti između dvije različite ideje. Ali metafora nije poređenje; u metafori se ističe sličnost, ali to mora biti aspekt koji nije suštinski za obje stvari na koje se odnosi, ali se ipak postavlja kao absolutni identitet. Ova absurdnost pomaže nam da se poguramo u novi svijet u kojem je ta fuzija moguća, i na taj način stvara se novi objekt. Ovdje možemo tvrditi da metafora funkcioniра na sličan način kao montaža; Mark Fisher prepoznaje montažu kao metodu najbližu čudnome. Riječ je o postavljanju slika koje ne pripadaju istom svijetu zajedno i forsiranju stvaranja novog svijeta, što često rezultira osjećajem čudnog.

Za Ortegu y Gasseta, proces koji stvara ovaj novi objekt, koji nosi dojam dviju prethodno odvojenih stvari, način je na koji umjetnost aludira na „biće u događanju“ koje je vrijedno kontemplacije. Najprije treba uništiti sliku i stvarnost onoga što promatramo, a zatim forsiranjem druge nestabilne i nemoguće identitarnosti na to, stvara se novi unutarnji svijet. Ako razmotrimo ovaj proces u kontekstu čudnog,

hibridnog, montaže, greške – sve ove metode odnose se na jukstapoziciju ili remix na nekonvencionalne načine, i kroz te procese potiču alternativna zamišljanja svijeta, svijeta koji se još nije stabilizirao, već postaje.

Narativ

Djelo se slaže na način da pratim skup impresija i logike, zatim ih suprotstavljam jedne drugima, polako dopuštam da sve međusobno djeluje. Smatram da mi ovaj način rada pomaže odstupiti od bilo koje unaprijed određene naracije, ne vjerujem da može pružiti odgovore, ali možda može pružiti više narativa u stalnoj promjeni, koji su zaigrani i zbnjujući. Jasno je da nam je potrebna alternativna imaginacija budućnosti, ali kako je prakticirati?

U knjizi „Ostati s problemom“, Donna Haraway plete zajedno koncepte iz biologije, antropologije, književnosti, kritičke teorije i filozofije kako bi stvorila vijugavu priču o životu, preživljavanju i umiranju u oštećenom svijetu. Pokušava se udaljiti od pojednostavljenih narativa o modernoj/kapitalističkoj eksploraciji, s dualističkim završetkom – bilo usvajanjem harmonične ravnoteže s prirodom, bilo postapokaliptičnom distopijom. Haraway zagovara nešto maštovitije, ali također teže za definiranje; ona pripovijeda priče o preživljavanju među vrstama i napredovanju kao zapleteni sklopovi.

Za Haraway je važno kako se priča priča. „Važno je koje misli misle misli. Važno je koja znanja znaju znanja. Važno je koje odnose odnose odnose. Važno je koji svjetovi svjetuju svjetove. Važno je koje priče pričaju priče.“ Korištenjem koncepata iz različitih disciplina, stvara uzorak mogućih novih načina postojanja u nastajanju.

Pisanje Haraway može biti teško za čitanje pri prvom susretu, priče nisu jednostavne, koriste se koncepti iz različitih disciplina, različitih kultura i izmišljene riječi bez ikakve diskriminacije. Taj osjećaj čudnog je izazvan, ovaj način montiranja različitih koncepata koji ne pripadaju zajedno čini me budnom, moj um želi sve to shvatiti i angažirati se s tim, kao da je nešto novo moguće.

Način na koji Haraway pripovijeda priču i koje su to priče pokazuje određenu metodologiju. Kako i zašto se te priče pripovijedaju, moraju biti konkretne i specifične, a ne apstraktne. Ovakav način pripovijedanja inzistira na proširivanju onoga što smatramo 'ekološkim' pitanjem. Postaje jasno da se problem ne može ograničiti na tradicionalna ekološka pitanja, ne može se izolirati od šire društveno-političke nepravde. Problem, kako ga Haraway opisuje, je pipkast, doseže posvuda i povezuje sve. Alati u Harawayinom "kompletu za nered" su mnogi: simpozeza, razmišljanje o kolektivnom sustavu koji nema definirane granice; otvorenost za učenje iznenadujućih stvari od neočekivanih suputnika; okupljanje i stavljanje u odnos i odgovor-nost, odgovoriti s empatijom na zbrku u koju smo svi zapleteni. Ovi alati daju neke smjernice u razmišljanju o ovom radu i kako izgraditi praksu uopće.

Plastiglomerat

Godine 2012., geologinja Patricia Corcoran i kiparica Kelly Jazvac otkrile su konglomerat od plastike i pijeska koji je prekrivao plažu Kamilo na Havajima. „to je učvršćeni, višekomponentni materijal koji postaje tvrd aglutinacijom stijena i rastopljene plastike. Ovaj materijal se dijeli na in situ tip, u kojem je plastika zalijepljena za stijene, te klastični tip, u kojem su kombinacije bazalta, koralja, školjki i lokalnih drvenih ostataka povezane zrncima pijeska u plastičnoj matrici.“ Nazvale su ga "plastiglomerat". Novi materijal, čija je čudnovatost neosporno karizmatična. Pišući o plastiglomeratu, Kirsty Robertson upozorava na opasnost korištenja plastiglomerata kao narcisoidne metafore za Antropocen, simbola spajanja dualističke prirode i kulture, odnosno "priroda nađe način", dok se zanemaruje zastrašujuća

stvarnost iza toga. Za mene, on također upućuje na ono što Haraway zagovara pod "ostati s problemom". Plastiglomerat obuhvaća i povezuje mnoge različite tvari i priče, s njihovim odnosima prema geologiji, kolonijalnoj povijesti, fosilnoj ekonomiji i klimatskim promjenama. Supstanca je sklop i fizički i filozofski. Njegova nemogućnost da se razmrsi očita je na prvi pogled; pokušaj razdvajanja dijelova neizbjježno bi uništio objekt i stvorio još više zagađenja.

Moramo pronaći nove načine života koji ne započinju smanjenjem složenosti te odbaciti način na koji su priče o stvarima bile ispričane. Smanjiti identitet plastike ili bilo kojeg umjetnog objekta na "ljudski proizvod" znači ponoviti staru priču. Ono što je čudno dobro je u postojanju na sjecištu različitih ideja, i može biti različite stvari odjednom. U ovom radu više puta sam koristila plastiku kao vezivni materijal. Plastika kao materijal nosi mnogo priča, a također je sveprisutna u suvremenom životu. Nekoć viđena kao čudesan materijal, njezina se svojstva mogu prilagoditi za različite namjene, ona je najsvestraniji materijal. Zbog svoje dostupnosti, također ljudima djeluje "jeftino", a rasprave o tome kako postupati s njom kad postane otpad također su uvijek prisutne. Kad radim s ovim dijelovima plastike, pokušavam ih ponovno upoznati proučavajući njihova svojstva i pokušavam zamisliti nešto izvan svih narativa koje nose. Promatram kako se gužvaju, skupljaju, postaju elastični, postaju tvrđi, kako su sjajni ili matirani.

Vrsta

Bioazi kažu da što se ranije neka vrsta odvoji od naše genetske loze, to je čudnija i teže je ljudima empatizirati s njom. Tako su člankonošci, naši najdalji rođaci iz životinjskog kraljevstva, često nazvani strašnim gmizavcima. Često mi nije ugodno u prisutnosti insekata i paukova. Razlog tome dolazi iz agencija obje strane. S jedne strane, nelagodu mi stvara njihova vlastita agencija – način na koji se mnogi od njih kreću nepravilno, potencijalni ugrizi, ubodi, pa čak i toksičnost. Njihova bizarna anatomija intuitivno je prijeteća. S druge strane, nelagodu mi stvara i moja vlastita agencija prema njima – koliko su ranjivi u usporedbi sa mnom. Sjećam se da sam u djetinjstvu htjela uhvatiti posebno velikog skakavca; ruke su mi ga brzo prekrile na tlu, ali kad sam ih polako otvorila da ga otkrijem, jedna mu je nogu već otpala. Sjećam se tog trenutka nelagode i šoka zbog vlastitog nesmotrenog nasilja.

Insekti su svuda oko mene. Uostalom, člankonošci čine najveći dio životinjske biomase na Zemlji. Kad god provedem neko vrijeme istražujući svoju okolinu, uvijek pronadrem tragove koje su ostavili. Ti me tragovi fasciniraju (također se osjećam sigurno dok ih istražujem izbliza jer su već napustili scenu) – prozirna ljuštura nekog koji se nedavno presukao, sitni krugovi zemlje iskopani, hipnotizirajući labirint izrezbaren u deblu stabla, blistav trag sluzi na travi. Čine mi se stranim, ali je jasno da su to tragovi funkcije, logike, organizacije, ali tako različite od moje.

Postoji urbana legenda koja tvrdi da se u svakom trenutku barem jedan pauk nalazi unutar šest stopa od osobe. To je očito netočno, ali činjenica da je tako široko rasprostranjena govori o paranoji ljudi prema paucima i o tome koliko su prisutni. Ponekad zamišljam da pauci i insekti pletu mreže između svih stvari, čineći sve povezanim i ispunjenim naborima. Da su oni prisutni u prostoru, često neprimjetni, dodajući više odnosa među stvarima oko nas. Toliko su brojni da se pojedinci ne izdvajaju, već svi zajedno djeluju kao nevidljive sile koje sve povezuju. U ovom radu pronalazim mnogo inspiracije u tim tragovima. Pokušavam oponašati njihovu logiku, dodajući detalje koji povezuju veće gomile, zamišljajući sitne aktere koji povezuju sve. Gomilanje sićušnih detalja pomaže raspršiti osjećaj centralizirane sile koja pokreće stvari, stvarajući mrežu napora.

Na tlu se nalaze različiti tragovi napravljeni od piljevine, pjeska, mljevenih začina i zemlje. Neki su oblikovani u uzorke, a inspiraciju za te uzorke crpim iz tragova koje pronalazim, često nastalih djelovanjem insekata ili interakcijom između insekata i okoline. Mravi često ostavljaju male prstenove zemlje oko tunela koje kopaju, ali ponekad, u urbanom okruženju, gdje je tlo prekriveno kamenim blokovima, kopaju između blokova i trag se formira u pravokutnike sa zaobljenim rubovima. Koristila sam komad drva koji je uglavnom izbušen od strane crva; dok je bio u radnom prostoru, pronašla sam male hrpicice piljevine oko njega – insekt umutar njega i dalje je radio svoj posao. Kad paukove mreže postanu previše guste, prestaju izgledati poput mreža i postaju gotovo pamučaste. Koristila sam šećernu vunu kako bih to rekonstruirala na nekim mjestima.

Mreža

Čudnovatost omogućava učenje o fizikalnosti materijala bez korištenja skraćenice u obliku već poznatog imena, kao i prisiljava um da razmišlja u novim svjetovima postavljanjem slika koje ne pripadaju zajedno. Također ima učinak razumijevanja stvari u njihovim odnosima.

Posljednjih godina postoji sve veći interes za gljive, jer se čini da je mreža micelija savršena refleksija interneta, kiberprostora i virtualne stvarnosti u kojoj ljudi sve više žive. Gljive se sastoje od dva dijela: jedan su vidljive gljive, a drugi skriveni, ezoterični dio koji povezuje cijelu ekologiju. Mislti da ljudska bića imaju nevidljivi, bestjelesni dio koji je povezan i u odnosu s velikom cjelinom obično je rezervirano za "new age", primitivno i magijsko razmišljanje. Ali s internetom, kad se informacije mogu mjeriti i prikupljati veliki podaci, ta skrivena veza čini se lakšom za zamisliti mnogima.

Ništa ne postoji izvan svojih odnosa s drugima. Čudna stvar može se činiti izvan mjesta, ali ukazuje na postojanje interakcija. Možda je način na koji su stvari povezane nejasan, ali i dalje možemo imati neku vrstu prepoznavanja onoga što bi moglo biti. Deleuze i Guattari koriste koncept "agencement", koji predstavlja uspostavljanje i rastavljanje poveznica između više konkretnih elemenata čiji su točni načini interakcije i funkcionalnosti nejasni ili nevidljivi.

Kako bih odrazila činjenicu da su stvari povezane i imaju odnose jedna s drugom, pokušavam stvoriti ponavljanja istih situacija, s nekim promjenama kroz cijeli rad. To može biti isti materijal korišten na različitim objektima ili ponavljanje uzorka. Može se pojaviti kao ista stvar, ali prikazana u različitim vremenima, ili kao različite stvari koje se manifestiraju na sličan način jer postoji zajednička materijalnost i sile prisutne u svim stvarima. Uzorci pjeska na tlu mogu se ponovno pojaviti kao urezani uzorci na drvetu. Elementi nalik mreži izrađeni su od plastike, ali i od papira, šećerne vune.

Zaključak: Čudnovato

Koristila sam radni naslov „Piknik pokraj puta” za ovaj rad. Potječe iz istoimenog znanstvenofantastičnog romana Borisa Strugatskog. Naslov je analogija koja uspoređuje posjet vanzemaljaca s piknikom. Auto skreće s ceste u šumu, grupa ljudi sa hranom, pićem, radio prijemnicima i kamerama dolazi i pravi piknik. Sljedeći dan nervozne životinje dolaze i ispituju te čudne ostatke, bez konteksta i razumijevanja što su oni. Ova slika me zaista zadržala, svakodnevnost i bezbrižnost piknika te egzistencijalna jeza koja ostaje za životinje – suprotstavljanje tih dviju slika stvara taj čudnovat osjećaj.

Mark Fisher u svojoj knjizi “Čudnovato i jezovito” identificira čudnovato kao fascinaciju nepoznatim, nečim što je "iza ugla", ali izvan naše spoznaje. Često izaziva

osjećaje strepnje ili čak straha. Dakle, čudnovato je nešto što ne pripada. Spoj dviju ili više stvari koje ne pripadaju zajedno obično vodi do iskustva čudnovatog.

Iako su osjećaji straha i tjeskobe često povezani s čudnovatim, Fisher ističe da to ne mora biti tako. Kada doživimo eksperimentalni rad, u prvim trenucima on nas često pogodi kao čudnovat. Ovo iskustvo može proizvesti osjećaje nelagode, ali u isto vrijeme postoji ugodna fascinacija koja nas privlači. Fisher tvrdi da taj osjećaj čudnovatog signalizira iskustvo nečeg novog, a u otvaranju prema novom načinu gledanja i razmišljanja postoji radost koja ima nešto zajedničko s Lacanovom "jouissance". Dakle, kad nam je nešto čudno, to nas tjeru da stvaramo nove narative, a ti narativi otkrivaju nešto o nama i svijetu u kojem postojimo. Što je to u čudnovatom što nas fascinira? Mogućnost različitih odgovora? Nepoznato, ili ono nespoznatljivo?

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