MA Contemporary Dialogues; Fine Art

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Confirmative Praxis M7X02024

PRAXIS REPORT

How **Time** Becomes

(Mise En) **Obsolete**

Figure 1.

Submission Date: 12/01/23

Word count: 6102

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"-Even though it is very unclear what tomorrow is, I do think we must believe the future is something better, otherwise we are going to go backwards-".
(Olafur Eliasson, 2022)

INTRODUCTION

Maps are a device I use to validate work, they are only really an assimilation of conceptual challenges situated within my own subjective socialisation.

"-The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation-." (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 13/14)

Gaps that exist within the maps make it at times difficult to proceed, like unexplained futures. But as soon as they are understood they shoot into the past, by the time the shadows and reflections dissipate and the current map becomes vaguely understandable, I move onto new ground and what had at once seemed important doesn't matter any longer. The whole process repeats itself again, for so long as a conflictual reality exists progress can be made, and I find myself continually paddling just out of my depth.

"-The art of painting, properly speaking cannot be taught, and therefore cannot be learned. Only certain means can be discussed. I believe about art, as I believe about music or architecture, that the only way to study is to practice; and that any good teacher can point out certain intellectual or technical "makings", certain helps that will give a fulcrum to the lever of practice-." (Carlson, 1929, p.9)

I started using mind maps during my BA in order to both rationalise and visualise my work and thought processes. I took this a step further in the course of the Explorative and Research Praxis module of this MA and assembled a retrospective 'crazy wall' to help me relate the work to theory; this was the beginning of my practice-based research. For the Confirmative Praxis module I have approached things slightly differently and fully utilise an organic crazy wall assemblage to inform my work throughout. By means of Polaroids and a mini thermal printer that prints both images and text, I am able to instantly visualise and connect thoughts and ideas. This offers a dynamic representation of the project, essentially

the main thrusts of the blog I keep, but directly displayed all at once rather than hidden within a series of pages. "Research: it's all about navigation really" (Barrett, & Bolt, B., 2010, p. 123)

An appropriate way to describe my work might be as meta practice; painting, photography, printing, sculpture and ultimately installation, so I do a lot of things unsystematically. Having identified gaps in my practical knowledge that impeded perceived progress, it seems vital to fill the voids to assist in the conviction of my work. This was attempted while simultaneously researching theory, that when combined with the practical elements aims to consolidate and validate into a firmer praxis, distilling the various threads producing a sophisticated discourse. It was during the ERP module that time was first identified as a central theme of mine. This had manifested itself through my discovery of parallel or concurrent time; essentially, this meant I could be working on more than one thing at a time.
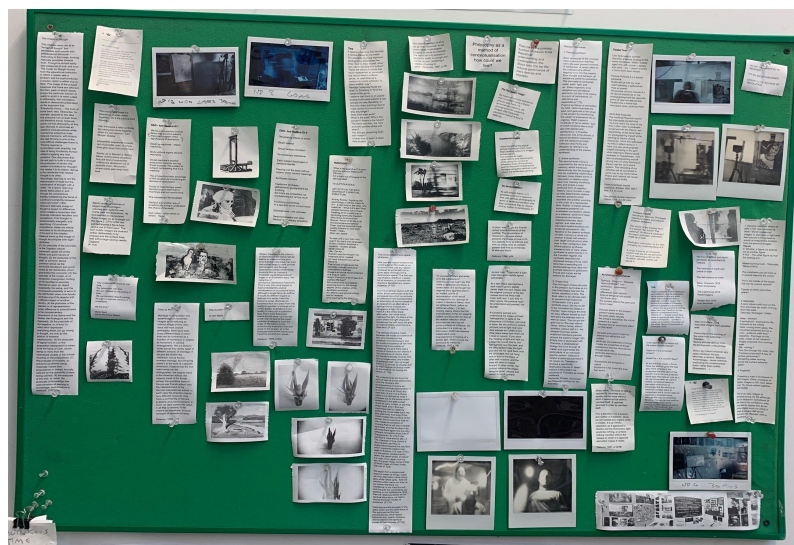

Figure 2.

One of the initial experiments I conducted into parallel time were long exposure photographic self portraits taken whilst drawing my own body reflected in a large mirror. Using a homemade pinhole camera, the film exposure dictates the time I had to make a drawing. Due to necessity self-portraiture had become de rigueur to my practice, not least

during lock down as I had infrequent access to models. It is interesting to note that two artists I had been researching also considered self-portraiture an appropriate subject; both Francis Bacon and Francesca Woodman. Bacon in conversation with David Sylvester stated; "I loathe my own face, but I go on painting it only because I haven't got any other people to do… One of the nicest things Cocteau said was: 'Each day in the mirror I watch death at work.' This is what one does oneself." (Sylvester, 1975, p. 222). Similarly, Woodman, on taking off her clothes to pose for herself, was reported as saying; "It's a matter of convenience, I'm always available" (1998, p 35).

Figure 3.

I believe that there is an element of 'autoethnography' in all artwork after all, we are narrative selves and this is obviously manifested in the tradition of self-portraiture. To more completely understand how my praxis has developed it is worth considering the artists that have informed it.

"-To rewrite modernity is the historical task of this early 21st century: not to start at

zero or find oneself encumbered by the storehouse of history, but to inventory and select, to use and download-." (Bourriaud, 2007, p.47).

Bacon has been an influential lynchpin for me during the MA, from beginning with pastiche of his work, to combining and reappropriating it into my praxis through ideas of anatomy, figuration, portraiture and ultimately, sensation.

"-The Figure is the sensible form related to a sensation; it acts immediately upon the central nervous system, which is of the flesh, whereas abstract form is addressed to the head, and acts through the intermediary of the brain, which is closer to the bone-." (Deleuze, 2005, p.25)

Joseph Beuys, known for his black paintings or blackboards, is also celebrated for his sensational works concerning temperature, the auditory and olfactory. "First the nose is gripped, then the body is heaved into its den and held captive. Smell is more than a sign; it gives shape to an overwhelming presence." (Borer, 1997, p. 20). The claustrophobia and message of his installation '-**Plight**-' (1985) gripped me some years ago on a visit to the Pompidou Centre, it has not left me. I have similar vivid memories of sensation and causality from the spectacular Olafur Eliasson Tate exhibition "-**In Real Life**-' (2019).

Stimulating my regard for the reflection, I recently experienced the fully immersive '-**Infinity Mirror Rooms**-' (2022) by Yayoi Kusama at the Tate Modern. "These installations propose an experience of the infinite, inviting the viewer to suspend his or her sense of self and accompany Kusama on her ongoing journey of self-obliteration." (Morris, 2012, p.153)

Michelangelo Pistoletto, a famous exponent of Arte Povera and the octogenarian notorious for smashing mirrors, reveals that:

"-When you see a figure in the mirror passing by, you catch it in a certain moment; the photo is the capturing of the figure at that moment. And the movement of the images in the mirror goes on, but the moment is stopped and fixed by the photo. The objectivity of the image is the same whether it is in the mobility of the reflection or in the immobility of the photograph. The mirror becomes like a film that moves in the present forever and the fixed figure is a photogram of it-." (Pistoletto, 2011, p.17/18).

A great deal of my research has been into cinema, notably the films of Andrei

Tarkovsky and it is his vivid representation of materiality and spirituality in the world that has had a significant influence on my direction. Another more recent filmmaker Adam Curtis, in part six of his documentary series "-**I Can't Get You Out of My Head**-" (2021), exposes the current dream world we inhabit, how things are unable to change and we are stuck in a neo liberal system that is essentially eating itself. As we consume we must be food ourselves; and the all absorbing posthuman echo chambers reflecting the construction of the self, that rely on the presence of the other, highlight how we have become the product. Perhaps this is part of the reason Bill Readings (1991) alleges that postmodern thinker Francois Lyotard aimed to rid the subjective transcendental identity.

Figure 4.

"-The spiritual choice is made between the mode of existence of him who chooses on the condition of not knowing it, and the mode of existence of him who knows that it is a matter of choosing. It is as if there was a choice of choice or non-choice. If I am conscious of choice, there are therefore already choices that I can no longer make, and modes of existence that I can no longer follow. […] I choose to choose, and by that I exclude all choice made on the mode of not having the choice-." (Deleuze, 1987, P. 128)

CHAPTER 1. HOW TIME BECOMES

As previously explained, the methodology I observe is effectively practice-based research; applied theory sometimes makes sense of my work and at other times it generates a practical line of inquiry. Time has already emerged as a major factor, to interrogate this theme, I begin with the films and writing of Andrei Tarkovsky. It is another exercise in the filling of gaps, presently theoretical knowledge. The Socratic maxim; "The more I know, the more I know that I don't know", suggests quicksand, as soon as gaps are filled new ones open up, seemingly faster than I can resolve them. However in relation to time, the cinematic sculptor Tarkovsky, is a good place to start. Remarkably he somehow managed to get away with making religious films during the secular years of the Soviet Union. These films served to link his art and spirituality:

"-The allotted function of art is not, as often assumed, to put across ideas, to propagate thoughts, to serve as example. The aim of art is to prepare a person for death, to plough and harrow his soul, rendering it capable of turning to good-." (Tarkovsky, 1987, p.43)

The film '-**Andrei Rublev**-' (1966), is a powerful story of faith lost and then found in a world of materiality. In it Tarkovsky introduces a character which I will return to later in the report; the 'holy fool', -is this a reference to the absurd and what purpose can it ultimately serve? One of his later films made after his defection to the West, '-**The Sacrifice**-' (1986), which Tarkovsky described as a parable, -is set in Scandinavia and has striking similarities to the films of Ingmar Bergman. In the early 1960's Bergman directed three films that became known as the '-**Faith Trilogy**-', these also deal with the loss and recovery of faith, questioning faith as hope in the unexplained. Persisting with the Nordic noir; Carl Theodor

Dreyer's '-**Ordet**-' (1955), the character Johannes leaves the family farm and studies Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard at university. On his return home he has become convinced he is the messiah, while his family believe him to be mad, (--. another example of the holy fool?). Crucially he performs a miracle at the wake of the character Ingma, resurrecting her just before she was to be buried, and this serves to resolve the whole story.

By now I was reading Gilles Deleuze '-**Cinema 1: The Movement Image**-' (2015) -fully intending to continue onto his second book '-**Cinema 2: The Time Image**-' (2005). -But the extent of trying to conquer what I know I don't know and grasp the complex theory, required following up a great many film references and other essential research into Deleuze's earlier work. This volume of research necessitated acceleration with immersion or crashing and optimising parallel time to intensify the options. I employ methods of study that incorporate my discovery of concurrent time to give me an edge; reading whilst commuting into university on the train, or listening to podcasts on headphones while working out in the gym.

Eventually I had a liberating epiphany, which actually came from the Deleuze and Guattari book '-**What is Philosophy**-' (1991). Realising that philosophy might actually be a conceptual journey rather than something leading to a discoverable destination. This revelation provided by Deleuze and Guattari allowed me to slow down and review the work I had completed so far.

I began to assess paintings I had been working on over the summer, both portraiture and landscape in terms of Deleuzian theory. Evaluating the portraiture in respect of the 'affection image' and landscapes as 'any elsewheres' identified in '-**Cinema 1: The Movement Image**-'. These comparisons I made with my work provided deeper meaning. Practice began to merge with theory, simultaneously filling gaps of knowledge in painting to gain confidence, validating and contextualising work. Proposing faith, self awareness, nostalgia and sacrifice into the contemporary through praxis.

An earlier silent film I studied by Dreyer; '-**The Passion of Joan of Arc**-' (1928), is

almost completely made up of the affection image, or close ups. This powerful technique is frequently used by another filmmaker Robert Bresson, who directed the film '-**The Trial of Joan of Arc**-' (1962). According to Deleuze time is at work in the affection image, the human face and the face of a clock have similar characteristics;

Figure 5.

"-we can say that this thing has been treated as a face [visage]: it has been 'envisaged' or rather 'faceified' [visageifee], and in turn it stares as us [devisage], it looks at us…even if it does not resemble a face-." (Deleuze, 1986 p. 98).

 He goes on to explain that the immoveable numbers and moveable hands on the face of a clock relay the measure of time, much in the same way that expressions made with the features of a human face convey information.

 It occurred to me that Joan of Arc has become an ambiguous figure; a mediaeval feminist now adopted by extreme right wing French nationalists. In the search for truth do we recover lost time? What was missed in the past, that we can see through the lens of today, things our ancestors missed at the time?

"-We understand at last from the point of view of lyrical abstraction, what the choice is, the consciousness of choice as steadfast spiritual determination. It is not the choice of good, any more than of evil. It is a choice which is not defined by what it chooses, but by the power that it possesses to be able to start afresh at every instant, of starting afresh itself, and in this way confirming itself by itself, by putting the whole stake back into play each time. And even if this choice implies the sacrifice of the person, this is a sacrifice that he only makes on condition of knowing that he will start it afresh each time, and that he does it for all times […] The character of true choice is discovered in sacrifice or rediscovered beyond the sacrifice which constantly begins over again-." (Deleuze, 1986, p. 131)

The concept of choice and interpretation leads me to consider illusion. According to Susan Sontag, the illusions described within '-**Plato's Cave**-' (Plato & Lee, 1987) are still relevant in a contemporary context; perception and reality are as disconnected. Illusion, conditioning and propaganda, is conducted by the means of screens*.*

"-Photography implies that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it. But this is the opposite of understanding, which starts from not accepting the world as it looks. All possibility of understanding is rooted in the ability to say no-." (Sontag, 1977, p.23)

Sontag stresses that we should put more emphasis on the feeling and emotion we get from an artwork than any meanings. It is vital to experience things firsthand and get out of the cave. This evokes two distinct things, sensation and space which brings me to the possible representation of 'any-space-whatevers', Deleuze has helpful advice:

"-How can any-space-whatever be constructed (in the studio or on location)? How can any-space-whatever be extracted from a given state of things, from a determinate space? The first way was shadow, shadows: a space full of shadows, or covered with shadows, becomes any-space-whatever-." (Deleuze, 1986, p.125)

Deleuze draws much from Henri Bergson, in order to grasp a better understanding of some fundamentals and connect back to time and space it was necessary to look into what Bergson had to say.

"-Bergson offers a twofold response (to Kant's theory of natural causality): On the one hand, in order to define consciousness and therefore freedom, Bergson

proposes to differentiate between time and space [...] On the other hand, through the differentiation, he defines the immediate data of consciousness as being temporal, in other words, as the duration-." (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Essentially there is no time like now, because as soon as the present is sensed it becomes the past. Bergson distinguishes between what he calls clock time and lived time, we are the action of time. Equally for Deleuze the time image is lived experience not just duration. In '-**Difference and Repetition**-' (2004), he identifies three synthesis; passive, active and empty time. Thus describing actualisation of the virtual, as the present.

Deleuze and Guattari had previously described philosophy as a journey and source of conceptualisation closer to art than science, asking, how could one live? Nominating the work of art as a "bloc of sensations", or a "compound of percepts and affects" (Bertetto, 2017). Likewise, Bergson had previously supplied potent insight into the capacity of art:

"-In the process of art we will find, in a weakened form, a refined and in some measure spiritualized version of the processes commonly used to induce the state of hypnosis-." (Bergson, 1910, p. 14)

Grappling to bind: time, materiality, sensation, choice, sacrifice, I look to the holy fool as a possible solution. According to Deleuze, thinking is divided into the categories of truth and error which is biassed towards truth and that authentic thinking is one of the most tricky tasks to perform. Also that intense thinking can benefit from an encounter with the ridiculous. Thinking develops sense as something tangible, learning is not just about memory, it binds thought to a reality. "As a result, 'learning' always takes place in and through the unconscious, thereby establishing the bond of a profound complicity between nature and mind" (Deleuze, 2004, p.165). I muse on using the absurd as a method of generating practice; "divergent thinking is the heart and soul of creativity" (Clarke, 2021). Although the absurd is commonly regarded as against god and transcendence as a method of understanding, does it on the other hand offer a virtual reality that is both creative and efficient?

Albert Camus through the ancient '-**Myth of Sisyphus**-" indicates how to live with the absurd in a world without religion. Our flaws and failures are as important as our successes. Repetition is absurd, but we must acknowledge the absurd. Our desires cannot be met in a world that does not make sense and the world is irrational. Science cannot answer the absurd, science can only describe not explain. Sisyphus pushes the absurd rock, to stop pushing is suicidal, regardless of how tedious or impossible the task is. It is a revolt, to be true to oneself. In the final chapter he writes;

> *"-It is strange in any case that works of related inspiration like those of Kafka, Kierkegaard or Chestov, those in short of existential novelists and philosophers completely orientated towards the absurd and its consequences, should in the long run lead to that tremendous cry of hope-.*" (Camus, 2005, p.130)

Philosophy of course can be viewed as a failure, in 2000 years it has never reached a 'truth', it just keeps reinventing itself. If it is deconstructed for example by the fool or idiocy, it can make more sense.

> "-*According to Deleuze, philosophy begins with a faire l'idiot – with 'making oneself an idiot'. Thinking is characterised not by intelligence but by idiocy. [...] The history of philosophy is a history of idiocy, of idiotic leaps: 'The old idiot wanted indubitable truths at which he could arrive by himself: in the meantime he would doubt everything … The new idiot has no wish for indubitable truths … and wills the absurd – this is not the same image of thought.' (What Is Philosophy?, 1994, p62) -*" (Han, 2022, p. 44)

By mobilising the possibilities of 'pataphysics as a vehicle to expand imagination of the absurd, thus providing a third space that equals the potential to allow multiple perspectives.

> *"-A metaphor takes you one step away from the thing you're actually talking about. A pataphor takes you an additional step further, to the point where an entirely new context exists with no relation to the first. There's a simple formula for creating a pataphor: Make a metaphor. Now inhabit the world of that metaphor just long enough to make another metaphor. Now inhabit this second metaphor, as if this is the world you'd been in all along. Now, if you choose to return to "base" reality, you'll find that the horizons have been expanded on all sides-.*" (Clarke, 2021)

"-*If a work of art is successful, it will invariably set its sights beyond its mere presence in space: it will be open to dialogue, discussion and that form of into human negotiation that Marcel Duchamp called the "coefficient of art", which is a temporal process being played out here now-*." (Bourriaud, 2002 p. 41)

CHAPTER 2. MISE EN OBSOLETE

For the public dissemination of my work I originally considered painting 'privileged instants' from films, but I'm concerned that these may be misinterpreted as celebratory. I also thought about mocking up photographs, but then realised that perhaps installation would be a more sophisticated option. There are so many potential 'mise en scene' to interpret from the films I have watched, I am spoilt for choice. "As a medium, installation is defined by spatial location rather than by the materials that constitute it [...] its physical possibilities are virtually limitless." (Hopkins, 2018, p.213). Installation is more like painting than painting, in that it can be experienced through physical materiality and sensation, even more intensely than paintings before the age of mechanical reproduction.

I am interested in what Deleuze refers to in '-**Cinema 1: The Movement Image**-', as "liquid perception" and "gaseous perception" and the clairvoyance inferred. The affection image, strong in Carl Theodore Dreyer's film '-**The Passion of Joan of Arc**-' and the burning of Joan excruciating, this is one of the most compelling mise en scene I have come across. It is the reference to gaseous perception I have begun to contemplate, and how that could be conveyed as an installation.

Beginning by painting my white studio space at the university with no colour, in black, this reduction of colour reduces the light. Next I close my studio space with a black tarpaulin as a ceiling, and install black curtains across the entrance, referencing for example '-**Black Square**-' by Kazimir Malevitch, (1913), contracting the sense of sight, a ground zero. I have succeeded in creating a camera, but a camera without any presuppositions. What I mean by a camera is not necessarily a box with an aperture to allow a timed light exposure of a

photosensitive substrate, what I mean by a camera is a mind camera; find the mind then the tools. It is like a cave and I have a collection of working but obsolete devices that I install within it. Technology adapts, and is used for other purposes than what was originally intended.

Figure 6.

I came up with a title based on André Gide's '-**mise en abyme-**' (1893), a play on words and meanings. The '-**Mise en Obsolete-**', which is at the time of writing in the future and will exist in space for a duration of the present, only persisting in the past through memories of those who experience it. Its presence will attempt to generate the creative '-**Aura**-' as described by Walter Benjamin, the external monolithic appearance representing an impulse to the abyss. (Benjamin, 2008). It will conceal internal projections and reflections and I intend to experiment with the contents of the installation right up to its dissemination. Starting with some maquette mini-installations that are, DIY, Arte Povera and precarious. So acknowledging the notion of the 'precariat' that binds us, literally held together with gaffa tape and Blu tack. Utilising and repurposing obsolete iPhones and iPads as lighting and projection devices; Apple does not upgrade them but they still work. By making things a little bit badly, sort of haphazard, childlike; the viewer thinks they could do the same, that is the

point, they could. I decide that whatever I show should be temporary, built from repurposed and recycled materials, or at least materials that can easily be used again when the exhibition ends.

Mise en abyme for example, accentuates illusions affecting the senses and draws attention to stories within stories. According to Dr Marcus Snow (2016), the mise en abyme is widely seen as both vague and durable, a conception giving artworks complexity. But since Gide's first identifications has the mise en abyme in a contemporary context simply morphed into a trope for the abysmal and sinister? There are three principles identified by Snow that are antecedent to Gide's ideas; 'Ekphrasis', 'Metalepsis' and 'Epanalepsis'. Moreover, since Gide, Claude Magny (1950), assigned a philosophical theme of internal mirroring to the concept and this has been further connected to infinite reflections by other thinkers. If so, can the sensations generated somehow be harnessed by experimenting with artworks that may have an impact on people's views, values and desire to act? It is important to keep in mind that shared values make for a consensual reality.

Small bright things are noticed, simultaneously larger darker things may go unnoticed. Placing time in the abyss, which plunges into temporal duration the short lifespan of additional functionality, built in obsolescence, automated obsolescence, greater acceleration, immediate obsolescence. Heating the installation would represent this velocity and subsequent warming of the planet. The viewer enters the void of the black camera , there is darkness, a blindness. There could be a series of small lit installations, anachronistic illusions, possibly referencing gaseous perception, liquid perception, blank time, active synthesis, passive synthesis. Stories of faith, hope, sacrifice, get the viewers initial attention. But in the darkest corner lurks a lifeless full size figure, (hands bound and tied to a stake?), not seen or noticed initially, only perhaps when the viewer turns to leave.

The entrance to the installation should be interrupted with materiality, a series of staggered hanging curtains that have to be negotiated. The second sensation simultaneously experienced is the darkness, the lack of any visible light, next perhaps the

smell of burnt wood, then gradually the temperature would be noticed and then the faint sound of a crackling fire. There might also be Lacanian mirrors serving to disorientate, and the darkness should further distort the viewer's reflection from the self into the perception of a possible other, thus considering Rosi Braidotti's theories of post humanism (2013) to bring the viewer deeper into the artwork. Concentrating one's gaze on your own reflection within a dark space can have a fascinating hallucinatory effect, known as the '-**Troxler Effect**-', discovered in 1804 by physician and philosopher Ignaz Troxler.

Figure 7.

Lurking in the darkest corner of the installation is possibly the '-**Gaffa Identity Meta Portrait**-'; a self portrait made from precarious adhesive tape and expanding foam, materials synonymous with 'make do and mend'. An elephant in the room, the figure chained to the wall of Plato's cave contemplating shadows and reflections. Things and thoughts grow out of the middle, because that is where everything unfolds; intra within on the inside. Deleuze and Guattari's theories are a melange, they are not unified by a single line of argument neither is the **Mise En Obsolete**. The only way out is the same way in, this is when what was experienced as materiality on entering becomes a hindrance on exiting, perhaps inducing panic. In a way the **Mise en Obsolete** is an extension of the work '-**Exposure**-' that I produced earlier during the MA, in that the figure is represented within a framework via

reflections.

"-But how can advanced art retain ethical distance from an increasingly immersive social realm and yet speak to a mass audience that sees its language as remote, if not impenetrable? After Modern Art this is the huge challenge confronting the art of the 21st century-." (Hopkins, 2018, p.274)

The **Mise en Obsolete** itself evolves during construction. Starting out planned as a black painted ten foot square, eight foot high cuboid with a two foot entrance.. During the initial stages it occurs that the planned two foot entrance is too narrow and that dimension needs to be altered to three feet, which changes the cube into an irregular hexahedron. But this is actually rather compelling because the adjustments are slight enough that the structure still appears as a cube although it is not, externally the installation is already projecting an illusion. **The Mise en Obsolete** is positioned so it does not line up with any of the gallery walls or features, this adds to the feeling of it being somehow detached from the space it inhabits. Initially the outside should give no information as to how or what it is constructed from, if it is solid or hollow. The viewer has to walk around to the back to find that there is a way in, they have a choice to enter or stay outside.

CONCLUSION

Externally the installation is a sentinel, black, other worldly mysterious box. It resembles the monolith in Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film '-**2001, A Space Odyssey**-' or Schneider's '-**Cube**-' (2007), contentiously referencing the Kaaba at Mecca.

> *"-In the film, the evolution of these hominids is raised to the next rung on the evolutionary ladder by the sudden appearance of a mysterious monolith. Commensurate with the new presence of this enigmatic "sentinel," our alleged simian progenitors learn to acquire a primitive form of technology; for the first time they use a bone as a weapon-.*" (Collins, 2007)

The viewer has to navigate around to the far side to come across the curtained entrance, which is reminiscent of a photo or voting booth or dark circus sideshow. Positioned adjacent to the entrance is a black plinth with a pen on a chain, questionnaires and a posting slot, resembling a kind of ballot box. Is this the death of democracy?

Reviewing the black material which has to be addressed to get inside, I decide that this should continue into the installation. The inside should contrast with the outside in that it will have no geometric qualities, it will be soft and irregular, externally stereotypical masculine, internally feminine. Could the **Mise en Obsolete** be interpreted as the Greek myth of '-**Pandoras' Box**-'? Empty of all the evils but hope; that which smooths out reality, allowing pretence and deflection to remain inside? Is this an ontological apparatus of entangled phenomena as put forward by Karen Barad:

> *"-Particular possibilities for (intra-)acting exist at every moment, and these changing possibilities entail an ethical obligation to intra-act responsibly in the world's becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering-.*" (Barad, 2007, p.195)

Internally the finished construction is equipped with mirrors positioned to reflect the **GIMP** sculpture as an illusion through three mirrors indicating a third way. The entranceway contains a series of black curtains that envelop the viewer in materiality and darkness upon entering, before the first tiny reflection of the lit **GIMP** is sighted. The interior is hung with more black material and partitions are arranged to shield the view of the mirrors themselves

from the viewer, that is until they move on, in the intended anticlockwise direction around the installation. The series of reflections offer difference and repetition in scale and orientation of the subject, this could possibly stimulate the brain of the viewer simultaneously memorising and recalling memory in the same instant. The research of Dr Chris Moulin (2006) into deja vu does indicate that repeated layouts in virtual reality have been tested, and there is much more to investigate in this direction. The viewer is kept unaware of the actual location or proximity of the physical sculpture until eventually coming across the 'truth' of the illusion. A Tascam on repeat plays the recorded crackle and spit of a bonfire I had lit at home, and to supplement this half burnt logs are concealed that give off a slight olfactory stimulation. After all, it was Prometheus' theft of fire that led to Zeus conjuring Pandora.

Initially based on Plato's Cave Allegory, via Susan Sontag's contemporary angle, the **Mise En Obsolete** as a piece of conceptual art has taken more twists and turns than I could have predicted. Of course the Greek myths morph and change throughout, up to, and beyond the "-**Metamorphoses**-" (8 CE) written by the Roman poet Ovid. They are all open to interpretations, new comprehension and multiple versions.
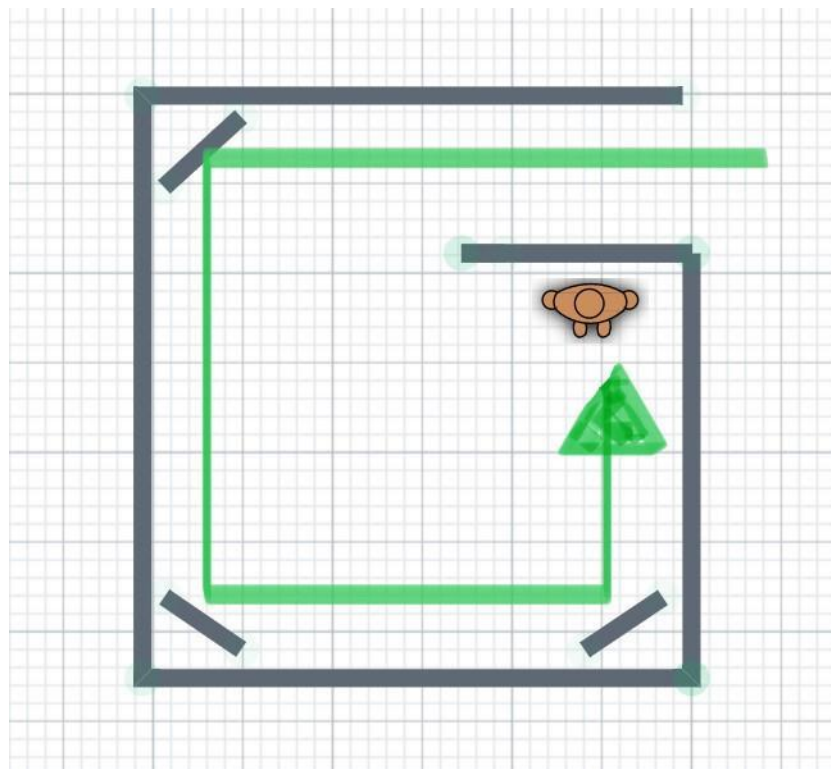
Figure 8.

I started with the darkness as being another way of looking, rather than with the lightness or the enlightenment, it's the opposite way of looking at the world. How the dark triggers the senses, darkness could refer to ecocide and as the darkness needs the light, the light needs the dark. The **Mise En Obsolete** is an illusion, a series of reflexive echo chambers, mirrors of Lacanian (1977) self and the other. The **Mise En Obsolete** is a constructed reality within space and space is more like time, and we are like time, and inside we experience the posthuman in a world of illusion and materiality. If successful the **Mise En Obsolete** demonstrates as apparatus becoming a flow of ontological phenomena.

We find ourselves in a posthuman convergence; the best and worst of times, a fourth industrial revolution, climate change, the sixth mass extinction, all colliding with the rise of AI and synthetic biology. As our brains cannot keep up with the computers we have created, studies in trans-human enhancement accelerating cognitive function to counter obsolescence begin.

> *"-The motivation for the social construction of hope is grounded in a sense of responsibility and inter-generational accountability. A fundamental gratuitousness and a sense of hope is part of it. Hope is a way of dreaming up possible futures: an anticipatory virtue that permeates our lives and activates them. It is a powerful motivating force grounded not only in projects that aim at reconstructing the social imaginary, but also in the political economy of desires, affects and creativity that underscore it-." (Briadotti, 2013, p.192)*

Substance is more like time than space, are we not time itself? To attempt actualising the unconscious of the audience, they are invited to participate by filling out questionnaires. My exhibition statement is deliberately vague and ambiguous, a strategy to give the viewer little to go on before or after they experience the **Mise En Obsolete**. Hopefully viewers enter the installation with very few presuppositions so the resulting questionnaires will be as authentic an account of their observations as possible. The **Mise En Obsolete** can be further analysed on the results of these surveys which go to make up the supplementary

research of this report. The aim is to help guide both the artistic and scientific communities on best practice for future communication and or stimulation.

Ultimately the installation is what the audience makes of it, as any work of conceptual art should be. It will be the analysis of the completed questionnaires that determines the democratic meaning the **Mise En Obsolete** holds. We are in this nature-culture continuum together, it is important to remember that we are not all one and the same, but we have to think our way through to open up the possibilities of the ethical options.

"-The timeless Beckett may be paraphrased: (Art), that double-headed monster of damnation and salvation. At odd moments I even suspect art can mend the world a little. No i'm certain it can because I have the experience of its company - the healing effect of its company, just the two of us like pals alone in a room together. Many will agree with the feeling-." (Kitaj, 1989, p.15)
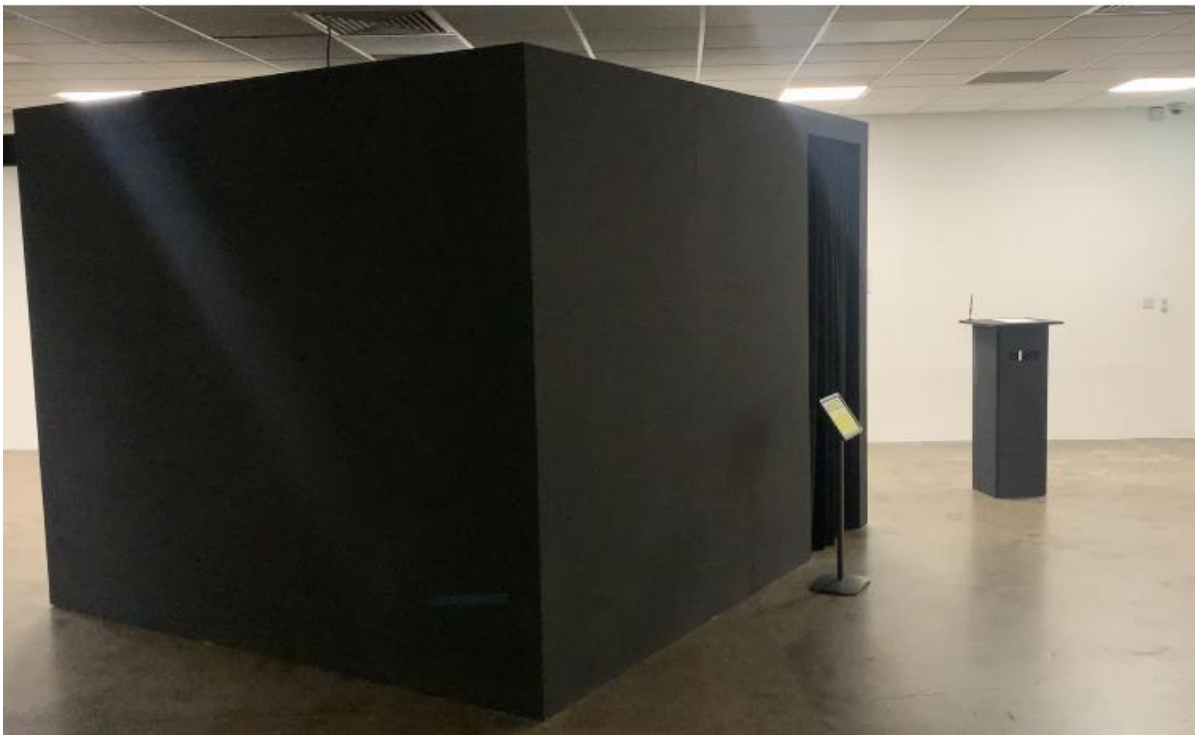

Figure 9.

GLOSSARY

Autoethnography: is an autobiographical genre of academic writing that draws on and analyses or interprets the lived experience of the author and connects researcher insights to self-identity, cultural rules and resources, communication practices, traditions, premises, symbols, rules, shared meanings, emotions, values, and larger social, cultural, and political issues. (Poulos, 2021, p 4)

Aura: The term was used by Walter Benjamin in his influential 1936 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.* Benjamin argued that 'even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: Its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.' He referred to this unique cultural context i.e. 'its presence in time and space' as its 'aura'. (Tate, 2022).

Truth: There is widespread doubt in philosophy as to whether an universal explanation can be provided for this term which means 'truth' is at the very least a problematic concept to explain. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy succinctly highlights this dichotomy as: '… what truths are, and what (if anything) makes them true.' Therefore, the neo-classical correspondence theory definition of: '… a belief is true if there exists an appropriate entity - a fact - to which it corresponds ...' provides a partial, yet acceptable interpretation for this essay. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018)

Ekphrasis: The verbal expression of some visual part.

Metalepsis: The carrying over of meaning from one part of a work to another.

Epanalepsis: The repetition of two, or more, parts in a sequence.

(Snow, 2016)

Precariat: In sociology and economics, the precariat (/prɪˈkɛəriət/) is a neologism for a social class formed by people suffering from precarity, which means existing without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare. The term is a portmanteau merging *precarious* with *proletariat*.

(Lunning, 2010, p.252)

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