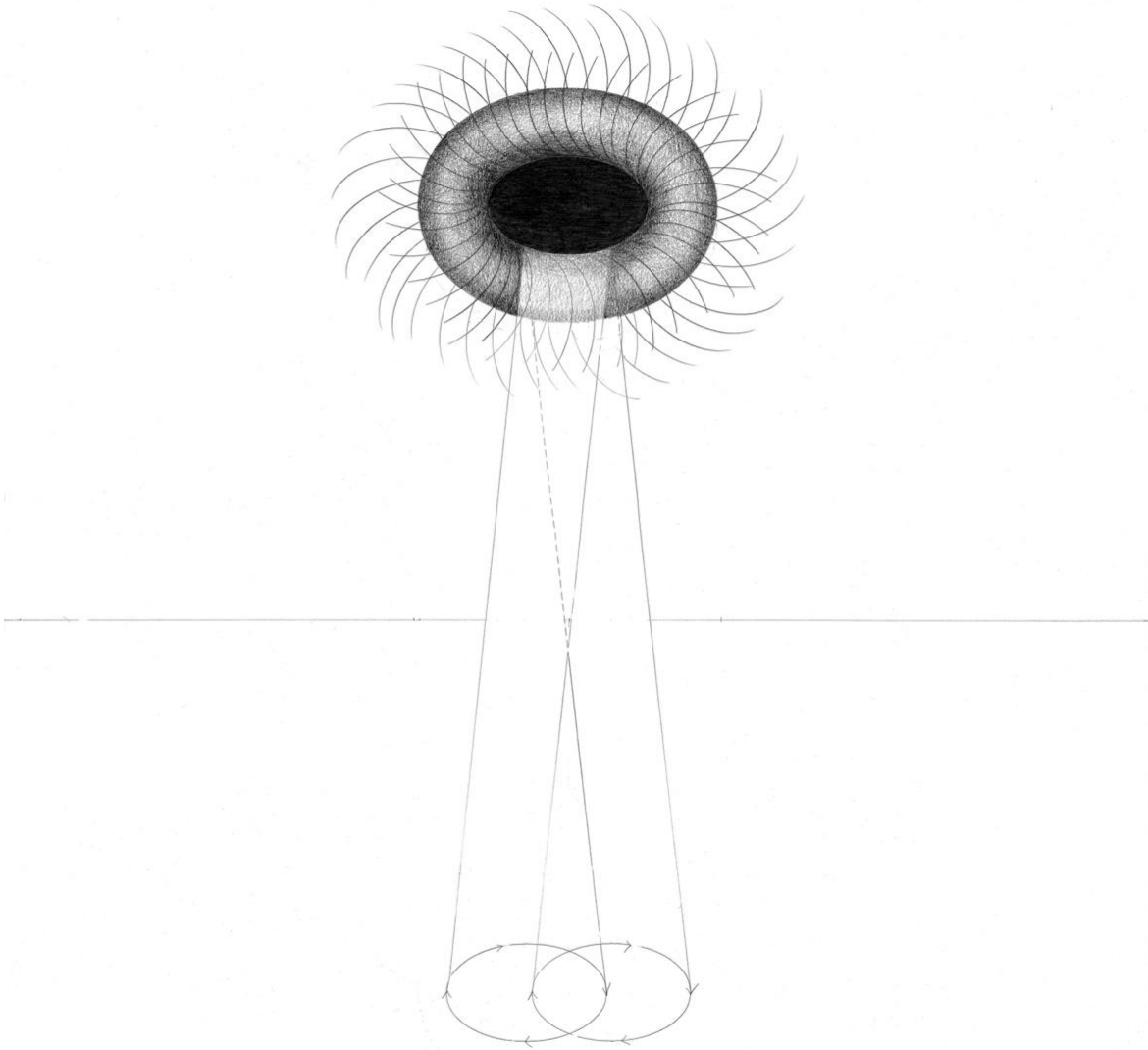


Becoming Diagrammatic

In what ways does conceptual art praxis intersect
post-continental philosophy in drawing the imagethought?



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Cover image: #12 *black eye torus with looping Venn*

Imagethought Experiments – 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

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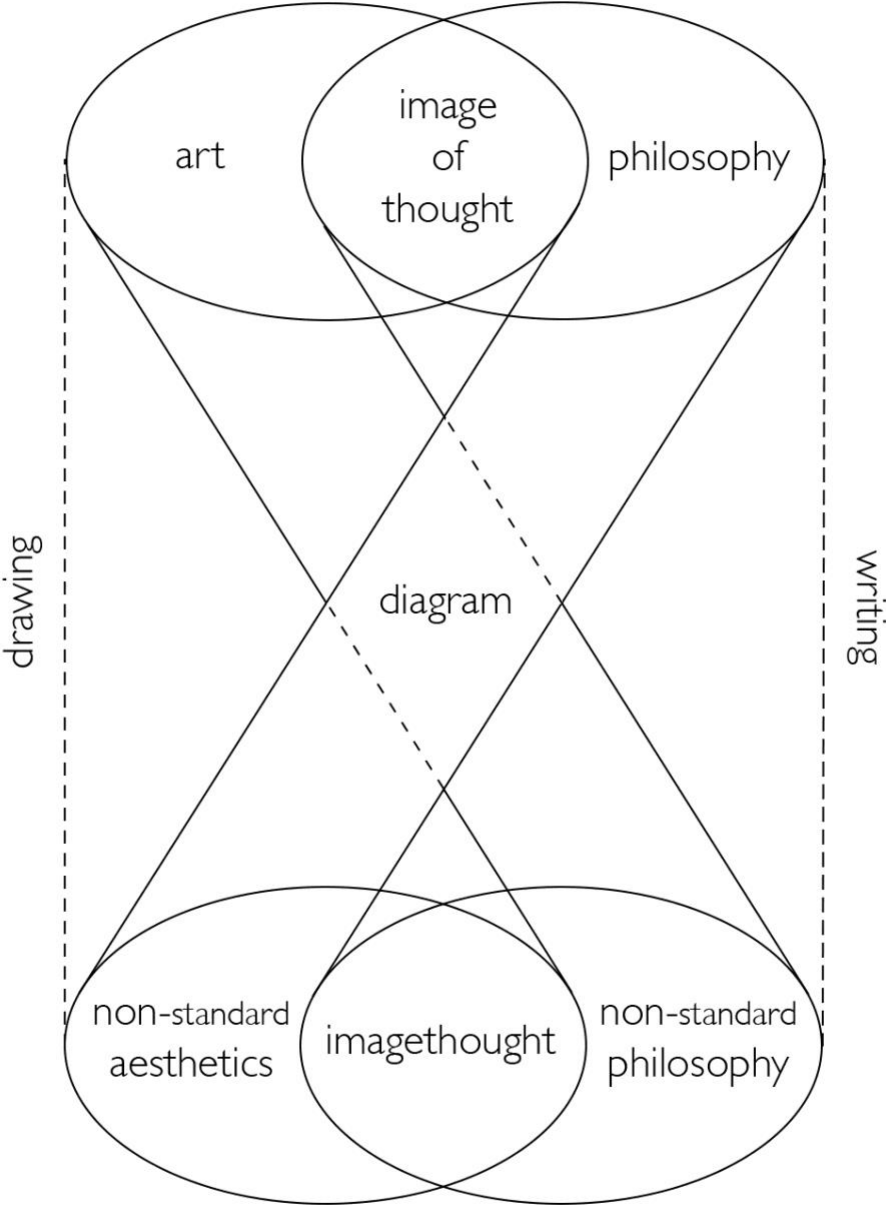
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Abstract



Introduction

The initial stimulus for this creative, practice-based research project emerges from a desire to develop the relationship between an established, if intermittent conceptual drawing practice, and an abiding, if amateur interest in Continental philosophy.

The initial stages of the research process led to a recognition that there is considerable potential for shared ground in the realm of the diagram.

Thus, the literature and contextual review focusses on a growing constituency of artists, philosophers and philosopher-artists already working with the diagram, to find the place for this inquiry. To this end, and parallel to secondary research sources, I have sought opportunities at conferences and symposia to meet and talk to some of these practitioners directly.¹

The last decade has seen an increase in research into the role of drawing in thinking both as an experiential praxis and as a research tool.² As a contributing member of the Drawing Research Network (DRN) and the University of Brighton's Drawing Research and Enterprise Group I have developed a track record of collaborative research in drawing in the context of art and design pedagogy. Here, my role as educator has foregrounded my role as artist. In this research project, I give precedence to the latter, but with the understanding that the division is moot and that the emancipatory capacity of art is rooted in its pedagogic function.

¹ e.g. Participation in residential Symposium *Along Lines* - Inter-format symposium 18/05/17 to 22/05/17, Nida Artist's Colony, Lithuania. Funded by MRes. Research Fund. This symposium was an excellent opportunity to talk to Nikolaus Gansterer, one of the key practitioners in my literature review.

² Patricia Cain, *Drawing: The Enactive Evolution of the Practitioner*. (Chicago: Intellect, 2010).

Part 1. Literature & Contextual Review

Image

Underpinning this review, the subject of the diagram has been pursued across a broad range of disciplinary contexts from art history³, aesthetics⁴ and the psychology of perception⁵, to information graphics⁶, anthropology⁷ and Peircean visual semiotics⁸.

My research in this broad field has enabled me to establish a mesh-work of references in which to situate this inquiry. What is evident is that the definition of the diagram changes depending on the disciplinary context and the medium in which it becomes manifest.

Joanna Drucker's *Graphesis* offers an overview of the field of visual knowledge, providing an analysis of the ways schematic graphical forms construct meaning. Here she provides a clear synopsis of the requisite constituent elements of the diagrammatic form, and does a good job in establishing key terms, such as surface, figure and ground;

Visualisations and diagrams depend on the same basic graphic principles as other visual sign systems: the rationalisation of a surface (setting an area or space apart so that it can sustain signification), the distinction of figure and ground (as elements of a co-dependent relation of forces and tensions in a graphical field), and the delimitation of the domain of visual elements so that they function as a relational system (framing or putting them in relation to a shared reference). Without these basic principles, no graphical system can work.⁹

In *The Culture of Diagram* Marrinan and Bender outline the progressive understanding of the diagram as a 'working object', through their in-depth analysis of Diderot and D'Alembert Encyclopedie.¹⁰ Contra Foucault who proposed the Encyclopedie was totalizing in its ambition to systematise and

³ Margaret Iverson, *Index, diagram, Graphic Trace: Involuntary Drawing*. (Tate Papers no.18 Autumn 2012).

David Joselit, *Dada's Diagrams* [2005] Online (Columbia University. n.d).

Michael Whittle, *Romantic-Objectivism: Diagrammatic Thought in Contemporary Art* (PhD Kyoto City University online [2014]).

⁴ James Elkins, *The Domain of Images* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999).

⁵ Rudolph Arnheim. *Visual Thinking* (London: University of California Press. 1969).

Richard L. Gregory, *The Intelligent Eye* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson 1970).

Ernst Gombrich, *Art & Illusion: A study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, [1960] (Oxford: Phaidon. 5th ed. 1991).

⁶ Keith Albarn and Jenny Miall Smith, *Diagram: The instrument of Thought* (London: Thames and Hudson. 1st ed. 1977).

Gunter Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. (London: Routledge 1996).

Edward R. Tufte. *Envisioning Information*. (Connecticut: Graphics Press [1990] reprint 2013).

⁷ Alfred Gell, *The Art of Anthropology*. ed. Eric Hirsch. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing [1999] reprint 2006).

⁸ Tony Jappy, *Introduction to Peircean Visual Semiotics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

⁹ Joanna Drucker, *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production* 1st ed. (London: metaABprojects Harvard University Press. 2014), 71.

¹⁰ Michael Marrinan and John Bender, *The Culture of Diagram* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. 2010).

compartmentalise knowledge, they argue that the apparent ‘internal discontinuities’ invited observers to cross-reference information.¹¹ This enabled the development of the reader/viewer’s cognitive capacity through the correlation (*rapport*) of data across text, image and index.

In *The Domain of Images* Elkins opens up the art historical investigation of the image by extending his analysis to non-art images.¹² Building on Nelson Goodman’s influential systematic study of symbol systems in the *Languages of Art* Elkins uses a Venn diagram to re-work Goodman’s relation of writing, picture and notation.¹³

Gerhard Dirmoser further develops Elkins’ tripartite schema by operationalising the line in the diagrammatic object as the domain of the diagram itself.¹⁴ In moving the diagram from the central field to the line, he points to the immanence of the diagrammatic to itself (see fig 1). The significance of this will become apparent in due course.

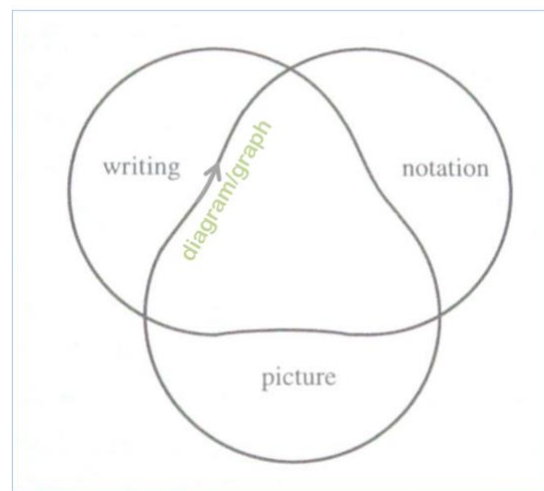


Fig. 1: screen shot - Dirmoser, after Elkins, after Nelson, 2009

In summary, Drucker’s statement provides the definitive formal requirements of graphical systems. Marrinan and Bender’s analysis contests the Foucauldian view of diagrams as reductive, ideological instruments and suggests how the diagram may instead function as a cognitive tool. Dirmoser’s further adaptation of Elkins’ diagram introduces the idea of immanence and points to the form’s close relation to writing, pictures and notation systems.

¹¹ Marrinan and Bender, *The Culture of Diagram*, 8.

¹² Elkins, *The Domain of Images*, 89.

¹³ Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1976).

¹⁴ Gerhard Dirmoser, ‘James Elkin/The Domain of Images’. *Online* [2009]. Web. 6 January 2018.

Diagrammatology

W. J. T. Mitchell called for a comprehensive study of the diagram, under the term 'Diagrammatology'. In *Picture Theory; Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* he described the visual or 'pictorial turn' as a 'post-linguistic, post-semiotic rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visibility, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies, and figurality.'¹⁵

Mitchell's broad agenda to open up the 'image/text problematic' is set against the backdrop of European post-structuralist analysis, most notably in the work of Foucault (1926-84), Derrida (1930-2004) and Lyotard (1924-1998). However, his work does not address the diagrammatic specifically as an operation of the image/text problematic. This effectively opened a gap in the field for others to address.

Thus, Fredric Stjernfeld has answered Mitchell's call with his comprehensive work *Diagrammatology; An investigation on the Borderlines of Phenomenology, Ontology and Semiology* focusing on the theoretical co-relations between the work of Husserl, Ingarden and Peirce respectively.¹⁶

Stjernfeld's close attention to the shared semiotic function in diagrammatic thinking across disciplinary boundaries positions Diagrammatology as a progressively 'indisciplined' area of research.¹⁷

Diagrammatology is here understood to be distinct from Diagrammatics.

Rogers describes how 'Diagrammatics uses the diagram as the transference of an abstract function across heterogeneous discourses whose propositions are epistemologically incommensurable.'¹⁸

In other words, Diagrammatology focuses on the ontological properties of the diagram such as iconicity and linearity, whilst diagrammatics is concerned with how these properties work in practice. Both are relevant to the methodology of this inquiry which brings theory and practice together under the heading of Praxis.

¹⁵ W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1995), 16.

¹⁶ Fredrik Stjernfeld, *Diagrammatology* 1st ed. (Dordrecht: Springer. 2007).

¹⁷ Yves Citton, 'From Theory to bricolage: indisciplin and the exemplary gestures of interpretation' *International Social Science Journal*, Wiley, 2012, States of Theory: Contemporary Schools of Thought and Institutions of Knowledge, 63 (207-208).

¹⁸ Kenneth Rogers in conversation with Mathew Richie "Temptation of the Diagram" YouTube. April 2014.

Thought

Much of the current interest in the diagram is consequent on the non-philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, who expanded the concept and application of the diagram throughout their collective and individual corpi. The term 'non-philosophy' points to the limits in the traditional work of philosophy, where concepts are derived from pre-suppositions - the notional 'a priori'. Non-philosophy is, in this sense, outside of or pre-philosophical as a '*plane of immanence*', prior to the first concept e.g. Descartes 'I think'.

In their work *What is Philosophy* Deleuze and Guattari suggest 'non-philosophy is perhaps closer to the 'heart of philosophy' in that it seeks to do philosophy beyond the boundaries of philosophical thinking.¹⁹ In this work, they also introduce the diagrammatic as a feature of the 'plane of immanence', which can only be thought as an 'image of thought'.

Citing Deleuze as the pre-eminent proponent of the 'diagrammatic turn' in Continental philosophy, Jacob Zdebik describes the way Deleuzian non-philosophy proposes a paradigmatic shift from the concept of diagram as representation or schema (after Kant) to one of 'abstract machine', in which it is argued the gap between discursive (concepts) and non-discursive (forces) is bridged.²⁰

He explains how conceptual diagrams such as plans, maps and graphs, are prior to the appearance of the event in that their marks are not representative, but designate a state of possibility between 'the visible and the articulable'.²¹

Zdebik also states that Deleuze 'situates the notion of the diagram squarely within the field of art' and goes on to examine the influence of Paul Klee and Francis Bacon on Deleuzian Diagrammatology.²²

In *The Logic of Sensation*²³ Deleuze introduces the idea of the diagram as a small locus of chaos, a catastrophe introduced into the painting by the 'malerisch' mark - a non-representational mark that serves to 'wrench the visual image away from the nascent cliché [...] which is the pictorial task'.²⁴ It also inaugurates possibilities via an ordering principle in the form of rhythm, which moves between figure

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *What Is Philosophy?* Trans ed. (Columbia University Press. New York 1994), 37.

²⁰ Jacob Zdebik *Deleuze and the Diagram*. 1st ed. (London: Continuum International Publishing. 2012), 16, 20.

²¹ Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram*, 1.

²² Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram*, 18.

²³ Deleuze, G. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* Trans ed. (London: Continuum, 1981).

²⁴ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 93-6.

and structure.²⁵

The diagram in this context is a 'zone of indiscernibility' whose purpose is the emergence of new form.²⁶ Importantly (for my use of hand-made drawing in this research) Deleuze's diagram functions to bridge the tactile and the optical, through the haptic.

In effect, 'diagrams are closer in kind to a Jackson Pollock than to a Rembrandt.'²⁷

Imagethought

In *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline* John Mullarkey surveys the 'philosophy of immanence' in the work of Deleuze, Badiou, Henry and Laruelle.²⁸ He finds common ground in the philosophical diagram, and speculates on its use as a way out of the 'representational transcendence' that haunts philosophical writing. Through a process he calls Metaphilosophical Diagrammatology, Mullarkey proposes 'enriching the life of the diagram to avoid its reduction to the text that enframes it...'²⁹

He postulates that;

The diagram can do meta-philosophical work as a moving outline that takes both a transcendent view (representing immanence) while also remaining immanent: it does this by diagrammatising itself - it reiterates itself as a drawing that is perpetually re-drawn, and so materialises its own aporia.³⁰

Think here of fig. 1, Dirmoser's diagram.

In chapter 5, *Thinking in Diagrams*, he gives this provocative idea a shape in the form of the portmanteau term 'imagethought'.³¹

The imagethought imagines a paradigmatic shift in the practice of philosophy. It is a 'non- philosophy' of 'radical immanence', not bound to and by the sentential logic of the logocentric, but open to a new way of communicating not 'about' but 'out of' experience itself. It may be otherwise described as a 'philo-

²⁵ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 62.

²⁶ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 174.

²⁷ Marrinan and Bender, *The Culture of Diagram*, 7.

²⁸ John Mullarkey, *Post-continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 1st ed. (London: Continuum. 2006).

²⁹ Mullarkey, *Post-continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 180.

³⁰ Mullarkey, *Post-continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 9.

³¹ Mullarkey. *Post-continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 157.

fiction³² and like sci-fi, it speculates on a philosophy yet to come. Philo-fictions as a new genre may take a creative or ludic turn but are still considered to be rigorous hypotheses with a determinedly utopian agenda, and in this respect Laruelian non-philosophy draws on Marxist theory.³³

Laruelle proposes the practice of non-philosophy, as ‘an installation of multiple thought material that work at the edge of art and philosophy’, and in so doing he is proposing a re-vision of art as a non-standard aesthetics- maybe in the form of diagram.³⁴ He also disputes the idea of non-philosophy as ‘a second order thought, a meta-philosophy. It is a unique usage or a transcendental thought *for* philosophy and equally for science, ethics, art or any other region of objects.’³⁵

Laruelian non-philosophy is drawn in more detail by John Mullarkey (now called Ó Maoilearca) in his later work *All Thoughts are Equal*, where he develops the non-philosophical methodological stance from a meta-philosophical ‘position’ to that of a non-philosophical ‘posture’.³⁶ In so doing he invokes an attitudinal shift which has implications for my methodology.

Hence Ó Maoilearca/Mullarkey’s provocation to ‘stop conventional writing and start unconventional drawing’ in the paradoxical effort to describe the work of the imagethought, has given rise to my own research question and decision to give creative practice the methodological lead in this inquiry.³⁷

Research Question

‘Becoming Diagrammatic: In what ways does conceptual art praxis intersect with post-continental philosophy in drawing the imagethought?’

In the following contextual review, I address those practitioner/researchers whose work supports, frames and gives value to this study by demonstrating its currency. It also serves to demonstrate that to the best of my knowledge to date no other research project has addressed this specific non-philosophical provocation through creative practice.

³² The ‘philo-fiction’ is a new theoretical genre proposed by Francois Laruelle. Through this new genre, all modes of thinking (artistic, scientific, philosophical and non-human) are equalised into a fictional space/time, where they are viewed (non-philosophically) as ‘clones’ of the Real.

³³ As Ó Maoilearca explains ‘Clearly Laruelle’s non-philosophical project is not only epistemic (the non-as expanded explanatory scope): it also has an ethical axis - the “non-“ as protest, as resistance to any concentration of power, to any exceptionalism or inequality’ John Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (London: University of Minnesota Press. 2015), 48.

³⁴ Francois Laruelle, ‘Generic Orientation of Non-Standard Aesthetics’. Paper presented at the Weisman Art museum, University of Minneapolis, November 17, 2012. Quoted in Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy*, 37.

³⁵ Francois Laruelle. *Principles of Non-Philosophy*. (London: Bloomsbury 2013), 19.

³⁶ Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy*, 173.

³⁷ Mullarkey, *Post-continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 192.

Art Praxis

Artist-philosopher Simon O'Sullivan makes use of 'metaphilosophical diagrammatology' in his book *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation*.³⁸ Here, he works through a genealogy of philosophical diagrammatic forms to arrive at a 'processual image'. O'Sullivan's imagethought evolves the topological diagrammatics of previous thinkers in his use of the geometry of cones, planes and torus forms (see below).³⁹ These are carefully explained in the progress of his discussion, with their respective 'routes of reference' helping him make his case. In this capacity as a meta-philosophy his diagrammatics hold onto established philosophical interpretations of these iconic forms which Deleuze adopts from Bergson's conception of the diagram as 'abstract machine'. In this respect, they could be described as non-representational 'images of thought'.

204 *On the Production of Subjectivity*

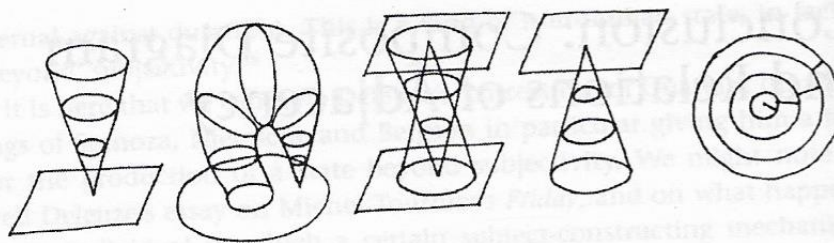


Figure 6.1 Five diagrams of the finite-infinite relation

Fig.2: scan - from O'Sullivan, *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation*, 2014

In contrast, Marc Ngui's project to diagram Deleuze and Guattari's *Thousand Plateaus* as a 'methodical interpretation' is more illustrative in its approach.⁴⁰ Though this work is diagrammatic in its aesthetic appearance, making use of both geometric and pictographic forms to make accessible the ideas of the written text to the reader, it does not seek to build on the ideas. In this sense the project appears to have a didactic function to make-sense or explain.

³⁸ Simon O'Sullivan, *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014).

³⁹ O'Sullivan, *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation*, 204.

⁴⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *Thousand Plateaus*, trans ed. (London: Continuum. 1987).

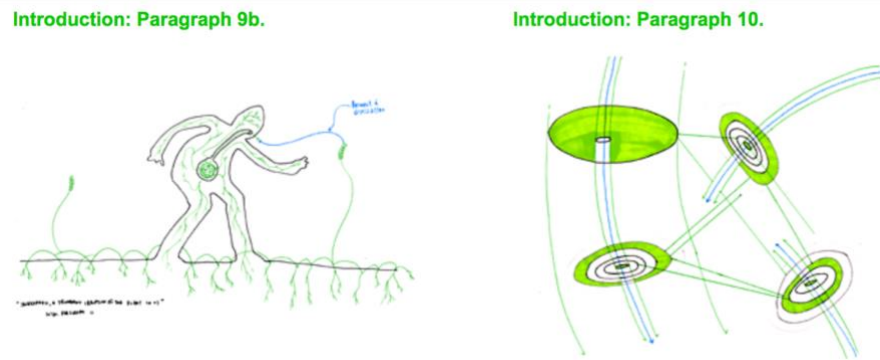


Fig.3: screenshot – from Ngui, Interpretation of *Thousand Plateaus* (n.d)

Though I make use of some of the same iconic forms in my own drawings, these are not tethered to specific concepts or texts. In this respect, they function more speculatively as open-works.

Artist Thomas Hirschhorn’s *Map of Friendship between Art and Philosophy* (2007) - worked out in collaboration with contemporary philosopher Marcus Steinweg - takes shape in his signature bricolage aesthetic. This form of concept-map diagram, where ideas are both mapped out and worked on, is often highly annotated with textual inscriptions. Prioritising the pedagogic function of the diagrammatic is symptomatic of Hirschhorn’s political engagement. It also demonstrates disciplinary convergence and a growing tendency amongst practitioners and theorists to creatively collaborate. This type of diagramming is certainly a feature of my own research, with a sub-set of my practice conceived of as ‘learning diagrams’. However, I consider my ‘learning diagrams’ to be non-art objects.

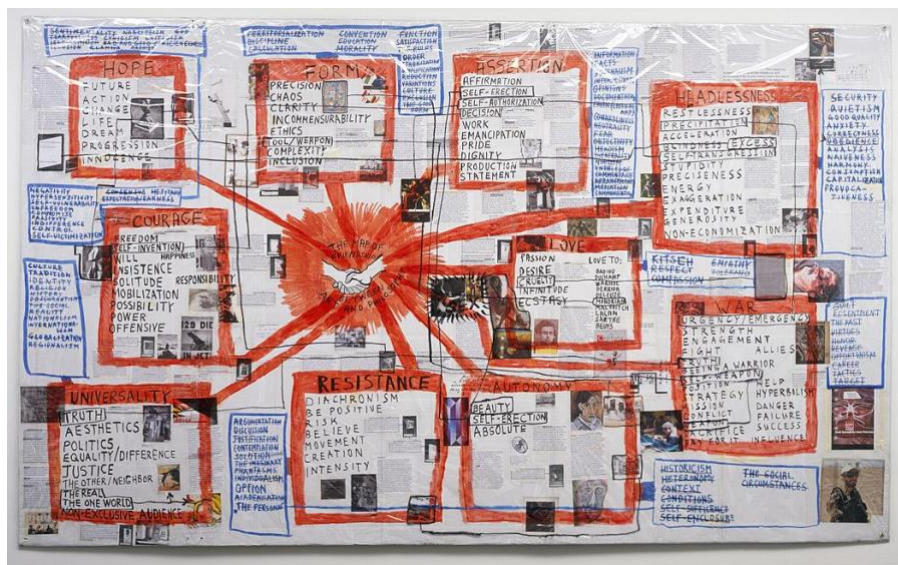


Fig. 4: Hirschhorn & Steinweg, *The Map of Friendship between Art and Philosophy*, 2007

As a practitioner O’ Sullivan has collaborated with David Burrows and others since 2004 as *Plastique Fantastique*, making comics, writing manifestos and performing contemporary shamanic rituals making use of multi-media.⁴¹ The diagram features in this context as a ‘deterritorialising’ assemblage emphasising its Deleuzian heritage.

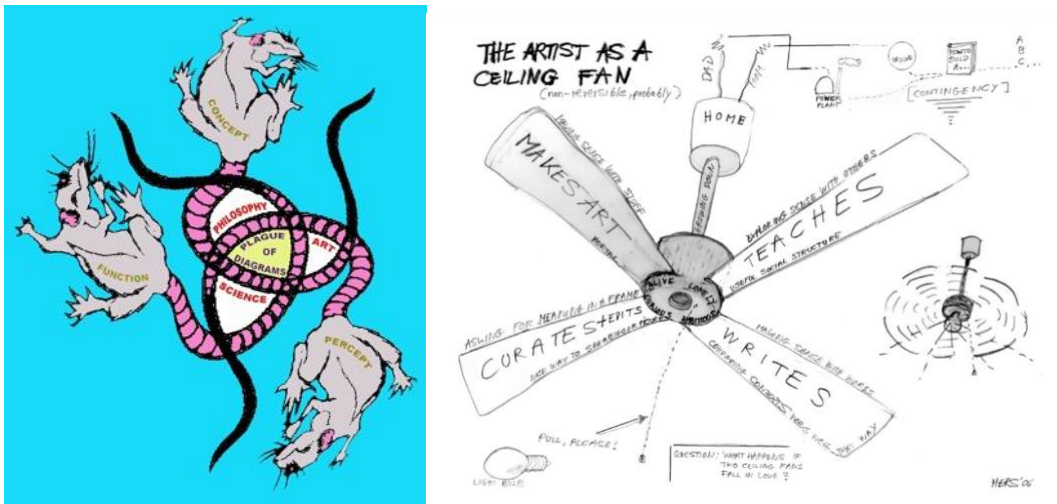


Fig. 5: Burrows & Kenning, 2015

Artists working in this field also self-identify as practitioner-researchers, and in so doing they encourage progressive, methodological approaches to art practice as research which often foreground pedagogy in the process.

Nikolaus Gansterer is one such case. In his expansive research and publication project *Drawing a Hypothesis* he engages a host of others in an extended exchange to test out the limits of intelligibility of the diagram.⁴² Gansterer’s emergent diagrammatic mark-making appears to evolve through a process of improvisation in and through a developing repertoire of recognisable and invented forms.

Like myself many of the artists reviewed here teach, yet there is an evident interest to mobilise and differentiate the pedagogic function of the diagram as indexing and ‘delivering’ knowledge, to one of posing problems and facilitating thought as an exploratory process.

In 2015 Burrows and Dean Kenning curated the *Plague of Diagramms* event at the ICA, which sought to explore the function and use of diagrams in art as ‘expanded’ diagrammatic practice.⁴³ The event

⁴¹ *Plastique Fantastique*. Online Web. 13 January 2017

⁴² Nikolaus Gansterer, *Drawing a Hypothesis: Figures of Thought*. 2nd ed. (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2017).

⁴³ *Plague of Diagramms*. [2015] online. ICA Web. 13 January 2017.

included open, collaborative workshops mapping the ‘capitalist subject’, which drew on a variety of oppositional discourses. The diagram in this context is often produced digitally. Though I identify with their politics, they are not an explicit feature of my RQ.

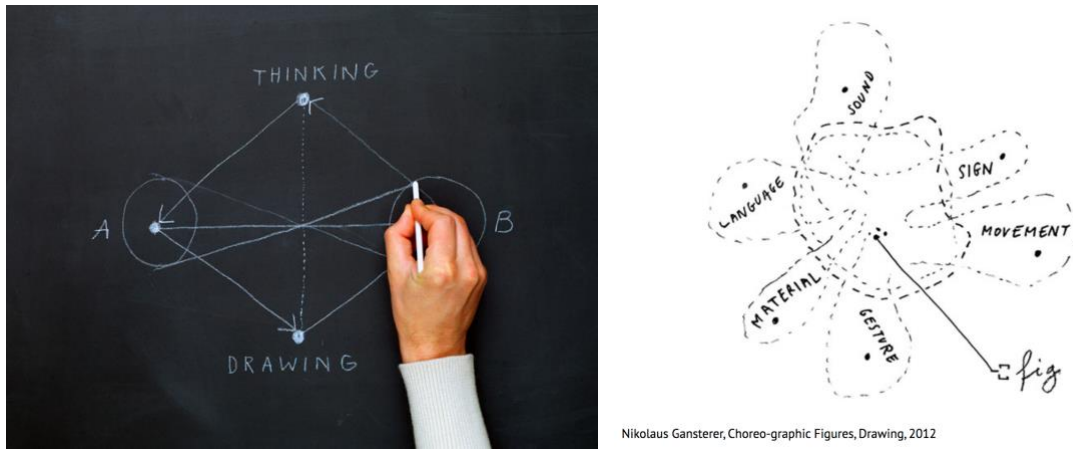


Fig. 6: screenshot - Gansterer *Drawing A Hypothesis*, 2017

In many respects Gansterer has been an ‘inspiring friend’ in the progress of my own research, which makes use of similar, ordinary materials such as chalk on blackboard and stop-frame animation to explore the dynamics of diagrammatic thinking in manual drawing. Beyond some material similarities his collaborative research in ‘embodied diagrammatics’ as ‘ethico-empathetic’ practices of awareness has influenced my thinking and approach to methodology, but the non-philosophical focus of my study takes a different tack with regards to performativity and embodiment in the drawing through the behavioural ‘posture’.

Michael Whittle has made an intensive study of the diagram in his PhD thesis *Romantic Objectivism*, in which he explains that his practice is a ‘meditation on our contemporary relationship with nature’.⁴⁴ The overarching aim of his thesis is to stake a claim for art that mediates between the demands of scientific objectivity and romantic subjectivity. In turn, he argues that a diagrammatic aesthetics can evolve our understanding of art and in turn transform our notion of the diagram.

Whittle’s highly crafted diagrammatic drawings appear to work very precisely with recognisable figures, topological and topographic forms. In this respect, they appear to be crystallisations of thought, rather than thought -in-the-act. Though there is a great deal of shared cross-referencing in our respective bibliographies, and I am sympathetic to the claims of his thesis, his philosophical framework is Heideggerian rather than post-humanist.

⁴⁴ Whittle, *Romantic Objectivism*. 131.

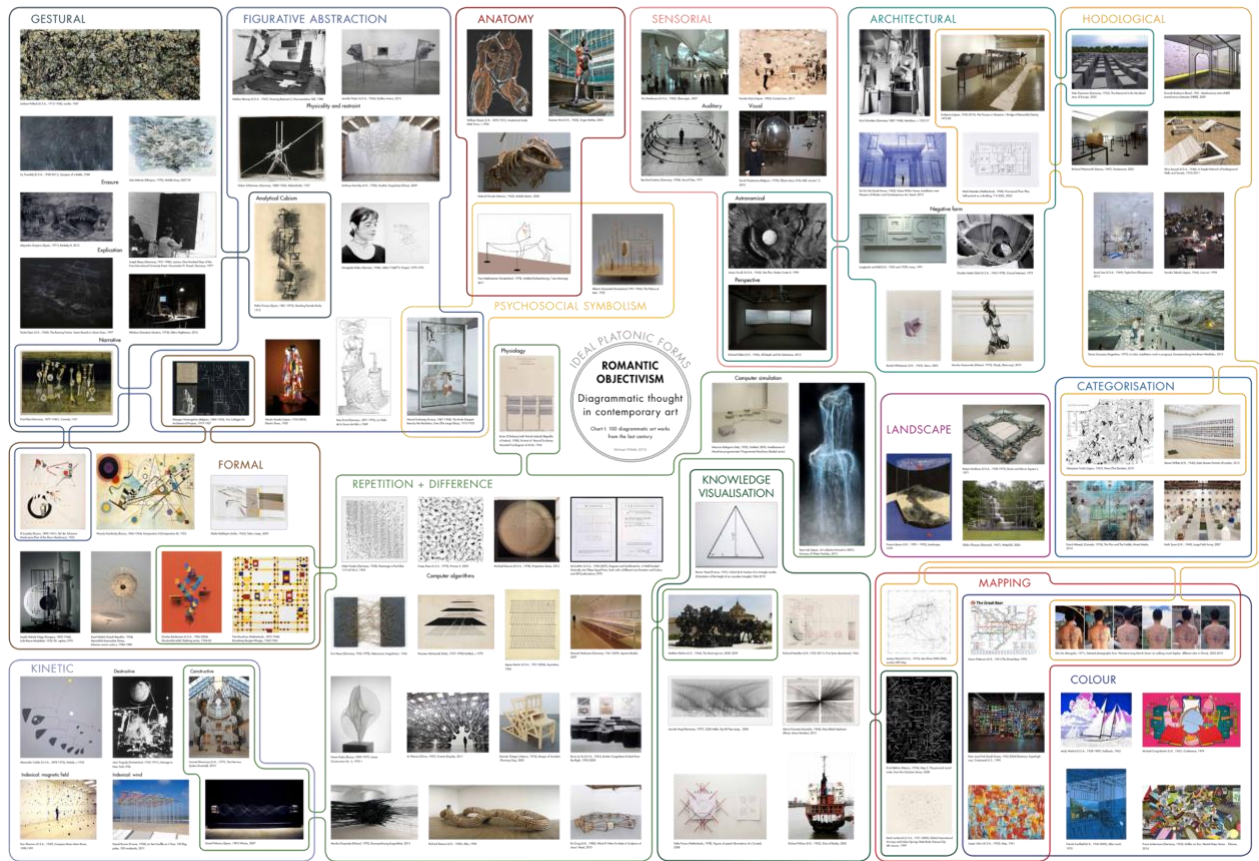


Fig.7: Whittle, Diagrammatic Art Poster from *Romantic-Objectivism* PhD, 2017

Artist Mathew Ritchie has been working with the diagram in his multifarious practice since at least 2014, working through an extensive contextual review of the form culminating in his two-volume book-work *The Temptation of the Diagram* and exhibition of the same name at the Andrea Rosen Gallery, NY.⁴⁵

Ritchie’s impressive intellectual range is in evidence in his most recent performance lecture and score *Surrender to the Diagram* in which he dynamically extends the functionality of the diagram by incorporating duration, movement, material components and human participants.⁴⁶ Though his research engages with post-humanist philosophy, his exposition exceeds the role of manual drawing in the diagrammatic, which is key to my RQ.

⁴⁵ Mathew Ritchie, *The Temptation of the Diagram*. Vol.1 &2. Artist publication (Milton Keynes: Lightning Source UK Ltd. 2017).

⁴⁶ Mathew Ritchie, *Surrender to the Diagram*. University of Houston. 2017.

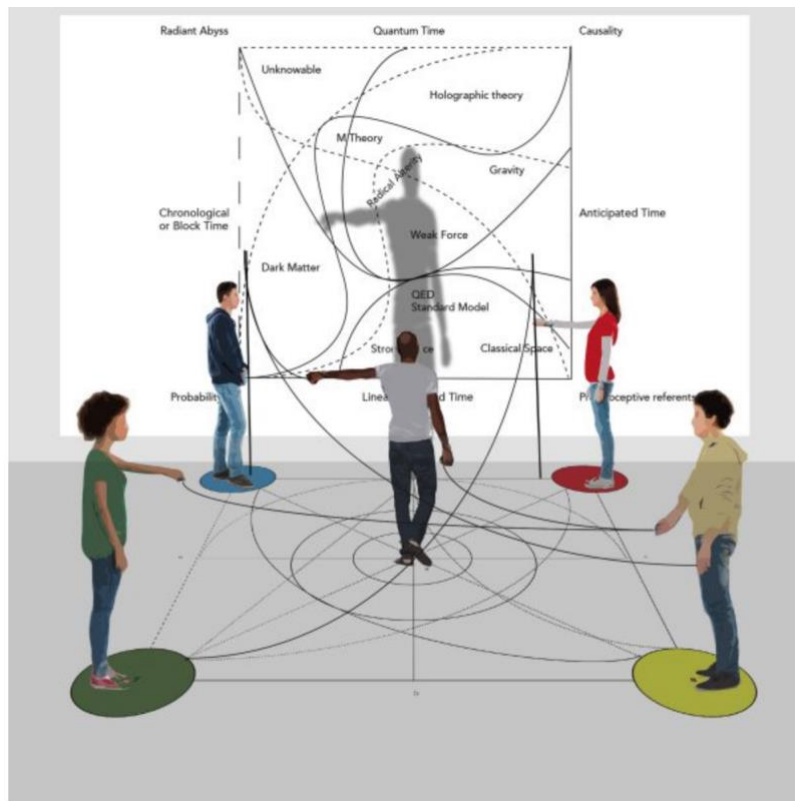


Fig. 8: screen shot – from Ritchie, *Surrender to the Diagram*, 2017

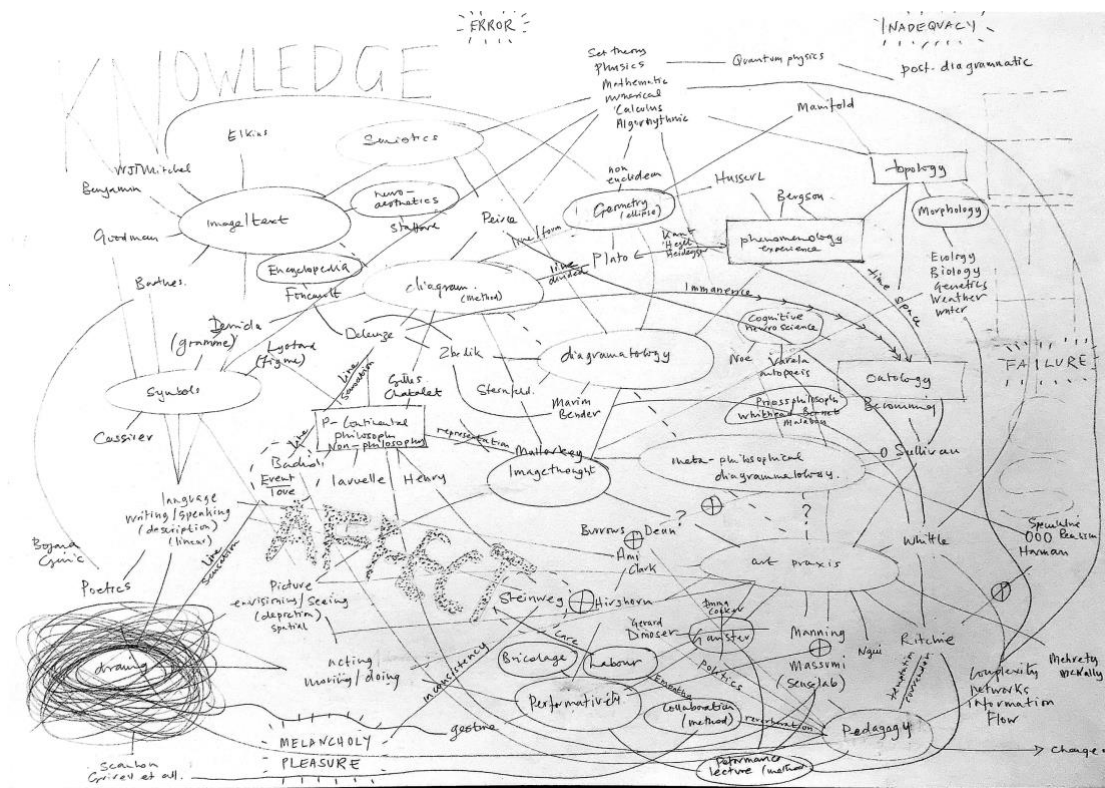


Fig. 9: author's own diagram - map of research @ November 2017

In summary, 'the diagram may be the dance of the moment'⁴⁷ as;

- A way to overcome the 'representational transcendence' of Continental philosophy (Mullarkey)
- A way to map social, political and philosophical relations (Hirschhorn and Steinweg)
- A way to perform the production of subjectivity (O'Sullivan)
- A form of poetics bridging the subjective and objective (Whittle)
- A way to explore embodied cognition and communication (Gansterer)
- An 'indisciplined' form in which to think across incommensurate epistemologies (Sternfeld, Rogers & Ritchie)
- An exit from the cul-de-sac of Contemporary Art? (Ritchie)

What this research project seeks to contribute is how the diagram may work as a ludic philo-fiction.

⁴⁷ Luke Engleman. "Diagrammatic: Beyond Inscription?" Conference recording [2016] CRASSH

Part 2. Figuring-out Methodology (through an extended literature review)

Artistic research is an ongoing subject of debate across a growing number of dedicated journals, societies and institutionalised structures such as Parse, EARN (European Artistic Research Network) and SAR (Society of Artistic Research). The Journal for Artistic Research platform suggests it has come of age largely through theories of embodiment.^{48 49}

Sarat Maharaj also suggests that artists' research methods are often less systematic or conventional than they are creatively ad-hoc, worked out along the way to fit the unfolding nature of creative practice.⁵⁰ Indeed, how could we produce 'ideas that are new, surprising and valuable' with a research methodology fixed in advance of practice?⁵¹ This question seems to me to be cogent not only for the role of creative-practice in the research process, but is especially pertinent to this project, where the subject of research is itself a question of (a new) methodology.

To explore this conundrum, I will return to my Research Question:

'Becoming Diagrammatic: In what ways does conceptual art praxis intersect with post-continental philosophy in drawing the imagethought?'

My RQ foregrounds the notion of 'becoming' and makes use of post-continental philosophy as a framework. The philosophical concept of *immanence*, key to this enquiry, requires methodological movement to address an emergent ontology.⁵² Furthermore, the imagethought is a highly speculative concept emerging out of Francois Laruelle's non-philosophy of radical immanence⁵³ and therefore, as an object of enquiry it has an 'irreducible vagueness', as 'it is being drawn into the open [...] for the first time, and so embodies what one does not yet know'.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Society for Artistic Research. Online Website

⁴⁹ Theories of embodiment would include; Phenomenology - Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul 1962), Enactivism – Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, *The Tree of knowledge*, Trans ed. (London: Shambala, 1987). Somasthetics - Richard Shusterman, *Thinking Through the Body* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Cognitive Science – George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in The Flesh* (New York: Basic Books, 1999) and Alva Noë, *Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature*. (New York: Hill and Wang Parse, 2015).

⁵⁰ Sarat Maharaj, *Know-how and No-How: Stopgap Notes on "Method" in Visual Art as Knowledge Production*. Online. (Art & Research.Vol.2. Spring [2009])

⁵¹ Margaret Boden quoted in Clive Cazeaux, *Art, Research, Philosophy* (Oxon: Routledge Taylor and Francis group. 2017).

⁵² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (Trans ed. Columbia University Press. New York 1994).

⁵³ Mullarkey, *Post-continental Philosophy*, 153.

⁵⁴ Rheinberger quoted in Cazeaux, *Art, Research, Philosophy*, 37.

It could be argued that the emergent nature of the research subject might be accommodated by a Grounded Theory methodology.⁵⁵

Grounded Theory is an inductive method involving three stages:

1. an initial attempt to develop categories which illuminate the data
2. an attempt to saturate these categories with many appropriate cases, to demonstrate their relevance
3. the development of these categories into more general analytic frame works with relevance outside the setting⁵⁶

Grounded Theory however, still deploys the classification, evaluation and interpretation structure of research consistent with a humanist Interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. This paradigm, it seems to me, with its associated methods and subject positioning of the researcher as singularised producer of knowledge of 'truth' claims, sits uncomfortably with the 'post-theory'⁵⁷ epistemology of the RQ.

Remembering the resonant edict that 'it matters what ideas we use to think other ideas (with)'⁵⁸ this dilemma has led me to seek out alternative concepts associated with a post-qualitative research paradigm which feel more commensurate with the subject of inquiry.⁵⁹

What this means in effect is that there is no prescribed 'methodology' to organize the research design. Rather, there is a set of concepts with which to explore.

These concepts include 'assemblage'⁶⁰, 'performativity'⁶¹, 'transversality'⁶² and 'entanglement'.⁶³ They resist a dualist ontology by creatively synthesizing terms such as 'bodymind', 'lifeworld', 'natureculture',

⁵⁵ Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory* 2nd Ed. (London: Sage, 2014). Cathy Urquhart, *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2013). David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. (London: Sage, 2014).

⁵⁶ Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 2014.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, "Post-Qualitative Research: The Critique and the Coming After" *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 2011) 611.

⁵⁸ Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham NC: Duke University Press. 2016.), 12.

⁵⁹ Adams St. Pierre, "Post-Qualitative Research: The Critique and the Coming After", 613.

⁶⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 1987.

⁶¹ Karen Barad. *Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter*. (Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 2003, vol. 28, no. 3. The University of Chicago.2003) and Barbara Bolt. *A Performative Paradigm for the Creative Arts?* (University of Melbourne, AU. online [2008]).

⁶² Félix Guattari, "Transversality," *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews 1955-1971*, translated by Ames Hodges (Los Angeles, California: Semiotext(e) 2015).

⁶³ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 2016.

which acknowledge connectivity and complexity and de-center the human subject.

This inquiry into the imagethought, can then be said to be situated in a post-humanist paradigm with a non-philosophical ontology.⁶⁴

A post-humanist 'methodology' [...] finds its rhizomatic outlines in the postmodern critique of objective knowledge and absolute truth. It is in no way definitive, but dynamic, mutant, shifting; it has to be aware of the state of things in order to acknowledge current challenges and be open to possibilities. It resonates with Feyerabend's *Against Method* (1975), in the sense that its value is merely transitional and contingent.⁶⁵

Furthermore, a post-humanist methodology (for want of a better term) does not foreground the written and 'can be performed in many ways.'⁶⁶

Bolt makes the case that it is precisely at the disjuncture between the truth claims of scientific models of research and the 'nebulous, unquantifiable and untestable' claims of artistic research that the 'performative principle' arises. Working with its foundational terms in speech acts she articulates this thus:

Constative statements and descriptions are the propositional or discursive statements of qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies rely on constative statements or utterance to establish truth claims. Here truth is seen as correspondence. In other words, they are representationalist. Performativity offers an alternative model, one that is no longer grounded in truth as correspondence. It sets up a different paradigm altogether. [...] The performative act doesn't describe something but rather it does something in the world. This 'something' has the power to transform the world.⁶⁷

This paradigm for research chimes with the growing constituency of artists (mentioned previously) working with diagrammatics, who are themselves figuring-out new ways to do creative-practice research.

To apply a performative methodology appositely to this research context, where drawing is a primary method, I have adopted a non-philosophical behavioural stance or 'posture'.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ A non-philosophical ontology would acknowledge all other philosophical ontologies as clones of the Real.

⁶⁵ Francesca Ferrando, *Towards a Post-Humanist Methodology. A Statement*. Online [n.d] 11.

⁶⁶ Ferrando, *Towards a Post-Humanist Methodology. A Statement*. 11.

⁶⁷ Barbara Bolt, *Performative Paradigm for the Creative Arts?* University of Melbourne online 2008.

⁶⁸ Ó Maolearca, *All Thoughts are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy*, 173.

Research in Art Praxis Methods

Erin Manning succinctly describes the Aristotelian concept of praxis as a '*doing of the thinking and a thinking of the doing*'.⁶⁹ Her re-conception of the formula research=creation to research-creation, in which she asks 'how can the rethinking of how knowledge is created in the context of artistic practice become an opening to thinking philosophy itself as a practice?' is cogent to this inquiry.⁷⁰

Drawing on Process Philosophy, Manning explains how it is possible to research 'against method' by developing 'technicity' in material practices which develop awareness in the event of living; awareness of the bodily, situational, relational and material aspects of the research process *as* experiential praxis.⁷¹

Qualitative auto-ethnographic methods focus on the experience of the researcher in their relation to an object of inquiry in a social setting, and tend to use narrative writing in the form of thick description to 'capture' experience. I do not intend to do this, nevertheless as the primary 'case-study' in this enquiry I have needed to find ways to make conscious my own thought process, to understand how it is mobilised and where it gets stuck, what 'affects' it, and how to 'observe' and 'record' it.

To help with this, I have drawn on advances in Consciousness Research in the work of Francisco Varela, Pierre Vermersch and contemporary philosopher of Immanence Natalie Depraz. Depraz⁷² advances Husserlian theories of first-person phenomenology (reduction) by showing how the dualist concept of the private/public experience can be reconceptualised as a 'relational inter-dynamics between plural-links', extending the idea of self-knowledge towards the social domain. She goes on to propose an experiential praxis that requires two mutually-generative practices;

1. Experiential reading and writing
2. Explication by others (theory)

Independently, she argues, these practices would be insufficient because with experiential introspection alone (auto-ethnographic practice) you only get inductive generalisations and with philosophical scholarship you only get a priori concepts and never reach a specified experience.

I make use of this scheme by adding drawing/diagramming to her first set of experiential practices

⁶⁹ Brian Massumi and Erin Manning, "Relational Soup - Philosophy, Art, and Activism". TedxCALart. Sept. 2014. YouTube.

⁷⁰ Erin Manning, "10 Propositions for Research-Creation. Journal of Electronic Publishing Volume 19, Issue 2: *Disrupting the Humanities: Towards Posthumanities*, Fall [2016].

⁷¹ Manning, "10 Propositions for Research-Creation, 2016

⁷² Natalie Depraz, "What About a First Person Phenomenology? First Steps Towards an Experiential Phenomenological Writing and Reading". Institute of Advanced Studies Lecture. [2012]. Youtube.

because, as Gerhard Dirmoser observes of CS Peirce, 'in his diagrams he sees means for slowing down, controlling and revealing the motion of thinking'.⁷³ In other words, diagrammatic drawing decelerates thinking, allowing us to observe its unfolding as if we were watching ourselves over our own shoulder thinking in drawing.

Practically, this takes place in various notebooks, iPad apps. (Notability) and voice recordings, and these field note methods may be described as phenomenographic. Drawing accompanies thinking as an experiential praxis in-situ - as marginalia, in the condensation of the shower cubicle, on whatever surface can be inscribed, even before those surfaces become considered adequate to an 'art' praxis. In this way, I could say that water, graphite, paper, chalk, blackboard and my and others' human 'bodyminds' co-create.

Methodology Figured

At the outset of this project, I had a hunch that 'conceptual art praxis' would take-up a position relative to post-continental philosophy as a kind of meta-philosophy, indeed I identified this position as meta-philosophical diagrammatology at the interim assessment - hence the idea of an 'intersection' in the RQ seemed apposite. What I did not anticipate is the impact of the paradigmatic shift proposed by Laruelle's conception of non-standard philosophy, on the modus operandi of my methodology. As a consequence, my understanding of my actions as a researcher has changed, from working *on* philosophy to working *with* philosophical materials.

If non-philosophy is grounded on the meta-philosophical ideal, then it is all the more exercised as a *unified theory - unified rather than unitary-of philosophy and science*, philosophy and art, ethics etc; a theory which brings both the fundamental and regional under the reason of immanence and no longer under that of transcendence (*meta-philosophy*).⁷⁴

On reflection, the variety of approaches I took to drawing were not particularly strategic at first, but a natural consequence of a creative-practice-based research project in an early (data) generative phase. Latterly, these various approaches in practice have been reconsidered non-philosophically as 'postures' to indicate this attitudinal change.

What this change consists of is also critical to the reception of this project. In moving through a conception of art as a meta-philosophical practice, to art becoming "non-standard" in making use of

⁷³ Gerhard Dirmoser in Nikolaus Gansterer, *Drawing a Hypothesis: Figures of thought*. 2nd ed. (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 160.

⁷⁴ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 9.

philosophical concepts as raw materials in the Real (non-philosophically speaking), a methodological distinction emerges. This distinction recognises the movement in and out of the decisional mode in creative practice - moving from a meta-philosophical position seeking an understanding *of* philosophical concepts and undertaking a representational distancing in the process, to one which mimes a (non-philosophical) *posture* which is immanent in praxis. As Ó Maoilearca explains in quoting Laruelle;

Non-Philosophy takes the terms of philosophy and follows the procedure of “*simplification or reduction*” such that they are “reduced to the state of *first terms* deduced from the philosophical field and deprived of their philosophical ‘signification’ ...of their formal philosophical trait of auto-position”. Nothing is destroyed, deconstructed, or negated. Everything is reviewed, mimed, or “postured.” [...] As an *immanent* mime, therefore, it apes, parrots or copycats philosophy, rendering it behavioral. As Laruelle writes, “science is not a question of *decision*...; it is question of ‘posture’, which is to say of ‘behaviour’ or of ‘seating’ in oneself, realised solely by means of immanence.”⁷⁵

The diagram then acts as the stage on which the various postures I have adopted attempt to perform the non-philosophical imagethought.

⁷⁵ Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy*, 175-6.

The Postures Data

Please refer to the Prezi Portfolio Timeline to see the full body of work at this point;

<https://prezi.com/j8ohdeu9mq7e/becoming-diagrammatic-portfolio-timeline-sept-2018/#>

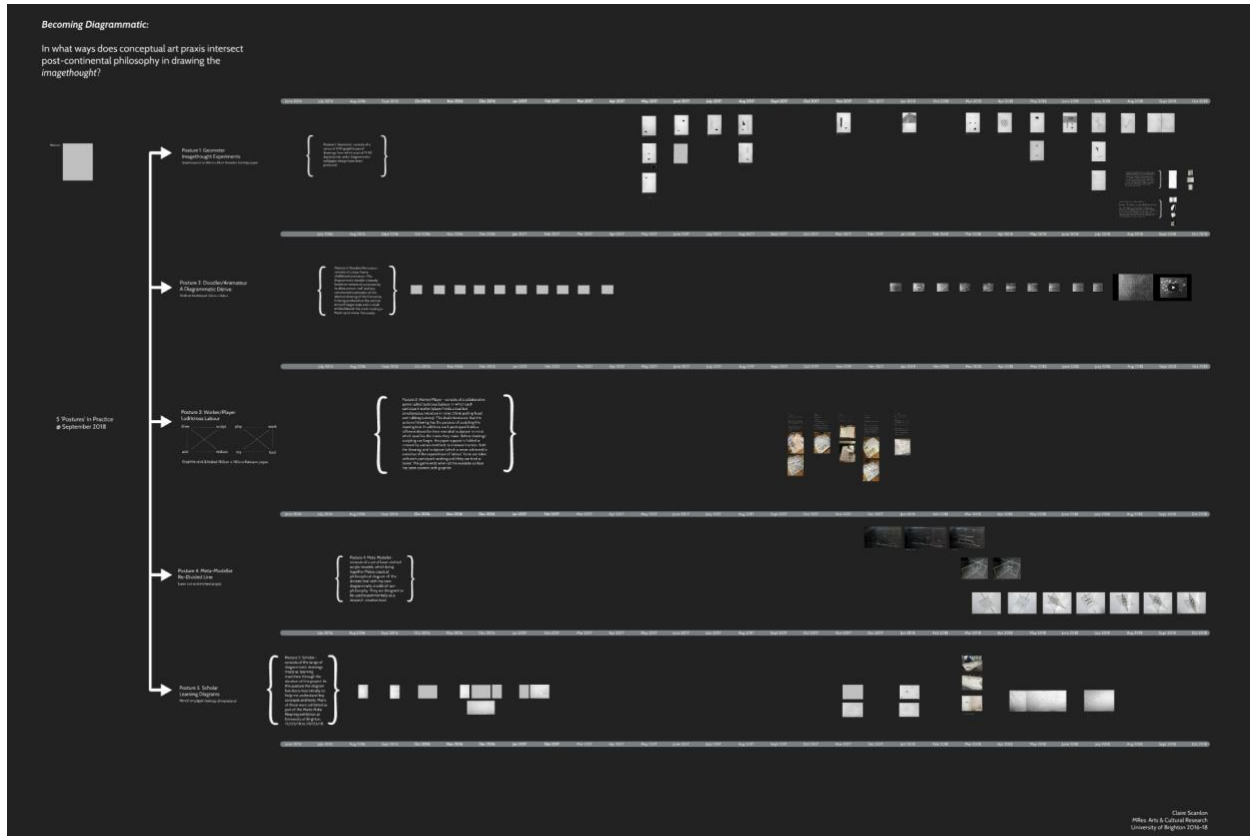


Fig. 10: Becoming Diagrammatic Portfolio Timeline @ Sept 2018

- Posture 1: Geometer** - consists of a series of 21 A1 graphite pencil drawings from which a boxed set of 12 A5 digital prints, and a 'diagrammatic' wallpaper design has been produced. The set of 12 images indicate the trajectory of my 'Imagethought experiments' in the paradigmatic shift between a meta-philosophical 'position' and a non-standard philosophical 'posture'. The set is offered up as a ludic opportunity for others to engage in their own imagethought experiments, through the action of re-combination along a horizon of possibility. Across the set a consistent 'horizon' line and poly-optic viewpoint are redolent of a myriorama parlour game.

The diagrammatic wallpaper design (in progress) works towards another imagethought hypothesis involving a stereoscopic optical experiment which also requires a participatory observer.

- **Posture 2: Doodler/Animateur** - consists of a stop-frame chalkboard animation. This diagrammatic doodle is loosely based on notions of automaticity to allow a more 'naïf' and less constrained exploration of the abstract drawing of the first series. In being produced on the vertical at much larger scale and in chalk on blackboard, the mark-making is freed-up to move 'flexuously'.
- **Posture 3: Worker/Player** - consists of a collaborative 'game' called Ludicrous Labour, in which each participant worker/player holds a dual but simultaneous intention in mind. (think patting head and rubbing tummy). This dual intention is that the action of drawing has the purpose of sculpting the drawing tool. In addition, each participant holds a different desire for their intended 'sculpture' in mind, which qualifies the marks they make. Before drawing/sculpting can begin, the paper support is folded or creased by various methods to increase traction. Both the 'drawing' and 'sculpture' (which is symptotic- i.e approached but never achieved) is a residue of the expenditure of 'labour'. Turns are taken, with each participant working until they are tired or bored. The game ends when all the available surface has been covered with graphite.
- **Posture 4: Meta-Modeller** - consists of a set of laser-etched acrylic models, which bring together Plato's classical philosophical diagram of 'the divided line' with my own diagrammatic model of non-philosophy. They are designed to be used experimentally as a research-creation tool.
- **Posture 5: Scholar** - consists of diagrammatic drawings made as 'learning machines' throughout the duration of this project. In this posture the diagram functions heuristically to help me understand key concepts and texts. Many of these were exhibited as part of the Marks Make Meaning exhibition at University of Brighton, 2018.

All the postures have contributed to the research process, but only Postures 1 and 2 have been subject to analysis. Posture 3 is referred to in the context of 1 and 2 and for this reason, the participants Information sheet and ethical consent is included in the appendix.

Refigured Data Analysis

In line with the emergent orientation of the RQ - the analysis will be bottom up, starting with the ontological properties of the diagram (point, line, plane) to the semiotics of geometric forms (ellipse, cone, torus) and the concepts (the compossible, the amphibolous, the allagmatic) emerging from the analysis of these forms and the structures or figures that operationalise them. (logic square, Venn, recursive two-step, erotographic movement).

The drawings are simply coded via the nomination of their components in the process of titling. After that, the analysis is conducted under the rubric of a framing question;

How does the diagram work in this posture?

Theoretical, embodied-visual and (Peircean) semiotic lenses are deployed in a process of abductive reasoning. In this way, the analysis seeks to enact the epistemological meshwork of Diagrammatology (ontology, phenomenology, semiology) from within a non-philosophical posture.

Part 3. Analysis and Discussion

Posture 1: Geometer

The figure of the geometer is pre-eminent in classical western philosophy and the geometric diagram is the philosophical tool *par excellence* as the iconic form of rationality, from Aristotle's square of opposition onwards.⁷⁶

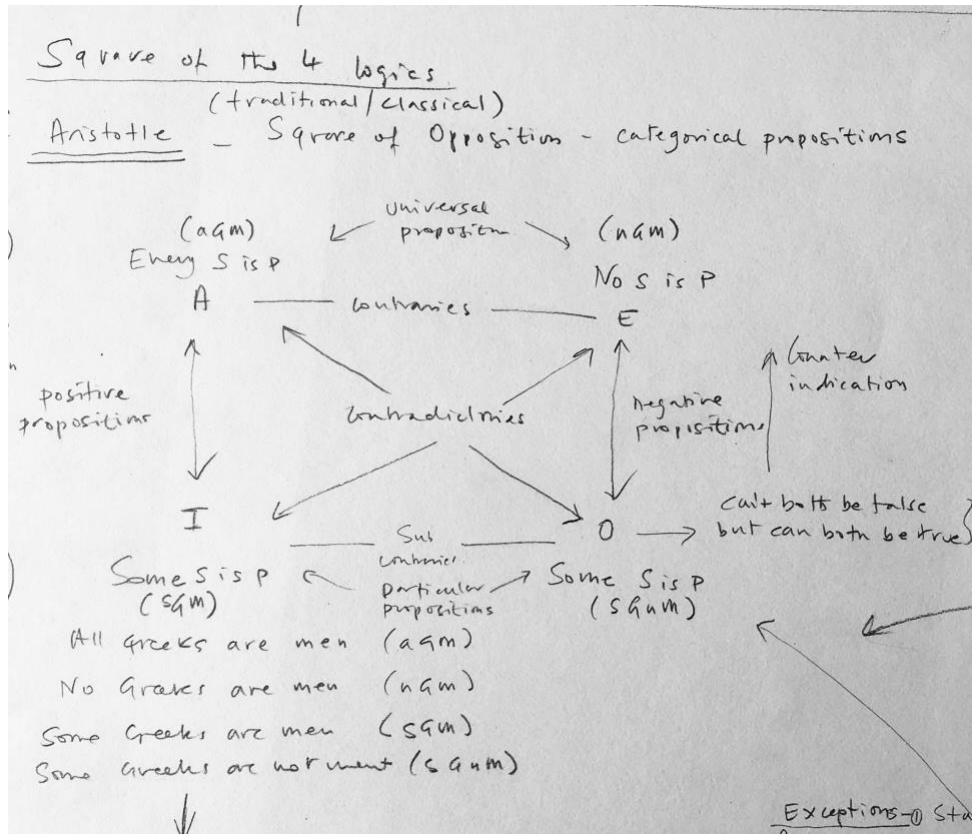


Fig 11: detail from 'learning machine' diagram, Claire Scanlon, 2017.

Thus, in Posture 1. I began by 'miming' various diagrammatic schema, such as the Greimas square and L Schema with their respective applications in semiotics and psychoanalysis, and allowing them to evolve alongside invented forms emerging from the drawing process itself.

In the following discussion, I will map out how this takes place beginning with the ontological properties of the diagram.

⁷⁶ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/square/>

Plane

Sybillie Kramer speculates that the invention of the inscribed surface has had the equivalent impact on 'the mobility and creativity of the mind that the invention of the wheel meant for the mobility and productivity of the human body'.⁷⁷ In Posture 1. the drawings are made on the horizontal with drawing apparatus. The plane is provided by a material substrate of paper. The paper quality is significant for its grain and the way it enables the graphite pencil mark to materialise. But as Kramer reminds us, in the diagram the de-limited *surface* of inscription is generally viewed and treated as an idealised, unlimited n-dimensional *plane*. In other words, there are two spaces – the space of the 'virtual' co-ordinates of the geometric image, and the '*action space*' of the drawing itself, which includes the user in their use of the drawing/diagram.

I hope to show in the following semiotic analysis how these two spaces intersect in the performance of Posture 1.

Peirce's Lens Semiotics

Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic system is notoriously complex but in simple terms he defined three types of sign called Hypoicons; Images, diagrams and metaphors. These in turn are characterised as exhibiting phenomenological qualities of 'Firstness', 'Secondness' and 'Thirdness', respectively. As Jappy explains,

each subclass of sign corresponds to one or other of the three categories: a qualisign, the 'significant quality' is a case of Firstness, the sinsign - a sign produced and then gone forever, like Friday's footprint - is a case of Secondness, while language signs, which necessarily partake of an enduring pattern, are cases of Thirdness.⁷⁸

In the geometric diagram, Euclidean figures form the basic prototypes of signs which enable concepts to be perceived as images. Though in general, geometric figures in diagrams are taken as tokens (replicas) – in the context of the pencil drawing, these figures take on 'significant qualities' (firstness). The tokens perceived however may also function as symbols (thirdness). Thus, we can see that categories can have a porous relation depending on context and medium.

⁷⁷ Sybillie Kramer, "The Mind's Eye': Visualizing the Non-visual and the 'Epistemology of the Line.'" *Image and Imagining in Philosophy, Science and the Arts* 2 (2011), 275-293.

⁷⁸ Jappy, *Introduction to Peircean Visual Semiotics*, 67.

Line

This porosity between semiotic registers, is symptomatic of the line in the context of the diagram. The reason for this is that although it would be easy to assume that the line in the context of a diagram functions like writing (and to an extent this is true - when it is interpreted as a concept for a designated purpose, thus becoming as invisible to the eye as any letterform becomes in the act of reading.⁷⁹ The drawn line has an autographic energy which is significant for its plastic qualities and rhythmic affect - the eye must come *in-line*, as it were, to take notice. Unlike typographic text, the drawn line's meaning is therefore immanent to its plastic form on the material page.

Thus, the line in the diagram moves between registers of 'firstness', 'secondness' and 'thirdness' in replicating itself first as shock/scission/cut, then as 'secondness' as bodily/material gesture/mark, and as 'thirdness' as sign of conceptual function.

In Posture 1 I exploit this semiotic porosity in the visual language of the diagrammatic line to keep open and defer the impetus of (decisional) interpretation. For example, the dis-continuous or dashed line can signify motion or speed, something hidden from view, or in the logic square the type of relations between categories and sub-categories. Its visual weakness as dis-continuous, is counteracted by its rhythmic strength.

In the structure of the classic logic square the line operationalises the act of reasoning, but it also gives a visual energy to the procedure. It moves left to right on the horizontal contrary-wise, top to bottom in an implied hierarchy between category and sub-category and diagonally cross-wise in contradiction between sub-categories and their opposing category. Though it is not a circle it is a circuit. The rhythm of logic thus shunts between corners - boxed in to expose the inconsistency. Yet the inconsistency is voided in the process. The inconsistency is precisely the void (the outside of the circuit) that this geometric diagram evades, because its ontology is dualistic. It attempts to do its work within the limitations of Euclidean geometry.

Laruelle describes the relation between philosophy and non-philosophy by way of this more familiar relation between Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometry in that the 'non' in non-Euclidean is not a negative.⁸⁰ Rather it is an expanded paradigm where geometries co-exist and partake of one another at

⁷⁹ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, trans. Antony Hudek and Mary Lydon (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 211.

⁸⁰ Mullarkey, *Post Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 138.

a local level.⁸¹ So, it is important to remember that non-philosophy is not a deconstruction, negation or revision of philosophy. Rather, it is a super(im)position, which generalises and simplifies all philosophies and other thought forms through a practice of 'cloning' or 'Dualysis'. In the practice of cloning, all philosophical dyads (sensible/intelligible, being/becoming, virtual/actual etc.) achieve equivalence as a 'unilateral duality', which *belongs* to the Real rather than being thought *about* the Real.⁸²

By working with the variable rhythms of the line and the potential of semiotic porosity, the classic logic square mutates into a philo-fictional 'square dance'. Here, other non-Euclidean topological figures such as the torus (see cover image) and movements such as the 'recursive two-step' perform alternative thought-forms (e.g. digressive) to syncopate the tick-tock of binary logic.

⁸¹ Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy*, 8.

⁸² Mullarkey, *Post Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 146-147.

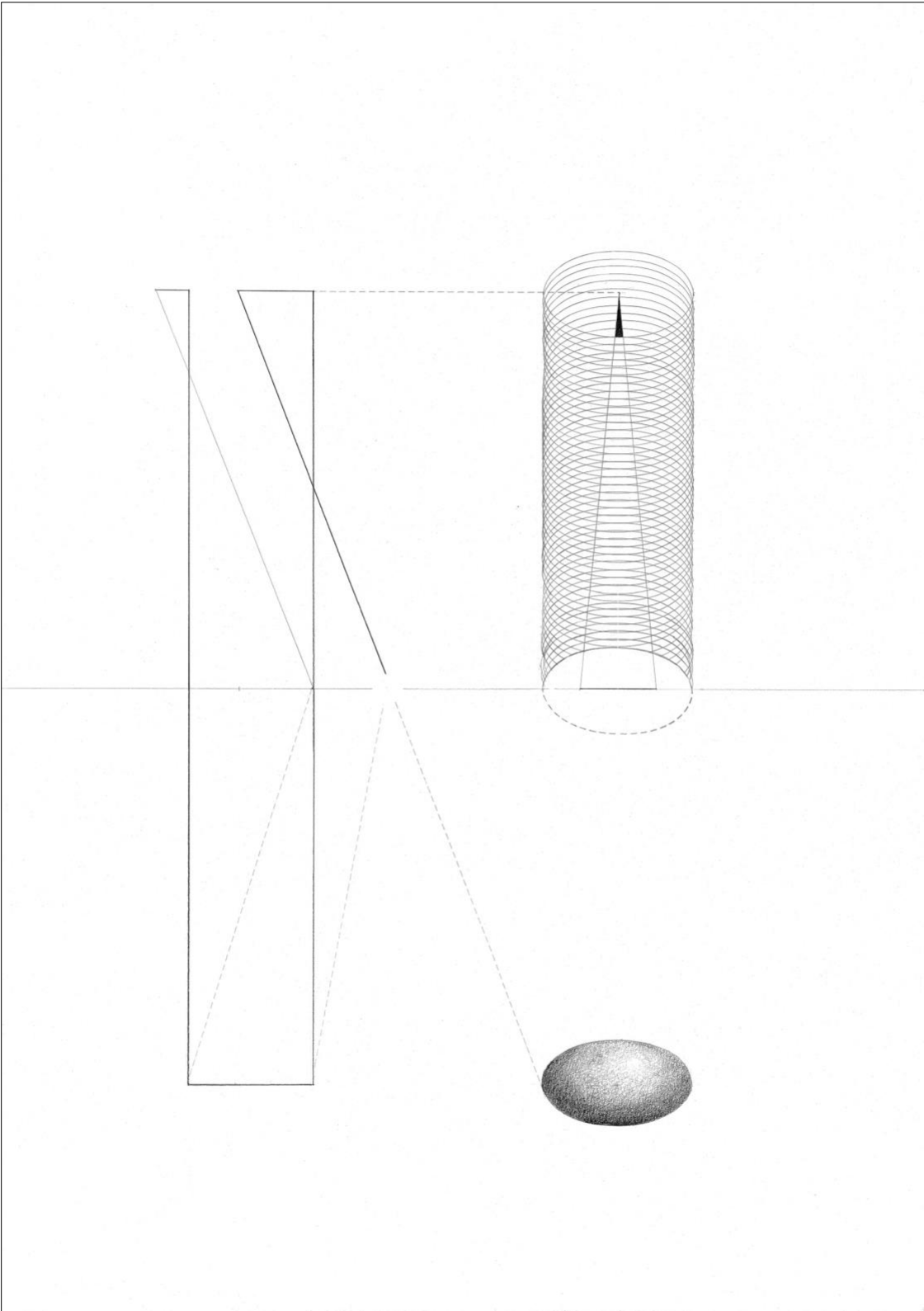


Fig 12: #7 square schema with half erotographic movement, compossible object and syncopated, recursive two-step Imagethought Experiments - 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

Allagmatic

As we shall see, the action of super(im)position is both conceptual and visual and is constituted by a form of analogy known as the 'allagmatic'.⁸³ This consists of the productive incongruence between the terms of an analogy that produces thought, in the same way that binocular vision produces depth-perception through the (partial) superimposition of the differing viewpoint of each eye. This operation of difference, works differently in the image than in language, where analogy functions by way of a bridging operation. For example, "this is like that" requires the third term 'like' to operationalise the analogy. In the image, particularly in the indeterminate image there is a collapse or compression of the space of analogy. Indeed, what is significant about the allagmatic is that it must work in the visual and incidentally (Simondon suggests), through the figure of the geometer.⁸⁴ Through the allagmatic, structure and operation co-exist. This process renders the production of thought immanent to the production of the image, which must therefore be seen/thought both in the maker and in the viewer, as the 'terms of the allagmatic process depend on the presence of an ontic being to carry out the operation.'⁸⁵ I would suggest that Laruelle's vision-in-One functions similarly in the imagethought, as Deleuze's allagmatic materialism in being *from* the real rather than *about* it.⁸⁶

This is not all however, for it is not just the schism in the differential viewpoint that is productive here, but the blind spot that is compensated for in movement (saccade) of the eyes. Like the schism in the binocular viewpoint, the blind spot is productive in its absence in our experience of vision – it is only when we look for it deliberately or experience a disturbance of our normal depth perception (double vision) that we become aware of them. How then to make the imagethought surface in consciousness without falling into representation? Is it possible that by experimenting with the schism in binocular vision we might see/think the imagethought?

⁸³ The term comes from the work of Gilbert Simondon on the problem of individuation cited by Jacob Zdebik

⁸⁴ Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram: Aesthetic Threads in Visual Organization*, 50.

⁸⁵ Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram: Aesthetic Threads in Visual Organization*, 52.

⁸⁶ Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram: Aesthetic Threads in Visual Organization*, 54.

Horizon

At first, the line drawn is an opening gesture, it has an intentional character which is heightened by its sobriety in being made by the edge of a ruler.⁸⁷ This first line is decisional (*decaedere*⁸⁸), it is a coordinate that cuts the space in two and by running from edge to edge it divides the space of the page horizontally. This line becomes a figurative horizon which orientates both the image, in having a 'right way up', and the viewer in relation to their body schema and viewpoint. Read in this way it is a philosophical rather than non-philosophical line which positions the subject (as in Cartesian Perspectivalism⁸⁹). However, this metaphoric horizon line gives rise to a virtual 'landscape' in which abstract figures come to perform a non-philosophical philo-fiction.⁹⁰

Ellipse

Then, a circle is drawn and immediately parsed into an ellipsoid by perspectival projection, casting a shadow. The ellipse enters the stage as figure.⁹¹ This opening proposition is seen in drawing # 1 of *Imagethought Experiments*, Posture 1. It performs the movement from the Euclidean circle (2D) to the non-Euclidean 'topological' ellipse (3D).

The double foci of the ellipse give this circuitous figure a specific tension, increasing the speed of return at each end. For Derrida, the undecidable's logic is that of the ellipsis of the circle, a deformed, de-centered circle.⁹² If the *image of thought* in Deleuze's anti-Hegelian thesis *Difference and Repetition* is constructed as a circle, then the ellipse is the beginning of its deconstruction.⁹³

⁸⁷ Sobriety is the pre-eminent aesthetic quality attributed to the line in 18th century blue-prints, identified by Stephen Werner in Diderot's *Encyclopedie de science* and admired by Foucault and Deleuze, according to Jakub Zdebek in *Deleuze and the Diagram; Aesthetic Threads in Visual Organization*. 73. In simple terms, it suggests rectitude, as in recti-linear- a property of the geometric. The 'sobriety test' for drunk drivers tests how able they are to walk a straight line, to wobble or to meander suggests a disorderly state of intoxication. Contemporary philosopher Markus Steinweg reminds us that concepts are toxic because they intoxicate us. (from Lecture notes at Along Lines Symposium. Nida Artists' Colony. Lithuania 19.5.2017) In seeking concision through its clean and simple, 'sober' line the geometric diagram adheres to an enlightenment aesthetic, attempting to order the delirium of thought through its supposedly objective character.

⁸⁸ from Latin *decider-* 'determine', from *de-* 'off' + *caedere* 'cut'.

⁸⁹ Jay refers to Cartesian Perspectivalism as the 'dominant scopic regime of the modern era'. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes; The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought* (London. University of California Press, 1993), 70.

⁹⁰ In the boxed set of 12 'imagethought experiments' this viewpoint becomes poly-focal so as not to serve a singular subject.

⁹¹ As the form of earth's orbit around the sun, it is arguably the ellipse, not the circle which is the cosmological blueprint of all earthly movement.

⁹² John P. Leavy JR. in the introduction to Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry* by (Paris: Presses Universitaires De France [1962] 1989), 6.

⁹³ Gilles Deleuze *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton. reprint (London, New York. Continuum, [1968] 2004), 165.

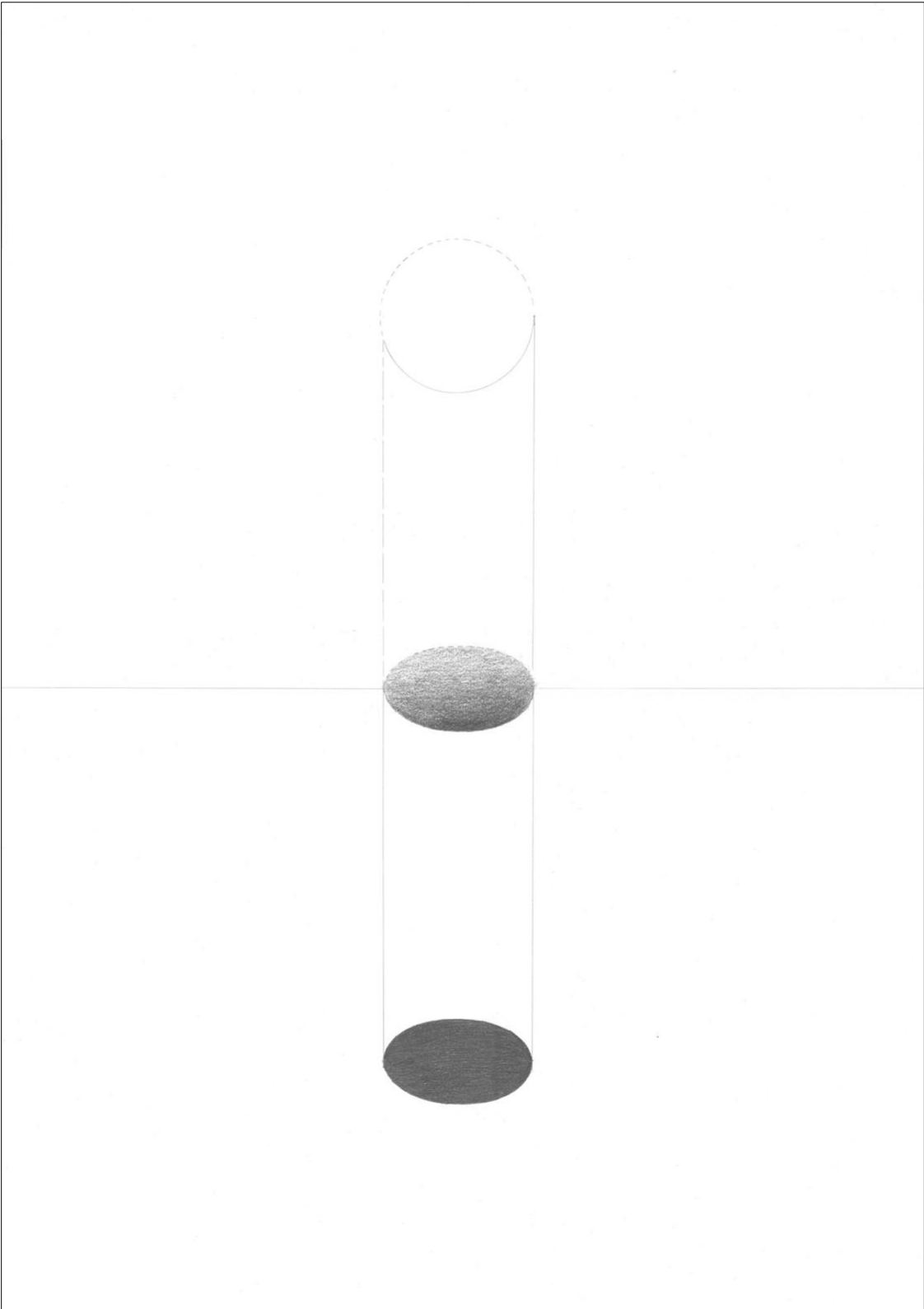


Fig 13: #1 schema
Imagethought Experiments - 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

Compossibility

Through small circular movements of a soft graphite pencil, the grain of the paper is made evident. The outline of an ellipse subsides into form, as an illusion of light and shadow appears through the slow procedure of the mark.

This illusion begs a question of recognition – is it an object or a hole? An egg or a stone? synthetic or organic? Real or ideal? This thought experiment is no Duck-Rabbit however, adrift from its body on the page of binary illusions.⁹⁴ Perhaps it is a compossible object? All at once and none together.

Compossibility is a philosophical concept derived from Leibniz's metaphysics, wherein he argued that the possible world is the sum of all that can be. Badiou develops the concept beyond the theological in defining philosophy as the creation of a "space of compossibility" for heterogeneous truth procedures, derived from all knowledge forms, though it is only through the 'sensual figure' that heterogeneity can appear in one place as a vision-in-one.⁹⁵ The sensual object in this case plays its part to perfection, appearing to be both voluminous and void (see fig 14). Next, the compossible object comes into relation with its other conditions as outline (which double as Venns) and as shadow/void, by way of a continuous or dashing line.⁹⁶

The invented form of the erotographic movement – a column of overlapping ellipses produces a sensation of (virtual) movement by way of an optical moiré effect (see fig 15).⁹⁷ The erotographic movement, multiplies the reciprocating action of the ellipse as a stable yet dizzying figure of oscillation. The visual effect of moiré has a somatic impact - the sensation can be both pleasurable and nauseating.

Figures like the 'compossible object' are speculative in that they hypothesise the relation between iconicity/visuality and known philosophical concepts. In the democratic 'non-philosophical' mode, philosophical concepts become material to be worked with on equal terms and alongside other figures and materials like graphite and paper. The reflexive relation between medium and sign is shown in

⁹⁴ Wittgenstein renders the duck-rabbit as an outline, without the realist shading or features of the original game. This drawing away from representation helps him to make his critique of the 'switch' hypothesis in the bi-stable illusion, speculating instead that in seeing it as a composite entity, a new perception is enabled. The duck-rabbit however, in both renditions remains body-less, gaping at the neck to the picture space. As W. J. T Mitchell suggests the duck-rabbit is not a neutral motif in referencing game, hunting, decoys etc. and goes on to say that its figurative character, in contrast to the Necker cube for instance, may be the reason for its philosophical interest. What he doesn't observe or extrapolate from this point is the violence of the image itself, in the annexation of the head/s from an impossible body - whereby the game would inevitably, be up. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, 76.

⁹⁵ Mullarkey, *Post Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 171.

⁹⁶ Conceived around 1880 by John Venn, this form of logic diagram, comprised of overlapping circles or ellipses, has had an increasingly wider and indisciplined application beyond its original use in set theory.

⁹⁷ The 'erotographic' figure has made a previous appearance in a prior work (*Desultory Object 4*. 2008) and is so named because of the personal circumstances that gave rise to it.

drawing #8 of Posture 1, where graphite as matter renders graphite as icon of its atomic structure in chemistry. (see fig 16).

The philo-fiction begins to take shape as a concept-collider.

The state of indeterminacy of the compossible object is further amplified by the attachment of the elliptical form to that of the triangle, creating the topological figure of the cone.

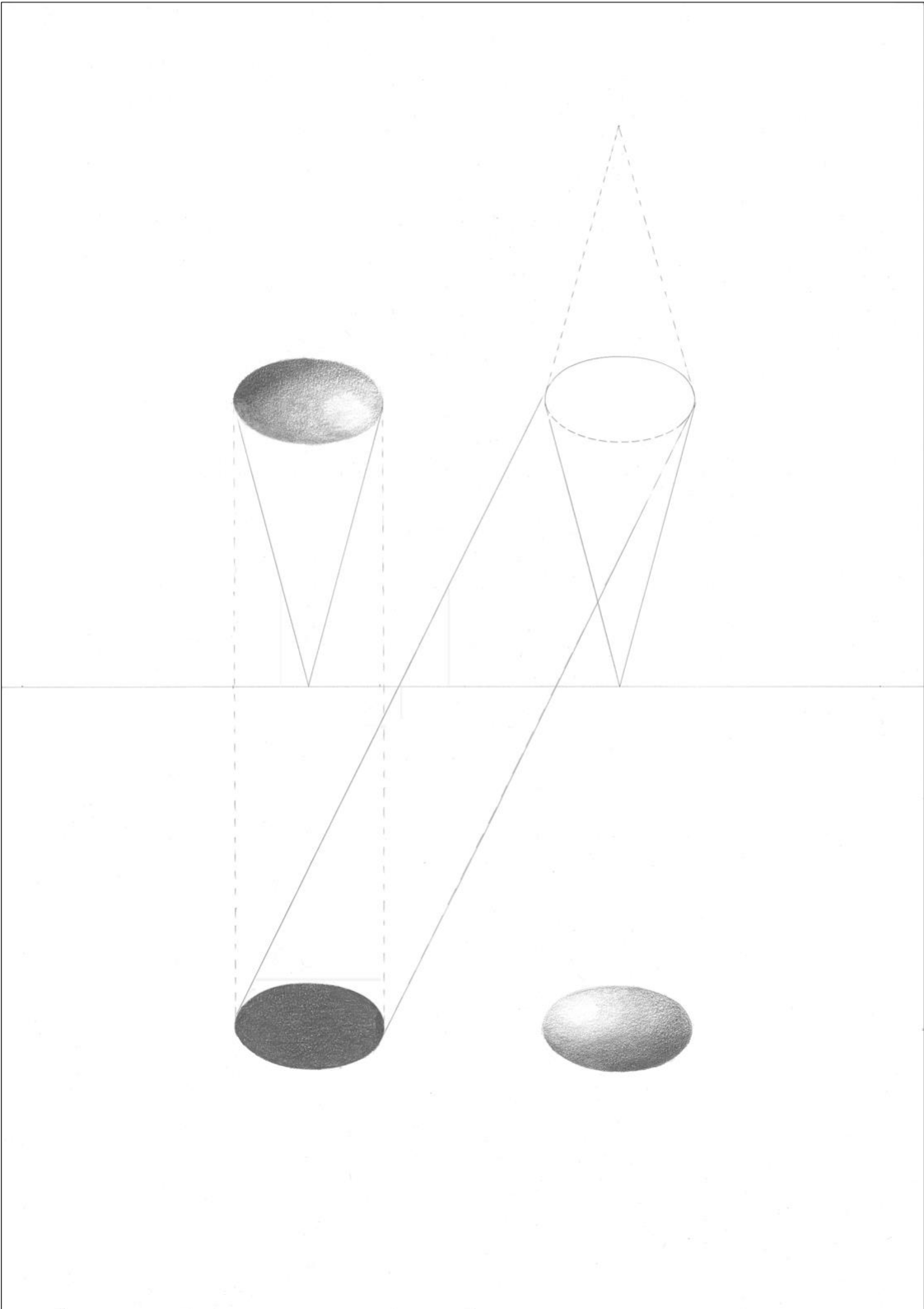


Fig 14: #4 square schema with compossible object, cone inversion and shadow/void
Imagethought Experiments - 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

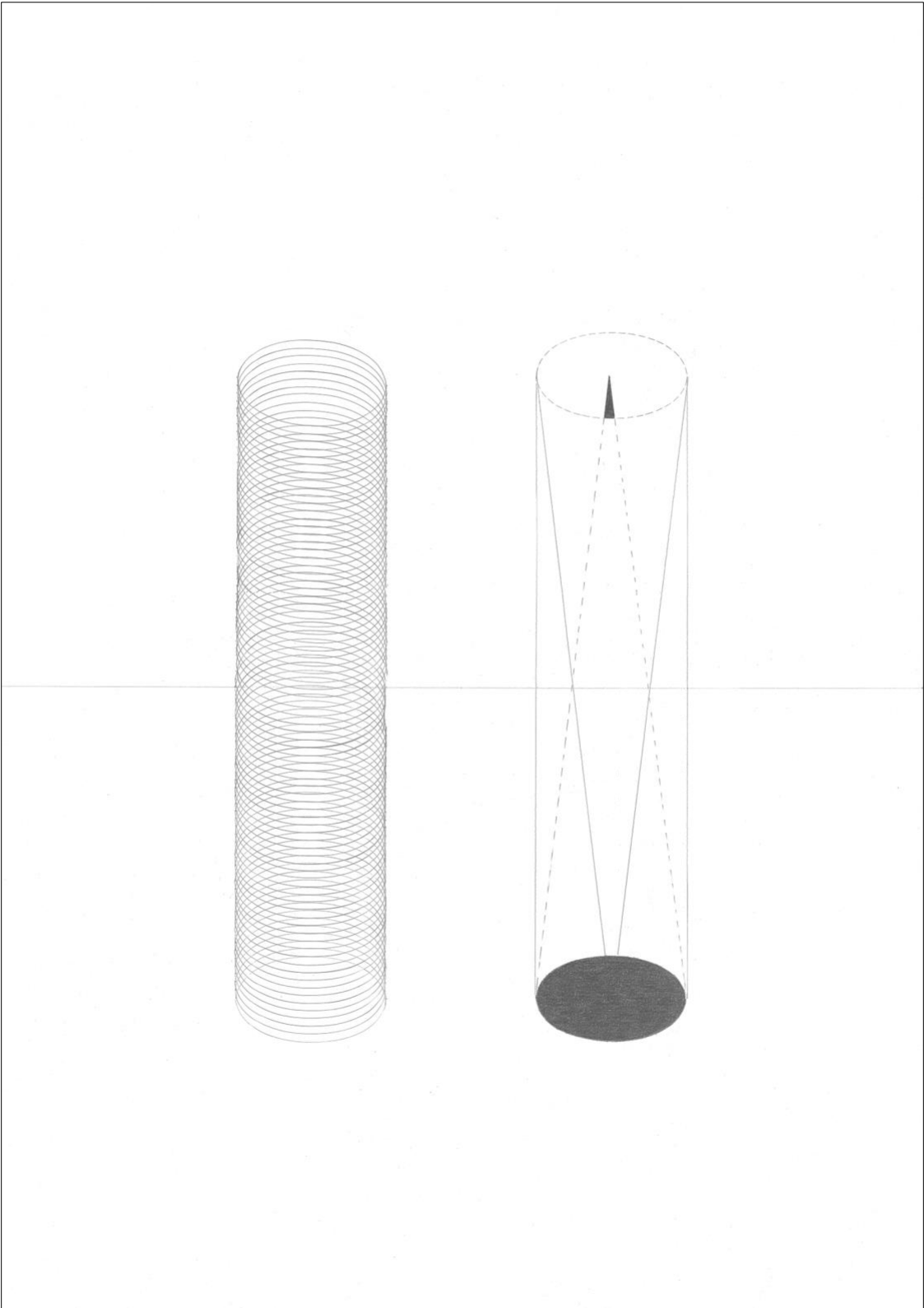


Fig 15: #5 square schema with erotographic movement, cone and shadow/void
Imagethought Experiments - 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

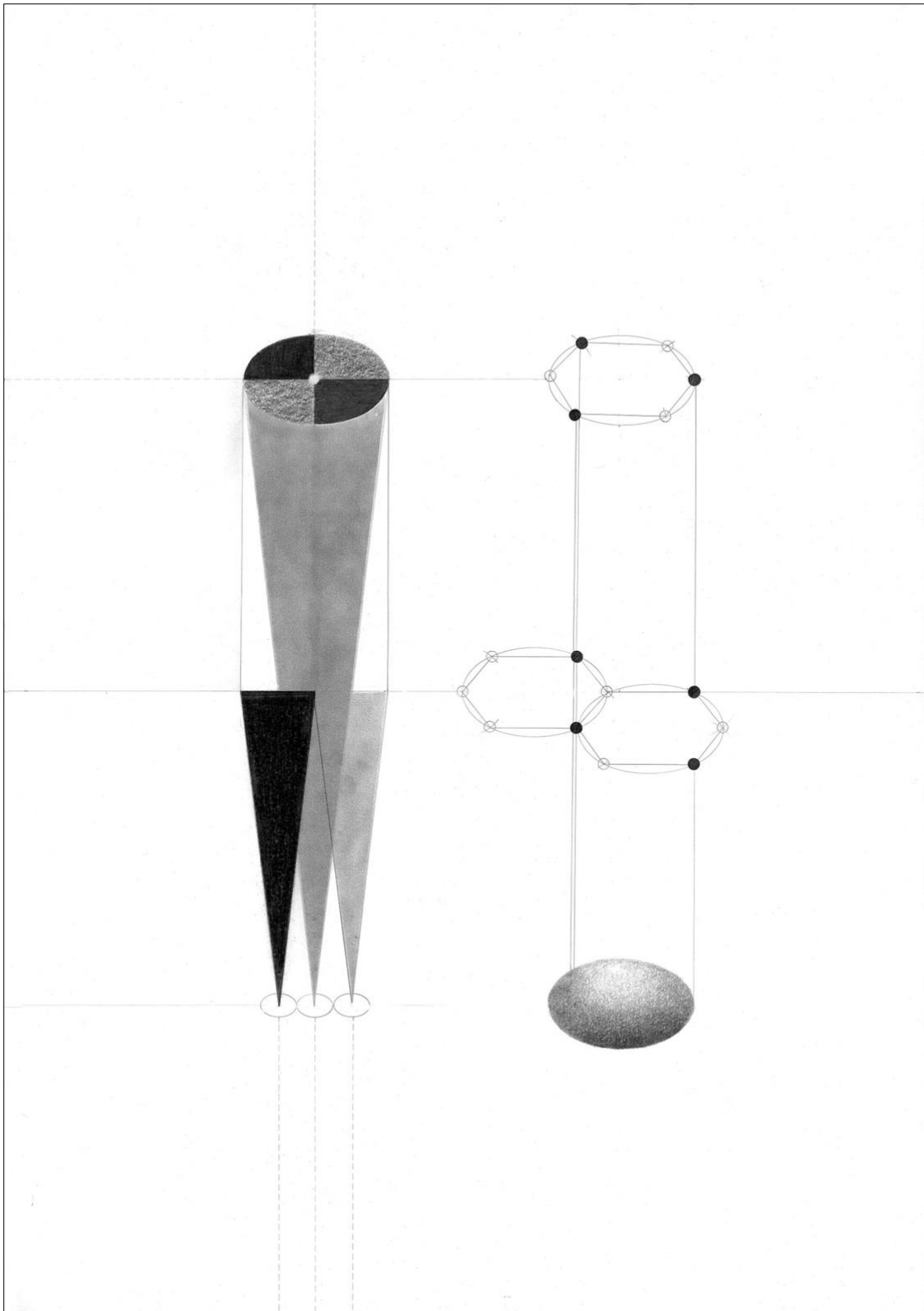


Fig 16: #8 square schema with graphite molecular structure (weak co-valent bonds) and triple-headed cone-arrow
Imagethought Experiments - 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

Cone

The figure of the singular, doubled and intersecting cone is prevalent in the history of diagrammatics.. Paul Klee used the figure of intersecting cones to diagram his theory of the cosmogenic.

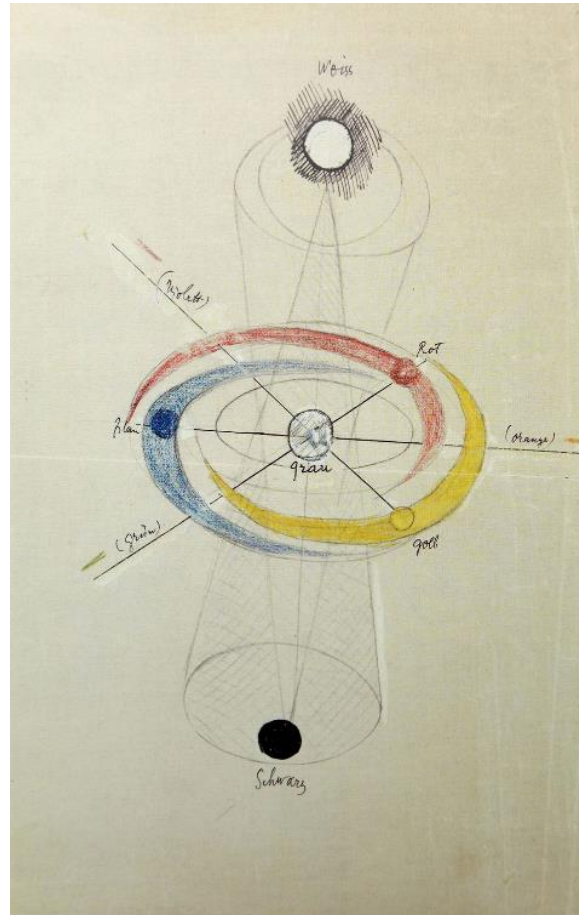


Fig.17: Paul Klee, *Canon of Totality*. Undated. Coloured pencil and indian ink on paper

As we can see in his diagram (see fig 17) colour is produced as the middle voice (grey) between the intersecting cones of white and black (light and shade). According to Robert Kudielka;

The middle voice between active and passive in ancient Greek, which is used for all those actions that are neither actively directed nor passively endured. Such as appearing, speaking, dancing. Drawing as the movement of a point 'that sets itself in motion' can be seen as such a middle voice.⁹⁸

For Klee (and subsequently Deleuze) the 'graupunkt' was more than this - it was his way to make visible the n-dimensional point in his theory of cosmogenesis. As such it was a '*non-conceptual concept* of non-

⁹⁸ Robert Kudielka, *Paul Klee: The Nature of Creation* (London: Hayward Gallery, 2002), 84.

contradiction: it may be both itself and not itself, in one place or another, all of the time; hence, it is not subject to the law of non-contradiction.⁹⁹

For Klee, as in most of the other cases observed, intersecting cones function to demonstrate both the operation and limit of the philosophical dyad.

Amphiboly

The ellipse is the projection of the circle in space, seen as the upper edge of the cone, as an outline. This outline can then appear to be open, closed or indeed rotating, as I have sometimes indicated by the addition of arrows. These arrows privilege a directional movement around the perimeter of the ellipse (the line diagrammatising itself). A flip/flop motion or yawing of the plane of the ellipse is implied by the shift from a continuous line to a dashed line. The dashed line in this context indicates something hidden from view. In this way, the cone becomes an amphibolous figure appearing to shift its relation to the viewer, showing first its front and then back. In Posture 1 the amphibolous cone becomes the figure that 'performs' the philosophical dyad (as clone) and as such is experimented with in various ways. Firstly, it is used in combination with other figures, and then as a repetition in the circular 'amphibolous cone array' and the 'amphibolous wallpaper' (see figs 18 and 1). Both uses are optically demanding, and like the 'compossible object' require a specific mode of engagement from the viewer.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Corry Shores, "Deleuze and Rhythm: Klee's Grey Point (Graupunkt), Messiaen's and Bacon's Rhythmic Figures, Maldiney, Boulez, Brakhage, and Golden Ratio", *Pirates and Revolutionaries* Blogspot, 8 January, 2009.

¹⁰⁰ This mode is also required by the cultural curiosities or 'parlour games' of optical illusions, which are intended to be both entertaining (ludic) and dizzying.

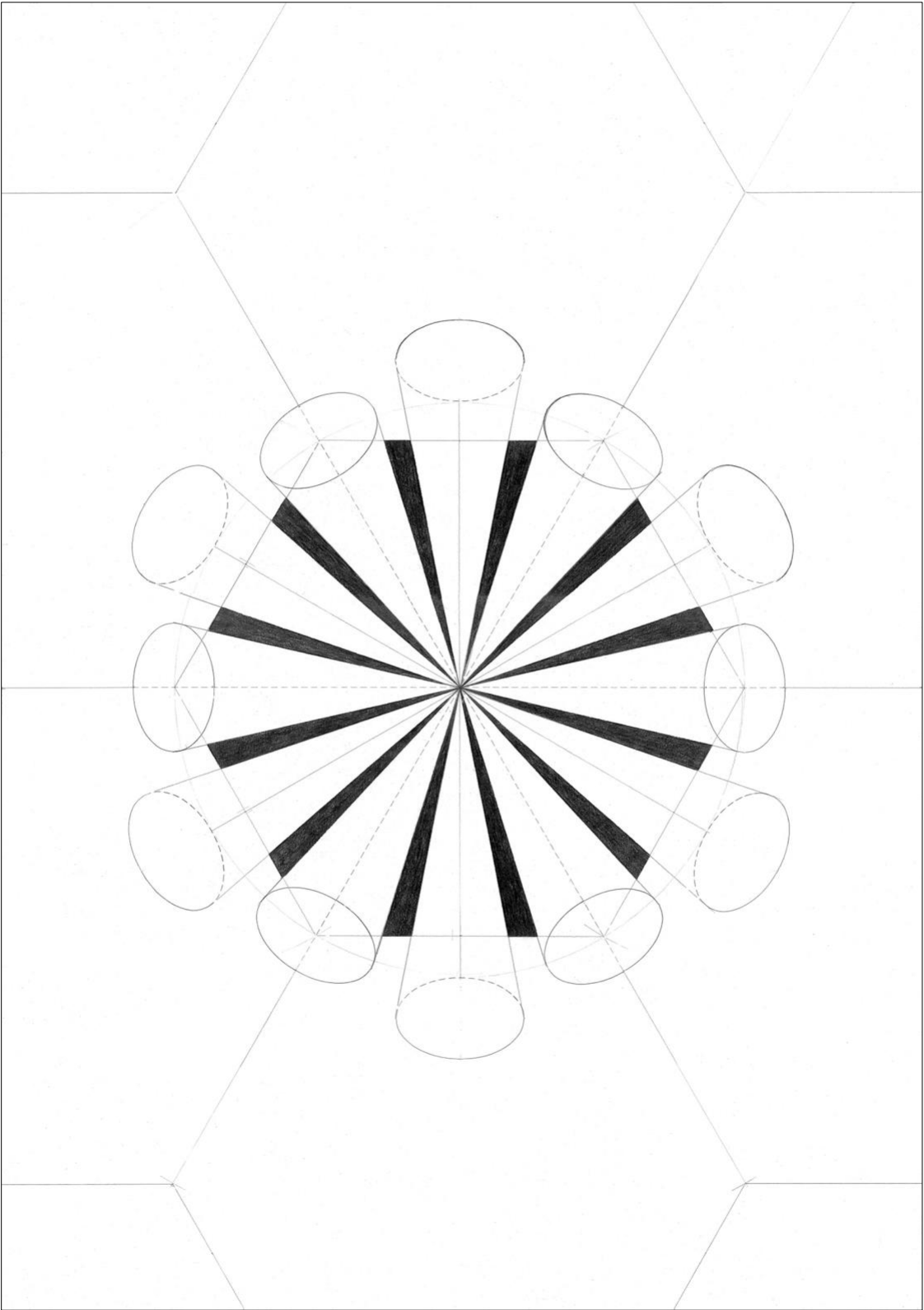


Fig 18: #10 hexagonal atomic structure (graphene) with amphibolous cone array
Imagethought Experiments - 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

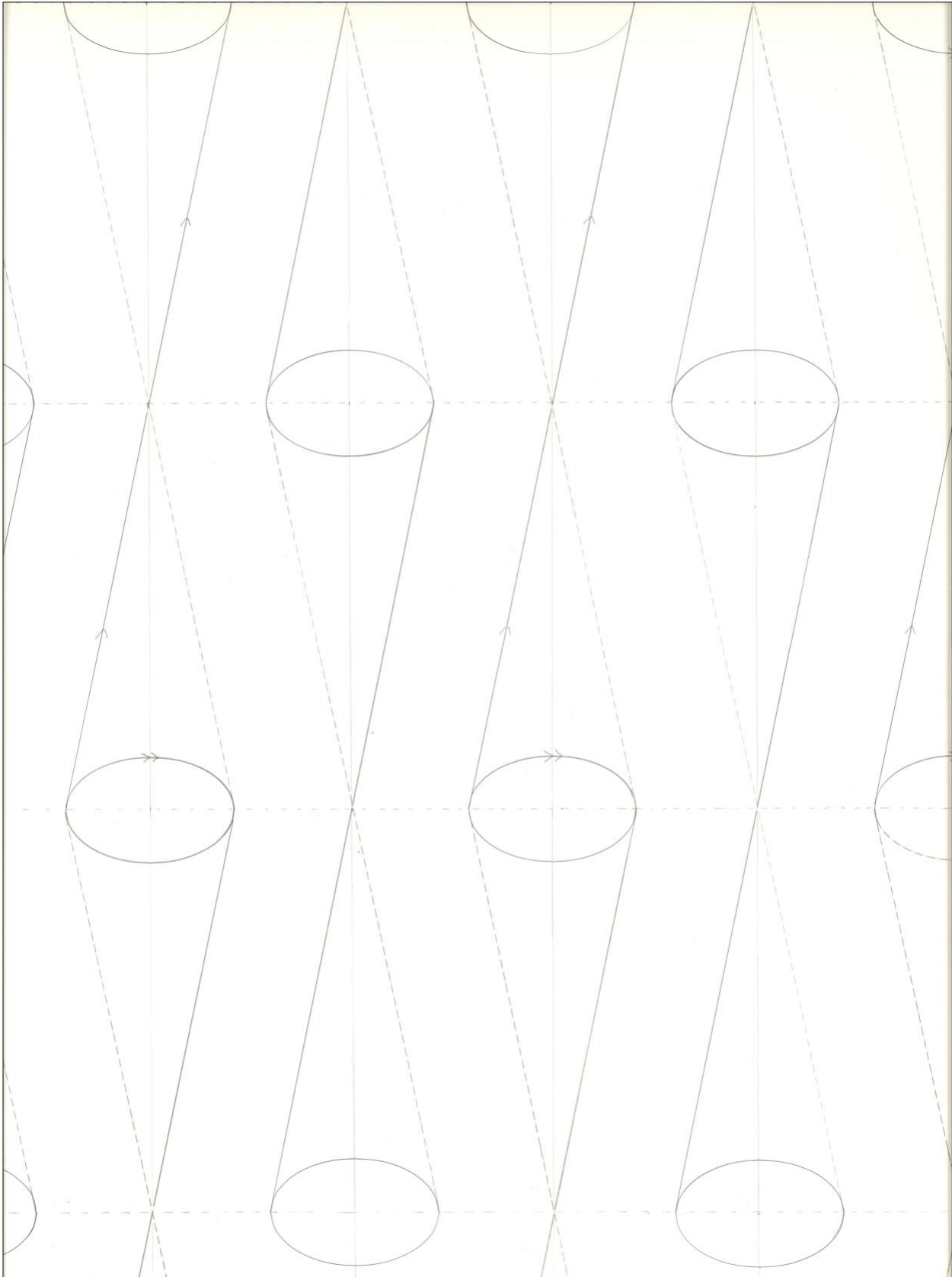


Fig 19: *ambolous cone wallpaper repeat (3D)*
Imagethought Experiments - 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

Posture 2: Doodler/Animateur

Deleuze's Lens - Haptics

In *Francis Bacon: Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze proposes that there are 'several aspects in the values of the hand that must be distinguished from each other: the digital, the tactile, the manual proper, and the haptic.'¹⁰¹ In his terms the digital refers to the pictorial use of the coded forms of the geometric. In this mode, the hand is subordinated to the eye in the production of an idealised optical space. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the pure manual drawing, which leads to a veritable 'in-subordination' of the hand to the eye (this is the mode of the Ludicrous Labour game in Posture 3: Worker/Player). He goes on to say that only in the haptic is there a balance between the operation of the hand and eye, where the figure is borne out of the figural. Though I have used geometric drawing for its association with the diagrammatic, I would say that the drawings in this series function as sketches. They are first-order drawings, but unlike the conventional, observational sketch where the marks build up an energetic field, standing in for the process of observation, no such process is evident in the non-representational diagrammatic (pencil) drawing. Un-intentional marks in this context are 'errors' created by erasure and smudging. In the geometric diagram, which makes use of apparatus to maintain consistency, the 'error' haunts the drawing as a haptic accident or inconsistency, and appears as an 'outside' to the proposition. From a non-philosophical stand-point however, this transcendent 'outside' is recuperated as immanent material fact and appears as the character of 'ghost' in the philo-fiction (see fig 20).

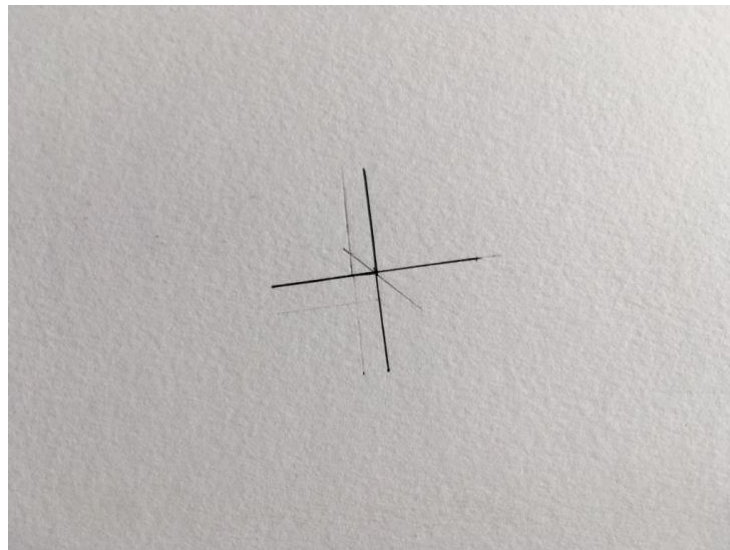


Fig 20: erasure detail from *Catuskoti (Nagarjuna) four corner Zen Buddhist square, with descending rain and ineffable grid*, Imagethought Experiments - 1st Posture: Geometer, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

¹⁰¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logic of Sensation* trans ed. (London: Continuum, 1981), 154.

In Posture 2, the animated diagrammatic doodle is loosely based on the idea of a *dérive* to allow a more ‘naïf’ and less constrained exploration of the geometric drawing than that of Posture 1.¹⁰² In being produced on the vertical at much larger scale and in chalk on blackboard, the mark-making is freed-up to move ‘flexuously’, as in much painting. In this context the diagram works in the interstice between drawing and erasure - where both the dry, white chalk marks and the wet, black erasure marks contribute equally. The resulting scumbled surface is similar in appearance to Deleuze’s description of the ‘malerisch’ or painterly mark where unanticipated forms are produced to disrupt the ‘nascent cliché’ of the ‘image of thought’ arising in the artist’s intentional consciousness (see fig 21).¹⁰³ In this work, the chance encounter of ‘tactile’ mark and ‘manual’ erasure act generatively to produce what Deleuze refers to as a ‘zone of indeterminability’.¹⁰⁴ Instead of working through the optical amphiboly of the geometric, the diagram in Posture 2 works in the ‘haptic’, between the ‘digital’ codes of the geometric icons, the gestural or ‘tactile’ fields of chalk clouds and black watery shapes, and the ‘manual’ marks of wiping back or erasure. Within this there is also semiotic porosity between these visual registers - from the shocking ‘firstness’ of a luminous black to the ‘secondness’ of the non-representative erasure mark, to the ‘thirdness’ of the cartoon/pictorial and geometric icons. The non-philosophical posture values each mode equally, working against the auto-positioning of the philosopher/artist to decide on ‘truth’ value.¹⁰⁵ ‘Decision’ is eschewed in non-philosophy, as it is in the *dérive* or doodle.

¹⁰²According to Situationist theorist Guy Debord, in performing a *dérive*, the individual in question must first set aside all work and leisure activities, clearing their minds of all their usual motives for movement and action and then let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. *Dérives* are necessary, according to Situationist theory, because of the increasingly predictable and monotonous experience of everyday life in advanced capitalism. The *dérive* grants a rare instance of pure chance, an opportunity for an utterly new and authentic experience of the different atmospheres and feelings generated by the urban landscape.’ Quoted online: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9rive>.

¹⁰³ In the *dérive*, chance procedures are often used to avoid the habitual routes of goal orientated travel, to become lost in the journey in order to discover new terrain. Similarly, in painting, Deleuze suggests the painter chooses to use ‘accidental’ mark-making for the same purpose – ‘These marks can be called “nonrepresentative” precisely because they depend on the act of chance and express nothing regarding the visual image: they only concern the hand of the painter. In themselves, they serve no other purpose than to be utilized and reutilized by the hand of the painter, who will use them to wrench the visual image away from the nascent cliché, to wrench himself away from the nascent illustration and narration. He will use the manual marks to make the figure emerge.’ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logic of Sensation*, 93-94.

¹⁰⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logic of Sensation*, 174.

¹⁰⁵ “non-philosophy makes no truth claims at all. It is instead a thought *alongside* the Real, not *about* the Real”. Mullarkey, *Post Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 136.

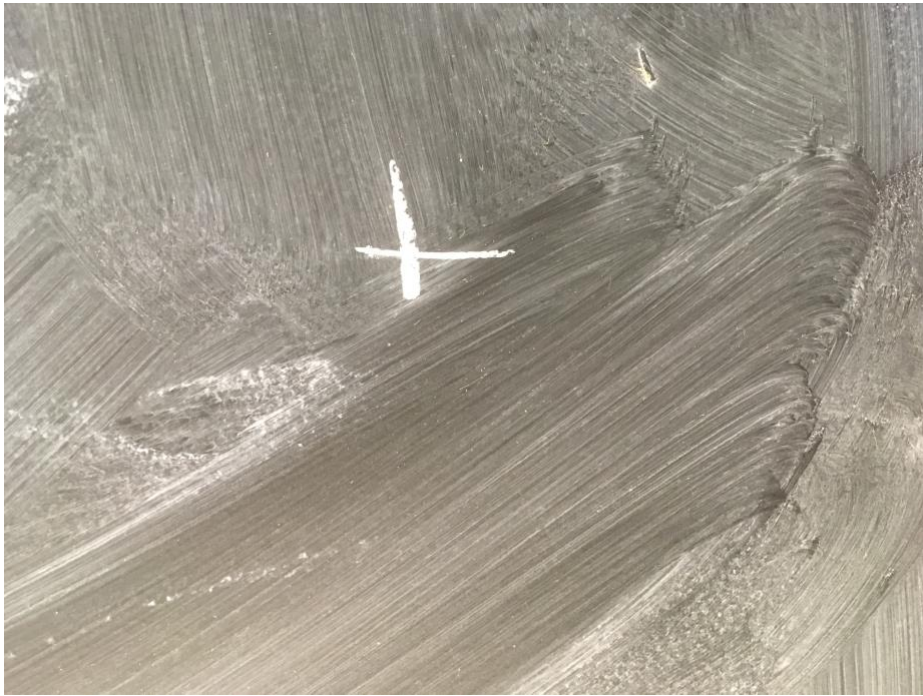


Fig 21: erasure/wipe detail from Posture 2: Doodler/Animateur, Claire Scanlon, 2018.

Conclusion

This project has afforded me an intensive initiation into post-continental and non-philosophy, but there is much still to do. In this respect, the first thing to say is that the following hypotheses, arising from the analysis have not been proved. The imagethought (if it is indeed possible), is yet to be achieved. As suggested in my methodology, this research project has been conducted at the edge of a paradigm shift. The outcomes here lean speculatively towards that achievement, which may require moving beyond the hand-drawn diagram.

Hypothesis

The imagethought is ocular-centric. This leads me to the hypothesis that the imagethought can only be 'experienced' through a deliberate act in vision. This may be in the form of an amphibolous figure or a stereographic illusion wherein normal binocular vision is suspended, and double/parallel vision is then practiced to enable access to the perception of a virtual 3rd dimension from a 2D image. The active engagement of the viewer through this type of stereoscopy has a long and broad cultural history encompassing scientific discovery and popular entertainment.¹⁰⁶ It has also been worked on by artists and philosophers and has corollaries in other forms of awareness practices (e.g. meditation) where habitual modes of perception are suspended. The experiments that I have produced in Posture 1 attempt to perform the imagethought through the 'allagmatic' superposition of diagrammatic figures which operate between the 'firstness' of visual effects and the 'thirdness' of metaphor. In posture 2, this semiotic porosity is played out through the haptic. This process has led me to this hypothesis, but it may be that I have been misled. It is also possible that I am caught in the fold between a Deleuzian 'Virtualist' or non-representational 'image of thought' and a Laruellian 'Actualist' 'imagethought'.¹⁰⁷

Taking up a Laruellian non-philosophical posture is admittedly difficult to sustain. I have hypothesised that it is akin to a kind of 'un-learning', or an 'un-seeing', which requires the neuro-typical viewer to be 'doing looking', not by focussing but by un-focussing in a practice of 'suspension, redirection and letting go' of the automaticity of normative vision.¹⁰⁸ This is because normative vision, in its correlation to memory in the process of re-cognition, 'de-composes' the world in its relation to language. In this respect, a Laruellian imagethought may perform what Erin Manning would call 'autistic perception', where the world appears "without discrimination" as a co-motion of textured pattern before it is named

¹⁰⁶ Seiji Horibuchi and Yuki Inoue, eds. Trans. Matt Thorn. *Stereogram*. (London: Boxtree, 1994), 10.

¹⁰⁷ Mullarkey, *Post Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, 176.

¹⁰⁸ Varela and Scharmer, *Three Gestures of Becoming Aware*, 4.

as such.¹⁰⁹ In giving vision and seeing priority of over 'decision' and reading, a Laruellian non-philosophical imagethought may for this reason be closer in kind to what James Elkins calls a 'pure picture' - a purely visual yet 'indecipherable' image.¹¹⁰ Perhaps such an image may be the residual product of a social process or material labour such as that produced by Posture 3: Worker/Player in the Ludicrous Labour game, where the image outcome is incidental to the operation of the diagram as 'game'. Alternatively, the imagethought may be a highly constructed picture that appears indecipherable to normal vision but would reveal its code under the right conditions - conditions which would require the viewer to practice a dis-habituated vision. Something like a random-dot stereogram perhaps. Addressing these questions is now a matter for future research.

¹⁰⁹ Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the ecology of Experience*. (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 6.

¹¹⁰ James Elkins, *The Domain of images* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999), 147. According to Elkins, "Pure pictures would be the pure absence of system, character, and sign- a void in which no meaning could survive." 147.

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Appendix

Participant information Sheet

Title of Study: Becoming Diagrammatic: In what ways does art praxis meet philosophy in drawing the *imagethought*?

I would like to invite you to take part in my MRes Arts and Cultural research study, organised by the School of Arts, University of Brighton. UK.

In order to do so I am required by the University of Brighton Research Ethics Committee to obtain your 'informed consent'. This information sheet, which is yours to keep, will help you to understand why I am doing this research and what participation will involve for you.

Please take your time to read the following description of the project aims. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or discuss this invitation with others before you decide.

What is the purpose of the study?

Becoming Diagrammatic: is a creative practice research project, investigating how conceptual art drawing as diagramming intersects with the speculative idea of the *imagethought* in post-continental philosophy.

It makes use of the relatively new interdisciplinary field of Diagrammatology to situate the study 'at the borderlines' between Phenomenology, Ontology, and Semiotics. (Stjernfelt.F 2007). In addition, the study will address how aesthetics and picture theory are also relevant in the discussion of the visual aspect of the *imagethought*.

I have invited you to participate in this project because of your stated interests or expertise in a field of research or practice related to the aims of this study.

You are under no obligation to agree to participate and are free to withdraw at any point in the process of participation without explanation or detrimental consequence.

Participation will take the form of a group drawing game, which will be audio or video recorded. The game will take place at your convenience and should last no longer than 1-3 hours. The game will involve working with graphite – which may be messy but not toxic and involve some physical effort but you may stop at any time if you feel you need to. The drawings produced may be copied by the researcher through photography for reproduction in digital print format. All audio or visual data will be securely stored on the researcher's own password-protected hard-drive, and only reproduced by the researcher in the context of this research project.

I can offer no financial incentive for your participation, but I hope that you will find this opportunity to be of value to your own research interests. You may participate anonymously if you prefer, in which case any material derived from participation will be reproduced with anonymous citation, otherwise participant contribution will be gratefully acknowledged in the appropriate academic manner through named citation.

Material from the drawing game may be used in academic presentations, exhibitions and published papers of this project. Where requested participants may have access to the transcript of recorded material.

Should you have cause for concern, you can contact me at: C.Scanlon1@uni.brighton.ac.uk

Claire Scanlon
CRD, University of Brighton
Grand Parade
Brighton, UK.

or my Project Supervisor

Dr Mary Anne Francis at: M.A.Francis@brighton.ac.uk



University of Brighton

Participant Consent Form

Becoming Diagrammatic: In what ways does art praxis meet philosophy in drawing the *imagethought*?

Please initial or tick box

I agree to take part in this research which is to ask; In what ways does art praxis meet philosophy in drawing the *imagethought*?

The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the purpose, principles and procedures of the study and the possible risks involved.

I have read the information sheet and I understand the principles, procedures and possible risks involved.

I am aware that I will be required to take part in a group drawing game with the researcher of approximately 1- 3 hour's duration

I agree to the researcher taking photographs/making audio/video recordings during the project.

I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will normally be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without incurring consequences from doing so.

I agree that should I withdraw from the study, the data collected up to that point may be used by the researcher for the purposes described in the information sheet.

I understand that material from my participation may be used in academic presentations, exhibitions and published papers of this project.

Name (please print) JON CARRIT

Signed [Signature] Date 24-6-18



University of Brighton

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Name (please print) RICHARD WALKER

Signed Date 16/10/17



University of Brighton

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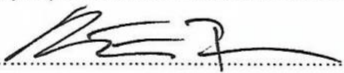
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Name (please print) NADINE FEINSON

Signed  Date 16-12-17



University of Brighton

Participant Consent Form

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Please
initial or
tick box

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Name (please print) DAN PALMER

Signed  Date 24/6/18



University of Brighton

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Name (please print) PAUL GRIVEN

Signed Paul Griven Date 13-10-18



University of Brighton

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Name (please print) STEPHEN DWYER

Signed [Signature] Date 16-12-17