

pavleheidler  
report  
konstnärnsämnden studio stipendium  
with Alys Longley  
STHLM 2020-10-23

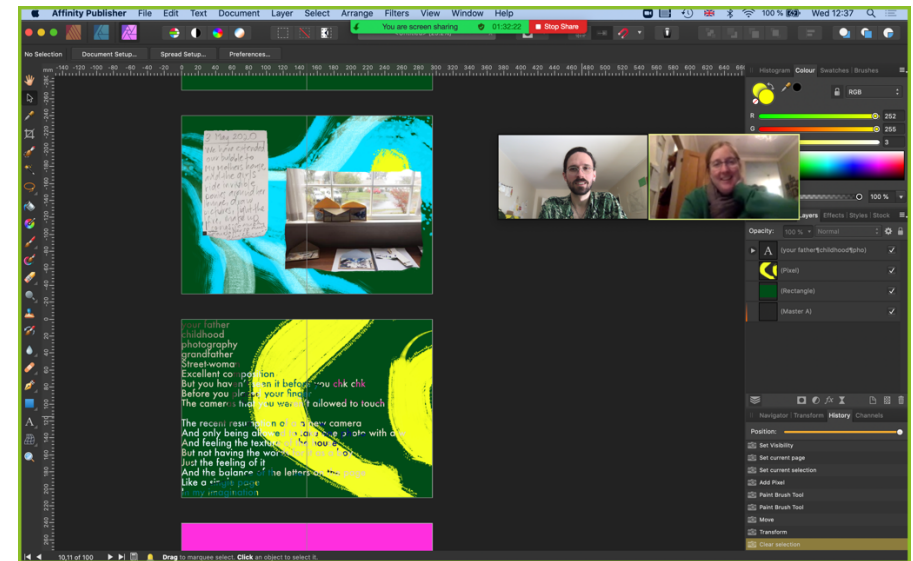
*How has the work been carried out?*

Aotearoa New Zealand initiated the first travel restrictions in response to the outbreak of Covid-19 just a couple of days before Alys was going to fly out to join me in Stockholm for the Konstnärnsämnden studio residency. We considered Alys joining me in Stockholm, then—following the local requirements and travel-restriction laws—self-isolating for a period of 14 days upon her return. When we received the permission to keep our resources even in case we chose not to follow the original itinerary, Alys and I decided to carry our meetings out online, using Zoom—a software popularised by the onset of the pandemic. The new itinerary prioritised our health and the health of those closest to us.

We opted to meet once a week, as working online full-time for two weeks straight seemed an unreachable goal. We decided for Wednesdays starting at 11AM Stockholm-time and 9PM Auckland-time. The approximate duration of our meetings was set at 120 minutes. We met on the mornings and evenings of the following Wednesdays:

April 22, 29  
May 6, 13, 20, 27  
June 3, 10, 17  
July 1, 8, 15  
August 5, 19, 26  
Sept 2, 16

A couple of sessions into the working-during-or-despite-the-pandemic experiment, we added to our analog creative-documenting practices the digital ones: the Zoom screen-share option and the Affinity publisher, which is—compared to Microsoft Word—a flexible word processor. It wasn't long before we figured out we were making a book. The book was completed on September 16. With the completion of the book, we decided to officially conclude our residency. The book is subtitled with the question that guided this residency, namely: “What decides green from blue?”



## *What was your experience of the exchange / trip?*

See below for the list of concepts, ideas, experiences, thoughts, and curiosities we touched upon during the working period. Following the list, I will write a couple of reflections on the notion of anti-anticipatory aesthetic, as the concept in my experience most directly reflects the work focused towards the question “What decides green from blue?”

1. the (simple) freedom to move things around
2. non-anticipatory aesthetic
3. anti-proprietary language
4. non-binary poetics
5. to speak the experience of moving is no less moving than moving 6. moving is no less dancing than dancing
7. tonal visibility <> visual tonality, of attention; proprioception
8. temporal + location: when moving becomes drawing becomes
9. tears will shoot out, like upwards, from your face. 10. letters made out of bacterial archways
12. un-comfort/ dis-knowing
13. dwelling in the dual/ duel
14. tangential-somatic drawing
15. voice to pigment to line to [ ]
16. to undo the sleeves of the discipline with the quick unpick of touch
17. voice as touch, touch as atmosphere
18. Can I balance on a metaphor?
19. the effort is the bracket/ to continue is the bracket/ to tell the story is the bracket/ the body is the bracket/ the distance is the bracket/ mortality is the bracket
20. all gets taken seriously <> grain of material/ granularity of feeling
21. scaling/ reorientation <> reconciliation
22. pages of absence moving/ and then you'll be the lymphatic system; my conclusion goes toward the clavicles
23. How quickly are you going through these points? Can you *feel* each and every one of them? Not *just* imagine, not *just* understand.
24. unethical but responsible
25. deter/ delay/ and change, a different kind of responsibility
26. too small to archive
27. The half-formed idea. The return of the idea that never left. <> Writer's block debunked.

## *introducing anti-anticipatory aesthetic*

Shouldn't “anticipating results” be considered a potentially counterproductive strategy in the context of artmaking? Ought not the fact that an artist expresses tendencies towards form and methodology be understood as an expression of specific curiosity instead of it being necessarily assumed as an expression of commitment and possibly even belonging? Given that an artist's commitment to form and methodology—in that it ensures results—often communicates trustworthiness, I wonder: how else will it be possible to communicate trustworthiness?

How can I, in other words, as an aesthetically-non-committed interdisciplinary artist who works in the expanded fields of choreography and writing (unexplored and yet to be institutionally recognised, not only in documented words but in shared experience) earn trust?

### *anti-anticipatory aesthetic\**

\*the notion of “anti-anticipatory aesthetic” is developed in relation to the work created in collaboration with artist and scholar alys longley (auckland, aotearoa new zealand) and artist skye reynolds (edinburgh, scotland).

“anti-anticipatory aesthetic” names the experimental creative strategy that functions according to a principle similar to “act first, deduct later,” which—in itself—is an homage-of-sorts to deborah hay's choreographic strategy “shoot, then aim.” the aim of “anti-anticipatory aesthetic” is to put *observation* at the centre of the creative process instead of *anticipation*. the hypothesis guiding this strategy is the following: by placing *anticipation* at the centre of a creative strategy, one is bound to attune their sensibilities to, and so unintentionally re-produce those aesthetic values and working habits one is *already* familiar with, i.e., those values one is used to and comfortable with *prior* to the beginning of a creative process. working with *anticipation*,

in other words, at the centre of a creative strategy could be said to lead to the production of unoriginal material.

it might be worth mentioning that the production of “original material” might not be my primary concern, or else might not be how i’m interested in naming our primary aim. more important than the development of original material is my/our concern with knowledge production: how can, is a question we might ask, a creative process become an opportunity for learning instead of it becoming an opportunity for confirming what we already know?

as a queer and a neuro-atypical person living in the time of the global pandemic, the climate crisis, and the long-awaited rise of the global anti-colonial movement, i find it exceedingly urgent to invest time, effort, and resource into developing the kind of methodology that will make possible the maturing and eventual widespread recognition of (norm-)critical creative practice.

*anti-anticipatory aesthetic, a personal note  
a note on practice*

When reflecting on the notion of anti-anticipatory aesthetic in the broader cultural context, I am consciously reflecting on my own embodied experience. At the age of 31, I am beginning to realise the way in which the observations I am making are really meant to help me personally work out why is it that I am constantly scared of not being able to sustain, i.e., find resources with which to support my ever complexifying and diversifying artistic drives, needs, wishes and wants.

Being raised a dancer in Zagreb, Salzburg, Bruxelles, and Stockholm, being raised at least in part by forward-thinking human beings, I am trying to understand why is it that I am still capable of not *truly* believing myself and the experience I’ve had working with Alys on this book. Working on this

book has made me feel like I’m dancing in the way I haven’t felt in a whole long while. Working on this book has made it possible for me to explore the extent of my dancing that dancing alone hasn’t been capable of supporting and hasn’t been capable for a long time. This book is a dance, is an evidence of dancing, is an evidence of embodied knowledge, is more of an evidence of what it is that I know than I can argue for at the moment because it encompasses more than the intellectually affirmable. Why is it challenging to believe in those statements, even though they evidence my actual and physical and shared and shareable experience?

In a recent conversation with a friend and a colleague whom I trust and who trusts me, whose identity will remain anonymous, I talked about the challenges I was facing when arguing my practice as a dancing practice even though *at the moment* it tends to express itself in writing and speaking more than it does in “actual dancing,” quantitatively and formally speaking. My friend followed my argument excitedly, which was encouraging. It was not until we arrived at the end of the conversation, when our attention turned from me to them, that they smirked and decidedly concluded that; yes, sure, everything I was saying was *indeed* amazing and exciting. Except that at the end of the day they were the one taking morning classes and worrying about injury in the way that I am not—*at the moment, they added cynically*. Surely that must mean that my dance practice isn’t *really* a dance practice after all...

It took me a while to wrap my head around our conversation. I’ve finally arrived at the following question; why is it difficult for friends and colleagues who are interested in each other’s practices, why is it difficult for them, for us, to support each other’s trajectories in this socio-political climate? Why do we, friends and peers, instead of encouraging and inspiring each other to pave new pathways, punish each other—intellectually as well as emotionally—for not conforming to standards?

Here is what I observed:

I tend to have conversations that follow the scenario described above with friends and peers who are young professionals, who might identify as dancers exclusively, who might have struggled finding work, who might have struggled with being recognised as valuable contributors to our community. I tend to have another type of conversation that follows somewhat of an opposite scenario to the one described above in which I am *indeed* encouraged to proceed in my research and almost made to feel ashamed for feeling confused at times—oftentimes confusion “at my age” can be deemed evidence of a childlike naïveté. This type of conversation I tend to encounter when talking to colleagues and friends whose work has been recognised as valuable, who are economically stable, whose work is partially recognised by important institutions, and who are often ten years my senior or more.

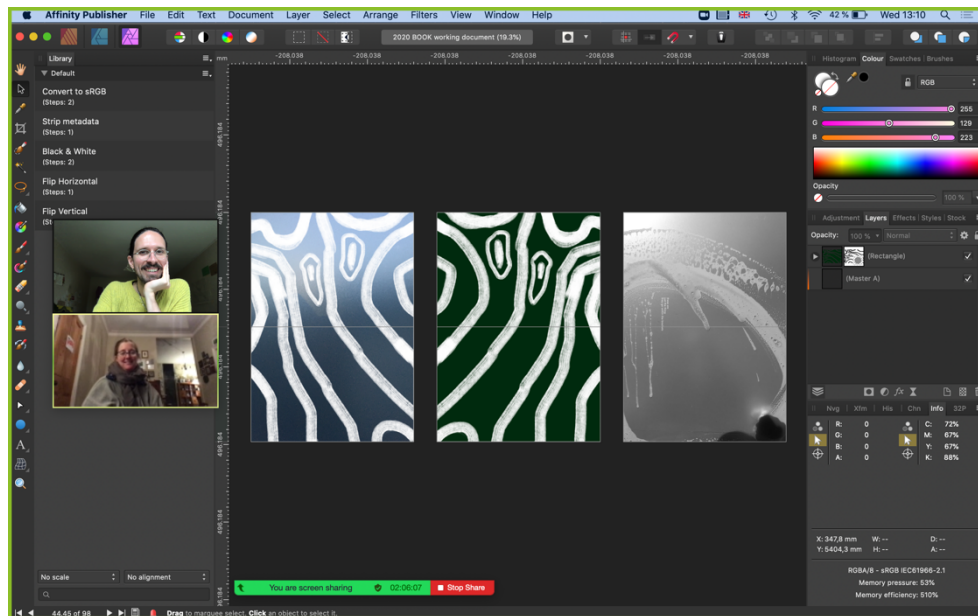
Now, the conclusion I would like to come to is that the encouragement I sometimes get from my seniors is what I should draw from it in order to gain experience from which to gain confidence. The catch is in that this particular encouragement comes with a warning: in order to succeed, you must learn to play the game. Compromise is essential. Choosing your battles is essential. Anticipation is essential. Those are the qualities that signify maturity, that signify adulthood, that signify professional demeanour, that make you trustworthy in the eye of those who have already achieved those qualities within their own practice.

My current hypothesis is the following: what if both of these demographics are evidencing the kind of behaviour, the kind of reasoning developed over time in response to a limited access to and a systemic lack of resources?

And how do we, as individuals, create conditions necessary for development of a confident critical study when so much of our experience is conditioned by a limited access to and a systemic lack of resources?

For when resources are scarce, and we barely have enough to support those whose work affirms those same standards that justify the labour by subsidising it, why would we ever invest resources in those who challenge the standards by exploring its periphery, its margin, its transitional and transformative capacities?

Thank you for investing in this work.



*What decides green from blue?*

Experience.  
Patience.  
Time.  
Curiosity.  
Permission.  
Benefit of the doubt.  
Relationship.  
Context.  
Contemplation.  
Remembering.  
Grandmothers.  
Aunts.  
And children.  
Autumn.  
Fall.  
Powdered pigment.  
An expression of Joy.  
Historicity.  
Luck.  
Laborious intellectual activity.  
Rest.  
Digestion.  
The stars.  
Staring.  
Forgetting.  
Pleasure.  
Faith.  
Sensation.  
Sensibility.  
Relationship.

*Describe how you have been informed that the trip / exchange received support from the Arts Committee*

We've implemented the Konstnärsnämnden logo (see example below) into the book and will communicate our gratitude to the received support in all relevant communications.



see the book behind the following link:  
<https://online.flipbuilder.com/qmiq/fbou/>

*A note from Alys Longley*

Earlier in this report, pavle writes that, “Working on this book has made me feel like I’m dancing in the way I haven’t felt in a whole long while. Working on this book has made it possible for me to explore the extent of my dancing that dancing alone hasn’t been capable of supporting and hasn’t been capable for a long time. This book is a dance, is an evidence of dancing, is an evidence of embodied knowledge, is more of an evidence of what it is that I know than I can argue for at the moment because it encompasses more than the intellectually affirmable.”

For me also, this project has enabled a dance collaboration that has brought elements of my practice as an improviser, choreographer and writer to the fore in new and pivotal ways. This research collaboration has enabled pavle and I to explore some formal kinds of experimentation that are usually unavailable due to the constraints of more output focussed work. Ironically, I think we have produced quite a robust and extensive output as a result of this freedom. We were very much looking forward to taking our research questions into the studio, but to work with them over zoom redirected our interest into page works, conversation and drawing practices *as* forms of choreography and improvisation. The book we have created is a genuine collaboration that emerged from an interstitial space of relationality and co-creation. For me, this output is remarkable as a clear example of experimental writing that moves from the space of dance practice.

I’m very grateful for this *Konstnärsnämnden Residency* as this has been a transformational opportunity that has opened new doors into future practice.

*“I privately say to you old friend (unto you, really, I’m afraid), please accept from me this unpretentious bouquet of early-blooming parenthesis: ((( ( )))”).*

— J.D. Salinger, *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters & Seymour: An Introduction*