

**Part 1 – 13:38**

Ideas around practice

Ideas around ideas

Spend the afternoon working with virtual objects (15).

Stories around virtual objects

Each participants picks an object and will create a response of their own style.

On the screen is a grind stone and grinder stone on a white background.

From a cave in SA. With a history stretching back 500,000 years of activity.

Objects taking us back somehow.

“You tell me what you want” or how can I (Nick) be useful

Encouraging freedom and creativity as opposed to the scholarly circles he has traversed.

Asking the group if they are okay with his proposed plan

“It is Indulgent to articulate practice in a broad way”

Trained as a archeologists, following a traditional scholarly track

AIR at the moment. Allowing him to explore questions in a different way through a different lens.

Walking seminars. Abolishing spaces like the one we are sitting in.

7-10 days long. Walking and talking. Embodied research

We park too many things at the door: memory, experience.

**Losing the rich texture of our human lives for a myth of coming as equals around a table. So he is trying to bring what we leave at the door into situations like the one we are having.**

**Participants:**

Philip – Anthropologist / Earthworms

Eshan – Visual Artist / Non-aesthetic art

Anna – Scenographer / Back to school

Rose – Dance-Performance / Local School

Emilio – Visual Artist / Research based practice

Barbara – Participatory Projects / PhD in design / Figures of miscommunication

Shamakura\* - Gender theory / Embodied learning

Marieke – Trained as a German theatre scientist / Arts education field of research / impossibility of the art academy

Paula – Design studies / DAS Intern

Sheri – Cultural entrepreneur / society & the arts

Tonina – Asst. Dir TV Doc violence food sector Europe / Research migration

Emke – TheatreMaker, Local School / Games, power relations, interactivity

Noah – TheatreMaker / LAB session scribe

Tatiana – Intersection Visual Arts, Philosophy, Education / Writer / Teaches artistic research in Den Haag, created program

Cecilia – Collaboration with trade unions / Writing about that practice

Nicole – Searching for topics / Where we come from as humans / Make work with other lifeforms (eating your collaborators)

Mike – Metaphor from a cognitive science perspective / Choreographer

Clementine – Object designer / Interested in performance

Lina – Question of ‘What if I took your place?’ / Displacement and empathy

Sarah – Art and Academic backgrounds

Marta – Film director / last film about a ‘black male belly dancer’

## **Part 2 – 14:17**

‘The group is it’s own resource’

### First Frame - Archeology

Archeology – A material practice / embodied

Archeologists are invested in the idea that they have a sci. practice / empirical practice

Nick’s notion that is the practice is more bodied/feeling (sweaty, dirty).

### Control – An emphasis on it. From Arch.

There is a huge question of: you don’t know what you will uncover during the work

‘Stuff’ intrudes on the work

Arch. Is focused on the material world.

Material is frustrating because it is present and tangible, but deeply unknowable

Arch is moving about in time. Playing with notions of deep time and how we relate to it.

**“As beings we’re poor at thinking about time” Forming empathy over time ‘we know, we don’t feel it’**

### **Feeling the Anthropocene**

Eshan reacts: describes the environmental conditions in Tehran

Cape Town water shortage (Day Zero in April)

Arch. As a strange and uncomfortable discipline that raises questions around theory and practice / text & object

**A second frame is a sense of urgency around human caused climate change**

*The Climate of History* essay – A creeping realization that is articulated for Nick

An essay about rethinking whole practice in the face of the Anthropocene

Bruno Latour

Nick has been re-orientating his work in a similar way to new contexts

The last 50 years we have seen a number of planetary indicators spike: The great acceleration

There is a trend around Anthropocene discussions, which Nick is suspicious of, but ultimately we do have respond to the changes caused by humanity.

Refiguring forms of scholarly practices in the face of current conditions.

Binaries in institutions: facts & ideas, body & mind

Which structures our practices

New ways are needed of asking questions, of doing research

Urgent field of artistic practices

Feeding debates of Anthropocene through this field

**Third Frame: Decolonial thinking**

Accountable to the societies we find ourselves in

Urgency of responding to the political moment

**Coloniality of being: normalizing ways of working and pathologizing other ways of working**

**Certain bodies are allowed to be in the space for working / qualification**

**Which leads to parking certain things at the door (memory, experience)**

Nick teaches a wide range (of class) of black and white students in SA.

Sitting around the table creates the fiction that we occupy the space as equals because we check experiences at the door. Normalized as part of intellectual practices.

**Part 4 – 14:36 (See Dropbox Images)**



4.tiff

Asking the group what they see.

Group: The gaze of the black man. The return of the gaze. He is the only one in focus. Black skin more bright than the white man. Letters on the cave wall. “are they colleagues?” what is the date of the photo? The person looking down is relating to the viewer thru his ‘science’

Nick: Photo from the 1930s. Cave in SA. Archeologist named Goodwin. Meter square grids, lettered and numbered. Imposing order in the space whatever it might had been before. ‘This is a science space.’ Performative acts of gridding the cave wall. Trans historical connection when a subject looks at the camera—looking at us.

Group: the grid is something that comes from the military and military order. The concept of control. How is control back in the 30s alike or dislike today.

Nick: Many archeologists had a military background. They recruited “armies of laborers.” Today there is a lot of 3d modeling tech used to exactly place objects. The question for Nick became the relationship between the two figures in the photos. He wanted to identify the figure on the right because the one on the left is well known. Nick looked through a massive archive to identify the black man. He found 3 lines written. There is no named function for the black man. (Most laborers were designated as either digger or the very colonial ‘boy’)



Nick shows us more photos. From a different excavation site. A photo of two black men standing near trees, the figure on the left is the same man from Image 1. Black co-workers are nearly absent from the written, but present in the visual archive.

Nick shows us a close up of the man and ask the group.

Group: The man is barefoot, but wearing well put together clothes.

Nick: Who is holding the pen (when writing the history)? Goodwin doesn't think of the man as his collaborator. This man and the other unrecognized collaborators are consumed in Goodwin's professional practice. There are only 3 written lines about the man named Adam V. He worked with Goodwin for at least 6 years as discovered through the dating of the photos.

Nick shows us a third photo of the man. He is in a group around a fire. He is nearly hidden the shadow.

Group: The man has such presence. Who took the photos? It isn't know.



A fourth photo (3.tiff) with the man, Adam V., in the background. Zoom in. He is excavating. A human skull is on a stick. Other bones are around. A deeply odd photo with the perspective all off.

A fifth. It doesn't appear as though there is a man in this photo. It is a boring photo of a hole in the ground with a measuring tape stretched across it. Then Adam V. is spotted. Nearly hidden in the top left corner of the image. He might be holding the end of the tape marking the original height of the ground.

Nick: there is a story here about black co-workers producing knowledge that is written out of history, out of the process.



A photo of 4 white people (5.tiff). From a roadtrip Goodwin took with his wife and two others. 5000 miles. Visiting caves, naming them, marking on a map. An exercise in cartography. Naming the site gives it existence in a particular way.



Then, Photo of a woman tracing in a cave. (6.jpg)

Group: Another group of people co-producing knowledge that is written out – women

Nick: Yes exactly. The figure called the Archeologist's wife. Also she is used a scaling device.

Then, Image of a man with a stick pointing up. A local guide. He is pointing out a point of interest for the archeologist. This man is an another co-producer of knowledge.

Then, Another image of the man. He is now standing, posing. He is now the point of interest for the archeologist. There has been a flip to the man as the subject of study.

#### Part 5 – 15:00

Nick shows us some of the objects for discussion.



1.tiff

Scientific regime of care around repeatable practices. Epistemic violence against remains in the ground. Here is a sacred site of burial. Imaging the hands burying the body. Nick describes the burial practice in detail. The living mirror the dead in the ground in the way their beds are arranged. Contracts of the different regimes of care. The sci. regime displaces the original one of burial care.

**Fostering an empathetic sense across time is important today. We're looking at scene of care across 10k years. Are there other possible responses than the rote Archeologist/Sci. Approach? Are there different practices of research we can take to approach the scene in the photo?** The performance of science. The museum is the theater/staging space for this performance.

Re-spatialization (relocation) of the buried dead in the central archive of the South Africa museum.

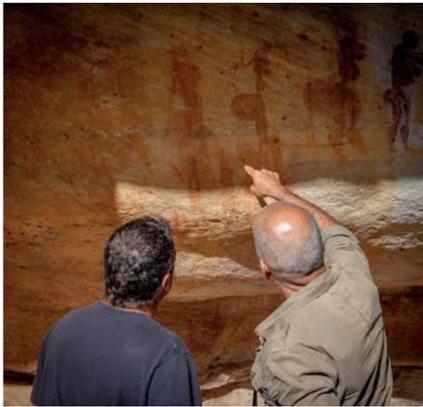
**Digital objects as a 2<sup>nd</sup> order archeology. Meta archeology.**

Where does the body (the present live body of us in particular) come into play?



1974. People looking at body casts. Are they body casts or stuffed bodies? Body casts made from live people. The body casts are now considered as biological remains because they contain trace human remains from the people who were cast. The people looking into the diorama are practicing an exercise in time travel. The man is the designer of the diorama for the museum.

10.jpg



Nick is in the photo performing archeology.

12.jpg

The group now has 15 minutes to breakoff into smaller groups and pick an object and create a response.

#### Part 6 – 15:37

Time for responses.



*Group 1 – 11.png*

“In the process of trying to digest the story of the box. Digging into the object for the story. If you want to understand mute objects you need to deconstruct them. A design exercise: like an IKEA manual for deconstruction of a historical object. How can the object create an empathetic response? The box is a very powerful object. Saartjie has not left the box yet. The object itself can help to trace back and create a new future where she is no longer in the box. The IKEA manual is used to right historical wrongs. “why did someone keep the box?” maybe out of intuition.”

Response: Is this proposed practice colonial? Do we do it for that person or for ourselves, to give us something?



*Group 2 – 1.tiff*

“First reaction was emotional. Grieving. ‘Why do we have to look at them?’ Uncomfortable curiosity, wanting to leave the room and the image. ‘Where am I in this picture?’ I would like to imagine the weight of the body as a way to establish an embodied relationship to the picture. The story of the man on Lesbos, burying the bodies of migrants washing up on shore – carrying the weight. In ethnographic museums the supplanting of the ideology around death, life, burial etc. Death becomes just another ‘scientific’ term.”



*Group 3 – 6.jpg*

Short performative action: The group recreates the image out of their bodies. Some bodies are taking the place of the women. Some bodies stand in for the stones, materials. The roles switch and the image is made again. They switch roles and then angle of the image. Another switch .

Talking: “Work, labor, action. We thought we could do an action. What’s it like to be under? What’s it like to do the actions in the photo? Taking these decolonialization things out of the thinking mode into the doing mode. The performance creates a rethinking of the original photo: was that staged? Reflecting on the moment that the documentation photographer came in and took photos of us – an imagined future of archeologists recreating the photos of us.”



*Group 4 – 7.jpg*

“What logic and info is in the drawing? What do the lines and their style mean? What deeper info is present than what is on the surface of this infographic. The drawing looks like the set up of a theatre space. A fake view into a cave. This perspective doesn’t actually exist in reality. A fantasy perspective.”

Response: The title is striking, “Schildegat,” which translates as cave of drawings.

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*Group 5 – 10.jpg*

“Many different approaches to this. The question became, “what are we seeing?” and how. We imagine laying an archeological grid over the image and use it as a method to look at it. To bring together all the perspectives/approaches. We are also looking at Nick in the image because he brought it to us. Perspectives: What is the photographer trying to show us?; Where would I position myself?; This is not a romantic image, but if I look at just the woman in the cave then it is a very romanticized image.; The lack of current conversation on colonialism and related areas – the picture is very violent from a 2018 position.; Geometrical, architectural thinking. The intersection of time and geometry through how the glass is positioned.; Conventions around exhibition.”  
 Opens up space around the white person could be an object to be studied. Dioramas are not done around aesthetic values, but around values of ‘teachings.’ A process of violence in looking at the image?



*Group 6 – 10.jpg*

“I thought about the time of going to an archeology museum in St. Petersburg. Many deformed body parts. The polish, sterile museum. Where is okay to strip down the human body to satisfy the curiosity of the human mind.”

Last thoughts:

IS IT POSSIBLE TO DECOLONILZE THE COLONIAL GAZE?

QUESTION OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL

The colonial gaze inhabits many practices/disciplines of today. -> Decolonize the disciplines.

Summary:

Description – Nick shows his work around archeology and research practices. He speaks on challenging the normative forms of research. Artistic practices and approach are part of this challenge.

Method – He shows many historical images and invites the group to respond. He asks what we see. He draws our responses into how he shares his thinking. There is a last task where he invites us to pick and respond to a virtual object he has brought.

Motivation – An urgent need to find new modes of thinking and research in the face of the Anthropocene. New approaches are needed to challenge the normative order.

‘Result’ – Activating different modes of ‘reading’ or excavating the images. Opening the mind to the concept of creating empathy across time.

Discussion – See above.

Conclusion – No set conclusion made. A strong interest was created towards the approaches Nick shared with us.