Lynda Beckett PhD Thesis 2025

Folding knotworks:

a conceptual, sensual and socio-political encounter

To my sister and all of my other sisters who have held me close

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This thesis is my own research and reflects my understanding of the work undertaken. I have sought to credit all sources with care; any omissions or errors are mine alone.

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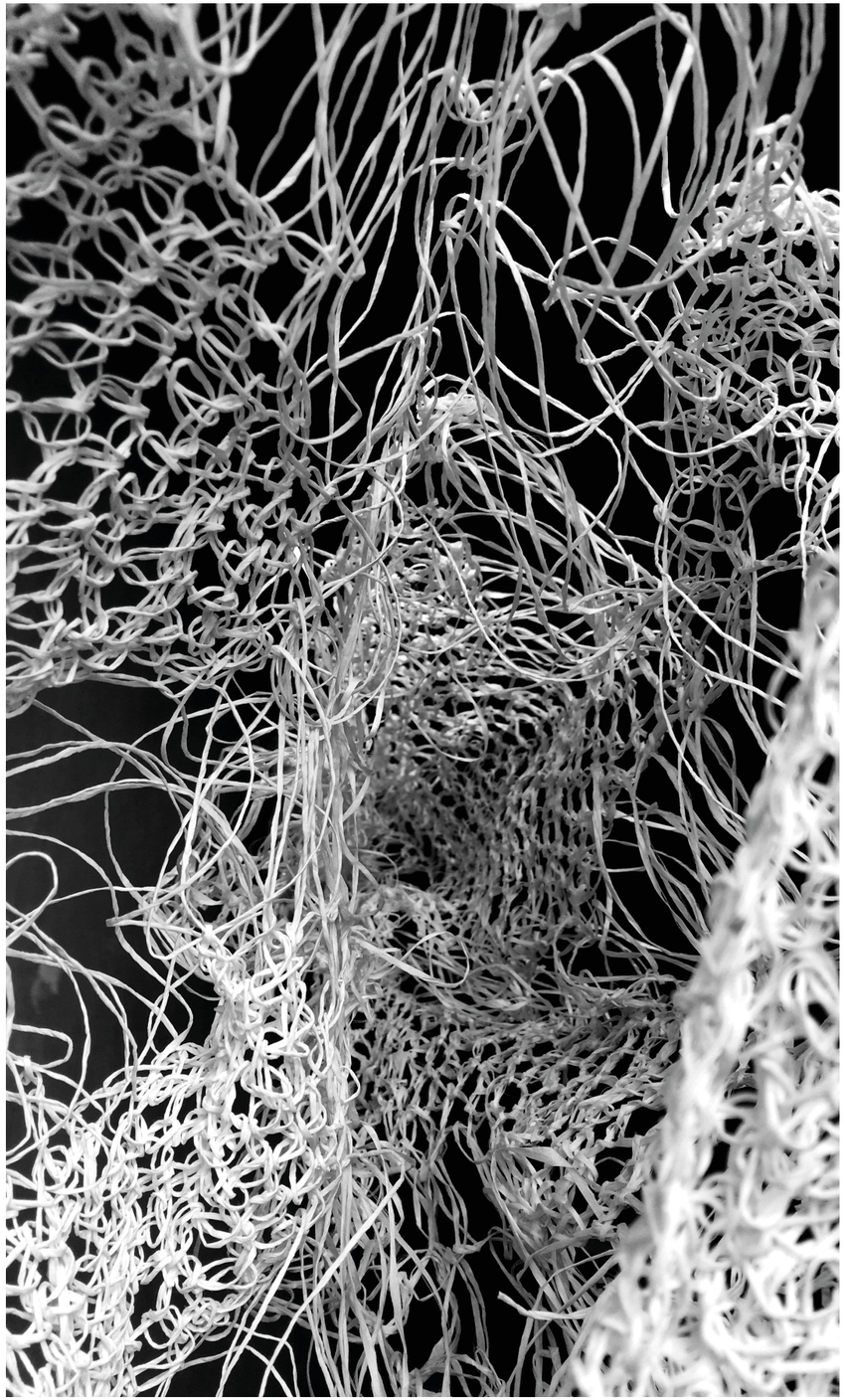
Abstract

This thesis proposes knotwork as a research-creation method, a conceptual and practical framework where making, writing, and thought interweave to navigate indeterminacy and transformation. Thinking with and through Gilles Deleuze's 'fold' and Luce Irigaray's 'air', it proposes air as an active medium that sustains movement and allows work to unfold in liminal spaces. Knotwork operates at thresholds where matter, sense, and thought meet without closure. Folding names a situated handling of materials and relations: gestures of gathering, releasing, and unspooling.

Suspended in air, forms shift, sustained in flux. Framed by feminist posthumanism, the research threads Erin Manning's attention to affect and process with Rosi Braidotti's zoe/geo/techno assemblages. Practice is the method: thinking-through-making via recursive folds across sculpture, immersive installations, audio-video work, drawing and writing. The page becomes a weave: words knotting into images and material gestures. Knotwork emerges as a living, relational methodology, restless and generative, rethreading experience as it loops and returns through loss, a conceptual, sensual, socio-political encounter.



To Return/ To Rewind/ To Reform (2021)

The fold that changed everything

We were asked to give her the final drops of medication, an act intended to ease her pain. The simplicity of the action belied the complexity of its implications. We understood what the medication would do, but not how long the process would take, or how she might feel as her body closed down. There was an unspoken tension between knowing and not knowing, between the necessity of the decision and the uncertainty it carried. Each of us, in our own way, would cross a threshold, stepping into an experience that was irreversible and profoundly unsettling.

What lingers most is the quiet weight of those moments – the awareness of an ending that was both inevitable and incomprehensible. There was no going back, no undoing the act, only the slow realisation of what it meant to let go. These memories, tied to the fragility and complexity of such decisions, are marked by the gradual unfolding of meaning over time. They remind me of the layered, often unresolved nature of transformation, where change emerges through the interplay of action, emotion, and reflection.

In threshold concept terms, not knowing, the unknown and unknowable, represent 'troublesome knowledge', something that unsettles and transforms our understanding in lasting ways.



To fold is to begin again, not from the start but from the middle (2025)

Unfolding thesis: making and becoming otherwise

My thesis does not unfold in a straight line; it weaves threads, folds, and knots. It gathers theory, practice, and lived experience in ways that resist transparency. At times, the direction may feel uncertain, as connections between threads linger and lie just beneath the surface. This is deliberate: an invitation to stay with not knowing, to dwell at a threshold in flux. Folding here is a gathering across artistic, philosophical, and affective terrains, to eventually realise knotwork. My research begins with a question: what becomes possible when making and thinking arise from a space where subjectivity shifts, language falters and matter speaks, and knowledge is not possessed but transformed?

A central contribution of this research is the development of knotwork: a conceptual and material practice that evolves from Gilles Deleuze's *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1993), and moves in another direction. Deleuze, thinking through Gottfried Leibniz, conceives 'the fold' as a continuous modulation of surfaces. Knotwork introduces tension: holding, twisting, and knotting materials. It attends to the felt, the durational labour of becoming otherwise. Formed through iterative acts of making and reflection, it is simultaneously method and methodology, material gesture and philosophical stance, a way of holding complexity without demanding resolution.

The work of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 –1716) is notoriously difficult to grasp. *The Monadology* (1714) is no exception. In their introduction to *Deleuze and The Fold* (2010), Niamh McDonnell and Sjoerd van Tuinen recall a 1980 lecture in which Deleuze names Leibniz as a 'philosopher of order', a writer, mathematician, scientist, and linguist, yet also 'abominable'. 'There is something frightening there', Deleuze remarks. 'He only thinks in terms of order… he yields to the most insane concept creation that we have ever witnessed in philosophy' (1980). Deleuze is speaking of monads, found in *The Monadology* (1898), which I will return to later.

Knotwork cannot live without air. It draws on Luce Irigaray's (1999) writing on breath, subtlety, and the spaces in-between. 'Air' is my medium of relation: invisible yet vital, elusive yet constant. It moves between bodies, thought, and matter. In Irigaray's work, air becomes the condition for 'becoming-with', the vibration of difference and the atmosphere of relation. In my practice, air appears as concept, sound, the tremor between pages, voices, and images.



Diffractive light patterns (2020)

This image materialised as light diffracting through the studio window onto white paper. It was photographed at the start of my research project; an early cue for knotwork and opacity.

Erin Manning also has a concept of 'becoming-with' (2016) which resonates with Irigaray's notion of 'air' (1999): both unsettle the idea of an autonomous subject, emphasising instead the relational and atmospheric conditions of existence. Where Manning foregrounds the process of co-emergence through affective entanglement, Irigaray names the elemental medium that sustains and connects us. Donna Haraway extends this relational vocabulary in her account of 'becoming-with' in *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) and *Staying with the Trouble* (2016), to address multispecies entanglements and the shared conditions of living and dying together.

It is the air, moving through threads, folds, and knots, that enables knotwork to breathe; they are co-dependent entities. Such knotting is not ornamental but methodological. It enacts the processes I describe, research-creation as diffraction, subjectivity as fold, and relation as knotwork. It becomes a fabric of thought in which strands are carried forward, turned back, and picked up in shifting forms. What may appear as digression is another thread in the weave; what seems unresolved may return knotted differently.

Writing and making dwell in uncertainty as I trace the contours of thought. Knotting is both metaphor and method: a way of living with complexity, folding sensation into matter, unsettling the divisions between theory and practice. This work is transdisciplinary, affective, and relational. Artistic research becomes a site of entanglement where posthuman feminism and new materialism act as forces to make and think through knotwork.

This practice responds to a personal and philosophical inquiry into transformation, loss, and 'becoming'. It emerges from the death of my sister, the entangled lives of women, the textures of grief, and a commitment to posthuman feminism, research-creation alongside the metaphysical possibilities of art practice. It seeks to make and write from within an event: to remain with what resists resolution, to trace the knots and atmospheres that form in rupture and renewal. Speculative research-creation unfolds as making and thinking in mutual relation. Text and image, sound and silence, theory and intuition are folded together. Practice and writing do not stand apart; they move through one another, interdependent and entangled.

Becoming here does not mean moving on from the death of a loved one, but staying with transformation as it unfolds. Deleuze and Guattari describe 'becoming' as a process of change that occurs in-between, rather than a movement toward resemblance or fixed identity. It is always unfinished, opening possibilities for new relations and ways of living (1987, p. 238). This broader sense of becoming underpins my thesis, where it later develops into specific figures such as 'becoming-animal' and 'becoming-woman'.

For Deleuze, an event arises because chaos is mediated by a 'screen', an elastic surface that allows 'something rather than nothing… (to) emerge from it'. (Deleuze, 1993, p. 76).

Research-creation grounds my artistic practice, paralleling philosophical inquiry with making as an evolving, processual way of thinking through knotwork. The concept of research-creation, developed by Manning and Massumi (2014), Chapman and Sawchuk (2012), Loveless (2019), and Truman (2021), describes a form of making where theory is not applied to practice but entangled with it, where creation itself becomes research. Springgay (2022, p. 3) notes that research-creation has emerged within increasingly neoliberal models of knowledge mobilisation, yet resists instrumentalisation by insisting on practice as thought.

Manning and Massumi frame research-creation as 'an exploratory openness' that aims to produce 'new modes of thought and action' through experimental, embodied processes (2014, pp. 89–90). Chapman and Sawchuk describe it as 'an emergent category within the social sciences and humanities' in which creative or aesthetic practice is integral to knowledge production (2012, p. 5). For Loveless, it enables new ways of creating narratives that call for alternative literacies, forms of accountability, and pedagogies (2019, p. 28). Springgay and Truman (2016) argue that research-creation should not aim to describe or explain, but to speculate, invent, and generate problems. In *Ten Propositions for Research-Creation*, Manning offers principles such as 'create new forms of knowledge', 'activate new forms of life', and 'don't be afraid of philosophy' (2016b). These propositions align with my method of working 'with' and 'through' Deleuze, not as an external theorist but as a conceptual companion. As Deleuze reminds us, 'philosophical theory is itself a practice, just as much as its object… a practice of concepts' (1989, p. 280). In my practice, philosophy folds into making. Thinking becomes a matter of folding, knotting, and sensing: a research-creation process in which concepts emerge materially, intuitively, and affectively.

Knots and knotworks appear across disciplines as ways of thinking through complexity. For Thomas Nail, they arise through material flows and embodiment: in *Being and Motion* (2019) 'fields of circulation are knotted together', generating new knots and relational fields through ongoing interaction; the body is a 'tightly knotted field of circulation', and in ecological terms he speaks of 'woven knotworks', drawing on Mae-Wan Ho's genetic research (2013, pp. 146–148). In healthcare, the term is used for flexible collaboration, roles and knowledges tied, untied, and retied in distributed agency oriented toward shared goals (Mnaymneh et al., 2021), which resonates with my sense of collaboration as a continual reworking of relation. Craft and spatial theory add texture. Andrew Rabyniuk's thesis treats knots as tools for producing space (2016), while Carol Strohecker's research demonstrates how children use knotting to grasp topology and relations (1991).

Nail offers one of the few explicit scientific/philosophical accounts of knots. By contrast, R. D. Laing's *Knots* (1970) is a psycho-poetic exploration of human relations; it illuminates patterns of recurrence and bind, but remains literary rather than ontological. Together they mark the gap this thesis addresses: knotwork developed as a conceptual–methodological frame, not merely a metaphor.

Interestingly, in two coincidences related to my work, Nail used *To Return/ To Rewind/ To Reform* (2021) as the cover image of his book, *Matter and Motion* (2024). He also used the term knotwork independent of my development of the concept of knotwork within art practice. He used it to describe a socio-policial system in *Being in Motion* (2019.)

I contacted Nail because I was curious to know whether, in 2023, he was in the process of developing knotwork as a conceptual theory. At that point, he was not, and I am not aware that he ever has.

The material intelligence of knots has long been recorded in *The Ashley Book of Knots* (Ashley, 1944). Artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Mona Hatoum and Cornelia Parker, carry threads into affective and conceptual terrains, drawing on the physical and psychological charge of knots to trouble boundaries of form, memory, and containment. These references are shifting surfaces, partial, flickering, provisional. In my practice, knotwork is at once a mode of making, a method, a methodology, and a concept: a way of knotting thinking and making, structure and improvisation, presence and pull. Knotwork moves through these tensions, holding meaning in motion, open and entangled. As a concept-method, knotwork is transferable, carrying potential application across fields concerned with diffraction, resistance, and relation. It is from within the field of knotwork that I have structured the thesis itself, weaving philosophy, practice, and narrative into a form that reflects the very processes it seeks to articulate.

Folds

The structure of this thesis follows its methodological commitments - folding, knotting, and returning to form a knotwork. My thesis does not progress in a straight line; it moves through five major folds and nine minor ones.

The first major fold, *Situating Knotwork*, begins with a performance in which knotwork stirred before I could sense or comprehend it. From that moment, the work turns to *The Fold* itself, tracing its complexities as philosophical tool and method. *Exploring Subjectivity* moves into the entanglements of the human and non-human entities I have thought with and through, lingering at thresholds. *Knotting Events*, unfolding duration takes the event as anchor, pressing against grief, memory, and transformation. *Realising Knotwork* gathers these strands from the perspective of research-creation and posthuman feminist thought. This fold realises knotwork as method and concept, and is an opening into further entanglements. It turns to songlines as knotworks and gathers the research without binding it closed. This is not a conclusion. It is an invitation to think with knotwork as a methodology for posthuman feminist research-creation. It is a concept that embraces complexity, relation, the 'not-yet' and 'as-yet-unthought'. The knots that form knotwork shift the surface and weight of the work, gathering, inflecting, holding. They are folds in motion, knots 'in-formation', carrying the conceptual, affective, and material threads of the research. Knotwork grows from practice and from the need for a concept that can hold 'multiplicity', contradiction, and 'becoming' otherwise. It moves alongside the fold as a subtle, affective transmission, not grasped, breathed. Rather than closure, the thesis invites entanglement: thinking and feeling through knotwork, attending to the spaces between, where transformation lies.

As the conceptual ground of knotwork develops, subjects such as Leibniz's monad, Deleuze's fold, Irigaray's air, Woolf's writing and Alice's wandering, appear, configuring and reconfiguring what will eventually take shape as knotwork. My inquiry moves between philosophy, personal reflection, and practice-based research, tracing how theory, lived experience, and artistic practice continually merge.

Practice flows throughout my thesis. Works such as *Beyond the Void* (2019), *Slippage and Moor Slippage* (2021), *Spider-fly* (2024), *Lines Book 3 & 4* (2024), and *In-between* (2025) act as folds of thought, sites where grief, matter, sound and relation, are explored materially. Each artwork is in conversation with, and reshapes, the written text, generating new openings and directions. Concepts also recur. Opacity, sound, duration, and cartography are not treated once and left behind. They are carried forward, turned back, and picked up again differently. Figures and companions return, Alice, Mary Carmichael, Virginia Woolf, and my sister, each time returning differently, altered by the context in which they appear. In this way, the thesis is structured less as a linear argument than as a fabric of thought, woven through repetition, resonance, and transformation.

Between the major folds lie nine minor folds: interludes that pause or intensify the rhythm of my thesis, giving the work space to breathe, to shift register, to let thought surface otherwise, affectively, atmospherically, and relationally. At the core of the folds lies the tension that runs throughout: presence and absence, motion and stillness, form and becoming. Each minor fold is where practice, place, memory, and philosophy briefly intersect. Neither illustration nor signpost, they are part of the writing itself, geographical and conceptual anchors, marking encounters and drawing attention to embodied, material, and metaphysical textures that resist linear telling. In these minor folds, coordinates emerge like points in a constellation: orientations in 'time-space-memory' that ground without fixing meaning, gesturing toward speculative and affective dimensions. For Deleuze the fold is a topology of transformation. Drawing on posthuman feminist and materialist methodologies, each of the nine minor folds becomes a gesture, a breath, folding the work back into itself, while opening onto something else. Accumulating and straining against one another, they gather as knots within a knotwork, where theory and practice fold in acts of making and revelation.

In the same spirit, the footnotes follow the rhythm of the fold rather than the logic of sequence. They are not numbered as traditional footnotes but move alongside the text, conversational rather than referential, unfolding in resonance rather than order. Freed from the constraints of hierarchical systems that pinpoint and interrupt, they breathe with the work, opening intervals of reflection rather than pause. Each note becomes a minor fold of its own: an inflection of thought that bends and extends the main body of writing, modelling the same movement of air, hesitation, and return that animates the thesis as a whole. Like the folds themselves, these notes perform a methodological resistance to closure—they invite a reading attuned to drift and relation, to the ongoing negotiation between attention and release.

Manning's 'not -yet' and 'as-yet-unthought' point to a field of potential that precedes recognition, a speculative interval where movement and affect remain indeterminate (2016a, 2020). In contrast the philosopher, Katherine Hayles' 'unthought' draws on neuroscience to describe nonconscious cognition as embodied processes beneath awareness (*Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*, 2017). Manning foregrounds the creative and processual: knowledge as lived potential, always on the cusp of becoming, 'the experimental register of the not-quite-yet' (2016a, p.29).

Deleuze and Guattari define 'multiplicity' as the third principle of the rhizome, that which 'has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature' (1987, p. 8). Unlike hierarchical (arborescent) models, rhizomes do not trace back to a central 'One' but emerge through shifting configurations of their own dimensions. They 'operate by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots'. (1987, p. 21).

Paraphrasing Leibniz, a monad is a simple, indivisible substance, the basic element of reality, which has no parts or windows and cannot be created or destroyed by natural means. Each monad contains within itself an internal principle of change, unfolding a continuous series of perceptions driven by appetition, so that every monad expresses the whole universe from its own unique point of view (1898).

I designed and typeset this thesis in InDesign. The layout process became research-creation as styles and threads folded text and image into a knotwork. This iterative practice developed and revealed *Re-folding page 20 — Book 4 v (I–II)*, (see page 273–277), and *Re-writing and developing the words again and again (I–III)* (2025) (page 287–291). These works emerged as zoe/geo/techno assemblages.

Fold upon fold the knotwork of thesis was revealed.

The hyphen also enters as a methodological figure. In words such as ‘non-sense’, ‘with-in’, and ‘not-yet’, it interrupts and simultaneously connects, marking language as unstable, while opening space for multiplicity. It also functions as a hinge, a seam that holds and separates, mirroring the folds and knots that structure this thesis. Like the fold, the hyphen unsettles closure: it gestures toward what is held together yet remains apart, to meaning that is suspended, provisional, and in movement. This attunement to the in-between shaped the beginnings of my research. I was speaking with a psychotherapist and immersing myself in new philosophical texts, while keeping two journals. Alongside these, I began writing my website. Only later did I decide to draw on these writings as material. Threads from these three sources weave into the folds of this work, giving it texture and shaping its direction.

As Sarah Truman writes, ‘I think about hyphens a lot… and whether they’re pretentious when encountered in academic writing. I’ve decided that they are not’ (2021, p. 158).

In this inquiry, I thread hyphens through words, ‘with-in’, ‘in-between’, ‘in-visible’, to gently interrupt the flow of language. These small cuts act as micro-folds: pauses that stretch meaning, inviting movement, relation, and becoming. Emerging from research-creation, this typographic gesture draws on posthuman and feminist strategies of disruption, where language is tactile, open, and shifting. The hyphen holds; it keeps space ajar for ambiguity, slippage, and transformation. It will have its moment with-in this text.

My website:
https://www.lyndabeckett.org/

Beginnings, thresholds and the shaping of form

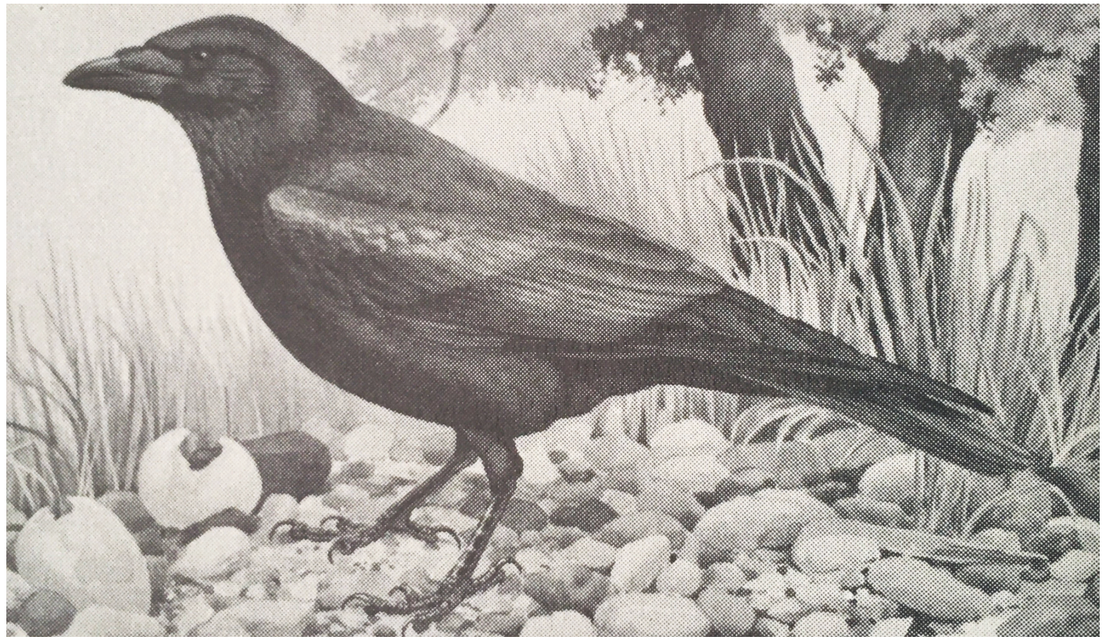
I did not grow up in a home marked by overt political ideology, but within a quiet resistance to authority, a belief in making one’s own way by folding thought into matter and matter into thought. My parents, neither formally educated nor politically radical, moved through the world working with materials: one a master builder, the other an upholsterer. My sister and I understood creativity early, claiming space at the breakfast table to build cereal-box barricades, as Brian Redhead’s voice carried the politics of another world into our kitchen. Books were scarce; academia seemed to belong to wealthier neighbours. Yet we learned to read the world through its textures: birdsong, scraps of cloth, the grain of wood, the twitch of thread between fingers.

My mother, offered a place at art school, was denied it due to cost. Years later, she in turn denied the same possibility to her firstborn daughter, my sister. In that moment I knew that if I was to become an artist, I would have to fund my own way. This research begins in the echo of that refusal, as a fold, a point of ‘inflection’, and a place from which to ‘become otherwise’. For me ‘becoming otherwise’ names a commitment to transformation: a refusal of fixed identity and a movement across thresholds, echoing Deleuze and Guattari’s open-ended becoming (1987, p. 306). I write as an artist, researcher, and sister, drawn to making as a mode of inquiry, mourning, and transformation. The death of my sister marked a threshold: an opening into grief and an unknowing that ruptured time and reshaped form. This research begins from loss, love, and the suspended air between presence and absence.

For Deleuze, an ‘inflection’, is ‘a first kind of singularity in space’ that marks the point where a curve bends or changes direction without breaking continuity. These ‘points of inflection… constitute envelopes in accord with indivisible relations of distance’, so that each inflection corresponds to a point of view, as ‘there are as many points of view… as inflections in inflection’ (1993, p. 15).

Rosi Braidotti extends the notion of ‘becoming otherwise’ through her posthuman ethics (2013, p. 196), describing subjectivity as nomadic, materially embedded, and in continuous transformation (2011, p. 301). Lola Olufemi (2021, p. 7) threads another dimension into the fabric, framing ‘otherwise’, as a feminist strategy for unsettling what is and creating room for other ways of being. Drawing on Christina Sharpe, Olufemi invites me to ‘imagine otherwise. Remake the world’, reminding me that ‘some of us have never had any other choice’ (Sharpe, 2016; Olufemi, 2020).

My path through education was winding. I entered further education as a fine artist, moved into graphic design and illustration, and later, under the guidance of Al Rees, writer, tutor, and Freudian, discovered film as a way to think and make with. His teaching opened philosophy to me as a companion to practice rather than an external system. After years in television, producing light entertainment, I left disillusioned by the work I was expected to make. I needed more. I was searching for something that could allow me to think otherwise, that would move toward the speculative and the not-yet-known.

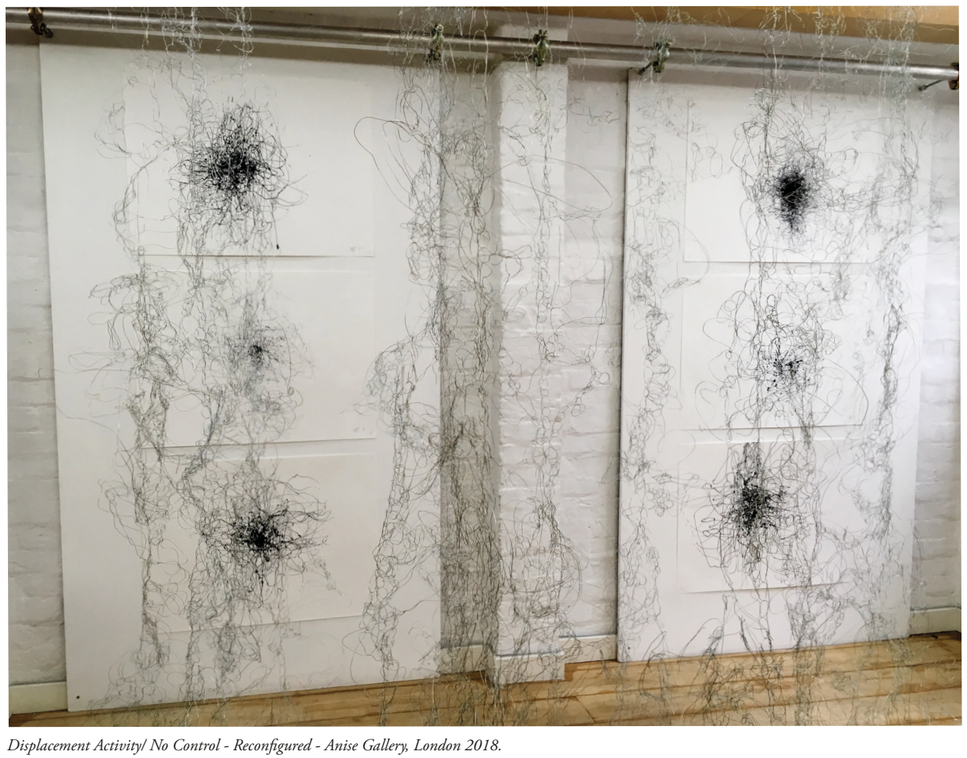


In another world my father might have been an ornithologist. Archibald Thorburn (1860–1935), plate from The Observer’s Book of Birds (1969). Public domain.

That 'more' arrived in the form of an MA in Photography: Philosophy and Practices at Central Saint Martins. Making became method again. The camera offered a veil, a soft lens through which to approach form anew. Daniel Rubinstein introduced me to a canon of twentieth-century thinkers, predominantly white and male, while Karen Barad, Donna Haraway, and Isabelle Stengers remained in the margins. Deleuze and Guattari unsettled me. They opened lines of thought and formed assemblages that refused order and coherence. Acts of deterritorialisation drew me toward another mode of thinking, one unfolding through movement, rhythm, and material encounter. Disoriented, I turned to thread, to knitting and crochet.

I needed my hands to think instead of my mind. In those slow, repetitive gestures, knotting would eventually emerge as a method. I did not yet have the language, but later, through Deleuze, I came to understand 'the fold' as a mode of existence. In *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Deleuze describes the world as continuous curvature: inflections that fold the external into the soul, and the soul back into the world. We are not apart from it. We are of it, enfolded and enfolding (1993, p.24). The fold named something I had always known in my body, that making is thinking, and thinking is folded into one gesture. In my practice, knotting and folding are not ends but processes. They hold space for subtle inflections: grief, memory, rhythm, and resistance. Each thread carries tension and force. It does not represent the world; it gathers it. Making is not separate from inquiry, but a way for thought to find form, a way of folding the immaterial into the material.

My research draws on multiple inheritances, intellectual, affective, and embodied. It moves between the canonical voices of white male philosophers and the vital contributions of feminist, new materialist, and posthuman thinkers, whose work opens alternative pathways for relation, practice, and thought. It is equally shaped by cultural and creative legacies passed down through my parents and other makers, those who taught me the value of thinking with my hands.



Displacement Activity/ No Control - Reconfigured - Anise Gallery, London 2018.

As this thesis unfolds, it tells stories that entangle and loop. Together they form a knotwork. Knotwork allows for staccato breaks and fragmentation, not as signs of rupture, but as fidelity to process. Passages and folds are shaped by recurrent, transformative material. Conceptual figures emerge and return alongside monads, air, sound, and opacity. They are shifting intensities, shaped by practice, interrupted by grief, softened by memory. Mourning is not separate from making. My sister's presence moves through this research like a warm current of air, quiet, unseen, but palpable—reshaping the folds in which I write, think, and make.

Here knotwork is more than a motif; it becomes a mode of subjectivity. My research explores how both artistic practice and the body act as epistemological entities, generative, situated, and materially entangled with thought. I am an artist working through grief and in transformation. Knotwork is a tool and a terrain: a method, concept, and a life, my milieu. Making is a way of knowing. Through matter, gesture, rhythm, and relation, something otherwise can be thought, felt, and begun.

A diffractive writing practice

Throughout this work, the writing performs a diffractive methodology, not only in its engagement with ideas, but in the structure, rhythm, and orientation of thought. My thinking is not linear, and therefore, drawing on Karen Barad's notion of diffraction as a mode of reading insights through one another, the writing resists linear exposition (2007). Ideas ripple, echo, and interfere in generative ways. Diffraction is a material practice of composition, interlacing theory, narrative, and artistic process to make conceptual thresholds felt. Rather than fixing a singular voice or position, the writing opens a field of relational vibrations. Textual, visual, sonic, and affective registers are folded into the act of writing itself. The page becomes a surface of interference patterns, where philosophical figures, artistic gestures, and grief collide and co-compose.

This diffractive approach allows the work to move within complex terrains, Deleuzian folds, Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity, Manning's affective events, and Woolf's rhythmic writing, without fixing them into static readings. These thinkers are not inserted as references to be cited and contained; they enter into mutual transformation with the writing, practice, and life events that shape the work. The methodology is open. Thinking-with replaces 'citation-as-capture'. Knowing remains in the making. Sections move from the concrete (a memory, a material practice, an installation) to the abstract (a theoretical tension, a speculative drift), then back again. The rhythm folds and weaves, durational and spatial, inviting the reader to dwell, re-enter, and trace lines rather than follow a single argument.

I will explore Karen Barad's concept of diffraction later in my inquiry. As Evelien Geerts and Iris van der Tuin (2021) explain, diffraction – originally a physical phenomenon describing the interference of waves – has been reimagined in feminist theory as a method of thinking that attends to difference, relation, and entanglement.

Barad extends this into a methodological practice, proposing 'diffractive reading' as a way of engaging with texts and disciplines through one another, producing new meanings while remaining accountable to difference (2007, p. 200).

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1996) and Donna Haraway (2004) use diffraction to move beyond binary models of identity and knowledge, toward a co-emergent understanding of difference (ibid., pp. 173–174).

A diffractive method here performs a non-linear, materialised, speculative mode of inquiry, attuned to complexity, difference, and becoming. These are less subjects to be explained than forces enacted through writing. As the central methodological thread of this research, knotwork proposes a way of engaging with situated, affective, and emergent subjectivity that is at once conceptual, material, and lived. Developed through iterative acts of making, writing, and living-with, my research responds to and extends Deleuze's fold, not by smoothing or modulating surfaces, but by introducing tension, entanglement, and affective resistance. It holds the fragility of lived experience—grief, transformation, and the subtle atmosphere of becoming—while weaving fictional and non-fictional figures, feminist posthuman theory, and embodied material encounters. This methodological innovation moves fluidly between concept, practice, and lived world, threading Deleuze, Braidotti, Manning, Irigaray, and Barad into an original praxis that is philosophical, tactile, speculative, and attuned to the more-than-human. In doing so, it creates a new strand of research-creation inquiry: non-linear, diffractive, and generative of both epistemological and ontological transformation.

Situating knotwork

Stepping into performance – risk, space and air



In-between II (2025) - A performance at Chelsea College of Art

Last night, for only the third time, I stepped into performance as part of my research and practice. I entered a space open to risk, a place of unfolding, an opening in which to breathe. The air was charged with the unknown, yet I was held in the care of the people within the room. *Space for Risk: Performing Feminisms* (2025) was an event within an event, a space of becoming where threads of being woman, animal and something else could weave together and unpick themselves through dialogue, presence, and performance. Manning writes, 'concepts are events in the making. An event in the making is a thought on the cusp of articulation – a prearticulated thought in motion' (2009, p. 5). *Space for Risk* allowed this cusp to hold form. Something from within me emerged.

Subjectivity and Feminisms Research Group, **holds monthly meeting during term time where students and staff can perform a five-minute piece without judgement.**

Manning continues:

> this complex passage from thought to feeling to concepts-in-prearticulation to events-in-the-making foregrounds how thinking is more than the discrete final form it takes in language. To come to language is more than to finalize form. To come to language is to feel the form-taking of concepts as they prearticulate thoughts/feelings. (ibid)

I was afraid. Yet I knew it was time to pull threads together – to stand in public and perform. Nothing was rehearsed. I knew my subject but not its shape. Words and gestures evolved in the air. Making within the moment carried me across a threshold. That night altered how and what I write here. The act of doing, the impromptu shaping of material, the live unfolding, moved knotwork beyond a conceptual or purely philosophical proposition, into a lived and felt register. This performance became a knot: condensed yet durational, woven into the larger knotwork of events.

From an unsettled ground, I stepped toward performance, where grief and care could be momentarily held in the presence of others. Working with knotwork entwined with grief, I open its generative force, making visible how the quiet labours of care and the realities of loss are kept at the margins of life.

Performance is not my natural mode of practice, yet it is a space I have entered three times. The first was during *Unfolding Narratives* 2024, where I sat on a panel with fellow PhD students to speak about my research, specifically *Spider-fly* (2024). I felt out of my depth, yet I knew it was something I needed to do. Time seemed to dissolve into 'duration'. I drifted from my body, as if I had momentarily stepped out of the room into a liminal space.

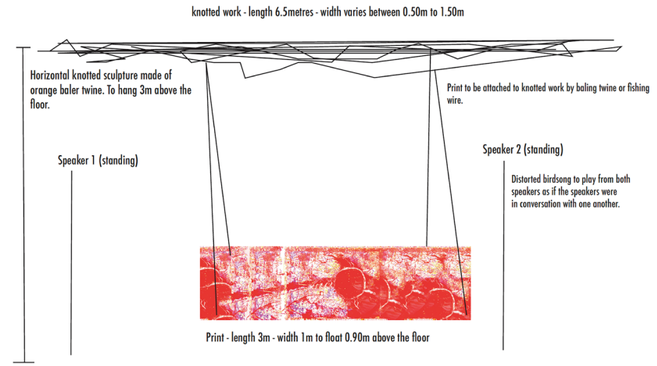
The second occasion was the launch of The Doctoral School at UAL in May 2024, when Bob Whalley asked me to perform, as if this was something I did naturally. It wasn't. Yet somehow, without a plan, I spent seven hours knotting baling twine as the conference unfolded around me. The piece grew quietly, insistently, and later became one element of *In-between* (2025), see page 28-29.

My performance would not have happened without a chance encounter the day before. While installing *In-between* (2025) for *Unfolding Narratives* (UAL, 2025), Jheni Arboine, an educational developer at London College of Communication, stopped to talk. We spoke about the work, and then of grief, how it lingers at the periphery—persistent, yet socially and institutionally avoided. She mentioned Lana Locke and *Space for Risk: Performing Feminisms*, an open mic event of five-minute performances, Locke would be facilitating the next evening.

On Tuesday, 11 March 2025, I entered what bell hooks and Laverne Cox describe as 'a community that allows for risk, the risk of knowing someone outside your own boundaries' (2014). *The Subjectivity and Feminisms Research Group* at Chelsea School of Art quotes hook and Cox, though they cut the end of the quote: 'the risk that is love. There is no love that does not involve risk' (hooks, 2014). Risk and love woven together, now anchor my understanding of conceptual, sensual, and socio-political art-making.

> "You should perform," she said, "with a piece of baling twine."
>
> I resisted.
> "No, I can't do that. What would I say?"

I wanted to connect with Locke, to understand more about the feral as a concept, a way of thinking, making, and performing. The event seemed outside my comfort zone, almost feral, yet its structure felt enticing. Performing for five minutes hovered on the border between fear and fun, with a dash of the unknown, which aligned with my theory of knotwork. As a concept knotwork refuses linearity and asks for space to breathe. This could be the opportunity.



The design of In-between – Unfolding Narratives 2025

In late 2024, I began to conceive *In-between,* a new work for 2025 comprising three elements: a sound piece, a flexible knotted sculpture made from orange baling twine, and a large print suspended parallel to the hanging sculpture.

The knotted forms a tubular structure that opens at intervals along its length, held in tension by orange fishing wire. Beneath it, a rectangular print hangs at table height, inviting close engagement and suggesting a terrain of unseen connections. At either end of the print, speakers emit distorted birdsong in sonic dialogue.

As one entity this installation performs the concept of knotwork with air.



Installing In-between - Unfolding Narratives (2025)

Our conversation continued, I steered it toward Locke's PhD thesis, *The Feral, the Art Object and the Social* (2017). I had been reading her work, and the coincidence felt significant. Locke's articulation of 'the feral' as both concept and practice resonated with my own sense of knotwork. Both concepts move at the edges of social systems, raw, unruly, and resistant to assimilation. But more importantly, encountering Locke's work, I recognised her as a posthuman feminist claiming the right to shape knowledge that is sensual, conceptual, and socio-political. I found her words speaking directly to my instincts:

> As there was no canonised theory of the feral… the feral appeared as a quality of my practice that bubbled beneath… rather than a legitimate avenue of academic exploration in itself. (Locke, 2017, p. 5).

There is no canonised theory of knotwork. It roams on the threshold of the conceptual, sensual and socio-political. Locke's openness about pregnancy, practice and life gave me a platform from which to align with her gestures and extend them into my practice.

Her openness and social awareness shape her writing: where she traces the feral's genealogy through the London riots of 2011 and Kenneth Clarke's description of a 'feral underclass' (Clarke, 2011), she names his words as a verbal act of dehumanisation (Locke, 2017, p. 38). The riots becomes, for her, an event within an event, a rupture catalyses her thinking.

My rupture is quieter. It forms the genesis of knotwork from a socio-political terrain that seeps from attunement rather than eruption. Knotwork emerges from grief, care, and creativity, knotted into forms that agitate without announcing themselves as political movements. Nobody wants to speak about death and dying. This work is no campaign, no solution to the ethics of assisted dying. Yet this research is entangled in those questions. It arises from the trauma of administering end-of-life medication, from the invisible labour of love surrounding the dying, and from what follows, what settles in a body and thought, unspoken yet enduring. That residue forms a quiet politics. It troubles the surface. It shapes the affective field from which knotwork as a concept unfolds.

Knotwork, like the feral, is a posthuman feminist concept. Both unsettle linearity and coherence, pressing against the boundaries of what is recognised as legitimate knowledge. Both concepts emerge from lived practice, insisting that affect, materiality, and embodied labour are not peripheral but central to the shaping of thought. Where Locke claims the feral as a resistant force at the edge of social systems, I claim knotwork as a mode of entanglement that knots death, grief and care into socio-political presence through research practice.



Performing *knotwork* -

remember to breathe

Entering the banqueting hall at Chelsea School of Art, an elegant room, felt like an embryonic moment of collective becoming. Quickly I would come to see the space was charged with the energies of birth, abortion, and sexual harassment, experiences were spoken aloud, felt deeply, and shared. Each performer was seen, heard, and supported. We risked exposure within a community that made space for care in the midst of vulnerability. During the interval, Jheni prompted me again:

"There's an open slot."

Something in me responded.

I was afraid. But I was safe.

I'd been told I would follow Jheni's performance.
I waited, expecting to be called after Jheni.

One name after another, and still not mine.

Rejection began to surface.
Then, the penultimate slot...
my name.

I grabbed my sac bag, baling twine spilling out, and walked to the stage.

Fearful, not in control, I placed the bag centre stage, reached for a thread, and pulled.

Knotted.

Perfect.

Where do I begin?
A mass of twine unfurled.
I pulled at it.
Weedling words from my mouth. My sister, uterine cancer, death.

Holding her.

My throat was dry, my body holding back tears, tryng to thread feeling into language.

Time collapsed.

I was in-between, physically on stage, mentally elsewhere.

At one point, I tied the twine around my wrist.
I needed to act.

Pulling the final thread from the bag, I searched for an unknown form, words poured out.

I spoke openly about death, love, grief.
I don't know what I said.

Resurfacing, I lost my thread and had nothing more to say.

I turned my back to the audience and walked away.
My bag of detritus was exposed.

Or perhaps I was set free.

That evening knotwork revealed itself, alive and breathing, within practice and in collaboration with others. Performance rearing its head again as method, as making-through-thinking and thinking-through-making. Through a sequence of events, a constellation of matter, *Space for Risk* crystallised knotwork, propelling it into the centre of my practice.

Time and duration

My performance was fleeting, improvised. I had only five minutes, yet I lost myself inside them. The moment belonged to what Henri Bergson calls duration - la durée: not time as line or grid, but time lived, felt, and stretched through consciousness (1921). This performance was not movement from point A to point B. It lingered, pulsed, thickened. Memory folded into gesture, hesitation into speech, anticipation into words still forming. For Bergson, duration is indivisible, continuous, interpenetrative, a collapse of clock time. It is life lived inwardly, where past and present co-exist and perception is shaped by memory and affect. It resists spatialisation; it cannot be sliced into snapshots. The performance was becoming in duration.

For Bergson, 'pure duration' is, 'that which consciousness perceives', and 'must thus be reckoned among the so-called intensive magnitudes, if intensities can be called magnitudes: strictly speaking, however, it is not a quantity, and as soon as we try to measure time we unwittingly replace it by space' (1921, p.106).

To experience duration is to inhabit process, to live through the unfolding rather than measure it. This is why performance, making-in-action, feels so charged and transformative. Speaking, moving and refusing silence, I wove a duration that was layered rather than linear, a knotting of art practice and socio-political urgency. This charge is what Elizabeth Grosz calls the intensity of 'affects and percepts' (2008, p. 27): visceral forces demanding expression. Such moments, she writes, are never smooth or scripted. They arise in the unknown, where 'we throw over chaos in order to extract an element, a quality, a consistency from chaos, in order to live with it' (ibid., pp. 27–28). In this performance, the 'it' was everything, risk, vulnerability, memory, grief, and transformation. Grosz, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, names such intensities 'brain-becomings', when the brain is not the seat of reason but the junction of perception, sensation, and event (2008, p. 27; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 208). As they write, 'the brain is the junction – not the unity – of the three planes' (1994, p. 208), where philosophy, art, and science intertwine.

Here, knotwork emerges as an affective unfolding of practice and mode of thought. It links inner perception with the external world, threading intensities into form while resisting resolution.

What lingers is contact: a syncopated rhythm between inside and outside, mind and body, self and world. Of the performance itself, I remember little. There was no plan, no path to follow, only the entry into a space where woman and animal could meet without inhibition. Deleuze and Guattari's 'becoming-animal' resonates here: like knotwork, it resists fixed form and stable meaning, moving through thresholds and crossings, reconfiguring itself. In knotwork, forms undo themselves, threads fold and refold, signification is deferred. It is not the representation of movement but movement itself, flux in which artistic, conceptual, and material forces intersect and transform. Knotwork becomes a topology of pure becoming, a weaving of nonsignifying signs where risk, transformation, and emergence are sustained in practice. Nietzsche touches on this in *The Will to Power:*

> Art reminds us of states of animal vigor; it is, on the one hand, an excess and overflow of blooming physicality into the world of images and desires; on the other, an excitation of the animal functions through the images and desires of an intensified life—an enhancement of the feeling of life, a stimulant to it. (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 422)

Nietzsche's 'animal vigor' reinforces the logic of becoming. For him, and for Deleuze, and Guattari, movement and excess are vital processes. Art is the manifestation of intensified life, spilling beyond containment into excitation and sensation. Becoming-animal is not literal transformation, but entry into new affective compositions, where fixed identities dissolve and life becomes more-than, life in motion. Spaces that allow for this vigour are rare. *The Subjectivity and Feminisms Research Group* was one: an evening of powerful readings and performances, of method and embodiment, risk and uncertainty, coalescing into something visceral and sensual, vibrating with life. Becoming-animal and becoming-woman both deterritorialise, undoing stable meanings and revealing new lines of potential. In performance, this undoing unfolded as a passage across thresholds of identity, where my body, gestures, and voices were woven into an assemblage of becomings (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 275–276). If Nietzsche's animal vigour evokes the overflow of life into sensation, then becoming is the movement by which that excess unbinds the subject, releasing it into the unformed, the affective, the real-time flux of practice.

For Deleuze and Guattari, 'a becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself' and 'has no term,' only the folding of one becoming into another (1987, p. 238). This is the logic of the pack, an assemblage of speeds, slownesses, and affects.

In this light, knotwork emerged as a shifting affective field, defined not by its parts but by its capacity to move, transform, and sustain relation. In performance, I experienced not representation but a loosening of form, a trembling at the edge of the human: an attunement to rhythms that gesture toward the more-than-human.

What I sought was not to imitate an animal but to move at the threshold of what might still be called human. I was both present and displaced, disoriented yet attuned to the rhythms of the pack. Knotwork here becomes a structure of attunement, a map of affects, hesitations, and emergent configurations oriented toward the yet-to-come.

Deleuze critiques representational systems that subordinate difference to fixed categories. Instead, he proposes a philosophy of immanence, where expression emerges from the intensive forces of matter itself. Representation, he writes, 'has only a single centre, a unique and receding perspective, and in consequence a false depth. It mediates everything, but mobilises and moves nothing' (1994, pp. 55–56).

The unravelling of air

During my performance, I inhabited an in-between state, a feral mode resisting domestication and coherence, floating in a liminal space. It was an event within an event, a knot within a knotwork, a moment of vulnerability and memory. The intimacy of speaking grief aloud became a temporal gesture. Not clock time, but lived duration, suspended and knotted together. I didn't follow a script. I moved through a knotwork of memory and affect, my language faltering, my feelings surging. The twine became more than a prop; it carried the detritus of past moments and released latent potential. In retrospect, my performance was a threshold crossing. From this point, my practice shifted from seeking resolution to holding complexity in motion. The unravelling of twine, like the unravelling of voice and self, was realised during *In-between II* (2025), and the ripples from it are still forming.

In-between II (2025), as performance, represented nothing and everything. It allowed me to experience knotwork in real time and, unexpectedly, to resonate with the audience. A few days later, Lana Locke wrote that she had found it "very moving".

Now I began to understand the purpose of air: not as a void, but a generative condition enabling movement, hesitation, and transformation. Air sustained the co-constitution of twine, body, and story, allowing unfolding without resolution, a space where uncertainty could be held rather than solved. This aligns with Irigaray's (1999) understanding of 'air' as vital for relation, and with Braidotti's (2013, 2022) posthuman ethics, which frame subjectivity as distributed, dynamic, and materially embedded. The concept of air also resonates with Manning's (2016a) discussion of 'the event' as an emergent field of relations. Experience, she argues, is not composed of discrete subjects and objects. Instead, it unfolds through movements, intensities, and the process of 'becoming-with' the environment, the materialities, and the affective currents in the space (ibid., p. 63). Similarly, Braidotti's notion of subjectivity as a nomadic assemblage supports this reading of performance as an unfolding event of becoming rather than a stable identity (2013., pp. 196-197). Subjectivity here was in motion, fluid, charged with grief, memory, and material presence, folding into the act of performing.

'Air', as conceptualised by Irigaray, plays a crucial role within knotwork. *In The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* (1999), Irigaray critiques the narrowness of ontologies that overlook the elemental space enabling relation. Air, for Irigaray, becomes a generative atmosphere aligned with feminine difference. I take up her focus on what is often unseen yet indispensable. Within knotwork, subject, object, and air operate as interdependent forces, knotted in a becoming that resists mastery or closure.

Manning adds, 'contemplation makes the artful felt. It does so in the event, in the uneasy balance between seeding a practice and becoming-with a practice' (2016a, p. 63).

Braidotti (2007) reads subjectivity through Clarice Lispector's *The Passion According to G.H.* (2014), centring on G.H.—a privileged artist who, while cleaning, confronts a cockroach. The shock unmoors her relations to otherness; class, race, the animal, the inhuman, the inorganic, and the cosmic, culminating in the slow dissolution of identity into a cosmic becoming (ibid., p. 160). Through this lens, I can see how my performance moved through shifting subjectivities, threading breath, speech, and becoming in the presence of others.

Knotwork, in this light, becomes a methodological commitment—recursive, intuitive, entangled—privileging emergence over linearity, process over resolution, attunement over definitive answers.

It is also an ethical stance: holding risk, giving space to the uncomfortable, and sustaining relation without forcing closure. Air, as Irigaray writes, is the elemental space enabling relation. It is subtle, vital, and sustaining (1999).

Thinking through the concept of 'air' and 'knotwork' directly informs the methodology underpinning my practice. Following Manning's articulation of research-creation as 'feeling-thoughts', process resists knowledge as end-point, instead embracing intuitive affective entanglement with material and conceptual forces (2016a, p. 36). Rather than treating research and making as separate or sequential, my method evolves through recursive relations between thought, material, and event. My research-creation as practice navigates and sustains such a knotwork: a breathing field where materials, affects, environments meet, asking how to keep that field open beyond the studio and the institution while remaining responsive to the forces that shape it. Air here is condition, atmosphere, and threshold, uncomfortable, vital, sustaining the emergent.

But what of this air? I will come to that later.

First, the threads.



My bag of detritus (2025)

The knots that bind

My sister gave me this yellow wool the last time we were together — a single skein, not something I would have chosen. For months after her death, it lay untouched and hidden in a box. It wasn't until the spring of 2021, more than a year later, that I began to work with it, using techniques she had used. She was a skilful knitter, patient with intricate patterns, unerring in her precision. I am not. The thought of following someone else's instructions feels suffocating. My making has always been led by exploration, by process. Working with her wool, I did not think of the neatness of her stitches, but of the quiet hours we spent together, hands moving, silent, content in each other's company. That quiet has changed. What once comforted now holds grief. Each gesture with the wool carried a trace of her absence. In that shift, from presence to absence, from warmth to weight, the knots began to speak in silence, their loops holding what I could not voice.

Matter

There is a knot that will not loosen. It holds me almost still. My sister, so near, nearer than thought, has gone. She is dead. The word circles before it is spoken. Once said, it alters the air. No one wants to say it. No one wants to hear it. Dead catches in the throat, dense with silence. To speak of death pierces the thin film stretched over sanity. Death hangs, suspended. Beneath that smooth hush, grief waits, unyielding. Death marks the place where language falters, where sound turns to weight, and silence deepens.

Her laughter. Her breath. The singularity of her being —gone. No words soften that fact. I sit among the remains of life and the sharp clarity mourning brings. All that is left, materially, is a small black box. Inside: a clear plastic bag of pale dust. Thinking with Braidotti, and holding to posthuman vitalism, death is not final, zoe carries on relentlessly (2013, p. 131). This sense of death as transformation underpins Deleuze's philosophy. For him, death is folded into the life of matter and events. It is a transformation in the field of immanence, a reconfiguration of forces that folds life onward rather than a border between being and nothingness. As Braidotti writes, death is less an absolute closure or ontological border than a continuous becoming, a reconfiguration of connections (2005, p. 149). Matter persists; relation endures that defies the finality of dust.

In Precarious Life, Judith Butler observes, 'We have to wonder under what conditions public grieving constitutes an 'offense' against the public itself... an intolerable eruption within the terms of what is speakable in public' (2004, p. 35). Naming death, especially in public, can feel disruptive, an act that disturbs the surface of shared norms and polite silence.

Deleuze reminds us in *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, 'we shouldn't enclose life in the single moment when individual life confronts universal death. A life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given lived objects: an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects' (2001, p. 29).



I Re-turn II (2021) - part one

Mourning

My research loops, folds, knots. It resists the reduction of a life to remains. In making, I stretch the limits of absence and draw forward what grief presses down. Folding thought, like memory, lets the past seep into the present while gesturing toward an unknown future. Mourning is not a path through sorrow but a way of living within its folds. The way my sister inhabits my world has changed. Yet her vitality, the way she wove the threads of her life, persists. Her presence is not held only in memory; it emerges through making, writing, living. As Braidotti observes, 'life itself is not a given essence but an assemblage … a quilt of retrieved material' (2005, p. 149). Following Deleuze, she shows how a life unfolds as continual improvisation in and with the world. My practice moves beyond commemoration, becoming a site where her presence shifts and continues to matter. In this space, her being and my becoming fold into one another, each reshaping the other. Making becomes a negotiation between presence and absence, where the stillness of grief brushes against the persistence of life. In folding and unfolding, in stitching and writing, memory becomes motion, animated, felt, and transformed. These gestures do not erase loss; they carry it, letting it speak through new material configurations. Mourning unfolds in perpetual motion—an ongoing dialogue with absence that opens new paths of connection and becoming.

Memory

The threads are frayed, not broken. They carry the texture of her being, woven into this unfolding work. Her absence is not a hollow but a fold, taut, pressing into thought. In acts of making, thinking, writing, I feel the air that gathers around these folds, life breathed into the knots where memory and presence meet. These knots shift with each gesture, tightening, loosening, and reconfiguring.

Her vitality, once immediate, is now diffused, threaded through textures and gestures, folded into the rhythms of living and creating. Absence is not the opposite of presence but its quiet companion. She continues in the folds, in the persistence of making, in the refusal to still the thread. Like the knotwork it sustains, this process is opaque yet luminous, carrying both the weight of her absence and the pulse of her life.



I Re-turn II - part two

Survival – thinking through making

Looping, folding, and knotting gave me purpose in the aftermath of my sister's death. The process was born of necessity, a way to keep moving through the weight of absence, resisting simplicity and haste, and demanding patience, repetition, and a kind of ritual endurance. Thinking through making formed a recursive rhythm, a return to a space both familiar and altered. I fold, and through folding, I think; through thinking, I fold. Lines curve back on themselves, touch and tighten, becoming loops, then knots. From one knot, another emerges, and then a mass, a knotwork dependent on air for its very existence, the immaterial enabling the material. Through this interplay, a shifting topology of thought begins to take shape, elusive and strange in its logic, becoming a knotwork that resists transparency.

Knotting in my practice holds a visceral charge, not only a method of making, but a mode of sensing, enduring, and surviving. Knots oscillate between the tangible and intangible, forming through intuitive necessary movements, guided less by mastery than by listening, attuning to their shape and allowing threads to lead. As I knot, internal thoughts trace themselves through material gestures, each contour concealing as much as it reveals, holding strata of place, family, and loss. These are geologies of the body and mind. My hands move to remain in dialogue with grief, material, and memory, without seeking resolution. The knots become a site of inquiry, holding what cannot be spoken, asking what cannot be answered. Each return to a work brings different questions: What lies within these folds? What stories, what histories, do they hold? Knotwork is, in this sense, a method of 'staying-with', of holding tension, loss, and sensation in an ongoing process that is both survival strategy and 'knowledge-making', material and relational.

Even in its most intimate form, writing becomes a way of 'staying-with'. "Why", a voice murmurs, "write about something so introspective?" I answer: "This is not self-absorption. This is the texture of grief. It does not belong to me alone". My sister's death tore through my family; each of us folded differently due to her absence, we all needed our own space to grieve. For me, my art practice became that space—somewhere to breathe, to step away, and yet to stay with the present. Survival, I sense, has always carried a shadow of escape: endurance is never only staying, but also know when to flee. These gestures entwine, inseparable, folded into the same act. What unsettles me most is how persistently Western culture turns from death and grief, as if avoidance could make them less real. Grief lingers at the margins of cultural

For two years after my sister's death, I kept two journals: one after conversations with my psychotherapist, the other after reading philosophy. In that time, Karen Barad and Gilles Deleuze became companions through whom I learned to think otherwise. From the pages of both journals *Ten knots within a knotwork* (2024) unfolded. (See pp. 72-73 for examples of pages.)



I Re-turn III - part three

discourse, too private, emotional, and unruly to be taken seriously as method. Yet, as Braidotti writes, 'the creativity of mourning rituals and the necessity of bereavement' support the expansion of the socio-cultural agenda (2013, p. 115). For me, grief is inseparable from creative work, constitutive of it, generating embodied, relational, sensual knowledge.

Here, research-creation takes hold. Folding, both concept and practice, it offers a way to think and make with loss, enabling access to what has been held in the body: unsaid, unprocessed. The fold does not resolve grief; it holds it. Mourning becomes methodological, less a system than an attunement, a mode of 'making-with' and 'staying with trouble', to borrow Donna Haraway's phrase (2016, p. 1). Her insistence that 'nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing' (ibid., p. 58) unsettles any fantasy of solitary endurance, opening instead a practice of co-composition with what resists resolution. As Braidotti notes, 'making friends with the impersonal necessity of death is an ethical way of installing oneself in life as a transient, slightly wounded visitor' (ibid., p. 132). Death becomes a force shaping form, practice, and thought. The fold that holds death becomes a site of encounter: between absence and emergence, silence and articulation, the irreparable and the still possible. Folding is, above all, a mode of questioning, a way of 'staying with' uncertainty. This thesis witnesses what is thought and sensed after loss, a labour born of grief's weight and wonder, marking how tentatively I began to reform my being. It does not chart a path out of the void but navigates within it, forming a knotwork of folds that continues to shift.

When two lives fold

When my sister was dying, I knew the distance between us had never weakened our bond. Born fourteen months apart, raised almost as twins, we moved in a rhythm of mutual care, crying when the other was scolded, entwined in small acts of knowing that shaped our shared life. In her final months, that closeness settled into silence, a presence no distance could unravel. Now, that intimacy reveals itself as a fold: a relation that resists finality. Folding did not merge or erase us; it allowed our forms to press, shift, and reconfigure. After her death, I began to realise that my practice exists within this fold, a layered milieu where memory, material, and gesture entwine in search of form amidst loss. Our fold is not smooth. It holds the tension of the irreconcilable. Her death ruptured the weave of our lives, a path fractured, a shared rhythm broken. Yet a thread persists. The fabric twists, turns, and reforms. It is marked by loss but continues to carry her imprint as part of its motion. Folding and making became a way of staying with her, less an act of preservation than an attunement to how she moves through me now. Trauma did not vanish with her death; it folded into gestures, into knots. Making became survival, a method of sense-making in the wake of rupture. Her absence carries presence in another form, textured through memory, sensation, and the contours of daily life. In the light of her death, folding became a continuum, a way of holding what can no longer be touched and listening to what can no longer be heard. Through her life and death, I found my way to Deleuze's concept of the fold.

In *The Fold*, Deleuze writes of folding not as closure but as becoming, an opening within constraint, a continuous inflection of inside and outside (1993, pp. 3–6). His articulation reverberated with my lived experience of grief and making, offering a conceptual mirror for what my hands and mind had already been practising. Folding became a way of remaining in relation, less memory fixed in time than matter in motion. In this fold, this milieu of memory and material, my practice continues to move. In staying with these folds of grief and making, I found myself drawn toward the philosophical fold, as another surface to work with. Encountering Deleuze's writing became a way to extend what my hands already knew into a conceptual space, where practice and theory could fold into one another.

Unfolding
The Fold

When I first encountered *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Deleuze, 1993), I expected to meet 'the fold', 'the Baroque', and Leibniz's 'monads' through a Deleuzian lens. Instead, comprehension hovered at the edge—enigmatic, spectral, insistently alluring. Each time I reached for a concept, it slipped away. Folds and monads remained elusive, yet I sensed they were central to my research. In practice I traced lines, folded materials, knotted threads—gestures echoing *The Fold*—yet something kept escaping. My thinking moved through physical acts; Deleuze's folds stayed near, present yet unresolved.

I began to ask: what is a fold? Could it be more than a form, perhaps a concept, a method, a way of becoming? Gradually, I folded into Deleuze's thought, weaving through his conceptual and socio-political threads, mirroring his method where one thought folds into another, and writing folds into thinking, into something yet to evolve (1995, p. 154). His texts, *Le Pli: Leibniz et le Baroque* (1988), the 1991 essay, and the 1993 English edition, offered not only a conceptual tool but an affective method. Folding became a way to think, feel, and create: a dynamic interplay of tactile, conceptual, and textual dimensions. Folding the fold became both metaphor and methodology, an ongoing negotiation and a practice of becoming (Deleuze, 1993, pp. 6–7).

A deeper understanding of *The Fold* surfaced while making a series of structures, *Planes of no sense* (2023). Born from rupture, these works took shape through fragmentary gestures that resisted resolution. The material began to think with me, a co-emergent force rather than an illustration of theory. Thread and crease enacted another topology, edges and pressures converging as intensities—tactile events resonating with Deleuze's fold as force. The work arose as event, an interiority pressing outward through matter, gesture, and sensation. Here, research and creation were already folded together.

The process of folding thought through others, multiple times, was not done intentionally. It was a method within my practice that I recognised much later in my research.

Deleuze's engagement with Leibniz's folds both philosophers into my process of thinking and making. For Deleuze, Leibniz's concepts appear as 'extremely odd notions, almost crazy', yet they 'a have concrete unity through *The Fold*—the folds of the earth, the folds of organisms, folds in the soul. Everything folds, unfolds, enfolds in Leibniz'. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 154)

Planes of no sense (2023) see pp. 46-49 and - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/plane-of-no-sense/

Leibniz and the monad

To contextualise Deleuze's fold within my practice, I returned to its philosophical source. Beneath the baroque surfaces of *The Fold* lies the metaphysical architecture of Gottfried Leibniz's *Monadology* (1714), where the monad shapes a universe of interiority, reflection, and transformation. Leibniz proposed a world composed not of material substances, but of indivisible, immaterial entities called monads, 'simple substances' without parts, without extension, impervious to external force (Leibniz, 1898, p. 1). Each contains a unique, internal reflection of the entire universe. 'They have no windows through which anything can enter or leave', he writes (ibid., p. 2), yet all unfold in synchrony through a divinely pre-established harmony.

At first glance, monads appear austere and abstract, but they are not inert. Each expresses the universe from its singular point of view, unfolding internal perceptions without external causality. This coordination, for Leibniz, is ensured by God, who inscribes harmony from the outset (ibid., p. 5).

Leibniz writes that 'through the knowledge of necessary truths, and through their abstract expression… we rise to acts of reflexion, which make us think of what is called I... of being, of substance', and 'of the simple and the compound, of the immaterial, and of God Himself' (no: 30., 1898). In us these traits are limited, while in God they are without limits, according to Leibniz.



Planes of no sense I (2023)

By contrast, Deleuze reanimates the concept of the monad, severing it from its theological scaffolding and refiguring it as immanent, processual, and transformative. Where Leibniz sees the monad as a self-contained unit orchestrated by divine harmony, Deleuze shifts it from substance to relation, from predetermination to becoming (Deleuze, 1993, pp. 3–7). This shift arrived in my hands through *Planes of no sense I* (2023), which emerged after rupture, through fragmentary gesture rather than design. I was never consciously making folds, although the book lingered in the background. The works surfaced from tension within the material and my body: threads refusing to disappear, creases holding weight, stitches slipping out of alignment. These ruptures became forces of expression. In my hands, the monad felt less like a sealed metaphysical unit and more like a resonant pressure, a speculative intensity moving through material.

While Leibniz's monads are isolated, windowless entities governed by divine harmony, Deleuze reimagines them through relationality and the fold, as dynamic sites of unfolding. He removes the theological enclosure and places them in a philosophy of becoming, where interiority folds in and out of the world. Philosopher Lloyd Strickland notes that compounds—composite beings made up of multiple monads, 'consist of force, having perceptions, and representing external things' (2014, p. 40). Even in Leibniz's pre-established harmony a multiplicity of perceptual events is already in motion. Deleuze pushes this further. What matters is not harmony as metaphysical guarantee but the active modulation of difference.

The fold becomes his figure for this transformation, binding inside to outside, self to world, through variation rather than resemblance. Folding complicates the line between interior and exterior, twisting and layering it. In this process, subjectivity becomes porous, an ongoing negotiation of tension, inflection, and transformation. As Deleuze writes, 'The world must be placed in the subject in order that the subject can be for the world... this is the torsion that constitutes the fold of the world and of the soul' (1993, p. 26). This torsion is not abstract, it is felt, lived and material. Subjectivity becomes eventful rather than essential, shaped through folding: taking in, turning over, and unfolding anew. The fold opens subjectivity to the relational, the molecular, and the affective.

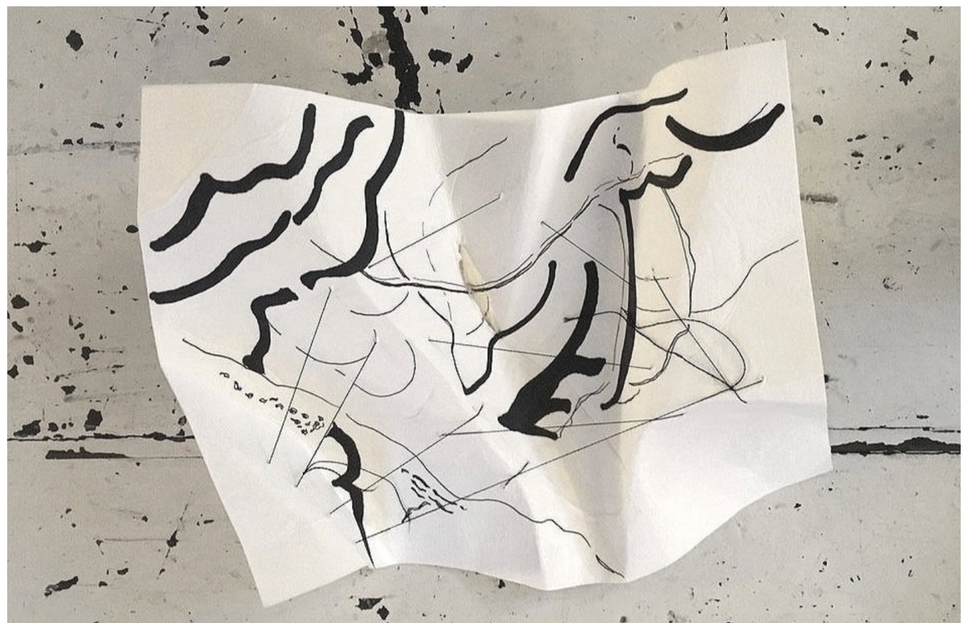
Microperception and practice

In the unfolding of practice, what often guides me are not fully formed ideas but fleeting impressions—textures, rhythms, or atmospheres that arrive before I can name them. These subtle shifts inflect how a work takes shape, yet they resist conscious control. It is here that philosophy offers a way of thinking with these elusive registers. Leibniz draws a distinction between perception, the unconscious registration of experience, and apperception, the conscious awareness of it. This unsettles the clarity of Cartesian reason, for it acknowledges that experience is not reducible to rational consciousness alone.
He writes:

> The passing state, which encompasses and represents a plurality within the unity (or simple substance) is nothing other than what is called perception, which must be distinguished from apperception, or consciousness... the Cartesians have fallen far short, as they have given no thought to perceptions which are not apperceived. (Leibniz, 1898, pp. 3–4)



Planes of no sense II



Planes of no sense III

Deleuze later calls these diffuse and often imperceptible microperceptions ‘minute’, often imperceptible forces that shape affect, mood, and material interaction, offering fertile ground for speculative, felt thinking (1993, p. 86). *Planes of no sense II* and *Planes of no sense III* emerged through this logic. Their forms arose through a constellation of minor decisions: where to stitch, how the paper buckled, when the thread held or slipped. These were not aesthetic choices in the traditional sense but responses to the material’s quiet suggestions, below conscious deliberation.

The works organised themselves through microperceptual rhythms. The folds were not imposed; they found their own form. To paraphrase Deleuze, consciousness merely clarifies microperceptions, yet these works resist such clarification (ibid.). The *Planes of no sense* hold the obscure edges of consciousness, emerging from the interplay of small decisions, unnoticed forces, and subtle resistances that accumulate into larger formations. What the viewer encounters is the macroperception, arising from this submerged process. Structures are never complete or transparent; they carry traces of what remains unresolved, still becoming.



Planes of no sense IV



Planes of no sense V



Plane of no(n)sense

Plane of no(n)sense (2023) emerged from folding unclear thoughts and the unthought. It evolved through doing, touching, and sensing without words. Each crease became a cartographic surface, transmitting thought between body, fingers, and form. The folds acted as lines of cognition—dynamic events through which new ideas surfaced. Nothing theoretical was imposed; understanding arrived in the act of arranging the planes. Placing them atop one another generated a layered, multifaceted surface that seemed to think itself into being. The realisation came in that unplanned moment: meaning was not applied from outside but arose with the folds.

This is what research-creation makes possible—art and thought unfolding together, understanding manifesting in process. The interplay between finitude and infinity that Deleuze identifies in the monad echoes the recursive structure of my practice. Each fold of material, thought, and time opens onto new complications, relations, and states of becoming. The monad, for me, is never closed. It does not merely contain the world; it touches, refracts, and carries it forward, generating variation from within. It transforms into the fold, which transforms again into knots and knotworks. This interior complexity aligns with Deleuze's reimagining and with the rhythms of making, where the work follows internal logics that unfold over time.

I was working in our living room, using a wooden box as a desk, an object already folded in history. A small metal tag on its surface reads 'Sergt. Harvey N&D Rest', likely from the Second World War. That quiet inscription folded memory into matter, adding another layer of tension to the knotwork of *Plane of no(n)sense*.

Which *Fold* to unfold

In my second year of research, I turned to *The Fold* (1991), Deleuze's essay in Yale French Studies. More accessible than its predecessor, *Le Pli: Leibniz et le Baroque* (1988), it acted as a kind of concertina, a compressed articulation that opened new pathways for thought. Here, I began to think of the fold as a method. Listening to the philosopher Andrew Benjamin, I explored folding through making, processing practice itself as an unfolding. Deleuze writes:

> The Unfold: certainly not the opposite of the fold, nor its effacement, but the continuation or the extension of its act, the condition of its manifestation. When the fold ceases to be represented and becomes a "method," an operation, an act, the unfold becomes the result of the act which is expressed in precisely that way. (1991, p. 243).

What emerges here is less a static concept than an operative method, a thinking-in-motion that generates sense through repetition, variation, and transformation. Folding became both tactile and conceptual. Whether marking paper, cutting video, or layering sound, I came to see each action as a gesture of the fold's logic. Reflection, or diffraction, took the form of a recursive motion in which thought, practice, and sensation shift, sometimes imperceptibly. Deleuze describes events as a series of singularities that rise, fade, or transform (1995, pp. 146-147). It is in this sense that I understand the unfold as a minor event, subtle yet transformative. Reading *The Fold* itself is shaped by such events, since every translation introduces its own inflections, tone, rhythm, and emphasis bending the text in different directions.

Translation as a folding of *The Fold*

Jonathan Strauss (1991), Tom Conley (1993), and an AI-generated version (2025), each reconfigures Deleuze's philosophy through their own interpretive lens. Translation is transformation, a fold in itself. Language resists fixity; it is matter in motion. From *Le Pli* (1988) through its translations, each iteration embeds its own conceptual inflection into the original. Following this logic, and informed by a conversation with Erin Manning, I retranslated the passage that drew me in, using AI, and then looked at it alongside the translations to see the tonal and metaphysical shifts that translation performs.

I spoke with Erin Manning during an online TrAIN meeting on 29/01/2025. We discussed writing-with The Fold and moving between French and English. When I asked about translations, she suggested I choose the passage that had gripped me and work it through with AI—treating translation as a fold that reveals tone, cadence, and conceptual drift.

I chose a section from the third chapter of *The Fold*, 'What is Baroque?'

> Le pli: le Baroque l'œuvre ou l'opération infinies. Le problème n'est pas comment finir un pli, mais comment le continuer, lui faire traverser le plafond, le porter à l'infini. C'est que le pli n'affecte pas seulement toutes les matières, qui deviennent ainsi matières d'expression, suivant des échelles, des vitesses et des vecteurs différents (les montagnes et les eaux, les papiers, les étoffes, les tissus vivants, le cerveau), mais il détermine et fait apparaître la Forme, il en fait une forme d'expression, Gestaltung, l'élément génétique ou la ligne infinie d'inflexion, la courbe à variable unique. (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 48–49)

Conley's 1993 translation renders this as:

> The fold: the Baroque invents the infinite work or process. The problem is not how to finish a fold, but how to continue it, to have it go through the ceiling, how to bring it to infinity. It is not because the fold affects all materials that it thus becomes expressive matter, with different scales, speeds, and different vectors (mountains and waters, papers, fabrics, living tissues, the brain), but especially because it determines and materializes Form. It produces a form of expression, a Gestaltung, the genetic element or infinite line of inflection, the curve with a unique variable. (Deleuze, 1993, pp. 34–35)

AI version translates the same passage as:

> The fold: the Baroque invents the infinite work or operation. The problem is not how to end a fold, but how to continue it, how to make it pass through the ceiling, how to extend it to infinity. The fold does not only affect all materials – which thereby become expressive materials, according to different scales, speeds, and vectors (mountains and waters, papers, fabrics, living tissues, the brain) – but it also determines and brings forth Form. It makes Form into a form of expression, Gestaltung, the genetic element or the infinite line of inflection, the curve with a single variable. (Translation – 30/01/2025)

Jonathan Strauss's translation, published in *Yale French Studies* (1991), aligns broadly with the AI version in vocabulary and tone, yet shifts subtly. The phrase 'l'œuvre ou l'opération infinies', translated by the AI and Strauss as 'infinite work or operation', carries a sense of act or invention; Conley's 'process' rather than 'operation', evokes immanence and continuity, resonating with Deleuze's commitment to becoming. AI's, 'extend it (the fold) to infinity' suggests outward expansion; Conley's and Strauss's 'bring' or 'take' imply directional

force or intention. These differences shift how I understand the fold's movement, not as expansion alone, but as inflection and an intensity.

This comes into sharper focus when considering Strauss's phrasing: 'The problem is not how to finish a fold, but how to continue it, make it go through the roof, take it to infinity' (Deleuze, 1991, p. 242). 'Roof' feels abrupt and exterior where Conley's 'ceiling' remains architectural and contained; 'take it to infinity' is more forceful than Conley's gentler 'bring it'. For 'la courbe à variable unique', Conley's 'the curve with a unique variable' is precise yet prosaic, whereas Strauss's 'the curve of a single variable' is mathematically idiomatic and more lyrical. Most telling is 'matières d'expression': Conley's 'expressive matter' attributes expressivity to matter itself, whereas Strauss's 'matter of expression' makes matter the site patterned by expression (Deleuze, 1991, p. 242). These micro-shifts retune the fold, its rhythm, vector, and ontological weight, drawing distinct conceptual cadences. Translation here does not sit alongside the argument; it contours the method.

Each translation performs the concept, modulating tone, emphasis, and resonance. Translation becomes an intensification of meaning, a site where Deleuze's fold works as a method rather than metaphor. Variations are not errors but differences that matter. They keep the concept in motion, alive to new expressive potentials.

Why these differences matter

Initially, the differences in translation felt like deviations from Deleuze's words. I came to see translation as a folding: a modulation of meaning that retained the conceptual structure, yet shifts in consequential ways. Language, like a fold, is continually reconfiguring. In *The Fold* such variations are not merely linguistic; they are philosophical. No text is self-contained. Meaning moves. What proves valuable is precisely this multiplicity, how language, thought, and materiality thread through one another, creating new conceptual terrains. Translation is metamorphosis, where the tension between original and iteration opens a fertile space for experimentation, where meaning expands and contracts across material, technological, and conceptual dimensions. This instability is generative. It echoes the fold.

Deleuze is said to have described philosophy as a 'tool box': a set of conceptual instruments to be picked up, adapted, and repurposed. My engagement with the different forms of *The Fold* does not seek to secure a singular origin; these variations show thought unfolding and refolding across textual, technological, and material media. Translation, in this sense, is less about preservation than intensification. It is a terrain where new meanings can emerge without erasing the trace of the original. This is a process of thinking with Deleuze, letting his concepts resonate differently as I make and write.

Deleuze himself never used the term 'tool box'. The metaphor appears in Brian Massumi's foreword of *A Thousand Plateaus*, where he writes Deleuze and Guattari 'steal from other disciplines with glee', assembling a conceptual tool box for others to draw upon (1987, p. xv).

Research Fellow, Harriet Hulme reminds us that to define a translation as 'good or bad, relevant or irrelevant… faithful or unfaithful… major or minor' is never the conclusion but 'only its beginning' (Hulme, 2018, p. 11). Translation, in this sense, is a dynamic re-inflection, an active participation in the ongoing becoming of thought.

Deleuze's writing as an experiment of folding

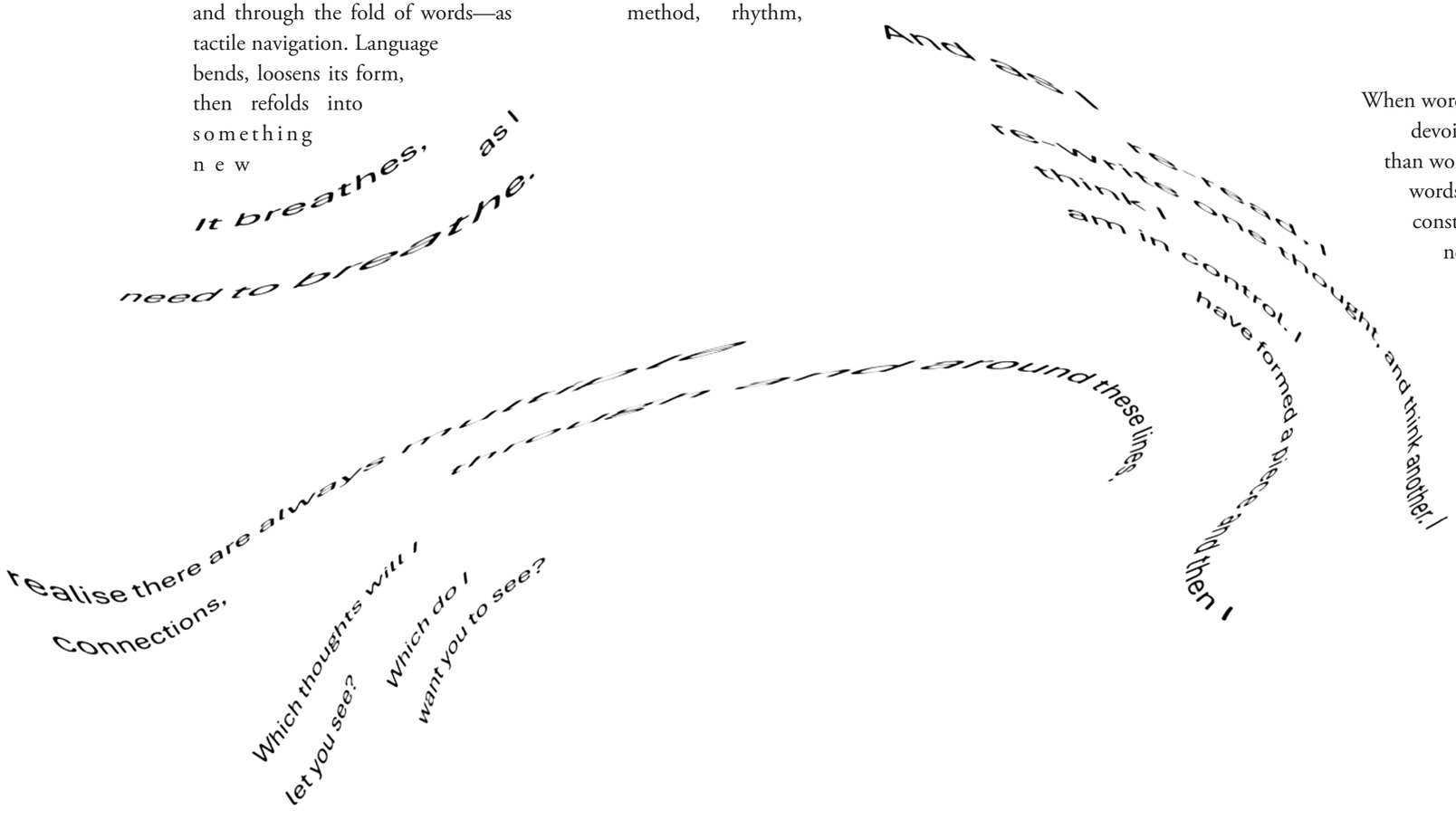
Writing unfolds materiality. It mirrors Deleuze's wider concerns by showing 'how and where folds and folding emerge in the writing', especially through Leibnizian aesthetics (2011, p. 171). In his foreword to *The Fold*, Conley presents Deleuze not only as a thinker of the Baroque but as one whose work across science, mathematics, contradiction, belief, music, and theology remains vital (1993, p. xii). The fold thus names a conceptual and material operation that reconfigures how we perceive and structure the world, a dynamic process of ongoing transformation that shapes how I think and make.

My focus on 'becoming', 'multiplicities' and 'immanence', resists rigid structures and binary distinctions, opening instead onto an infinite process of refolding and reimagining.

This sense of folding guides my approach to philosophical texts, especially in translation and writing. The tension between fidelity and transformation raises a live question: when does thinking with a philosopher become something other than their thought? I now treat translation variants as part of the fold's generative logic. Working with texts does more than trace meaning; it reconfigures meaning through situated knowledge. My aim is not to fix Deleuze but to stay attuned to how his concepts shift across media, forms, and contexts – cultural, affective, linguistic. Thinking with, rather than about, opens a space for experiment, allowing the text to resonate differently through new materialities. As Braidotti argues, this is not the self-assertion of a sovereign subject over a text but a practice of co-composition that lets thought move, bend, and breathe otherwise (2005, p. 307). She also underscores Deleuze's refusal of categorical splits when she suggests he 'makes no categorical difference between thinking and creating, painting and writing, concept and percept', treating them as 'variations of experimentation… with intensities that foster patterns of becoming' (ibid., p. 306).

Deleuze's orientation privileges transformation over identity, and topology over essence or telos. I align with this commitment to process, as a practice of continuous reconfiguration, where thinking and making converge. Writing, then, is not merely reflective; it is generative. It displaces the rational, self-possessed subject, 'it has to do with emptying out the self' (ibid.).

'What is at stake in writing', Braidotti continues, 'is not the manipulation of a set of linguistic or narrative conventions… Writing is an orientation; it is the skill that consists in developing a compass of the cognitive, affective and ethical kind. It is quite simply an apprenticeship in the art of conceptual and perceptual colouring' (ibid., p. 307). That compass, felt navigation through material and conceptual intensities, captures my way of working. Writing, like making, becomes attunement rather than mastery: a continual reorientation toward complexity, contradiction, and change. My apprenticeship with language is realised through mark-making, where thought unfolds through matter. What follows explores writing as material practice: not a vessel for pre-formed ideas but a speculative, recursive process. I move with and through the fold of words—as method, rhythm, tactile navigation. Language
bends, loosens its form,
then refolds into
something
new



The collapse of words and the language of marks

This next section opens into a reflexive mode, where the writing morphs and the physicality of words becomes part of my material inquiry. Within my practice 'becoming' is not only visible in the writing but in mark-making, as thoughts unfold, fold back upon themselves, and create something new. This text resists me, its author, pulling any illusion of control from my mind and fingertips.

"Yet is that not what you desire?" A voice inside my head resounds.

"To relinquish control."

"To let the writing breathe."

"To let it grow, away from the straight lines of certainty, and into the curved complexities of thought that shape your mindscape."

When words distort, they lose form and become rhythm, seemingly devoid of conventional sense. Yet marks may carry more affect than words; they open space, making room to breathe. My use of words as malleable material emerged from frustration with the constraints of linear syntax. Words could not hold the depth I needed. When I began folding and knotting sentences like thread, a form
and a rhythm appeared, visual and affective. The rhythm revealed a relational mode of writing, allowing thought
to move and flow rather than remain fixed under tension. The movement of text embodies a felt thinking, a mode of sense-making difficult to achieve through conventional form.
In this state, words become tactile shifting and slippery,
resisting resolution. Meaning emerges in the folds, in the spaces in-between, where language becomes material and material becomes thought.

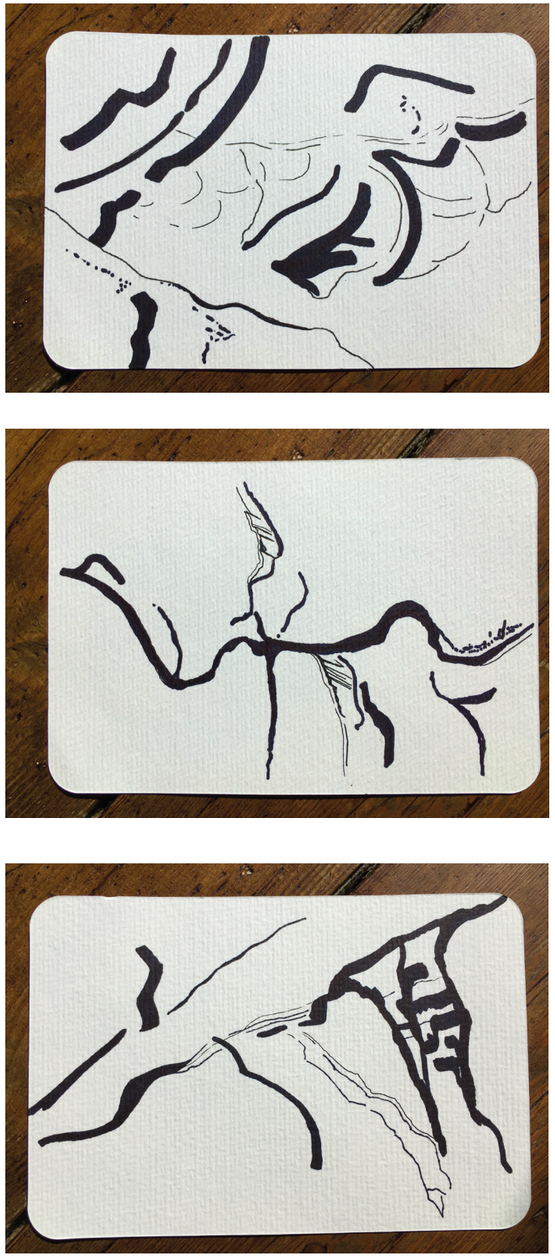
Learning to breathe again



Kinloch Hourn, Scotland

In the spring of 2022, I returned to Kinloch Hourn, the last place my sister and I had been on holiday. The shoreline held her traces: fishing, cooking, slow walks at sea level. Now I was here without her. My PhD had stuttered to a standstill; the research lacked orientation, so I set constraints I could keep. Each morning, I left the house with a small stack of blank postcards and two permanent markers, one fine and one thick. The weather did not suspend the work; it entered it. Wind off the loch kinked the stroke; rain freckled the ink; cold shortened the line into deliberate fragments. After a short walk, I would find a place (on a hilltop or tucked between two rocks) and draw the lines the mountains offered, following their tracks and traces as I wondered what forces had made those permanent marks.

The fine point often indexed distance: a far ridge, the lip of a corrie; the thicker point pressed the near edge, a seam of shadow, a band where scree met water. Once the ink hit the paper, there was no going back, no rubbing out; only rainwater to alter the stroke. When a card was filled, I dated the reverse and began another. No messages. I went there to escape syntax; instead, another syntax arrived: a spare score I could keep, look, hold, mark, stop and return.



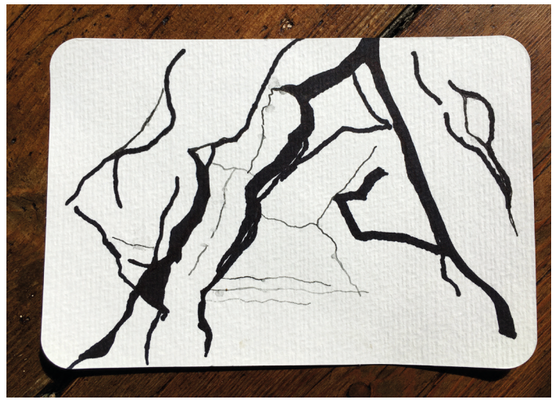
Tracks and traces - postcards from Kinloch Hourn (2022)

https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/tracks-and-traces/
Link to the series of drawings.

None of these postcards have ever been sent; it was as if I was sending twenty-five messages to myself.

Repetition reorganised attention. The same ridge refused the familiar face; light turned the facet; weather recalibrated the hand. Each card condensed a duration: the time it took for a profile to traverse eye, wrist, and paper, so the series formed a small archive of situated intervals rather than a set of views. Method emerged from constraint: the markers formed a simple apparatus for near/far, pressure/relief; the postcard fixed scale and demanded decision; place supplied continuous variation. In this sense, the line was not depiction but device, an operation for thinking with matter in time. Deleuze writes that 'language quivers in all its limbs, and we discover at this point the principle of a poetic understanding of language itself: it is as if language were carving a line to stretch—both abstract and infinitely varied' (1994b, pp. 24–25).

In Kinloch Hourn I came to understand this through my body. The line carved and stretched across a palm-sized plane; it folded landscape and memory into a single, repeatable gesture. Writing shifted medium: from sentence to stroke; from proposition to interval. The fold announced itself not as theme but as method, touch meeting resistance, pressure easing into release, variation generated through return.



From this practice came a series of postcards that sustained my research when prose could not. Simple to do, exacting to maintain, the postcards held grief and inquiry together without naming either. What remains on each surface is the record of movement; what exceeds the surface stays in the affective interval between action and trace. Understanding manifested there, not as definition, but as a durable procedure that could hold the world and keep making it, line after line.

Back in Yorkshire, I laid the postcards across the floor of my bedroom, ordering them by date, light, and negative space. Each line



returned as a felt encounter: pressure, hesitation, and release inscribed in the card. Meaning arose in the montage: adjacency produced correspondences, and the series formed a mapping closer to Braidotti's 'cartographic process' than to the fixity of an Ordnance Survey sheet, situated, relational, materially embedded.

Rearranging the cards, a new topology surfaced, a plane where the language of marks exceeded alphabetic sequence and gesture disclosed its capacity to think. Read through Braidotti, form is not representation but a situated mapping of forces and affects; it registers relations as they move through bodies, places, and matter (2011; 2019). Each inflection in the line was more than technique; it was force, a contact zone where histories, thoughts, bodies, geologies touch and reshape one another. A single turn of the wrist can carry the weight of a sentence. The accumulation of lines becomes trace, track, and tool: a method for navigating a world in flux that trains attention toward attunement and response. This was somatic knowledge; alphabetic writing could not contain its pressures and relays. Body and material moved together in a shared rhythm of marks that exceeded discursive capture.

I use 'cartographic process' in Braidotti's sense of cartography as 'a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present' that seeks epistemic and ethical accountability by unveiling power-locations structuring subject-position, situating one's location in space and time, and proceeding through figurations (conceptual personae) rather than universals (2013, pp. 164–65).

FOLD 1 _
DRAWING MACHINE

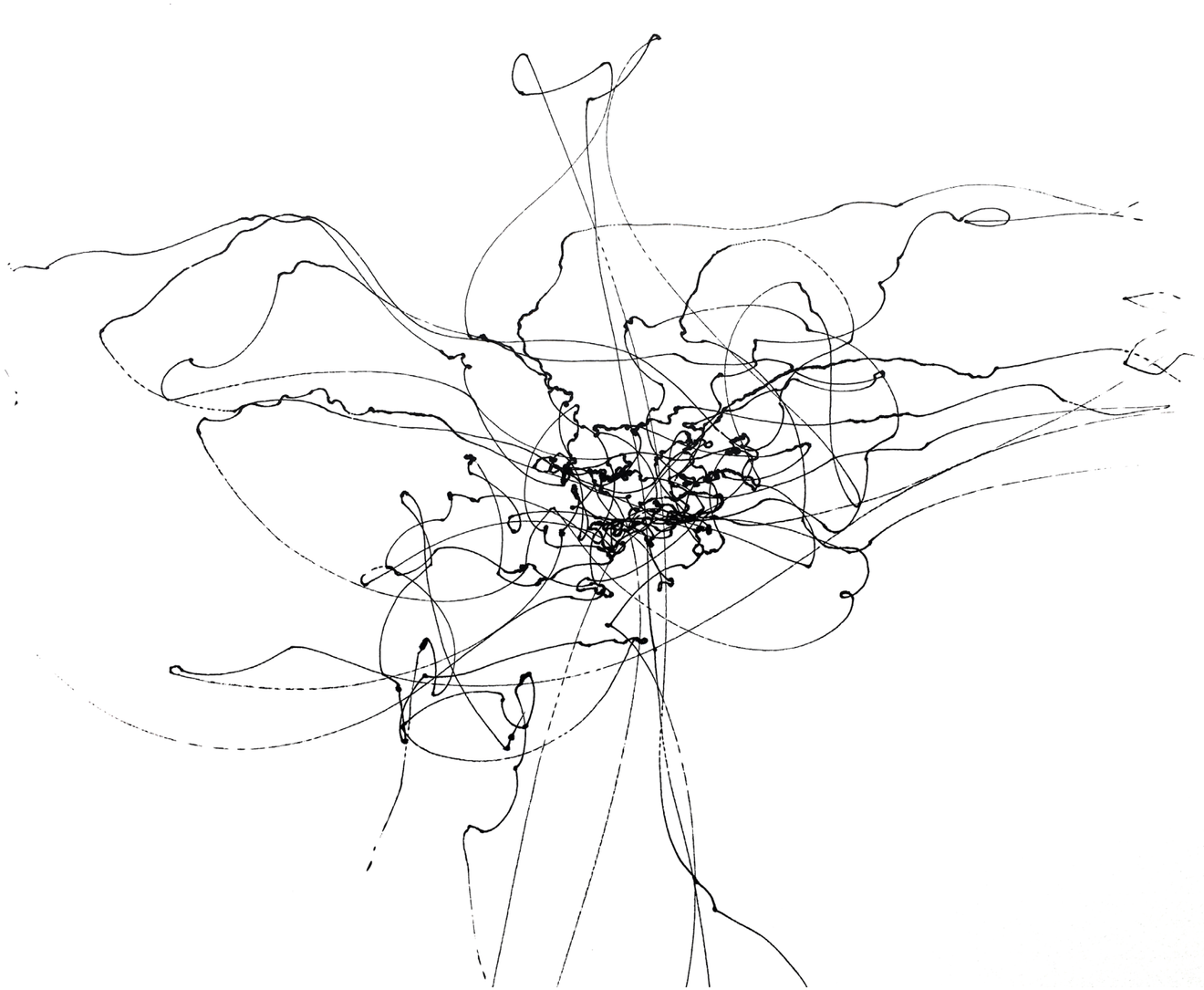
Honing to the beach return
(52.7972° N, 1.4502° E to
52.8216° N, 1.5403° E)

Thoughts fold and memories touch, and I turn to a series of machine drawings made in 2019, tracing the route from our house to a beach in Norfolk. These drawing were not drawn by hand, but as a co-creation between human and nonhuman forces. It was the beginning of mapping as a milieu, though at the time I know nothing about Braidotti's 'cartographic process'.

In the back of a battered Land Rover, a length of string stretched across the interior. From its midpoint, a pen hung over a sheet of paper. As I drove, the pen moved and recorded the road's surface. Each bump, curve and shift left a trace. The vehicle drew; I held the motion.

I now realise I was documenting a place, while also engaging a liminal field, something sensed more than seen. An attempt to visualise the intangible, to touch the imagined, affective, ungraspable. The resulting image is not a map in the conventional sense, it is a topological trace of space, sensation and encounter. A record of what lies beneath the visible. These lines from the Landy drawing fold and gather into a knotwork of sensual, conceptual, and socio-political threads, where mark-making becomes a posthuman process: a machinic collaboration where consciousness streams alongside nonhuman (thought). Form emerges as movement, a different language. Meaning takes shape through relation—through the weaving of motion, matter, and mediation, rather than representation. This is where knotwork begins to show itself: not as structure or diagram, but as a different kind of harmony. A composition of traces, human and more-than-human, knotted into the rhythms of terrain and machine.

Already my work was folding toward a logic of knotwork—toward a way of thinking that unsettles the boundary between mapping and living, between fixed lines.

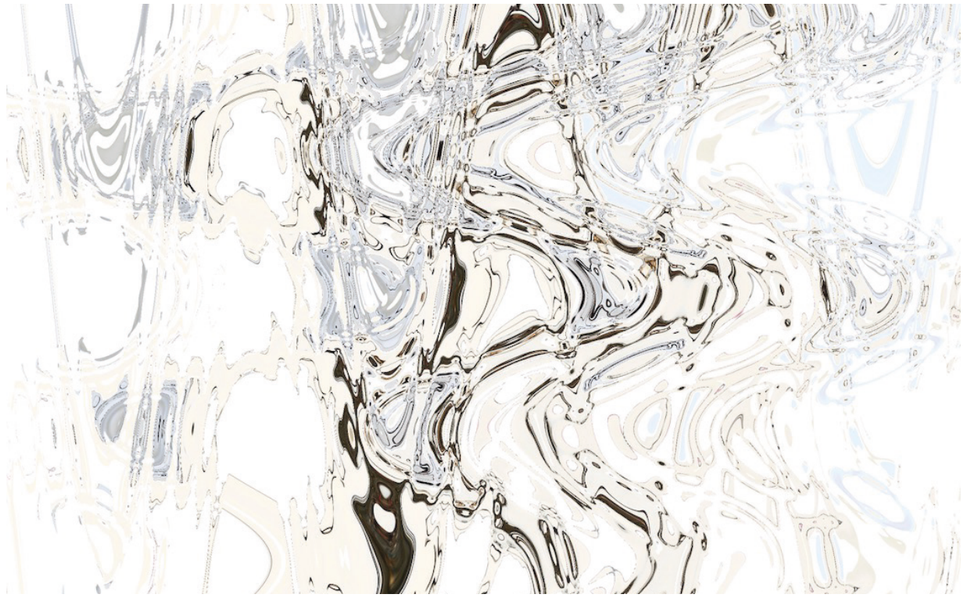


Mark-making through liminal navigation

It is through gestures, traces, and folds that I begin to navigate thresholds where matter, thought, and language touch. Mark-making here is less about description or transcription and more about entering liminal spaces where language itself turns into material that curves and breaks, and is both unsettled and generative. Working with words as material in an unstable space, I sense expression arising not from pre-formed ideas but from slight displacements, subtle shifts that unsettle perception. Manning names this the 'minor gesture' : movements at the margins of dominant structures, 'not controlled by preexisting structures, but open to flux' (2016a, p. 1).

Deleuze and Guattari first articulated the concept of the 'minor' in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (2008), where a 'minor' use of language deterritorialises the dominant tongue and opens new expressive potentials. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), this notion is expanded beyond literature: the minor becomes a mode of becoming that unsettles the major from within, creating lines of flight through variation, displacement, and invention. Manning reworks this into the 'minor gesture', a subtle force that operates at the edges of dominant structures, reorienting movement, thought, and expression (2016a).

Such small gestures are neither grand nor overtly disruptive, yet they reconfigure the conditions in which thought, movement, and material take shape. They 'create sites of dissonance, staging disturbances that open experience to new modes of expression' (Manning 2016a, p. 2).

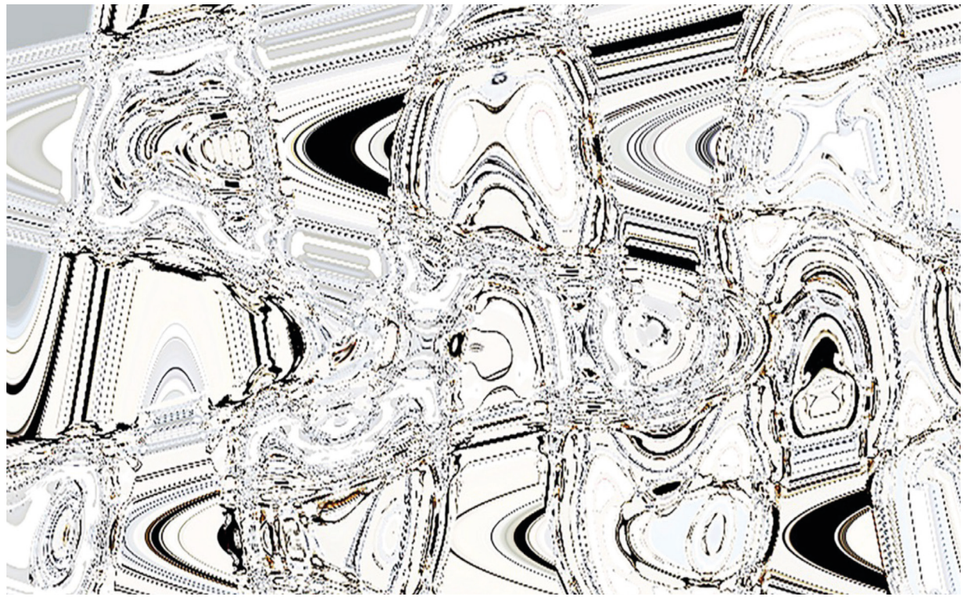


a fragment of Page 23 from Lines Book 3 (2024)

In my process, they act as generative forces, activating fields of becoming where sensation, thought, and matter converge. When I work with words as visual material, folding occurs digitally, through touch, resistance, and interruption. Thought, form, and sensation bend together. The screen becomes a surface of encounter where language curves and creases, hesitates and doubles back, opening new paths of sense. Mark-making then is not an endpoint but an orientation: a way of thinking-with through matter. Manning extends this further, noting that 'the minor gesture activates the differential such that the ecology's incipient heterogeneity becomes operational' (ibid., p. 13). Such an ecology exceeds the registers of making on one side and thinking on the other.

This recursive practice echoes a fragment from *Lines Book 3* (2024), where writing orients within disorientation as an embodied enactment of the minor gesture. I do not begin with clarity. Writing and rewriting through images becomes a way of finding bearings when bearings feel impossible. 'Writing-thinking-making', 'making-thinking-writing': the process is recursive. I fold forward, then back, searching for contours, following instinct. The aim is not a single trajectory but a movement with complexity as thought shifts and reforms. At the threshold, between knowing and not-knowing, form and dissolution, my process turns into a becoming-with. Not a destination, but a mode of orientation: recursive, searching, open to what thought and making might unfold together.

In my research, writing is a form of mark-making, as tactile and embodied as the materials I fold with my hands. Composing a thesis is not only the arrangement of words on the screen, but an engagement with a living terrain, a mindscape where folds knot, unravel and refold. Meaning resists stillness. It emerges through motion, in a field of psychological, socio-political, philosophical, genealogical, and geological forces that interlace. These threads slip beyond the language into a sensual realm where words are porous. In the interplay of thought and material, the lines between mind and matter, body and idea, dissolve. These threads are never static; they remain in flux, seeping, and flowing elsewhere.



a fragment of Page 23v2 from Lines Book 3 (2024)

By 2025, after months of working on fragments of text, Page 23 of *Lines Book 3 v2* revealed itself, perhaps as itself, perhaps as an Eschian knotwork. A cartographic entanglement resisting singular interpretation. It pulses, visceral and alive. Each line I now trace folds back upon itself, sending ripples outward, into my surroundings and back into me. Folding here is not just a method but a milieu: both methodology and practice, forming the backbone of a complex subject while moving a being into becoming-with.

This formation of knotwork develops within a Deleuzian framework, not as a predetermined blueprint or static metaphor, but as a dynamic methodology of entanglement that foregrounds instability and the openness of the not-yet. Deleuze and Guattari write:

> A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification… To become is not progress or regress along a series… Becoming produces nothing other than itself. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 237–238)

If 'becoming produces nothing other than itself', then it and self, are already there: immanent and active.

In *Animistic Design: How to Reimagine Digital Interaction between the Human and the Nonhuman*, Betti Marenko and Philip van Allen prefer the term 'milieu' over 'environment', describing it as 'a more specific and nuanced proposition' (2016, p. 7).

Milieu encompasses the ambient, atmosphere, or circumstance, a framing which resonates with my research. While acknowledging human presence, my work extends to the ongoing dynamics of materials and their shaping of the ground, territory, and cartography, and to 'affect' as the interaction of entities embedded within a specific space. Marenko and van Allen trace their use of 'milieu' to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), where it designates the complex layering of intermediate, associated, and exterior milieus that interlace and transform one another (ibid., pp. 50–52).

The philosopher, Cliff Stagoll offers a lucid reading of becoming:

> Deleuze believes that each change or becoming has its own duration, a measure of the relative stability of the construct, and the relationship between forces at work in defining it. Becoming must be conceived neither in terms of a 'deeper' or transcendental time, nor as a kind of 'temporal backdrop' against which change occurs. (Stagoll, 2005, p. 22)

Stagoll's framing turns away from resolution and toward flux, the not-yet, and the recursive shaping of thought and material. Duration here is a felt texture, a knot tightening, a breath held, a pause between gestures. What matters is not the endpoint, but the shifting constellation of relationships and meanings generated through open-ended interaction.

This textured, relational sense of becoming resonates with Brian Massumi's understanding of affect as a non-conscious, incipient action, a shift in intensity that precedes emotion and cognition, registering in and through bodies before form or meaning take hold (2002, p. 35). Within this framing, the fold is an unfolding force, charged with potential before form emerges. Affect, like the fold, operates on the threshold: a pause that holds more than it reveals.

Massumi describes affect as a field where the virtual and the actual co-compose, a two-sided movement where relational forces become expressive only through partial capture. 'Affect is the virtual as point of view', he writes, cautioning against a purely visual reading, since affect is synesthetic: tactile, visual, and internal, registering shifts in mood, movement, and sensation proprioceptive (ibid.). What gives affect its force is this excess, its ability to shape perception without being fully contained. Emotion, in this framing, marks the point at which affect is drawn into functional forms. Yet something always escapes: 'something remains unactualized, inseparable from but unassimilable to any particular, functionally anchored perspective' (ibid.). This excess is the condition of vitality, the interval through which becoming continues. The fold, then, is not only a structural gesture; it is a site of passage where intensities arc, compress, or fade, slipping into new configurations. In this play of emergence and withdrawal, of incipience and limit, the artwork, like the body, lives and thinks.

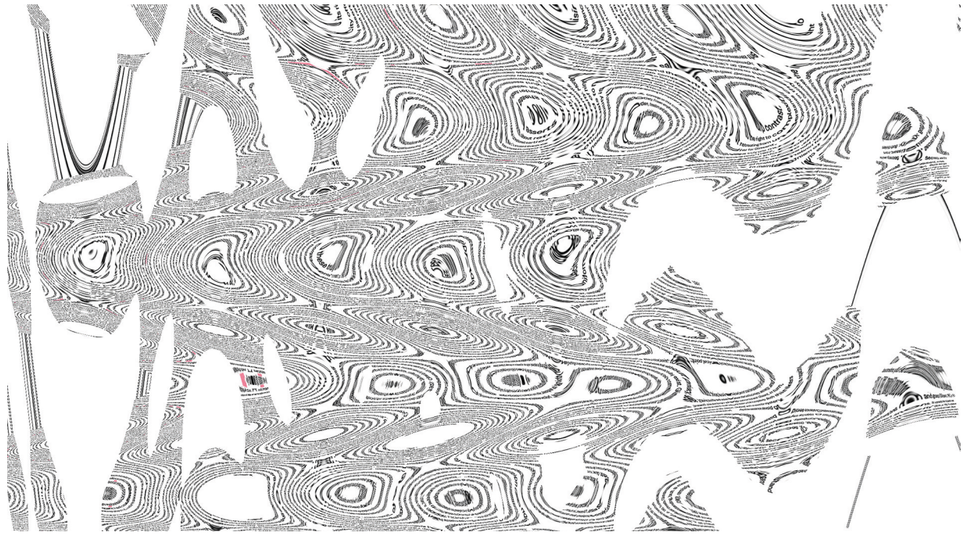
Whether through material experimentation, speculative writing, or sound-image composition, my practice moves between elements, each encounter shaping the next in unpredictable ways. This echoes Tim Ingold's notion of making as correspondence, a practice of moving along lines rather than imposing form upon them (2021). As Ingold suggests, lines are not endpoints but lifelines: gestures that emerge through attentiveness, not command. In this sense, every mark, every fold is an act of listening, of following movement as it happens, rather than fixing it in place. Ingold's *Correspondences* (2021) invites a mode of making that unfolds through attunement to materials, gestures, and environments. This resonates with my writing, which similarly resists fixed outcomes. Every line drawn or sentence formed is less a declaration than a response, a movement along a path shaped in the moment. In this way, writing becomes a form of becoming, processual and affective rather than representational.

Becoming-writing: Deleuze and Guattari

In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari write:

> If the writer is a sorcerer, it is because writing is a becoming, writing is traversed by strange becomings, that are not becomings-writer, but becomings-rat, becomings-insect, becomings-wolf, etc. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 240)

These 'strange becomings' are metamorphic intensities. The writer is moved, undone by forces within and beyond the self. In this process, identity folds again and again across lines of difference. Becoming-writing is not about crafting of stable meaning, but about dissolving into animal, material and world. This orientation toward becoming reshapes writing as a practice of unfolding. Language gathers multiplicities as it frays and ruptures. Writing becomes an event that folds thought into movement, an ongoing displacement of the self in favour of transformation. The screen becomes mirror a surface of transit, where the 'writer-sorcerer' is always mid-transformation. To become a writer-sorcerer is to relinquish mastery, to follow the tremors of the text and let its rhythms pull the writer into unfamiliar territory. Writing becomes conjuring, less the fixing of meaning than the stirring of affective force and 'matter-in-motion'. The text slips its bounds, folds back on the body that composed it, altering both writer and reader.



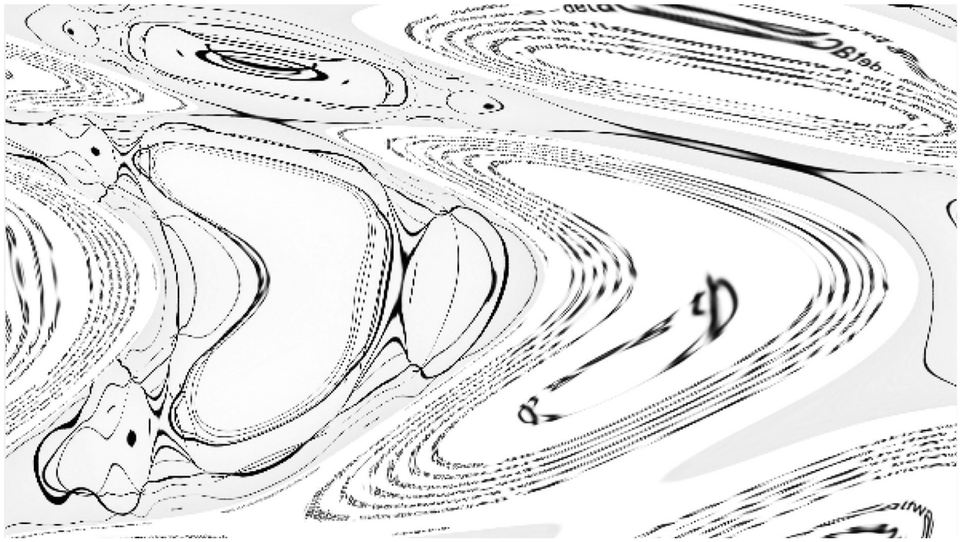
a fragment of Page 68 from Lines Book 3 (2024)

Beyond my control this fragment shows me something that is becoming.

In this sense, writing is a weaving of spells, an entanglement of letters, gestures, and rhythms that activate more than they represent. My spells are not mythic but acts of Deleuzian 'transduction': movements through which affect traverses thresholds, folding thought into sensation, and sensation into language. As 'sorcerer-writer', I do not impose meaning from a position of control. I listen, following the pulse through the spaces between the known and the not-yet-known. Writing becomes an incantation of becoming, a practice of 'staying-with' what emerges, and transforms. If writing is an incantation of 'becoming-with', then what of the surface it unfolds upon? What movements, intensities, or tensions press from beneath? Deleuze describes sense not as an underlying structure, but as something arising on the surface, a fleeting effect produced through the encounter of forces and figures. As Constantin Boundas elaborates in the introduction to *The Logic of Sense*, sense is 'a nonexisting entity, and, in fact, maintains very special relations with nonsense... As on a pure surface, certain points of one figure in a series refer to the points of another figure' (1990a, pp. xiii–xiv). In my practice, the surface becomes a responsive field of encounter, a terrain where meaning flickers into being through tension and disruption. Sense does not arrive fully formed; it emerges through a scuffle with nonsense, through interruption, and the not-yet-known. Surface knowledge folds not inward in search of hidden depth, but outward in complexity, layering thought through variation, contact, and resistance to resolution.

I borrow the term 'transduction' from Deleuze and Guattari, who define it as 'the manner in which one milieu serves as the basis for another, or conversely is established atop another milieu, dissipates in it or is constituted in it' (1987, p. 313).

For Deleuze and Guattari, milieus are never isolated: they communicate through thresholds, open to chaos, where rhythm and chaos meet in the in-between.



a fragment from Lines Book 4 (2024)

As I write, words simply lie on the page… No, not simply – they implicitly lie, often obscuring the essence of thought. My use of the word 'lie' is deliberate; these words lie upon the page, each occupying space, marking meaning. Lie drifts between meanings: to rest, to sleep, to deceive. Lie leans also toward the 'lie of the land', a contour both physical and metaphorical. Each sentence folds and knots. Linked together, these knots generate an emergent cartographic form – an intricate map of threads, where thought, sensation, and politics entwine in ways still partly unexplored. This knotwork of meaning extends across the intellectual landscape of this research, forming emergent contours into new knowledge.

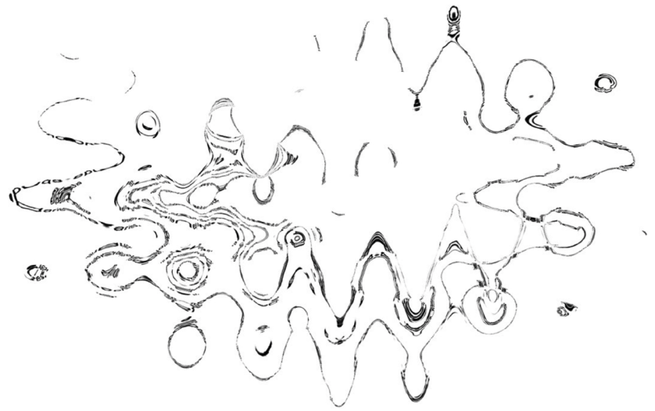
There is an underlying sense of folding and knotting material, a knowing that representation can never fully embody experience. Through experimentation as art practice, I recognise visual expression as a partial, mediated trace haunted by the fear of misalignment between affect and form. Making, for me, is about navigating the entangled relationships between materiality, thought, and emotion. In this sense, abstraction does not obscure meaning but draws the work closer to the body, inviting a deeper, more sensual engagement with experience itself. Folding and knotting here are active processes shaping the work. Lines twist, materials layer, and surfaces resist resolution, mirroring how memory and emotion refuse to settle into fixed form.

What is 'truth'? I have no idea. From a post-structuralist stance, Efe Baştürk, describes truth as that 'which represents the universality itself' (2018, p. 32). Drawing on Gottlob Frege, he further suggests truth is understood as 'not a property of sentences or thoughts, as language might lead one to suppose' (Frege, 1979, p. 234) because the conceptualisation of any linguistic structural form is unstable.

My work enacts the movement of experience—its tensions, ruptures, and reconfigurations—rather than representing it. Knotworks appear, yet the form often veils the raw material beneath. I am never certain the work can hold the emotional intensity that drives it. Perhaps this is why I turn to abstraction, which brings the work closer to the body, to sensation, allowing meaning to emerge through touch, presence, and process.

The essence of this thesis is to interrogate the fold, to look beneath the surface, to make visible the unseen forces that shape research-creation beyond language. Hidden flows of thought fold and knot into shifting configurations of meaning, structural knots, where thought, sensation, and politics tighten and release. These threads find new paths as they are tied, loosened, and reknotted. This ongoing movement resists fixed meaning, aligning with Deleuzean and posthuman feminist thinking, where knowledge unfolds through multiplicity, flux, and becoming. In this context, writing becomes part of a 'machinic assemblage', an evolving system in which words, ideas, affects and materials interrelate. Such assemblages, as Deleuze and Guattari describe, move along intersecting lines: one through bodies, materials, gestures – the tangible forces of practice – the other through language and signs, where expression brings about subtle shifts and 'incorporeal transformations' (1987, pp. 88–90). Writing here becomes the active composition of thought: a practice in which sense 'bursts out of containment', modulating across surfaces and materials (ibid., p. 90). Meaning arises through continual transformation, where intellectual, affective, and material forces are always in motion. Here, writing and making fold into one another as a shared mode of emergence.

'Assemblage' names the coupling of marks, tools, weather, and attention. Assemblage, Deleuze and Guattari write, 'in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously' (1987, pp. 22–23). Among its many aspects are the machinic and the collective, articulated 'by the movements of deterritorialization' (ibid., p. 90). Always in flux, assemblages fold and refold, loosening and reconfiguring form, sense, and relation.

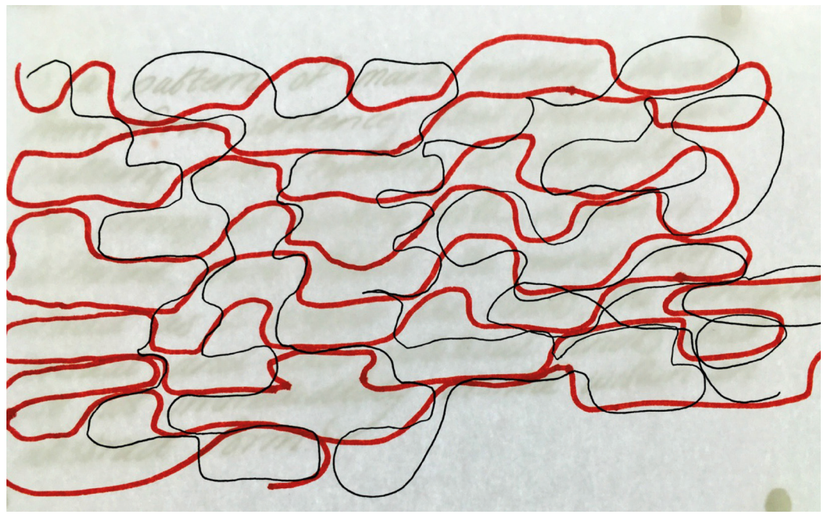


new life III (2024) – playing with words in Photoshop

Tampering with aesthetics

The screen is a site of unfolding, a field where thought spills over revealing the folds in the textual fabric of words, each fold momentarily catching sense before it disperses. These folds are embodied impressions, where writing breathes, falters, and returns to the pulse of lived experience. Writing within this speculative space becomes a process of recursive folding: turning thought inside-out, doubling back on the screen, refusing arrival, like Lewis Carroll's Alice, who does not simply cross into another world, but folds into it. Carroll's writing moves not toward closure, but into the paradoxical, the not-yet-known, the still-unfolding. This interplay between writing, space, and unstable logic gestures toward the realm of make-believe, less fantasy than method. The 'what if' becomes a generative device, a pattern of marks that does not escape the world but reconfigures it. In Alice this plays out as method: writing constructs liminal terrains governed by their own rhythms and internal logic. Alice and Virginia Woolf's Mary Carmichael, though invented, reveal something real about the nature of becoming. Their roles as speculative figures will emerge more clearly later in this thesis. To write through such characters is to enter a shifting field, where sense loops and lingers, and each mark carries the potential to open into the unknown, each word opening new dimensions of thought and creation.

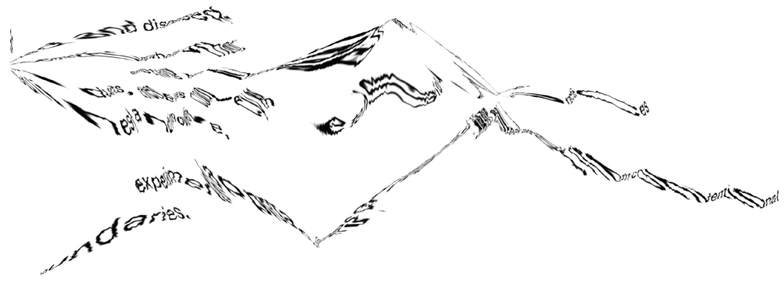
Alice becomes Queen, yet the journey is emergent, not teleological: 'what if' names a speculative method, a way of posing open questions rather than aiming at a fixed end, with relations and matter assembling en route. What matters is not arrival but the folds that compose her, assemblages taking shape along the way.



What if (2022)

In *What if*, I traced two paths around words, threading lines along their contours so language and thought folded together. Rather than impose order, I let ideas surface on the page and steered the tension between form and meaning; writing became as much arranging thought as composing rhythm, a movement in which form rose from the folds. That same impulse gathered force in *New Life II* (2024), where a single sentence from *Lines* unfolded into an image of words, its structure dynamic rather than fixed, guiding me as much as I guided it.

Pressing *What If* against the studio window, the words 'pattern' and 'mark' surfaced, opaque. What if I follow those notions in my practice?



New Life II (2024)

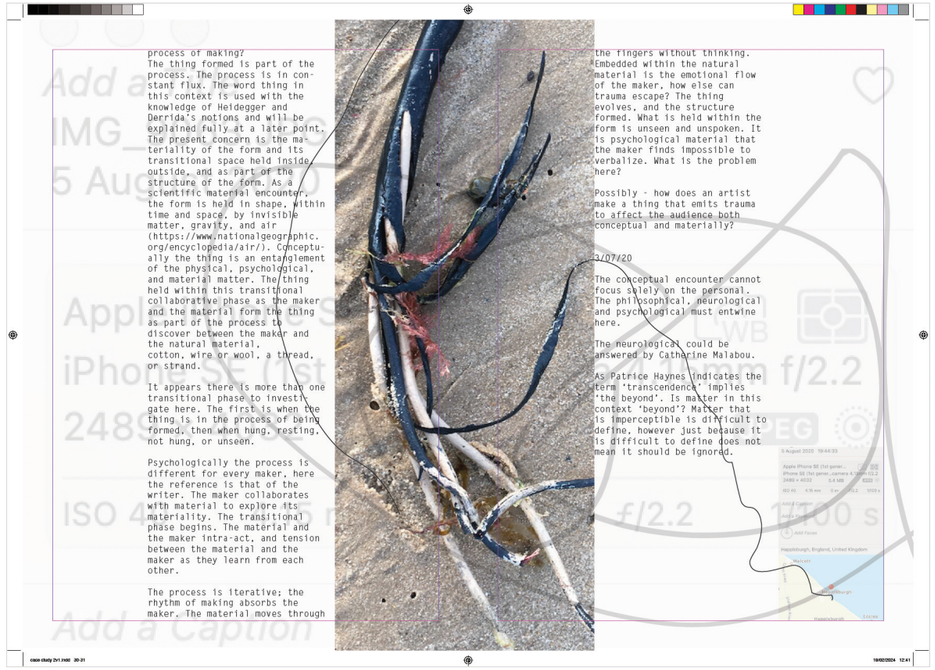
By the summer of 2024, I had completed *Lines*: a preliminary mapping of my research, a cartography of its genealogy, geography, and geology. The work stayed anchored in making and slowly shifted my sense of language from the conceptual to the spatial. It became active. It was alive. Earlier experiments had already pointed the way. In *Ten Knots within a Knotwork* (overleaf), I used InDesign not simply to design pages but to think on the screen, letting the page itself become a site of emergence. Text grew responsive; weight, rhythm, and spacing materialised meaning. The opacity of layers, the pull of what would traditionally be named the 'negative space', and the refusal of certain words to align, turned writing into a composing of form that was intuitive, tentative, affectively charged.

Folding words into space became a method in its own right, less about explaining than sensing the rise of an idea. Some intensities would not be stated directly; they appeared through the page, in the pause of a line break, in the slight dissonance of misalignment. Meaning arrived through friction, between screen and depth, precision and drift. I was no longer simply writing; I was folding psyche into form, letting thought spill, crease, and unfold across the screen.

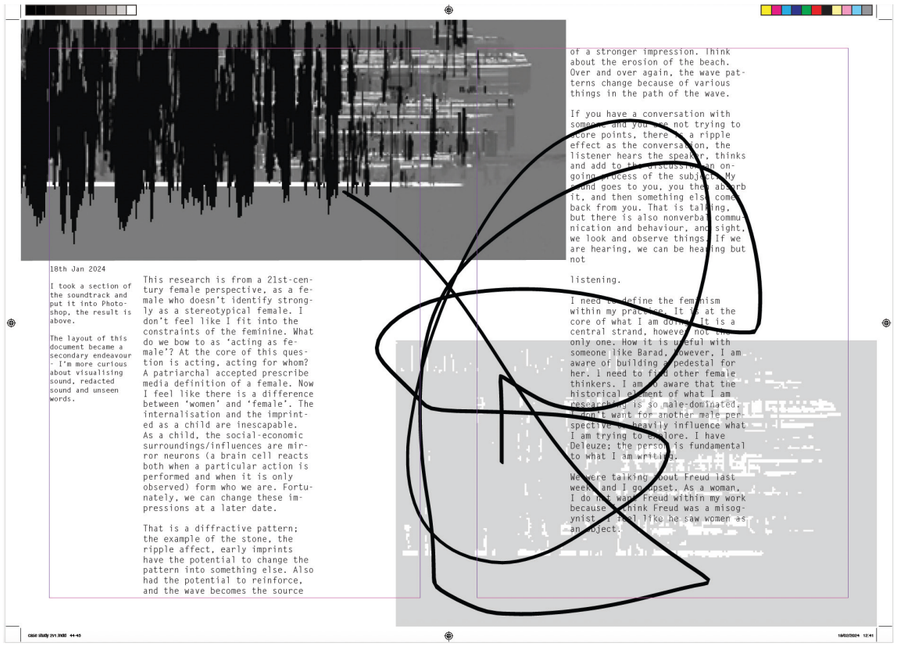
The following two pages present unedited material, kept intact to register the work's immediacy and rawness.



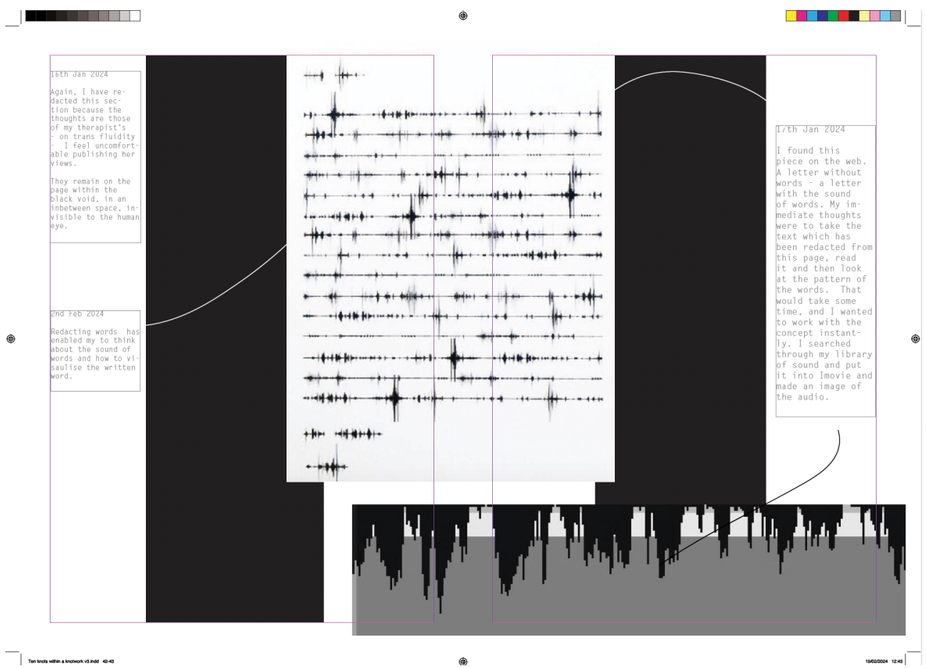
Knot 3 from Ten knots within a knotwork



Knot 6 from Ten knots within a knotwork



Knot 9 from Ten knots within a knotwork



Knot 9 from Ten knots within a knotwork

The Fold as conceptual terrain

The practice of folding on screen carried me back to the book. I had already been enacting folding in my work; returning to page 243 of *The Fold* (1991) clarified it as concept and method. The pages themselves, like a fold, resisted linear reading, asking to be touched, re-read, re-worked. I highlighted fragments and rearranged them, letting colour set the rhythm of my eyes. From theory to embodiment: the work shifts from reading to making, where thought becomes operation in material practice. Deleuze argues that once the fold is treated as a method, an operation or act, the 'unfold' is no longer prior but the outcome of that act (1991, p. 243). Handling the pages, tracing, annotating, folding, mirrored this claim that thought is in motion. Weight, texture, and scent collapsed the boundary between mind and matter, turning reading into a participatory act where material and idea are inseparable. Here the fold is a performative gesture, a way of doing, becoming with the work.

As I marked the text, I realised how Deleuze's writing folds together action and form: 'matter which reveals its texture becomes material, in the way that form which reveals its folds becomes power' (ibid., p. 243). I sensed this while giving the page a new texture, striking words with colour in a single, vivid gesture. Deleuze contrasts 'texturology', the textured surfaces of materiality, with logology, the folded articulations of thought; my practice inhabited both. I wanted to push the material further, first through the tactile act of marking, then digitally, dragging a line across the page in Photoshop to manipulate the form. In this in-between space, the writing paused; I could breathe again, and something unexpected emerged. Over time, this iterative engagement blurred the distinction between reading and making.

As Niamh McDonnell and Sjoerd van Tuinen note, 'The Fold resembles any other book... yet it is singular because it enunciates the process of reading as something which takes place through the irreducible differential of clear/confused thoughts and distinct/obscure ideas' (2010, p. 16).

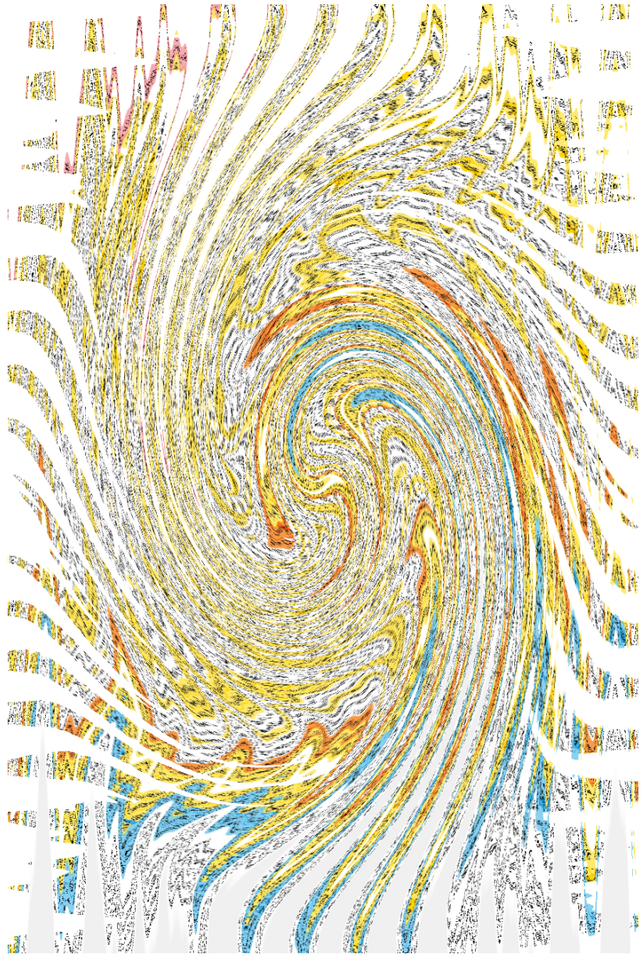
the fact is precisely that—the expressed does not exist beyond its expressions.

3. *The High and the Low:* The perfect harmony of the scission, or the resolution of tension, is effected by the distribution of two stories, which both belong to one and the same world (the line of the universe). The matter-facade tends downwards while the soul-chamber rises. The infinite fold thus passes between two stories. But in differentiating itself, it swarms over both sides: the fold differentiates itself into folds, which insinuate themselves into the interior and overflow onto the exterior, articulating themselves into the high and the low. Coils of matter when conditioned by exteriority, folds of the soul when conditioned by enclosure. Coils of the musical score and folds of the song. The Baroque is the preeminent informal art: on the ground, at ground level, at hand, it comprises the textures of matter (the great modern Baroque painters, from Paul Klee to Fautrier, Dubuffet, Bettencourt . . .). But the informal is not the negation of form; it posits form as folded, as existing only as "mental landscape," in the soul or the mind, at a height; it thus includes immaterial folds as well. The kinds of matter constitute the base, but the folded shapes are its forms. One moves from materials to forms. From grounds and terrains to habitats and salons. From *Texturology* to *Logology*. These are the two orders, the two stories of Dubuffet, and the discovery of their harmony, which must go all the way to the point of indiscernability: is it a texture, or a fold of the soul, of thought?[26] Matter which reveals its texture becomes material, in the way that form which reveals its folds becomes power. It is the pair material-power which, in the Baroque, replaces matter and form (the primitive forces being those of the soul).

4. *The Unfold:* certainly not the opposite of the fold, nor its effacement, but the continuation or the extension of its act, the condition of its manifestation. When the fold ceases to be represented and becomes a "method," an operation, an act, the unfold becomes the result of the act which is expressed in precisely that way. Hantaï begins by repre-

26. On "the two orders," material and immaterial, cf., Jean Dubuffet, *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants*, collected and presented by Hubert Damisch, (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), vol. 2, 79–81. Cf., also the *Catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet*, ed. Max Loreau (Paris: Minuit, 1964): "Tables paysagées, paysages du mental", and "Habitats, Closerie Falbala, Salon d'été" (the Logological cabinet is a veritable interior of a monad).

Deleuze, 1991, p. 243



Pages 243 from Gilles Deleuze, The Fold, Yale French Studies 80 (1991): 227–247.
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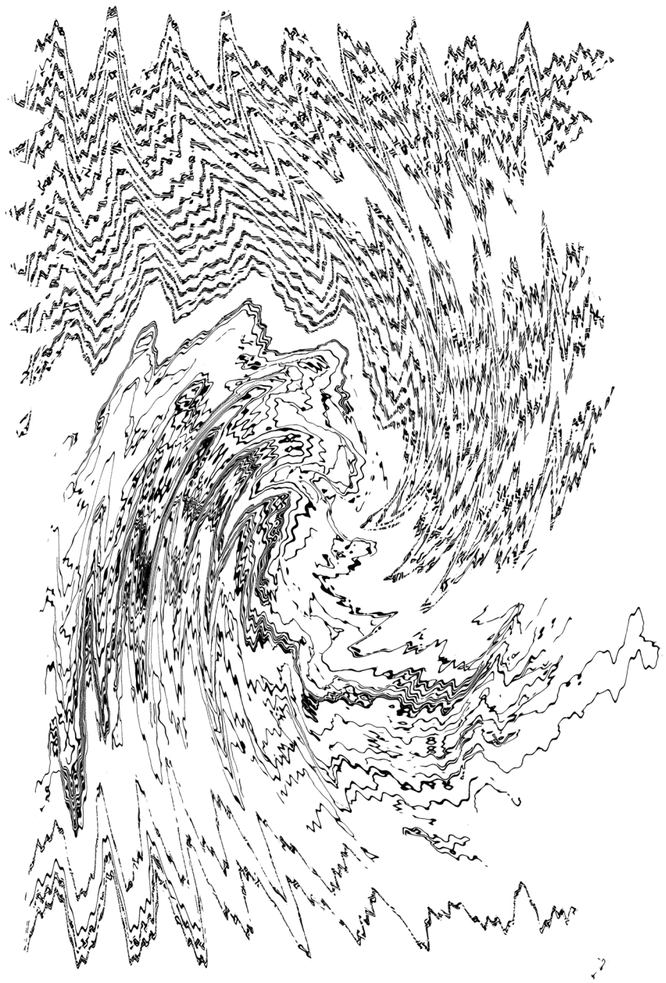
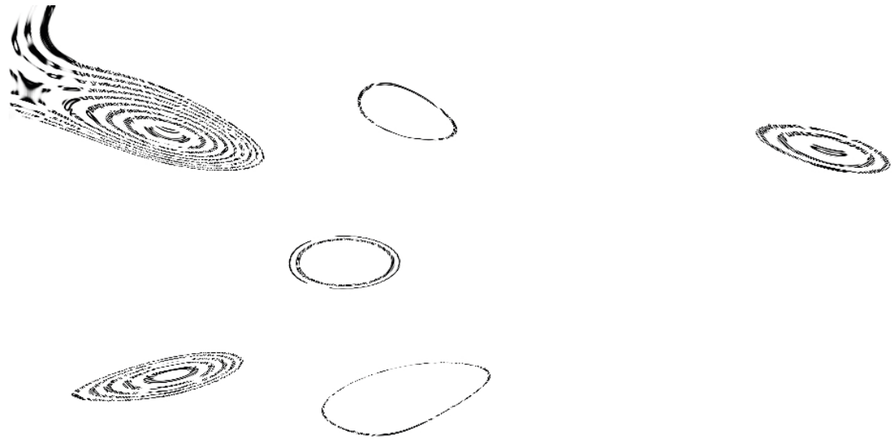


The woodblock print of Katsushika Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (1831), surfaced in my mind.

Lines Book 3, page 7

Carrying this method into my own pages, I extended it to page 7 of *Lines Book 3* (2024), where words dissolved into form, becoming shifting surfaces that opened interpretive spaces where sense moves. What first appeared as a diffractive pattern becomes something stranger: a topological surface resisting immediate translation, opening new intellectual terrain. These folded planes extend rather than represent, carrying the original text into unknown spaces, traced through delay, repetition, and reconfiguration. In this liminal suspension, the fold becomes a method of thinking-in-motion. Words, abstracted into form, remain charged with potential, vibrating between the legible and illegible, the said and the yet-to-be spoken. This is speculative navigation, composing with what might come.

A fluid, responsive methodology emerges—attuned to hesitation and to how diffraction and distortion carry felt knowledge that eludes speech. To fold is to speculate: to let the work yield, spiral back, then advance. Each fold is a divergence where sense holds in suspension and possibility opens. The fold is not only method, it is a way of being-with the work.



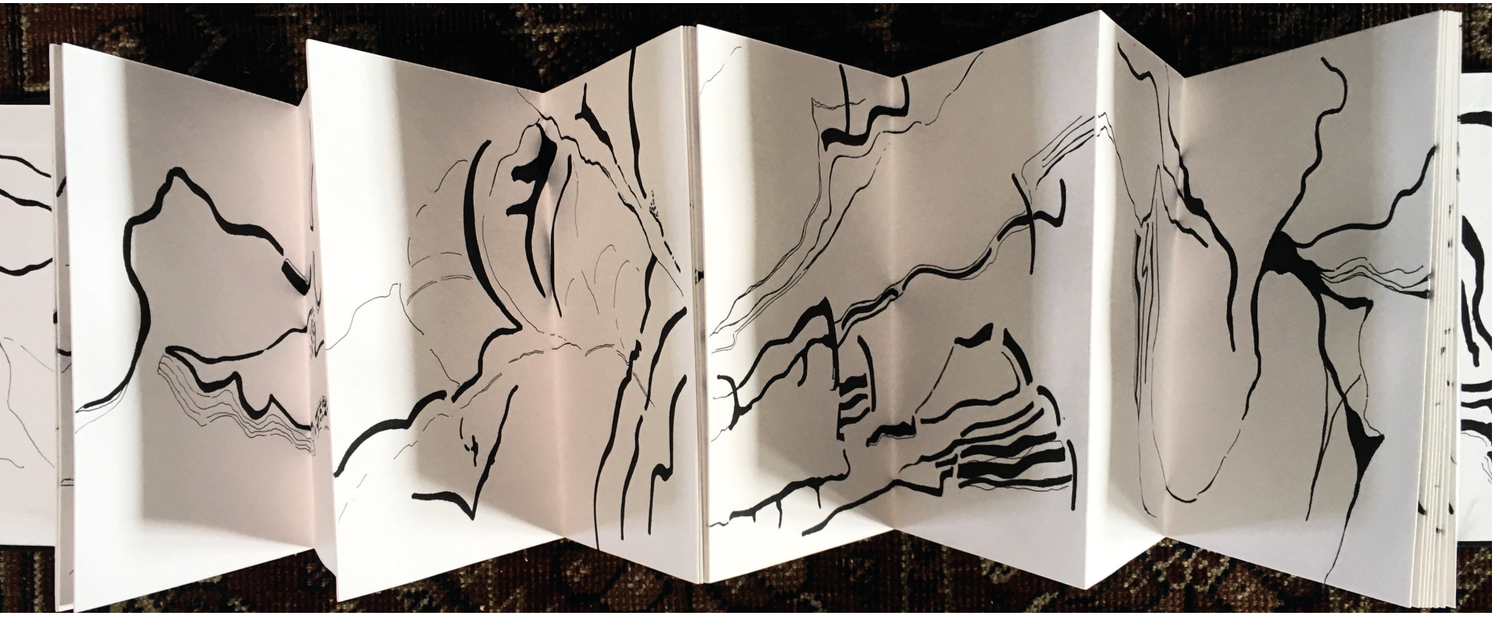
A few sentences from page 24 of Lines 4 (2024)

Folding thoughts: writing at the threshold, discovering air

At the threshold between uncertainty and a fragile clarity, I find myself endlessly folding words. Paragraphs emerge, dissolve, and reconfigure in a process that echoes Baroque sensibilities, curved, layered, and always in motion. The early anchors of this thesis, Baroque aesthetics, the May 1968 riots, and the concept of event, now drift and resurface elsewhere. Thought becomes a recursive rhythm, a knotwork of gestures that resists linear progression. The fold that moved through my hands in marking Deleuze's page now moves through the page itself. What gives vitality to *page 24 of Lines 4* (2024), above, is not structure alone, but the air around it: the light between lines, the spaces not yet filled. Air, the unseen, ungraspable element, becomes the open field in which the fold can breathe. It unsettles containment. It makes room for divergence, for the possibility that what matters most may be what is not yet legible.

Absence is not a void but a generative force. The space between words, the pause before articulation, the rhythm of breath that shapes the writing, these are not gaps to be filled, but textures of meaning. Within these intervals, the practice of thinking-through-making becomes attuned to more than what is written. It listens. It waits. It transforms. If the fold has guided this enquiry thus far, as gesture, as method, as way of being with, then it is now, in the breath between folds, that I begin to turn. Not away, but slightly askew. The next section will step into this divergence, testing the edges of the fold rather than breaking it. What happens when the fold is no longer enough? When other thinkers offer resistance, friction, or an opening? The air, like the fold, remains. It reminds me: not all movement is forward. Some spirals deepen. Others must simply undo.

Folding theory into practice, and matter into meaning, demands scrutiny of the philosophical framework that underpins my thinking and seeps through my practice. Deleuze has been a central influence: his work offers fluidity, openness, and a resistance to fixity that speaks directly to my methodology of folding. But with his influence comes tension. I realised my engagement with Deleuze risked becoming overly deferential, with the possibility of echoing rather than questioning theory.



Unfold the fold (2023)

Expanding *The Fold* through a posthuman feminist lens

Folding seeps across physical, material, digital, and philosophical domains, crossing and re-crossing through acts of making. Yet even as I work with and through Deleuze, I remain attuned to the limitations of his abstract conceptualism, particularly when viewed through a posthuman feminist lens. While his work offers vital tools for thinking transformation, becoming, and material entanglement, it often bypasses the situated, embodied specificity that feminist theorists insist upon. This tension is not an impasse but a generative friction, fuelling a processual and relational mode of inquiry.

Posthuman feminist thinkers have variously reworked, or thought through, Deleuze's concepts to foreground ethics, embodiment, politics, and affect. Braidotti (2007, 2011) critiques the universalising tendencies in Deleuze's notion of becoming, proposing instead a feminist ontology grounded in embodied difference and affirmative ethics. Claire Colebrook interrogates his conceptual handling of sexual difference (2000), while Elizabeth Grosz highlights his limited engagement with gender and sexuality (2011, 1994). Dorothea Olkowski challenges Deleuze's abstraction of embodiment into flows and intensities, calling for a materialist feminist ethics rooted in the concrete socio-political realities of women's bodies (1999, 2012, 2021). Erin Manning brings to the fore the lack of affect and embodiment in Deleuze's philosophical practice through her notion of minor gesture, emphasising micro-political, affective emergence as an embodied, rather than abstract, process of transformation (2016a, 2016b).

Informed by these thinkers, my work extends Deleuze's concepts toward a framework that is materially grounded and affectively attuned. The fold, in my practice, is an intensification of folds within folds, forming knots within knotworks, where processes accumulate, rupture, and re-form. Rather than signalling revelation or unravelling, folding develops into knotting here and denotes dynamic assembly, coalescence, and interruption. As method and movement, the knot resists closure, embraces multiplicity, and navigates the tangled terrain of lived experience. Through research-creation, my approach opens space for a feminist posthuman methodology that engages the political and ethical complexity of bodies, relations, and environments as entangled, processual, and always in becoming.

Breaking the spell of Deleuze

Even as my practice remains entangled with Deleuze's concepts, it must also hold them at a critical distance. Admiration alone risks repetition: critique opens the possibility of transformation. While many thinkers engage broadly with Deleuze's work, few have taken up *The Fold* (1993) with critical distance and creative insight. Alain Badiou (1994) and Simon O'Sullivan (2006) offer important contributions, and I return to their work later, but my attention first turns to what appears to be the only dedicated critical reader on the subject: *Deleuze and The Fold* (2010), edited by McDonnell and van Tuinen. This volume gathers voices that resist the seduction of Deleuze's conceptual elegance, engaging *The Fold* critically and generatively.

Initially, I thought the collection was a homage to Leibniz, whose bizarre metaphysical threads underpin Deleuze's thinking and echo throughout my research. I was cautious not to become lost in Leibniz's vast abstractions of monads, which could easily warrant a separate philosophical inquiry of their own. Instead, I was drawn to Niamh McDonnell's essay, *Leibniz's Combinatorial Art of Synthesis and the Temporal Interval of the Fold*, which offers a reading of Leibniz's monad that is rich and critically accessible (2010, pp. 65–68).

For a comprehensive account of the monad, see Lloyd Strickland's *Leibniz's Monadology - A New Translation and Guide* (2014).



In-between at Unfolding Narratives, LCC (2025)

McDonnell's interpretation of 'the monad' via 'the fold', shifts away from fixed rational systems, reframing perception as something unfolding through time and affect. This thinking parallels my practice, particularly with *In-between* (2025). Through McDonnell, via Leibniz and Deleuze, I came to see the space where *In-between* was suspended, functioning like a contemporary monad, not as a closed unit of reason but, as McDonnell describes, a site where change arises through sensation and meaning emerges in layered folds. Her reading reinforces my methodological approach grounded in materiality, affectivity, and uncertainty. Nothing in *In-between* holds a fixed status. Thread, paper, and sound resist decoding, drawing the passerby into a sensory field where thought emerges through movement and tension.

This movement of concepts and matter folding into new constellations resonates with Birgit Kaiser's chapter in the same volume, which examines Deleuze's reconfiguration of analogy. For Deleuze, analogy is no longer based on resemblance or identity, it becomes a 'higher analogy' that expresses difference (1993, p. 29; Kaiser, 2010, pp. 218–219). Through *In-between*, something similar emerged without deliberate intention: a work formed of floating anchors, using familiar materials stretched beyond their usual roles to invite the viewer into a new territory, a 'baroque house', another world where the air was as vital as the visible work.

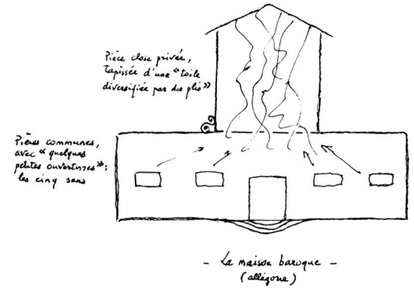


Diagram from Gilles Deleuze, Le pli: Leibniz et le Baroque (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2007a), p. 7. © Éditions de Minuit. Reproduced for academic research.

Kaiser's analysis of the baroque house deepens my thinking-through-making. She works closely with Deleuze's concept of soul and body, metaphysical and physical, as strata generated through the differentiating action of the fold. For Kaiser, the fold is a dynamic force, producing distinction without collapsing into sameness, simultaneously archiving and transforming.

This aligns with my practice, where in *Spider-fly* and *In-between* the fold takes on a physical, spatial, and sensory form. It becomes an environment to be felt, inhabited, and moved through, a force of relation that links the rhythms of making with the viewer's embodied experience. In this way, I move through and beyond Kaiser's alignment with Deleuze, folding philosophical abstraction into the material, affective, and situated terrain of posthuman feminist practice.



Spider-fly (2024) - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/spiderfly-video/

Where Kaiser offers conceptual architecture, Simon O'Sullivan steps across its threshold and inhabits the fold as method and methodology. In *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari* (2006) he proposes a generative route through the fold aligned with the sensibilities of a feminist posthuman baroque. O'Sullivan was the first thinker, I found beyond my supervisory team, to affirm folding as a concept and as a way of making and thinking. His writing first challenged me, as an academic, to work within the fold, to enter into its rhythms and tensions from the standpoint of posthuman feminist materialism, to think with and beyond the Deleuzian fold (2006, p. 140).

Although O'Sullivan offers a valuable methodological path to think alongside the fold, posthuman feminist philosophers such as Dorothea Olkowski, Donna Haraway, and Rosi Braidotti prompt me to examine the philosophical ground I stand on. They openly challenge the gendered assumptions that underpin much of Western philosophy, as they engage Deleuze from a posthuman feminist perspective, foregrounding tensions around subjectivity, embodiment, and ethics.

Though posthuman feminist philosophers find Deleuze's concepts of becoming, assemblages, and deterritorialisation generative, they also caution that such ideas risk sidestepping the specificities of embodied difference and the systemic structures that shape lived experience.

Olkowski, in particular, pursues Deleuze with precision. She critiques his abstraction of embodiment into flows and intensities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), arguing instead for a materialist feminist stance that acknowledges the socio-political realities of 'women's bodies' and the power systems that shape them (Olkowski, 1999. p.33). For her, ethics must be grounded in concrete power relations, not deferred to open-ended processes of becoming (Olkowski, 2012). While her critique is vital, it remains tethered to a traditional notion of 'the female'. My practice leans towards a posthuman feminist orientation that embraces multiplicity, material entanglement, and the generative ambiguity of embodied difference.

Rosi Braidotti and Rick Dolphijn offer a contrasting view to Olkowski, arguing that Deleuze and Guattari address structural power through a different ontological register. In *Deleuze and Guattari and Fascism* (2022), they describe how their critique of fascism operates both at the level of state institutions and at the micro-political level, within desire, subjectivity, and everyday practices (ibid., pp. 6–8). 'Microfascism' reveals how power is internalised, operating through norms, unconscious structures, and embodied social arrangements. From this view, their ethics are situated and resistant, fostering new modes of becoming. Braidotti's feminist posthumanism builds on this, showing how an ontology of difference can underpin materialist ethics responsive to embodied political and affective realities (2022).

Olkowski's critique extends to Deleuze's basic assumptions about knowledge and being. She questions his reliance on abstract mathematical models and metaphysical concepts such as the virtual, arguing that, while philosophically rich, they risk drifting away from the messy realities of life that feminist posthuman thought insists upon (Olkowski, 2012). In *Morpho-logic in Deleuze and Irigaray* (2000), Olkowski reorients Deleuze's notion of becoming through Irigaray, placing sexual difference and embodied materiality at the centre. 'Morpho-logic' names a mode of thought attuned to how form emerges through embodied difference, resisting abstraction and grounding becoming in the material, sexual, and affective textures of lived experience, 'to the 'bodies' of women' (ibid., p. 90).

I acknowledge critiques of Deleuze (and Guattari) within postcolonial and feminist discourse. Dorothea Olkowski's engagement with Deleuze is productively ambivalent, whereas Rosi Braidotti adopts his concepts more integratively. Like Braidotti, I draw on Deleuze yet remain critical of the philosophical tradition that positions the white, educated European male as universal authority; Braidotti resists this by dissolving 'man as the allegedly universal measure of all things' (2019, p. 32). Addressing postcolonial concerns, Braidotti turns to Simone Bignall and Paul Patton (2010), who draw on Kaplan's critique of the 'observer position in knowledge production: Deleuze and Guattari's subject/object framing risks preventing the object from speaking on its own terms, reproducing colonial logics (Bignall & Patton 2010, p. 2; Kaplan 1996, p. 88). The question persists: how do we create platforms where those othered can speak on their own terms?

For Olkowski, knowledge must remain accountable to life's concrete conditions, rather than suspended in speculative potential.This commitment aligns with her broader call for a feminist epistemology that bridges scientific inquiry with materialist philosophy (Olkowski, 2012). Drawing again on Irigaray, she argues for a practice-based, politically responsive mode of knowledge production, one that refuses to obscure systemic oppression in favour of fluid assemblages. Her feminist posthumanist stance seeks to reclaim agency for marginalised subjects, insisting on a politics grounded in material struggle (Olkowski, 2021). I take this less as a rejection of becoming than as a reframing, one that resonates with my everyday living, where concepts are tested through affective encounters and material processes. What matters is not fidelity to theory, but what a concept can do, how it moves, transforms, and opens space for thinking, making, and becoming.

Claire Colebrook observes, feminist engagements with Deleuze rarely settle into affirmation or rejection. Through Colebrook, Deleuze becomes a provocation: 'can feminism be the affirmation of an event and not one more grounding narrative? This places the event of becoming as a challenge rather than a position' (2000, p. 13). For me, this provocation opens an ongoing question: how might we reconceive subjectivity, embodiment, and becoming outside normative logics and binary structures, where transformation is privileged over resolution, and material process over representation?

Olkowski's reframing of becoming, through Irigaray, material specificity, and a feminist ethics of situated knowledge, offers a counterweight to Deleuze's more abstract formulations. Her critique keeps me attentive to what is grounded, embodied, and politically accountable. Yet as I move forward, I also want to test the fold through another lens: Alain Badiou, whose reading of *The Fold* questions Deleuze's philosophical discipline and structural clarity.

Interrogating *The Fold*: Deleuze, Badiou, and the multiplicity of thought

Deleuze's writing is often described as experimental and transformative, resisting fixed categories in favour of continual reconfiguration (Braidotti, 2014, p. 166; Colebrook, 2006, p. 154; O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 2). Yet this openness has drawn criticism, most notably from Alain Badiou, who questions its philosophical rigour, particularly regarding subjectivity and structure. He calls *The Fold* 'an admirable book [that] offers us a vision and a conception of our world' (1994, p. 51), but his praise is shadowed by unease. For Badiou, Deleuze's shift from rupture and contradiction toward what he calls 'the *being* of discord' (ibid. p.51) moves away from any form of philosophical rigour. Subjectivity no longer emerges through fidelity to an event but folds inward, modulating with the world rather than breaking from it (ibid.). For Badiou 'it is absolutley necessary to unfold the fold, to force it into some immortal unfold' (ibid., p.52)

The Fold as seduction or rigour?

Badiou identifies two key moves in *The Fold*: an antidialectical event that sidesteps opposition and an antiextensional multiplicity that resists hierarchy (ibid.). Deleuze's events arise through subtle modulation; his multiplicities are emergent and self-organising. Badiou admires the elegance yet warns that without structural cuts, philosophy risks becoming seduction rather than critique. Deleuze enchants 'the multiple, seduces the One, solidifying the implausible, [while] citing the incongruous', Badiou writes (ibid., p. 52). For Badiou, the fold and its companion, the monad, appear as metaphysical flourishes; too smooth, enclosed and committed to continuity, at the expense of rupture or intervention (ibid., p. 59).

So what—for practice?

I resist Badiou as a rule-maker, but I welcome his critique as a pause for rigour in liminal practice. Do my methods register disruption, drift into aesthetic smoothness, or hold open a cut that compels rigour? I test my Deleuzian leanings not in theory alone but in the contingencies of making. Scores introduce interruption, timed stops, erasures, blank fields that unsettle flow. Materials themselves resist, catching or fraying in ways that push against smooth modulation. Constraints; weather, fixed windows of time, found limits, demand response rather than assimilation. Traces of before and after keep interventions visible, exposing seams rather

Liminality, from the Latin limen, threshold, cross-piece, or sill, and linked to limes, (a boundary or embankment), refers not only to spaces of transition but to sites of negotiation (Etymonline, 2024). Thresholds mark both division and passage, containment and potential movement. Deleuze aligns with this notion, rejecting fixed structures in favour of becoming, deterritorialisation, and transformation (Deleuze, 1990b; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Becoming resists stable identities, existing as a continuous passage through difference; deterritorialisation unmoors us from fixed structures, open spaces of potentiality.

than allowing closure. Each gesture presses the fold against its own tendency to continuity, holding it open to rupture, interruption, and difference. In this way, Deleuzian affirmation meets Badiou's demand for rigour, not as rule but as accountability woven into the work.

My practice unfolds within a liminal operative field — a working threshold where form and formlessness, stability and break, thought and matter meet and exchange. The score does not guarantee resistance; it stages conditions in which it might occur. Rupture, tension, and fluidity remain central to the knotwork, keeping the work to account without foreclosure. The question is not whether my forms represent resistance, but whether they perform it — reconfiguring dominant patterns or replicating them in a seductive guise. These are not contradictions to solve but tensions to inhabit, aiming for a practice both rigorous and responsive. If rationality affirms what is already deemed reasonable, my task is to make space for what resists such schemas. Knotwork and folding trace uncertainty, pulling lines of tension to their fraying edges — into silence, dissonance, or affective disturbance. My aim is not to resolve but to attune; not to define but to sense otherwise.

In The Fold (1993), this liminality is perpetual, always 'between two folds', in constant mediation and transformation (ibid., p. 13). The virtual, for Deleuze, is another liminal space, holding multiple futures before their actualisation (ibid., pp. 51–52).

Anthropologist, Victor Turner describes liminality as an indeterminate space between fixed categories, a site of transformation (1991, pp. 95–96). Building on this, educational theorists Jan Meyer and Ray Land extend this to threshold concepts: moments of probable and often 'irreversible' conceptual shift, where existing frameworks are unsettled to allow new understandings (2003, p. 5). Both emphasise the generative force of liminal states, resonating with Deleuze's commitment to fluid in-between spaces. Here, liminality is an ongoing negotiation, where meaning, identity, and matter remain in flux, resisting closure, embracing continuous emergence.

Without thinking, or more accurately, not knowing, I welcome glitches, unexpected folds, and 'cuts' in Barad's sense: agential boundary making actions that specify what appears and how the artwork might act (Barad, 2007). The 'cut' is not opposed to the fold; it opens the interval in which the fold can move. I name that interval air. The space that lets a difference breathe, acknowledging the material porosity through which other forces and matters may pass, catch, or adhere. If cut opens an interval; the knot keeps that interval in play. Knots bind lines, yet through their porosity, let air pass through, so other forms can become embedded within the work, and it stays answerable without being sealed.

As much as possible, I record traceable decisions, the before and the after, so each intervention leaves a seam that can be read. If Badiou asks for rigour, this is my answerability: knotting and folding as a continuous process that embraces the necessity of a cut, tracing uncertainty to its fraying edge, into silence, dissonance, or affective disturbance. The aim is not resolution but attunement, not definition but a sensing otherwise. In this way the fold remains a live method, tempered by points of break that keep the work from closing over itself. And still a question threads through: what of the air—what moves within it? Having set out cut, air, and knot as the operative conditions of making, I turn to fabulation to name how language works

In *Meeting the Universe Halfway,* Barad states: 'The agential cut enacts a local resolution of the inherent ontological indeterminacy, thereby producing determinate boundaries and properties of entities' (ibid., p. 348). In other words, an agential cut carves local clarity from indeterminacy so that difference can breathe, with boundaries and capacities taking shape within an interval of air. Barad emphasises that such cuts are situated, performative resolutions that specify what comes to matter and how within the phenomenon (ibid., pp. 140, 148, 348).

within this field. By fabulation I mean an operative mode of telling: a material gesture that enacts agential cuts, configures what can appear, and keeps the interval of air open. It is not a detour into story but the work's linguistic fold: a speech act at the limit in Deleuze's sense that composes a collectivity as it tells; an element of the apparatus in Barad's sense that performs determinations rather than merely describing; and an answer to Badiou's worry about seduction, whose effects remain situated, legible, and accountable in practice. Fabulation shifts expression toward world-making: captions and traces do not illustrate the work; they world it, holding the process to account without closure. The interval opened by cut and held by knot is linguistic too: fabulation names how words act as folds within the work, keeping air in play.

Fabulation as fold: unspoken methods of rupture

Taken as a fold, fabulation offers a way to think of telling as world-making rather than as reporting. Manning's thought threads through my own, often in dialogue with Deleuze. In *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*, she describes fabulation and mythmaking not only as narrative devices but as affective orientations, where 'the wildness of fabulation' stirs the edges of the sensible' (2020, p. 139). This wildness resists capture, pressing against demands for function or closure. In *The Minor Gesture*, she insists that fabulation 'is not the denial of the truth. It is another species altogether, a dramatization born of joy that composes at the limits of experience in the making. Fabulation is true! Absolutely true, in the only register of truth affirmation knows: the pragmatically speculative' (2016a, p. 227). Here it appears less as story than as movement: pragmatic in what it does, speculative in what cannot be known until the doing.

Deleuze sharpens this sense when, in *Cinema 2*, he writes: 'Fabulation is not an impersonal myth, but neither is it a personal fiction: it is a word in act, a speech-act through which the character never ceases to cross the boundary which would separate his private business from politics, and which itself produces collective utterances' (1989, p. 222; translation modified). For him, it is a speech-act at the limit: it tells the event as it unfolds, inventing a collectivity of utterance of a people and a worlding that exceeds the human alone.

What compels me about this mode of telling is the way it moves like a fold, opening surfaces without fixing them, narrating in the midst of passage rather than from a point of resolution. It allows me to think of

my methodologies as more than illustration, as modes of world-making that fold and unfold with the work itself. In knotwork and folding, in the texture of sound and the glitch of digital surfaces, I sense this movement at play: not a narrative imposed from outside, but a texturing that emerges with an event, speculative and unfinished. For me, it becomes a method of attunement, a way of staying with what Manning calls 'the minor', the 'what else', and the 'not-yet', the unspoken edges where practice invents its own conditions of collective utterance (2020, 2016a).

From this perspective, the impulse to ask "so what?" is not a dismissal but a threshold: the point where comprehension meets the ethical demand to remain with what resists finality. Approaching this threshold becomes a way of lingering in the knot, orienting practice toward values that lie not in use but in the capacity to move, shift, and open. Folding is one such mode: an iterative, embodied response to the not-yet, the imperceptible, the felt. In my visual works, folding surfaces through knotting, distortion, and repetition are processes that do not illustrate theory, but enact it. A folded printed sheet from *In-between* is one such instance: a material and conceptual experiment, a surface dense with interference, gesture, and affect. Meaning glitches between sense and excess, echoing Manning's observation that 'language at the edge of comprehension… is moved less by the necessity to explain than by the realization, always come to anew, that telling is a form of liveness completely connected to the event's own emergence' (2020, p. 123). These folds become sculptural interruptions and speculative rhythms, forms of fabulation in their own right, world-making gestures oriented toward what cannot be resolved.

If, for Badiou, rupture is a decisive break, this practice reframes rupture as disturbance within continuity, interruptions, glitches, and excesses that reorient the fold without closing it. Badiou criticises Deleuze's fold for lacking ruptural force, but for me it is precisely this fluidity, and my commitment to fluid structures, that makes folding generative within practice. Thinking beyond binary categories opens spaces outside conventional logics, enabling a methodology of continual unfolding, refolding, and transformation. Deleuze's fold does not seek stable ground; it moves across surfaces, forming new intensities, influences, and contexts. This recursive motion parallels the rhythms of my making, where lines diffract and fold in intuitive processes, and meaning emerges not through resolution but through negotiation with materials.

Manning situates fabulation within 'a time of asynchronous weave', attentive to 'the squeaks of language' at 'the edge of comprehension'. Her emphasis on 'liveness' helped me understand fabulation less as explanation than as a mode of attunement, always anew in the event's unfolding (2020, p. 123).



In-between (2025)

Within this process, folding becomes more than metaphor: it operates as a material and epistemological strategy. Engaging with *The Fold*, I knew theory would enter my studio, not as an external directive but as an entangled force within the making. Sensorial, conceptual, and socio-political elements interweave, not as fixed steps but as fluid 'intra-actions'. Making is not about illustrating theory but about thinking through doing, enabling knowledge to arise responsively from within me, the material, and the spatial context. In this way, folding becomes a form of research-creation: an ongoing, situated, and embodied mode of enquiry.

'Intra-action', as articulated by Karen Barad, holds that 'relata do not preexist relations; rather, relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions.(2007, p. 140).

In-between: folding as research-creation

In-between emerged at a pivotal moment in the development of knot-work as a concept, showing how a single work can sustain divergent, overlapping narratives and clarify its 'operative function' within my research. Installed in the atrium at LCC, *In-between* disclosed its agency. What I had initially conceived as a cartographic, two-dimensional form transformed unexpectedly: folds appeared not as planned interventions, but as the material's response. The paper plane undulated where it chose, asserting a spatial autonomy that unsettled my compositional control. That agency registered most clearly in air. As people passed, currents stirred the suspended paper, setting it into motion and giving it a dynamic physicality. The work was no longer a fixed object, but a form co-constituted by what moved through it; shape, tempo, and presence with forces I could not control. Air was not as background but as an active element shaping the work from within. Here my understanding of knotwork tilted toward the unseen currents that hold things in relation.

In *The Fold*, Deleuze names the Baroque not as essence but as 'an operative function… (that) endlessly produces folds' (1993, p. 33). Andrew Benjamin later describes this as "a workful form of activity" (2004).

Finding space to breathe

The physical form of *In-between* – its suspended, interlaced lines – embodies this unruly stance, occupying space, resistant and difficult to contain. Strands dip and rise, moving between openness and shadow, holding a tension between exposure and concealment. That tension runs through knotwork as a concept, bearing undercurrents of grief yet remains at the margins of acceptability. Knitting and crocheting, often dismissed as feminised domestic crafts, place the work in a marginal space. In my hands, these folds and loops knot, thicken, and diffract to conceal/reveal; grief seeps through material and philosophical thought.

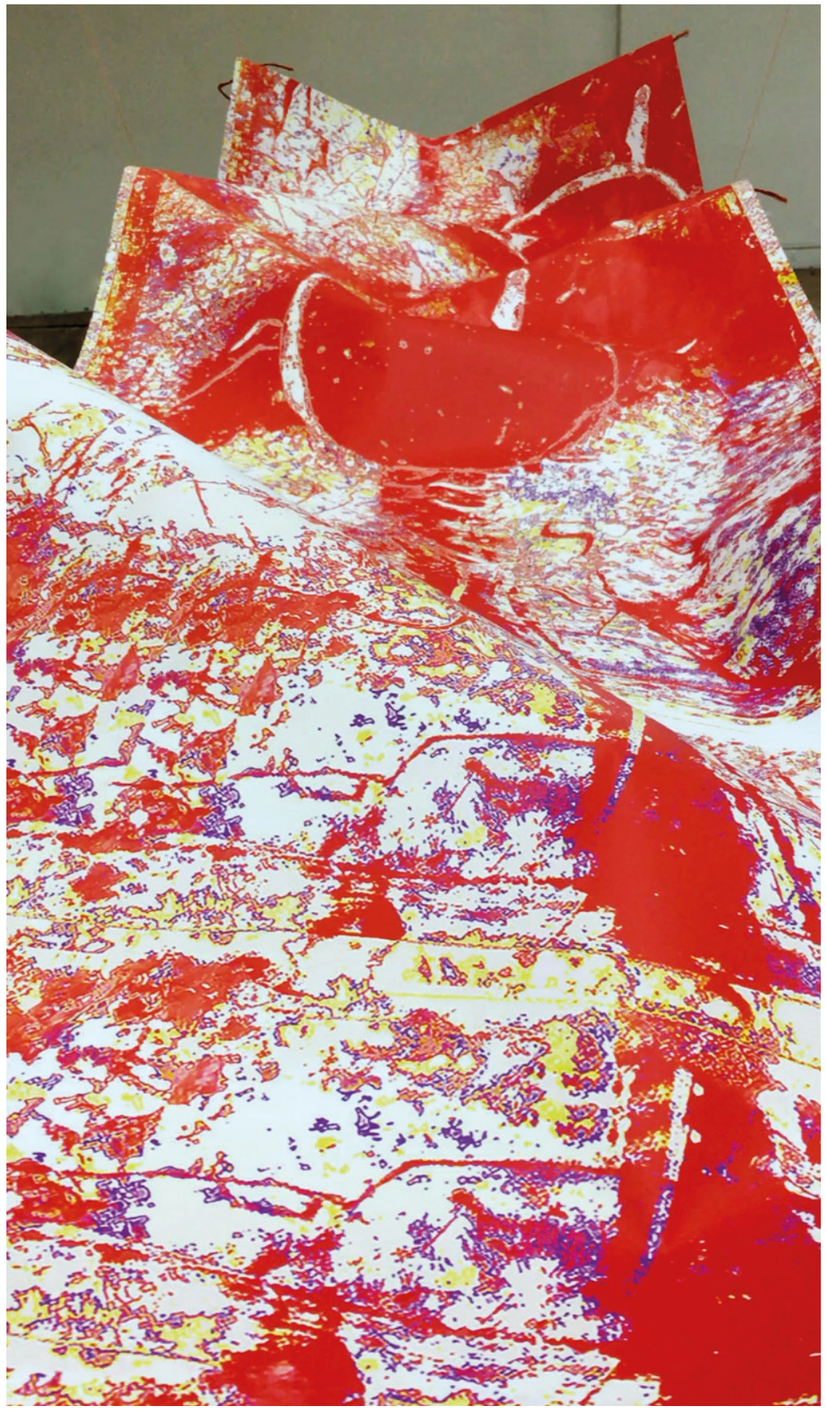
Earlier reflections on air pointed to its role in decentralising the subject-object relation. For Luce Irigaray, air is not merely the space between things but an active participant. As an artist, I know it is vital: it holds structures in suspension, enabling them to respond to their surroundings and become other than intended. *In-between* made this clear: unseen forces are not peripheral; they actively shape a work's form and meaning, mediating its interaction with space and time. Irigaray asks in *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* (1999, p. 8):

> Is not air the whole of our habitation as mortals?
> Is there a dwelling more vast, more spacious, or even more generally peaceful than that of air? Can man live elsewhere than in air?... No other element carries with it – or lets itself be passed through by – light and shadow, voice or silence.
> (Irigaray, 1999, p. 8)

She critiques Heidegger for grounding his thought in earth, arguing that such 'rootedness' overlooks the essential element of air. It is air, she insists, that underpins speech, movement, and presence without fixation. The attention aligns with posthuman feminist thought, which resists rigid categories and affirms porous, relational ontologies. In my practice, air is not structureless, it is structuring, an activating presence that animates the suspended form, *In-between*, in ways I could not plan. Air does not simply fill the space but interacts with it, attuned to shifting conditions. Rather than imposing a form, air fosters a responsiveness that keeps the work open and alive. This atmospheric engagement produces a structure-in-motion that holds space for becoming and difference.



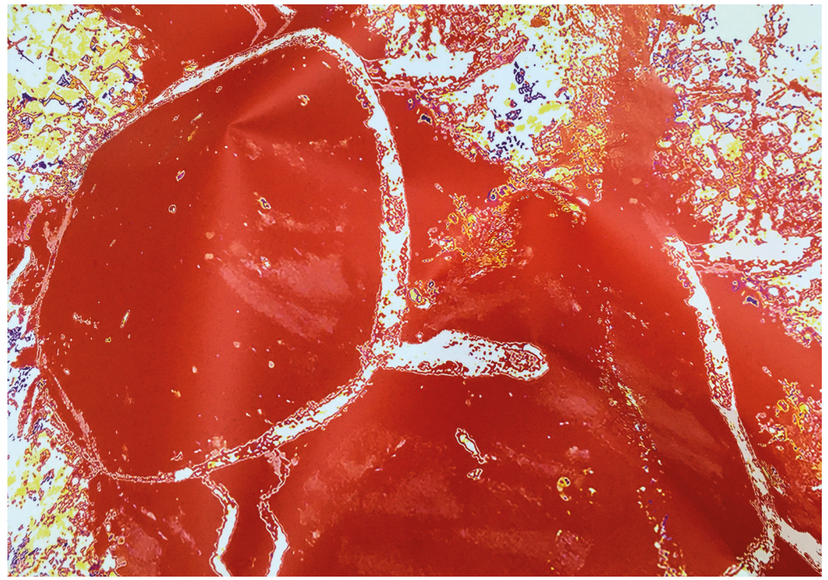
In-between (2025)

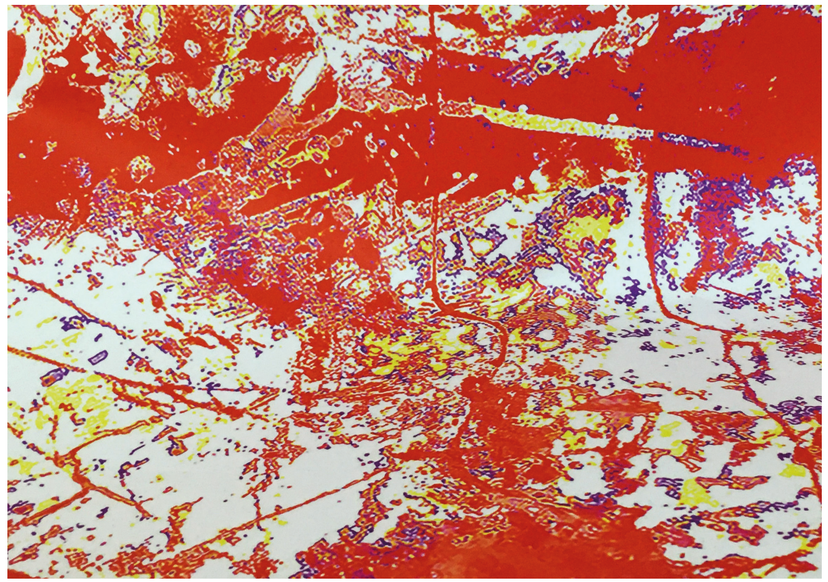


In-between

Deleuze, too, embraces this generative instability. His folds trace a logic of motion, turning surfaces back on themselves without seeking resolution. This contrasts sharply with Badiou's preference for ontologies and formal clarity. For Deleuze, meaning evolves through processes of difference and transformation, in ways that mirror the unfolding of practice through material and relational engagement. As he writes in *Difference and Repetition*, it is 'groundlessness… which engenders thought within thought, for thought thinks only by means of difference, around this point of ungrounding. It is difference... which causes thought to function – in other words, the entire machine of determination and the indeterminate' (1994, p. 276). Deleuze's thought, untethered, resonates with Irigaray's air, both direct attention to what is unrecognised, remains invisible, yet conditions the experience. In my practice, these unthought elements surface in unpredictable material behaviours and spatial configurations that arise in situ. At LCC, the air revealed itself as currents animating the form. Making becomes a site of thought-in-motion, where concepts emerge not through illustration, but through affective and spatial entanglements. This instability criticised by Badiou is, for Deleuze, and for me, not a weakness but a condition for becoming.

On screen, *In-between* was conceived not as a stable object but as a shifting form: three topologies touching and transforming through contact with one another, with space, and with air. It is a knotwork suspended in motion, entangled with a fourth dimension, air, which, as Irigaray reminds us, is always present but rarely acknowledged. In contrast to Deleuze's intricate assemblages, Irigaray invites us to attend to the conditions that make assemblage possible: air as a space of possibility, of speech, breath, and the unseen relation. Knotwork functions not as a rigid framework but as a field of tension and relation, offering coherence without closure. Just as air supports without determining, knotwork allows the sensual to emerge and transformation to occur without resolution. In this way, *In-between* enacts a speculative mode of thought and practice: one that refuses predetermined outcomes and remains open to what is yet to emerge.







In-between LCC (2025)

At *The Candid Art Trust* in late spring 2025, *In-between* unfolded anew in its second installation, expanding its intra-action with a diverse audience. As visitors engaged with the work, it took on sharper socio-political inflections, absorbing associations that ranged from quantum physics and mathematics to personal stories of gendered violence. These perspectives folded into the atmosphere of the installation, shaping a charged and porous field. Conversation, often unexpected, drew threads together, giving this phase of the research its momentum. *In-between* became a site of collective speculation and storytelling, where disparate threads gathered into a dynamic knotwork. Rather than offering a single, coherent narrative, the work invited multiplicity, each encounter adding another fold to its evolving form.

This multivocal quality deepened my reflection on the frame-works guiding my practice. The reinstallation of *In-between* created a transient but potent space where meaning emerged not through static display, but through dialogue, improvisation, and co-presence. Here, the work unfolded as a method of 'yarning', an oral, relational, and embodied way of knowing. Yarning allows for divergent knowledges to coexist, moving through fragmentations, contradictions, and affective resonance to form collective threads of inquiry. This practice resonates with the Deleuzian fold not only in its non-linearity but in its openness to divergence and multiplicity, where knowledge is not imposed from above, but emerges through the contingent interplay of participants, materials, and the moment (Vieira de Oliveira and Prado de O. Martins, 2019, pp. 109–110).

I now realise that the work was shaped not only by material and spatial concerns, but through a speculative, experimental orientation, an ethos close to Simon O'Sullivan's understanding of art as a political act and mode of collective engagement. For O'Sullivan, art is more than representation; it is a form of speculative becoming that resists dominant hierarchies and imagines the possibility of 'living our lives as an art practice' (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 34). This perspective enacts a refusal of the major and an affirmation of the minor, generating practices that critique, reimagine, and reshape thought, feeling, and form. The folds I engage with acknowledge the intellectual legacy of twentieth-century philosophy while actively challenging its white, male, Eurocentric foundation. My work gestures toward a politics of hope and renewal within posthuman feminism.



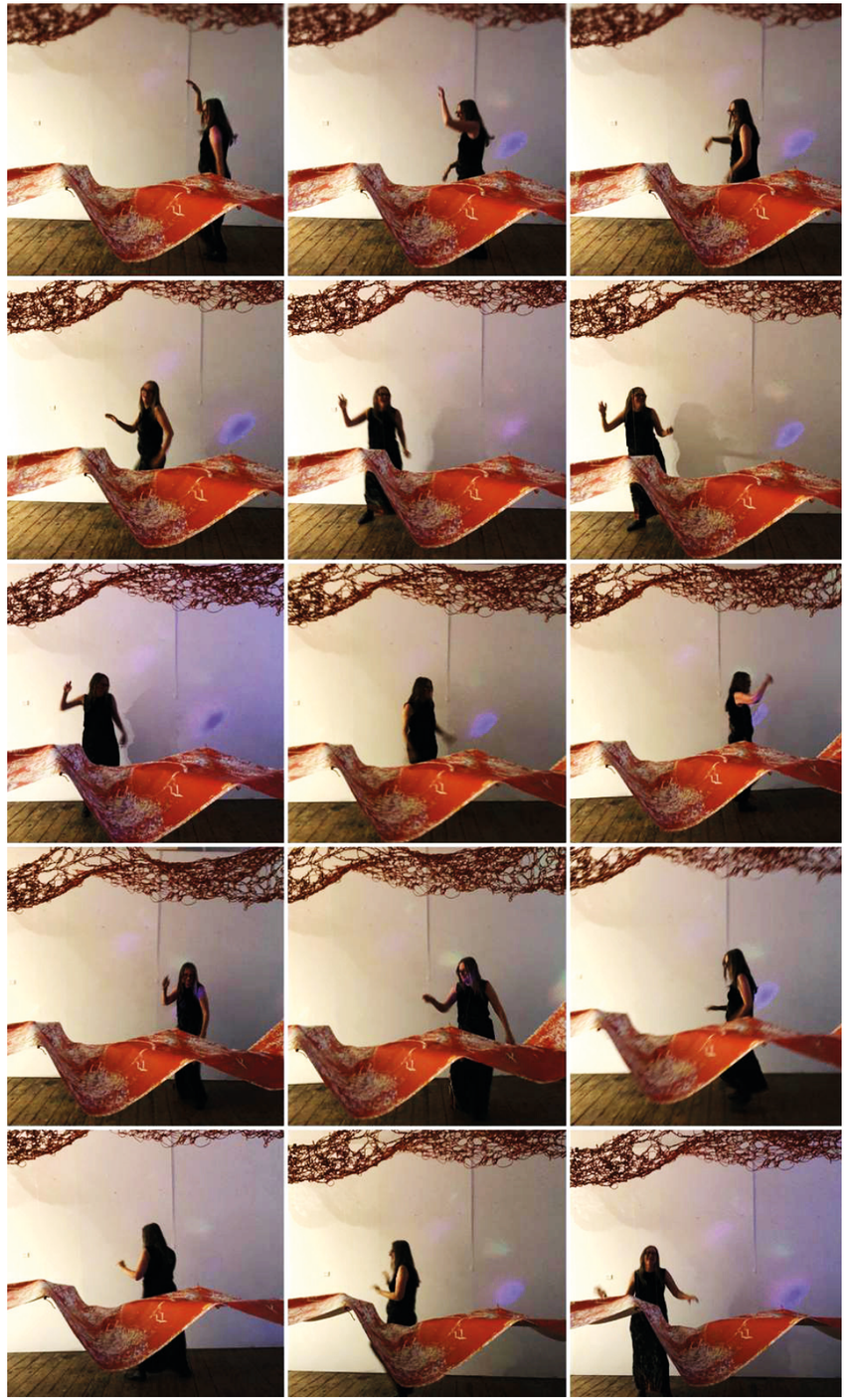
In-between - (2025) Candid Arts Trust

I remain acutely aware of the dominant structures I navigate, even as I follow the minor. Deleuze's concept of the fold, and O'Sullivan's articulation of it within art practice, have encouraged me to extend 'the fold' further, while generating folds that are conceptual, material, and socio-political. O'Sullivan writes, 'Art practice might then, like philosophy, involve intuition, an intuition incarnated in materials that take us 'beyond' the actual, plunges us deep into the virtual, before returning with new actualisations' (2006, p. 105). In this sense, the fold upon fold, in the form of a knotwork, becomes method, methodology, and milieu, a speculative tool through which practice unsettles and reconfigures thought to realise something new.

In-between embodies the ethos of the incomplete form. It represents nothing, yet remains speculative, not directive but inviting. Through subtle interventions, fragmented narratives, coarse baling twine, ambient soundscapes, and disrupted spatial arrangements, it unsettles habitual ways of seeing and knowing. My aim is not to offer clarity, but to sustain ambiguity, enabling multiple resonances to coexist and meanings to emerge affectively in the gaps. The installation becomes a space of indeterminacy, where boundaries are constantly redrawn, and becoming is experienced as a shared, speculative event.

O'Sullivan describes speculative art as inhabiting the 'seeping edge' between the actual and the virtual, a place where intuition incarnates in material and reconfigures what is possible (2006, p. 105). He borrows the phrase from Massumi, who aligns affect with Leibnizian monads: virtual perspectives that fade in all directions, separated by thresholds yet in contact with the whole universe of potential. For Massumi, the 'seeping edge' is the point at which the virtual leaks into the actual, where potential is induced as change (2002, p. 105). It is precisely this porous edge that allows the affective and the sensual to seep through, shaping the event of practice.

As an artwork, *In-between* may be framed within practice-based research, yet I argue it moves beyond that, evolving into research-creation, where it becomes an inquiry that activates thresholds of material, conceptual, and sensual engagement. In research-creation, theory is not simply applied but co-constituted through the maker's body, the responsiveness of materials, and the insights of others. Folding and knotting deepen this entanglement, opening unexpected pathways for knowledge-making. By embracing tentative gestures, improvised methods, imperfect results, and the experimental touch, I dwell on that seeping edge, where practice slips between actual and virtual, allowing new configurations of thought and material to emerge. Craft techniques,



Dancing with In-between (2025) - Artwork by Jonathan Martin

agricultural remnants, digital manipulation, and posthuman feminist theory generate a platform where the yet-to-come waits. Within these folds, my practice grows into knotworks. The folds I explore are material, conceptual, and affective operations revealing the mutable nature of ideas and their transformations. As methodological tools, they facilitate an ongoing negotiation of meaning through material dialogue. Thinking through making is process-oriented; meaning emerges within the work. Artistic and philosophical inquiries are intertwined; knowledge is sensed through the body, shaped through experimentation, and communicated through speculative storytelling, a terrain that, thinking through O'Sullivan and Massumi, functions as invention rather than representation.

Deleuze's folding methodology extends through the literary figures of Lewis Carroll, Franz Kafka, and Virginia Woolf, drawing me into liminal spaces that pulse with potential. Here, transformation occurs not through resolution but through the messiness of becoming. *In-between* is a product of such messiness. I could tell several stories about its creation: a post-installation insight that reshaped my understanding of knotwork, the procedural frustrations of installation, the journey of the baling twine from dump to artwork, the work's lingering effect on me, and its reception by others. Each story is a fold within a fold, part of the broader knotwork.

This storytelling process echoes O'Sullivan's account of myth-making in art. To paraphrase him, myths are not metaphors or regressions but the creative construction of new narratives for future subjectivities (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 145). Myth here is not a return but a forward movement, a performative, affective fold in practice that enables new ways of becoming. Through this generative terrain, lived meaning is organised, challenged, and reimagined. In this milieu, myth and fold dissolve boundaries between fiction and theory, practice and reflection, intellect and sensation. Like a myth folded within a knotwork, the form resists finality. They offer open-ended structures where conceiving, making, and telling are acts of thinking in motion. From this perspective, research-creation becomes a mythic fold: an ongoing renegotiation of boundaries between subject and world, what Massumi frames as the seeping edge and O'Sullivan extends as a threshold between what is and what might yet be.

Here, material, thought, and affect do not hold fixed relations they continually remake one another. What emerges through intra-actions with the fold is not a codified method but a mode of thinking open to ambiguity, process, and the not-yet-articulated. Folding is both conceptual and embodied: a practice of staying with complexity rather than resolving it, privileging movement over coherence, transformation over conclusion. From within this generative tension, I turn toward folds that resist capture—those that unsettle and refuse fixed meaning. This resistance is material, sensory, and intimately felt. I encountered it most viscerally through my sustained engagement with Deleuze's *The Fold*. That encounter has been neither purely theoretical nor detached, but lived, tactile, and affective, shaping my understanding of the fold and the subjectivities I engage with in practice.

Through *In-between* I was exploring Deleuze's *The Fold* not only as a philosophical text but as a generative force in practice, a way of arriving at knotwork as concept and method. That exploration now turns toward the subjectivities the fold brings into play, those Deleuze engages with in his writing, and those that emerge within my own. Before moving to micro-studies of two fictional characters, and later to the subjectivity of a house in the lead-up to my sister's death, I return to the text itself as an embodied encounter and a site of subjectivation.

Breaking controls

Beneath the surface of the page, beyond clarity's pretence and an impulse toward mastery, I linger on the fold with a sustained act of resistance against the tyranny of stasis. Writing a thesis demands coherence and resolution, yet when asked, "Why this thesis?" a defiant voice answers, "Must I spell this out?" The question feels misplaced, born of the Cartesian urge to reduce knowledge to clarity, to treat understanding as a fixed destination. Such thinking is at odds with the open-ended, fluid methodologies of posthuman feminist theory and the Deleuzian fold that grounds my inquiry.

The Fold invites resistance to closure, embracing ambiguity as a space of exploration and creation. Refusing fixed answers, *The Fold* disrupts the comfort of certainty, dissolving questions into shifting, reconfiguring movement. This fluidity undoes Cartesian logic that seeks to freeze thought in place. Writing, like folding, becomes an act of yielding – surrendering to the ebb and flow of ambiguity, where nothing remains static and everything exists in the midst of becoming. In this unfolding space, control is neither sought nor desired. My inquiry engages the dynamic interplay of material and thought, of text, space, and self.

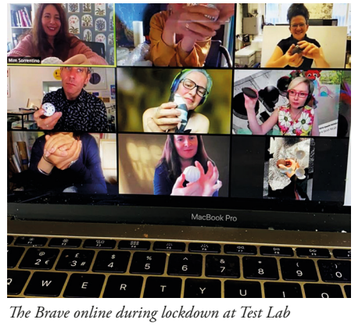
Folds carry me into evolving realms where questions unfurl into new shapes, leading to landscapes yet unseen. As Simon O'Sullivan concludes in *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari*, practice becomes 'the production of new folds, new worlds arising from these folds, and new myths appropriate to these future worlds... yesterday's codes will be made unrecognizable in their turn' (2006, p. 157). Each fold gestures toward refusal – of closure, certainty, and the suffocating limits of definition. They unfold like a wave in perpetual motion, embodying the vitality of ideas as they emerge, shift, and transform. Here lies a paradox: can such an open-ended practice persist without a structuring milieu?

Deleuze finds his infrastructure not in rigid systems but in careful alignments – with Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, David Hume, and with Francis Bacon, Paul Klee, and Samuel Beckett, thinkers and artists, who shape the affective contours of his thought. In my practice, the alignments are different – I think with Rosi Braidotti, Erin Manning, and Simon O'Sullivan, and make beside Louise Bourgeois, Mona Hatoum, and Cornelia Parker. They offer not only a trace to follow, but a texture to work within and through; an affective, conceptual, and material field that shapes my methodology, offers structure with invisible boundaries, and gives form to what might otherwise dissipate. Yet a part of me resists. My practice lives in the tension between these forces, embracing their entanglement, the push and pull that anchor, confound, and liberate within the chaos. To fold is to inhabit this paradox; to unfold is to remain within the flux, where boundaries barely hold, lines are provisional, and permanence is always in question.

Between page and practice, folding circulates. Folding becomes method; methodology seeps from *The Fold*. Unfolding, refolding, and enfolding keep the rhythm in motion. Writing is an unfolding – never complete, never still, yet alive and with possibility, weaving through the pages with a quiet insistence that transformation lies at the heart of thought and making. As O'Sullivan writes, 'The fold names our ontology, fractal and super-abundant... It names our processes of subjectivation, the relation we hold to ourselves, our capture of outside forces' (ibid., p. 157), describing ontology as fractal, layered, multiplying, and multidimensional, a concept that speaks to being and becoming. This understanding aligns with Deleuze's view of the fold as a recursive structure that undoes binary logics and opens onto shifting, interconnected terrains. For O'Sullivan, thinking through Deleuze and the fold is also a way of approaching subjectivity not as a stable identity but as a continual process, one that is political as well as personal, shaped by and shaping external forces. We are, he reminds us, actively made and remade by social, cultural, and political pressures, even as we reconstitute ourselves in relation to these pressures (2006, p. 88). This resonates with my practice. Subjectivity is ongoing negotiation, folding and unfolding in response to encounter. The fold becomes a way of inhabiting and working through liminal spaces of transformation, contradiction, and generative tension. The folds are the places where the personal, political, and conceptual entangle, where experience cannot be neatly contained or resolved. *The Fold* enables me to remain in motion, to think with and through ambiguity, and to keep the contours of thought and practice open to difference. In these folds, I locate the vitality of my inquiry, where the unfixed, the emergent, and the not-yet-formed offer both a trace to follow and a space to work within.

Bourgeois, Hatoum, and Parker have always been in my world, women making conceptual, sensual, and socio-political works.

Alongside them, a small group of fellow researchers and makers, *The Brave*, have stood with me throughout my PhD as an 'in-visible' framework. This group, which emerged from *The Art of Questioning* and *Test Lab* with Daniel Rubenstein steering an unruly ship, became a lasting friendship that continues to thrive.



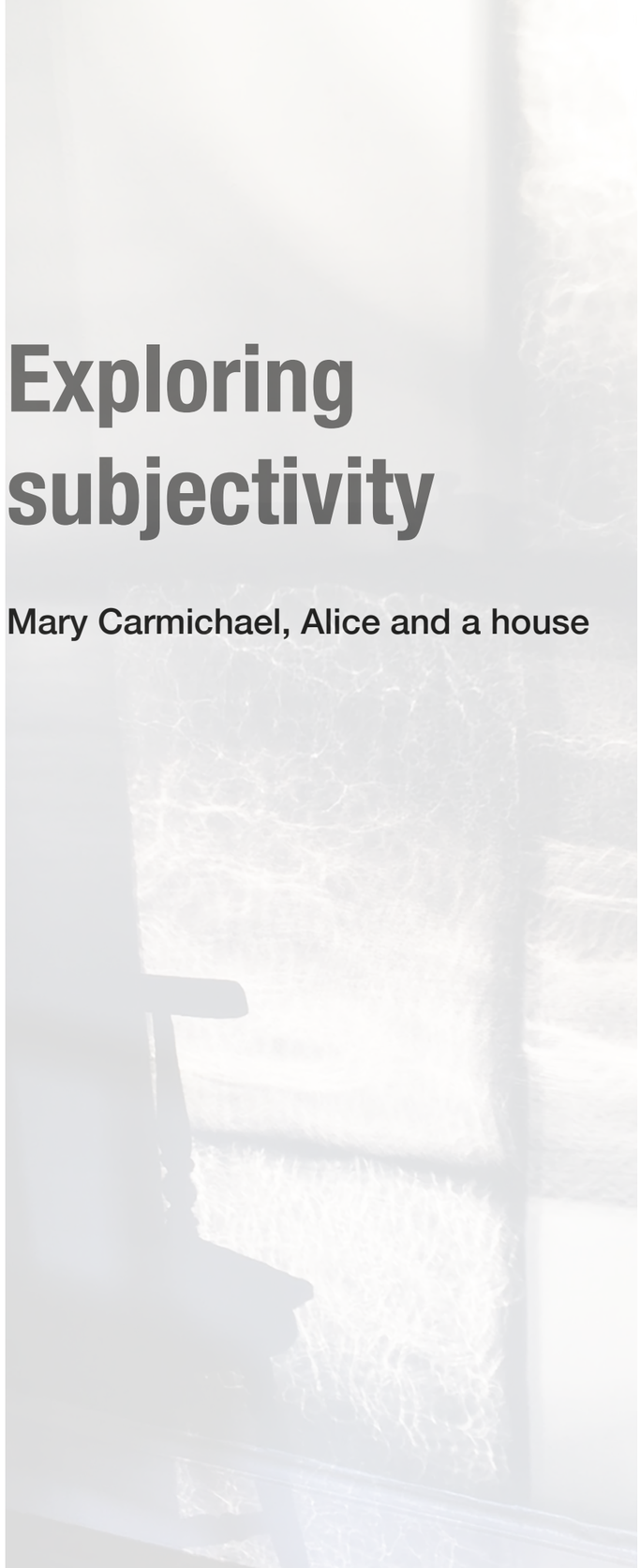
The Brave online during lockdown at Test Lab

Subjectivity, as it unfolds in my practice, does not resolve into a single perspective. It fragments, multiplies, drifts, emerging through shifting modes of attention and embodied presence. As I move through this process, I am accompanied by composite figures who help me navigate folds: Mary Carmichael, who dares to write sentences that push against patriarchal literary forms, and Alice, who steps through a looking glass into a world governed by strange logic.

Alice inhabits a liminal threshold between child and adult, sense and nonsense, dream and waking life, moving through unstable spaces where categories dissolve and language slips. She offers a model for navigating uncertainty, process, and becoming. Alongside this Carmichael writes from the margins of literary tradition, carving space for a new kind of voice, hesitant, fragmented, and insistent, within a structure not built for her. These figures do not stabilise my identity; rather, they offer ways of being in relation, of staying with indeterminacy, of seeing and sensing differently. Their presence, though spectral, shapes how I think and feel. They reappear not merely as conceptual figures, but as collaborators, co-inhabitants of the work, haunting, urging, resisting, and reshaping its direction. As I follow the folds of writing, I am drawn into spaces where narrative and theory entangle, where figuration becomes a mode of inquiry. What follows is an account of subjectivity lived, breathed, and worked through, in language, matter, and relation, rather than one confined to the conceptual.

Exploring subjectivity

Mary Carmichael, Alice and a house



As my writing folds and unfolds, I am drawn into a liminal space between the real, the written, and what slips just beyond words to explore different subjectivities. Mary Carmichael, imagined author in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Alice of *Looking-Glass* fame, my sister, and a house, (that became both home and work-space), move through an in-between space. Together they form a constellation that lives with me and orients the direction of this inquiry. As subjects, they are neither fully fictional nor strictly factual, yet their presence is anything but incidental. The house, with its shifting textures of living, working, and remaking, pressed itself into my thinking, shaping the way I came to inhabit *The Fold*. Alice accompanies me into absurd spaces where language loses its footing and sense falters. Woolf, through Carmichael, offers an alternative metre of writing, sidestepping patriarchal rhythms and gesturing toward a new tempo for women's voices. And my sister is always there, not as a literary device but as a quiet trace threading through my work.

These figures, and this house, are not decorative or symbolic; they form a constellation shaping the tone and movement of this research. Through their fractured words, uncertain presences, and shifting spaces, narrative becomes a way of thinking, an embodied, situated practice unfolding alongside theory, material, and lived experience. Their broken words, my seemingly unanchored thoughts, and the house's textures do more than influence form; they change the way my work moves and feels. Their drifting language merges with sound and sensation, while their shifting presence invites a way of making sense that emerges slowly over time. In this space, narrative doesn't explain or illustrate; it holds the work together, like air threading through the words, leaving space for transformation.

This movement of shifting language and presence aligns with my return to Virginia Woolf and her imagined author Mary Carmichael in *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Carmichael is one of four Marys in Woolf's feminist analysis of literary tradition and the systemic exclusion of women from authorship. Scholars such as Jane Goldman (2001), Melba Cuddy-Keane (2003), and Jane Marcus (1988) argue that the essay powerfully articulates Woolf's feminist ideology. Anne Fernald (1994) notes that *A Room of One's Own* delivers a radical critique of patriarchal structures and frames the essay as a form of 'personal criticism'. Woolf fuses polemic and imaginative storytelling, challenging traditional literary forms and feminist thought through both her own narrative and the fictional characters she creates (ibid., p. 170).

Writing with Mary Carmichael at hand

Mary Carmichael captures my attention as a site of speculative resistance. Her writing carries the fragmentary, disruptive qualities Woolf identifies as distinctly feminist, rejecting masculine norms of coherence and closure. This is resistance as speculation, troubling what is to make space for what might be. By splitting language from within a patriarchal frame, Carmichael opens a space I also inhabit in my creative practice. She embraces ambiguity and multiplicity, resisting the linearity often expected of literary form. In my own work, this becomes a tactile method: honouring the source before fragmenting it, allowing thought to unfold through material entanglements. Like Carmichael's speculative writing, my knotworks of words, sound and images foreground instability and flux, privileging interconnection over hierarchy. Carmichael's defiance parallels my navigation of liminal creative spaces through non-linear processes, textual fragmentation, and resistance to resolution. She becomes more than a fictional character; she is a conceptual figure for rethinking practice as transformation, engaging critically with language, form, and feminist methodologies. Woolf describes her 'tampering' with narrative sequence as a political gesture. When she writes, 'Chloe liked Olivia perhaps for the first time in literature' (1987, p. 82), she disrupts literary convention and ventures into a space previously unspoken between women. This disruption exemplifies what Valérie Favre (2020) calls Woolf's dual strategy of critique and imagination. Woolf describes Carmichael as having 'a sensibility that was very wide, eager and free… it lighted on small things and showed that perhaps they were not small after all... she wrote as a woman, but as a woman who has forgotten that she is a woman' (1987, p. 100). Through Carmichael, Woolf contests narrative authority itself, exposing the structural limits imposed on women writers. Described as 'tampering with the expected sequence' (Woolf, 1987, p. 88), Carmichael's method mirrors Woolf's own experiments in form, both resisting linear progression, both unsettle tradition.

Vita Sackville-West observed that Woolf enjoyed 'the feminine qualities of… fantasy and irresponsibility, allied to all the masculine qualities that go with a strong, authoritative brain' (Favre, 2020; Sackville-West, 2003, p. 258).

Anne Fernald observes that Woolf's use of the essay form becomes radical, guiding the reader toward new ways of seeing (1994, p. 170). Pairing Carmichael's experimental mode with her own hybridised form, Woolf stages a feminist epistemology grounded in affect, contradiction, and the overlooked textures of the everyday. This refusal of hierarchy and fixed structure is more than an argument; it is enacted. Woolf's essays perform the disorientation they theorise. Unlike Carroll's overt inversions of logic, Woolf, through Carmichael, enacts quieter, more intimate disruptions. Carmichael attends to 'unrecorded gestures' and 'half-said words' (1987, p. 91), revealing the epistemic and affective charge of what might otherwise be dismissed.

Carmichael's fragmentary, non-linear sensibility, attuned to minor gestures and quiet disruptions, parallels my method; it does not direct it. Woolf gives me the ground to break language structures and write otherwise. Carmichael's 'tampering with the expected sequence… for the sake of creating' (ibid., p. 88) is not chaos for its own sake but a generative form of disorientation, aligning with my thinking-through-making process. Where Alice stumbles through overtly illogical landscapes, Carmichael moves through subtler thresholds, pauses, ellipses, the unsaid, each a quiet breach in literary convention. Both depart from dominant logics, yet Carmichael's understated sensibility resonates most with my own: a practice attuned to fragmentation, ephemerality, and the creative potential of disorientation. Carmichael becomes central to my process, dwelling in the sensuous threshold between nonsense and non-sense, between fracture and form.

In Deleuzian terms, Alice and Mary Carmichael can be read as minor figures: operating from the margins to unsettle dominant sense-making. As child and woman, they occupy positions of minor status, marginalised by their gender and, as fictional figures, they intensify this double marginality. This situates them in what Deleuze calls the 'virtual', a space of potential acting on the actual (2011, pp. 42–43), and aligns them with Braidotti's notion of figuration: not metaphor, but methodological tool, 'a living map, a transformative account of the self' (2011, p. 14). In my practice, they function as agents of provocation, opening speculative and relational forms of thinking and making.

A moment to make sense out of 'non-sense'

The hyphen in 'non-sense' is intentional. It disrupts unity, turning nonsense into a triadic relation: of non, of sense, and the line that connects, or simply separates the two words. This disruption opens a space where meaning becomes unstable, oscillating between no sense and the emergence of sense. For Deleuze, nonsense is a productive force, 'a mode of co-presence' between sense and its disruption (1990b, p. 68). Thus, 'non-sense' becomes generative, not void. It interrupts and also enables. From a feminist posthuman view, the hyphen resists binaries, embracing multiplicity. As Deleuze writes, 'Nonsense… as it enacts the donation of sense, is opposed to the absence of sense' (ibid., p. 71). This framing aligns with my dyslexic experience, where language can be both disorienting and charged, a point where creativity and instability converge.

Writing with dyslexia involves navigating a fragmented paradoxical terrain, one that recalls Alice's disoriented journey through Carroll's unstable and illogical Wonderland. Woolf writes of Carmichael's sentences, 'something tore, something scratched; a single word here and there flashed its torch in my eyes' (1987, p. 88). Though Carmichael is not portrayed as dyslexic, her disruptive relationship with language feels familiar. Dyslexia creates a terrain where words fracture, slip, or resist cohesion. Writing becomes an act of negotiation between the intention to convey meaning and the unpredictable ways words manifest on the page. Yet this instability offers more than frustration: it can

open profound creative possibilities. As Taylor and Vestergaard (2022) note, individuals with developmental dyslexia often excel at 'seeing the big picture both literally and figuratively' (Schneps, 2015; Schneps et al., 2012), combining multi-dimensional reasoning with an ability to detect subtle patterns, forge analogies, and link disparate ideas (Eide & Eide, 2011, p. 5). This cognitive sensibility aligns with my knotwork practice, where thought emerges through the weaving of complex and interdependent strands.

Helen Taylor and Martin Vestergaard also note a marked capacity for novelty, insight, and innovation among individuals with developmental dyslexia (2022, p. 4). Creativity surfaces across different terrains: in freeform drawing and artistic practice (Cohn and Neumann, 1977), in literary invention (Rack, 1981), and in the ability to bring together ideas that seem unrelated (Cancer et al., 2016, p. 3). These studies point to a sensibility attuned to pattern and connection, one that thrives in tasks requiring inventive, unpredictable, and 'innovative modes of thinking' (Everatt et al., 1999, p. 28).

Mary Carmichael inhabits a space of creative potential that mirrors the instability of my experience as a female artist-academic with dyslexia. The 'unrecorded gestures' and 'half-said words' (Woolf, 1987, p. 91), alongside 'broken sentences' (ibid., p. 88) may echo hers, yet they open potential for originality. By embracing the unpredictability of my cognitive process, I align with the minor, the peripheral, and the disruptive potential of language as a site of creative exploration. This methodological stance anchors dyslexia in disruption, liminality, and transformation, a refusal of fixed forms and a celebration of unfolding and becoming. Woolf's feminist critique affirms the socio-political stakes of such a stance: the margins can be reframed as active sites of transformation, where undervalued or ephemeral elements become generative spaces for thought, practice, and relation (ibid., pp. 84–95).

Carmichael's challenge parallels my focus on thresholds of language, identity, and meaning, spaces where dominant frameworks falter and alternative modes of knowing begin to emerge. Woolf's emphasis on the overlooked enriches my philosophical engagement with figures such as Deleuze and Carroll, grounding abstraction in the tangible realities of lived experience. In my work, these liminal spaces demand new forms of creative and intellectual engagement, balancing the conceptual with the intimate and specific. Writing in this way becomes a mode of crossing, bringing into being what was previously unseen or unsaid. It is a continual negotiation between tradition and innovation, between established frameworks and emergent possibilities—a process that reshapes boundaries, challenges dominant structures, and generates new forms of knowledge (Deleuze, 1993, p. 23).

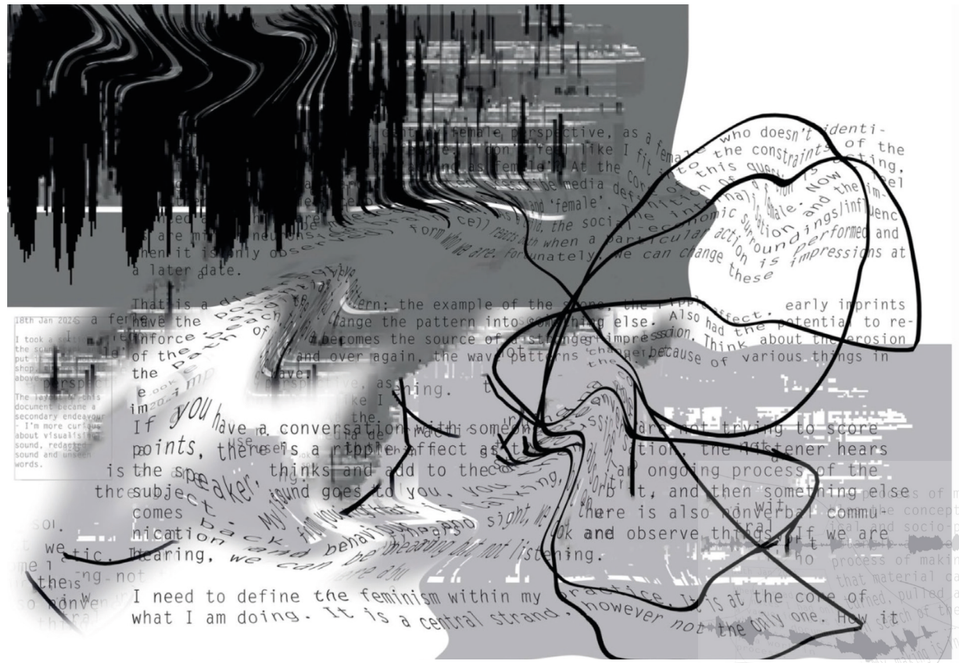
Finding space to think

My negotiation evolves from a self-reflective challenge: a continuous effort to transform the 'I' into 'we', resonating with a feminist posthuman perspective (Braidotti, 2022). Contesting conventional hierarchies, Braidotti emphasises an interconnected web of knowledge and affect, privileging relationality over rigid individualism. Woolf's insistence on a room of one's own (1987, p. 58) is not a retreat into isolation; it acknowledges that creative space is shaped by affective, material, and historical entanglements, anticipating Braidotti's posthuman subject as situated, distributed, and relational (2013). This emphasis on relationality and entanglement also aligns with Haraway's call to 'stay with the trouble' : remaining in complexity, acknowledging entanglement in human and more-than-human networks: 'we need to reseed our souls and our home worlds… on a vulnerable planet that is not yet murdered' (2016, p. 117). My speculative inquiry builds on this, occupying an interstitial space where ownership and relinquishment, selfhood and dissolution, intersect to open new pathways for creative engagement.

Dyslexic knotwork

Shaping not only how I write but also how I think, dyslexia draws me toward language as something material, inviting an alternative orientation – intuitive, spatial, and affectively charged. I often approach words as images on a page, reimagining them as forms to be folded, shifted, and reshaped, much like images becoming material thoughts in motion. This sensibility aligns with Macdonald's (2009) framing of dyslexia as a reflective position from which alternative ways of thinking and knowing can emerge. Writing, for me, is a practice of thinking-through-making, an unfolding of words suspended between sense and non-sense. When I take a thought from my mind and move it onto the screen, it initially feels unanchored and unresolved. Only through its materialisation as shape, line, and rhythm does it begin to stabilise. Yet even this fixity on the screen is provisional, a temporary tethering that allows the thought to resonate in another form. Writing and creating, then, becomes a speculative and affective practice: an encounter at the threshold where meaning morphs into being through movement, texture, hesitation, and form.

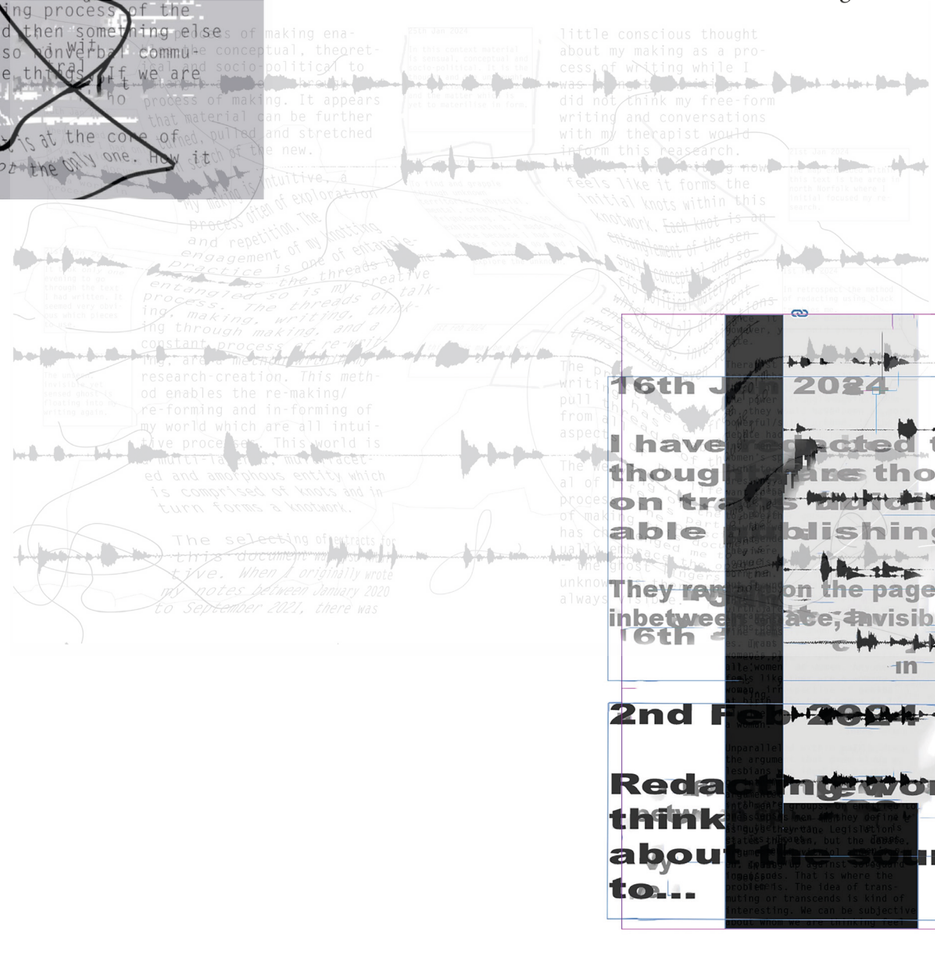
Windows of Reflection (2009), Stephen Macdonald critiques the medical and educational models of dyslexia for pathologising individual difference, proposing instead a social model grounded in lived experience. He introduces the concept of a 'window of reflection' to describe the position of dyslexic individuals as neither fully excluded nor seamlessly integrated, but situated in a liminal space that resists normative logics and fosters divergent, situated epistemologies (ibid., pp. 348–350). In this view, dyslexia is not a deficit but a threshold condition from which new modes of expression and critical reflection may unfold.



Evolving Knots I, II & III (2024)

The *Evolving Knots* series emerged from designing *Ten knots within a knotwork* (2024). The process enabled me to explore how lines fold, converge, and transform into both conceptual and physical knotworks. *Spider-fly* (2024) was an unexpected outcome, a speculative work that later coalesced into a larger knotwork, *In-between*. The knotwork of thinking through making remains in flux, its final form continually shifting and evolving. Despite this indeterminacy, there is a pull, a conceptual force of coherence, that keeps the work from losing all form. I understand this force as something akin to what Leibniz describes as a 'monad', a singular self-contained entity that simultaneously exists within a network of relations, surrounded by and interconnected with others (Leibniz, 1898). Thinking through Deleuze's (1993) reinterpretation, each entity occupies its own distinct space yet can fold into the next, producing a continuous interplay of meaning, a fold within a fold. As I write, I remain acutely aware of each word's presence and the space it occupies, while staying curious about what emerges when these words come together into sentences, paragraphs, and larger structures.

This interplay constitutes a folding process in itself, where meaning shifts depending on the placement and shape of words, how they touch, turn, and orient on the page. For someone with dyslexia, this process is further complicated as letters flip, crowd, and drift as lines blur or tangle. The act of writing and making becomes less linear, more spatial and affective, involving constant negotiation between perception and interpretation. In my practice, complexity becomes the force that reshapes meaning. Each fold, a syntactic or semantic turn, may slip into a knot, where multiple threads of thought entangle. These knots, in turn, begin to accumulate, forming a knotwork: a multi-dimensional structure through which language is read, felt, shaped, and traversed. In this way, I extend Deleuze's concept of the fold into a broader methodology, one that is spatial, material, and lived, folding through cognition, sensation, and the constraints and generative frictions of dyslexic perception.



https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/ten-knots-within-a-knotwork/

My process gave rise to a space where I began to feel a shift, a vibration in meaning and sensation. Carroll and Woolf entice me into shifting liminalities where the clarity of language begins to dissolve and meaning slips into multiplicity. Here, definitive answers remain just out of reach. Questions proliferate, words twist and distort, taking on new shapes and sounds in my mind. This complexity deepens the inquiry as it destabilises certainty. The writing becomes less about arriving and more about becoming, a recursive, rhythmic process of emergence. My writing is not merely the vessel for ideas; it is part of the structure of the thesis itself. The form reflects the method: unfolding thought through recursive motion, through moments of stuttering, hesitation, and flow. Writing here becomes a method of inquiry, a practice of embodiment, and an act of philosophical attention, and I am acutely aware of the need to find rhythm within this liminal space.

Simon O'Sullivan's articulation of art-making as a politically entangled, collective process resonates here. I am with-in a speculative engagement that resists established norms and uncovers utopian possibilities embedded within the present and the horizon of what is to come (2006, p. 128). Drawing on Theodor Adorno, O'Sullivan describes such moments as 'utopian blinks', brief, affective glimpses of potential worlds. These are not representations of what is, but affective openings toward what might be. This speculative orientation activates a space in which other possibilities momentarily surface. Such moments resonate with the kind of thinking and making my practice seeks to enact. Following this trajectory, practice-based research extends beyond its conventional framework to become research-creation. This realisation signifies a shift: research emerges through practice as a continuous, transformative process, a creation that acts as a catalyst for crossing thresholds, interweaving material and conceptual inquiry.

Alice *Through the Looking-Glass* of research-creation

If O'Sullivan's 'utopian blinks' glimpse possible worlds, Alice inhabits one. Her passage through the looking-glass is a lived encounter with thresholds and disorientation. Taking up Alice as a second subjectivity, I walk with her through a speculative field where structure and emergence are held in tension, and where transformation becomes possible through uncertainty. Her wandering becomes metaphor and method for research-creation, revealing how movement across unsettled ground generates openings for speculative practice. Immersive and unpredictable, her journey parallels my research process, where thought unfolds through what Deleuze and Guattari call 'line of flight': ruptures that redirect thought toward new formations (1987, pp. 204-205). These lines knot with possibility, inquiry unfolding with a resistance to capture, yet faintly ordered like Carroll's chessboard.

For Alice, as for me, a line of flight was there from the beginning, an unsettling force that disorients yet opens. It carries us across thresholds, sometimes loosening capture, sometimes tipping back into impasse, but always inflecting the movement of research-creation. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 204–5).

Imaginative exploration is vital for research-creation. Alice persists with curious determination, navigating contradiction as part of her method. Through her, the tension between order and emergence can be read alongside Kalina Christoff's account of 'mind wandering': leaps of thought that break from rigid frameworks and open space for transformation (2016). This resonates with my dyslexic way of thinking: emergent, recursive, charged with uncertainty. Alice's passage across thresholds becomes a cognitive tool for reconfiguring perception, identity, and understanding.

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The paradox of transition surfaces when Alice first glimpses the Red Queen. The Queen is close yet unreachable, suspended in a liminal space that resists immediate resolution. To approach her, Alice must submit to the chessboard's strange logic, where progress depends on abrupt turns and detours. This pursuit enacts a different temporality in which advance often arises through delay and disorientation. In my own research, thought moves similarly, looping, twisting, lingering in ambiguity, yet generating momentum through interruption.

Deleuze's *Fold* (1993) offers a conceptual lens for these layered movements. His topological reading of folds gathers the sensual, social, political and intellectual, offering a means to inhabit the transitions of practice. Folds refuse resolution; they complicate, add layers, producing speculative spaces where knowledge reconfigures itself. Engaging with Deleuze means thinking with and through him, a

complex but compelling task given the multifaceted nature of his thought. Through Deleuze, my research does not move linearly; it doubles back, overlaps, slips between modes. These meanderings create a terrain of continual transformation, where thought opens new possibilities for making, thinking, and becoming otherwise.

Within this folded terrain, I encounter the barely tangible. Like Alice, I sense the unknown as if it might be grasped, each movement of thought peeling back layers of sensation and meaning. Here, movement is less about progression than about staying with disorientation. In this tension between the known and the unknown, speculative research finds its force. Deleuze gives philosophical shape to this flux, conceiving thought as ever-unfolding and inseparable from instability, an 'in-between' space that mirrors Alice's passage across the chessboard, where each square opens into a world governed by its own logic.

Egocentric and allocentric cartographies

Alice's traversal of the chessboard opens directly onto questions of mapping and orientation. Folding and reorientation resonate with spatial cognition. Her movement through the looking-glass brings Melba Cuddy-Keane's distinction between egocentric and allocentric cartographies into focus: the egocentric anchors space to the perceiver's embodied position; the allocentric organises space independently to enable system-wide overview (Cuddy-Keane, 2018). In her lecture *Beyond Habit: Narrative, Neuroscience, and Flexible Minds* (2018), and in *Subterranean Cartographies and the Underworld Imagination* (2020), Cuddy-Keane maps spaces through fiction, reimagining cognition as recursive, materially embedded, and dynamically unstable. By retracing fictional routes across urban landscapes, her work resonates with Carroll's craft, which likewise carves a world for Alice where perception remains mutable and spatial logic is continually reconfigured (Carroll, 2010).

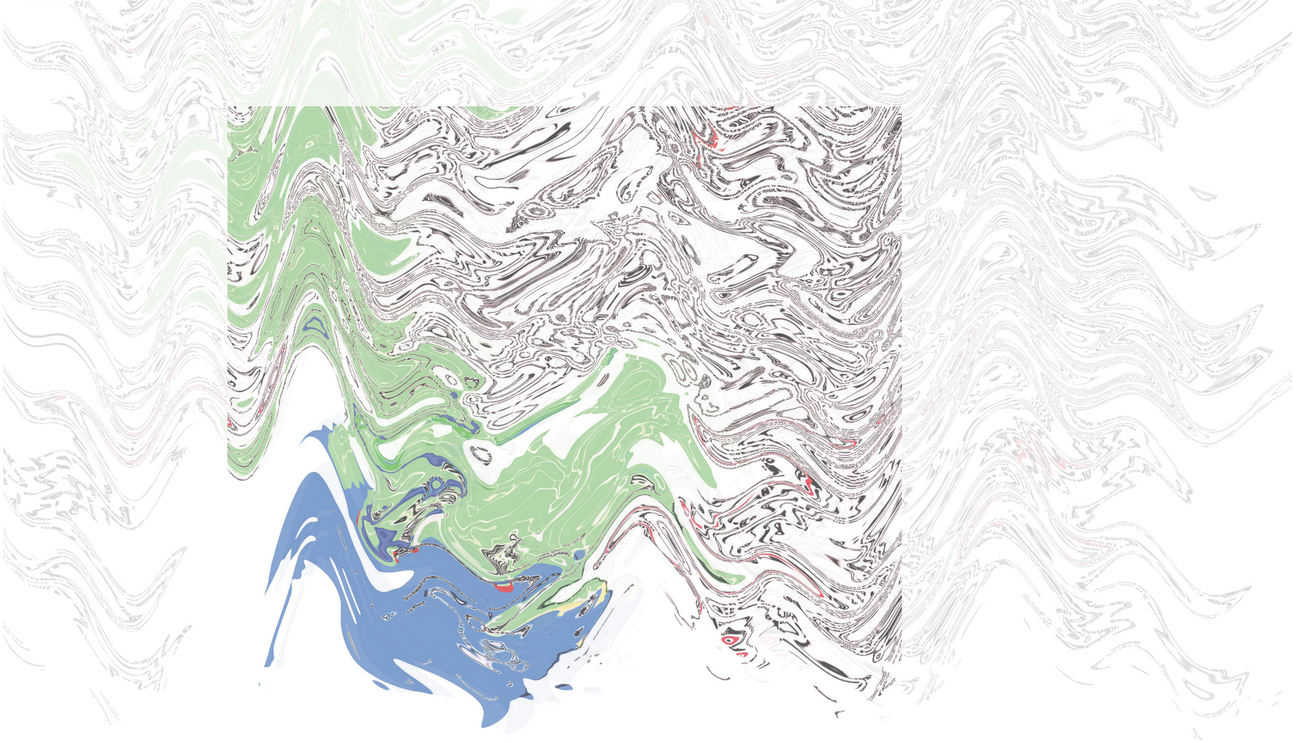
Alice and I oscillate between these two modes, at times immersed in egocentric confusion, running through space, chasing receding objects, navigating bodily disarray; at others, perceiving the allocentric logic of the world, glimpsing the chessboard's larger structure. This dynamic also shapes my research practice, where instability is not a hindrance but a condition of speculative inquiry. Like Alice, I move between immersion and overview, immediacy and reflection. Interruption and divergence become catalysts for transformation. I work within folds and tangents, following unexpected crossings rather than seeking resolution.

Cuddy-Keane bridges narrative theory and neuroscience. She shows how orientation is staged on the page: experimental writing works as cartography, shifting viewpoint, bending syntax, and re-spacing the field, so readers move between proximity and distance. In this frame, she argues disorientation becomes a mode of insight, calibrated through egocentric and allocentric cartographies.
(Cuddy-Keane, 2018).

Cuddy-Keane's thinking moves in similarly generative ways. Her reflections on instability unfold as a methodology of thought rather than a mark of aesthetic rupture. She draws on Christoff (2016), whose research into spontaneous thought challenges linear, goal-directed models of cognition. 'Ambiguity', 'wandering', and 'openness are not cognitive failures', Christoff argues, but vital components of creative insight. This ethos underpins my formation of knotwork, where research becomes both material and methodological. Carroll contributes to this rhythm with recursive structures, syntactic inversions, and temporal dislocations, creating a poetics of disorientation that mirrors speculative thought. Influenced by Christoff and Cuddy-Keane, and attuned to Woolf's speculative rhythms, my knotwork links space, cognition, and creativity as a way of dwelling in thought's ongoing emergence.

As Alice crosses unpredictable thresholds, disorientation becomes a method, a condition embraced as part of the process. In this way, research-creation unfolds through emergent questions rather than predetermined goals. Alice's aim to become Queen remains uncertain; the path is as significant as its destination. The Red Queen's interrogation, "Where do you come from?" and "Where are you going?" (Carroll, 2010, p. 148), echoes the essential questions of creative inquiry. These are not questions seeking singular answers but invite recursive engagement and openness to becoming otherwise. Jane Newland observes in *Deleuze in Children's Literature* (2021, p. 75), that this mirrors Deleuze and Guattari's rhetorical questions in *A Thousand Plateaus*: 'Where are you going? Where are you coming from? What are you heading for?', questions they ultimately dismiss as 'totally useless' (1987, p. 25). For Newland, this dismissal signals a shift from directional logic to conceptual wandering, a movement that refuses linearity. *A Thousand Plateaus* thus exemplifies a rhizomatic methodology: a text without beginning or end, composed of plateaus (ibid., p. 22). Its topological form models movement, cartography, and emergence rather than arrival or destination.

Each plateau sustains intensity across a duration, resisting closure and inviting entry from any point. This form does more than organise content; it enacts a method where thought extends through connections and never settles into a singular path. My own practice aligns with this logic. Knotworks, folds, and thresholds may seem to complicate meaning, yet what they open are processes of making and thinking that remain in motion. Like the plateau, they generate spaces where meaning lingers, shifts, and transforms.



In my practice, these plateaus emerge through both conceptual and material threads. The Red Queen's demand for origin and destination is displaced by a method of making that resists fixed points. I do not begin with a clear path, nor move toward a predetermined end. Instead, ideas and materials fold into shifting terrains, temporary alignments of thought and matter, that never settle. I make from within the middle, unsure of the final shape. It is often disturbing and disorienting, and yet, I am drawn to the threads that continually refold, creating spaces not only for uncertainty and sustained exploration. Deleuze's concept of the fold deepens this approach: creativity and thought bend endlessly, resisting conclusion and turning in on themselves. Each inflection opens another threshold. There is no endpoint, only further folding. This recursive motion offers a method, a refusal of linear progression in favour of ongoing engagement with thought, material, and affect.

This dynamic is echoed in Alice's eventual encounter with the Red Queen. At first, Alice gains a panoramic view of the chessboard landscape from an escarpment, a moment of apparent clarity. Yet this clarity dissolves the instant the Queen grabs Alice's hand and propels her into the air, collapsing the stability of the mapped world. The sudden acceleration, exhilarating and disorienting, enacts the nonlinear dynamics of speculative research. Like the folds within my practice, this leap displaces certainty, disturbing the grid of knowledge and opening space for immersion, friction, and unexpected entanglement. Stumbling between the folds is not a stable midpoint, but a recursive passage: a mode of becoming within process.

Speculative research, as Michael and Wilkie (2022) describe it, emphasises 'the not-yet, the potential, the emergent, the possible, the co-becoming' (ibid., p. 1542). Rather than tracing fixed paths, it attends to what unfolds in the interplay between researcher, researched, and the shifting textures of the research event. The movement between distance and immersion is less a recursion than a folding back and forth, between overview and embeddedness, mapping and being mapped. Speculative research resists resolution. It embraces partiality, relationality, and emergence. In this sense, Alice's flight with the Red Queen becomes a model for inquiry shaped by encounter and transformation.

My research methods mirror Alice's capacity to reimagine spatial, cognitive, and affective terrains. Drawing on Michael and Wilkie, speculative research generates unexpected convergences between micro and macro, material and conceptual, social and psychic, human and nonhuman (ibid., p.1547). As a method, it becomes a site of continual metamorphosis, marked by a willingness to remain in touch with the fold, to dwell in uncertainty, trace lines without destination, and be transformed in the process.

As an act of co-becoming *In-between* (2025) began with a piece of baling twine and two dead chaffinches. Its meaning unfolding only through installation, first in one site and then another, each location altering the work's force and resonance. The process revealed how iteration and displacement can fold new dimensions into practice, deepening both the artwork and the research it generates.

Viewed this way, Alice's looking-glass journey operates as an imagined diagram for a method that resists stasis, inviting a thinking that moves through situated entanglement. Speculative research does not impose structure; it calls for attentiveness to what might emerge when structure turns opaque. In this folding of orientation and immersion, the knower gives way to the becoming-with, altered through inquiry itself. This relation of becoming-with is both conceptual and spatial, unfolding through shifting modes of perception that mirror the very terrain Alice navigates.



Track and traces rearranged (2023)



Planes of No(n)sense (2023)

In practice, relational becoming-with appears in such works as *Tracks and Traces* (2022) folded into *Planes of No(n)sense (2023)*. Fragments reassemble into new spatial orientations, embodying the shift between allocentric overview and the egocentric act of making. These works trace a method that privileges process over fixity. Speculative research, in this light, becomes a practice responsive to complexity, reflecting the unpredictable and evolving nature of thought itself.

Planes of no(n)sense is a knotting of thoughts and the unthought, manifesting as an evolving form. The expression, the expressed, and the sensed become a mass of singularities entangled in the act of making — of doing, touching, and sensing. It is a knotwork, a multi-dimensional entity created within the flow of an evolving space, as one surface melds into another.

While reflecting on *Planes of no(n)sense* after its making (on my website, 2023), I wrote: 'Folding the paper enabled me to change its cartography as the lines of thought passed between me and the form via my fingers. Fold after fold, the creases developed new lines of thought, which evolved through the process of making'. I now muse about 'the relationship between movement and thought, and… sensory experience and speculation', borrowing Sarah Truman's words (2021, p. 104).

When Alice admits she has lost her way (Carroll, 2010, p. 148), she signals not a loss of agency but of direction. The Queen's replies that the path belongs to her, asserting control over the terrain. The moment stages a central paradox of creative practice: navigating unfamiliar ground within systems that claim authority over the path. Creativity unfolds here in tension: the route remains uncertain, continually made and remade in the act of flux.

In staying with the unknown, I return to Deleuze and Guattri's becoming: continuous transformation without fixed destintion. Yet the question "becoming what?" exposes a persistent friction, implying a subject-object binary that my work resists. I remain within the folds of the liminal, where uncertainty itself becomes method. Here, inquiry unfolds as feeling-through-doing, repositioning me within artistic, philosophical, and academic terrains. Thought takes shape through movement rather than mastery.

The fold of disorientation

Disorientation, then, is not a deviation from creative practice; but its generative ground. My work inhabits a liminal space where certainty unravels, frameworks diffract, and new patterns emerge from fragmentation. A shadow of doubt drifts in: "Who are you to develop a concept beyond Deleuze's fold?" Insecurity gathers like a mist, clinging, but never quite solid. Another voice rises through it: "Why not me?" Resistance knots itself quietly here, an insistence on the right to think, create, and intervene. What follows is a conversation with ideas as they diffract, troubling their boundaries and widening what is possible. Creativity, unfolds through continual movement and mutation, what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'becoming'—'even the failures are part of the plane' (1987, p. 255).

Each hesitation or missed step becomes a fold, an opening to what might yet emerge. Innovation arises through disorientation, a dynamic that *Through the Looking-Glass* stages with precision. At the Red Queen's cry, "Faster! Faster!" (Carroll, 2010, p. 150), Alice is propelled into furious motion; she runs breathlessly through air that bears her, gains an overview of the landscape, and yet seems to arrive where she began—or does she? I recognise this rhythm of motion without immediate change in my own practice: a becoming that Cliff Stagoll describes as 'the pure movement evident in changes between particular events' (2005, p. 21).



John Tenniel (1820–1914), illustration from Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass (1871). Public domain. Digitally modified for this research.

Transformation is ongoing mutation; a dynamic Alice embodies as she navigates imposed rules that expose instability and enable subtle subversions from within. Deleuze and Guattari observe that in becoming, 'speed and slowness, movement and rest… subordinate not only the forms of structure but also the types of development' (ibid., p. 255). Within this rhythm, transformation stirs inside the very patterns that sustain rules, altering them from within rather than abandoning them outright.

Such recursive movement, at once constrained and transgressive, echoes the rhythm of feminist posthumanism and research-creation, where fixed categories diffract and the boundaries between subject and object, interior and exterior, blur. Alice moves through folds, each one reconfiguring her relation to the world, an experience I recognise in my own practice, where constraint itself becomes generative. Like Alice, I 'become-with' the material and conceptual reweaving that unfolds. Her movements through folds echo the recursive gestures of my own practice, where the posthuman condition is lived not as a fixed subject but as emergent, relational, and ongoing.

In my practice, this becoming takes shape as negotiation, a movement through complexity rather than opposition. Each gesture is a fold in a knotwork of practice, an accumulation of turns that resists finality yet gathers force. Like Alice, I attend to what shifts in the folds: the liminal, the slippery, the not-yet-formed. Thought and matter intertwine; form is always arriving. Air moves through these knots as a sustaining force, holding them in tension, circulating among the threads, keeping the structure alive without enclosing it. It steadies yet unsettles, sustaining emergence and holding open the space for becoming.

Virginia Woolf re-enters the room

The intangible presence of air recalls Virginia Woolf's reflections in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), where she situates creativity within a historical lineage of women thinkers, giving them air to breathe. Woolf maps the constraints and inheritances that shape women's intellectual lives, grounding creative agency in a specific context. Her attention to figures such as Jane Austen and Emily Brontë underscores this tension: she celebrates their artistry within limitation, noting that Austen 'wrote without hate, without bitterness, without fear, without protest, without preaching', while also lamenting how 'history scarcely mentions' (1987, p. 50) the creative labour of women. By contrast, Alice moves through a speculative rhizomatic logic, erratic and generative. If Woolf speaks to the weight of historical positioning, Carroll conjures the force of disorientation. Yet both recognise that creative possibility emerges through the very constraints that shape the work. For Woolf, as for Carmichael – and for Alice, as for me – working within liminality produces its own kind of rhythm: a repeated movement between being caught and getting free, between hesitation and discovery.

Following Woolf's call for a room of one's own, I embrace Alice and Mary Carmichael not just as literary figures but as forces moving through language, gesture, and thought. They draw me into liminal terrains that resonate with Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), where knowledge emerges through folds and multiplicities. These conceptual spaces resist linear progression, offering disorientation as method. Liminal spaces open as sites of continuous recomposition, where resolution never settles. Creation, in this sense, moves collectively, recursively, historically – never in isolation. Writing and making unfold as gestures of folding and refolding, practices that turn toward transformation rather than closure. Woolf's feminist lineage, Carroll's warped logic, and Deleuze's fold converge in my practice. The knotwork I form is an unfinished linguistic, material, and affective terrain, emerging through recursive folds of theory, sensation, and memory. Like the knots themselves, it holds its form through tension – and is sustained by air.

In *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Parr, 2005), cultural theorist Kylie Message notes from her reading of *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), that liminality emerges as a third space mediating between molar (rigid, hierarchical) and molecular (fluid, decentralised) formations. 'Segmentarity', she argues, is 'a fundamental structuring principle that contributes to organising the individual and social life of all humans' (Message, 2005, p. 240). In this framework, liminality is not a passive interval but an active site of resistance and transformation. Like the fold, it unsettles closure: unstable yet generative, it opens onto new ways of thinking, making, and becoming.

Mapping threshold concepts

From within this knotwork, I find myself poised at a threshold, hovering near a notion not yet fully grasped. Movement feels both inevitable and endlessly deferred, a pulse between knowing and not-knowing. Here, Jan Meyer and Ray Land's 'threshold concept theory' (2006, 2005, 2003) meets Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, which 'assumes very diverse forms' (1987, p. 7). Both frameworks attend to complexity and transformation, tracing paths of learning that resist linearity. Threshold concepts, 'transformative', 'irreversible', 'integrative', 'bounded', and 'troublesome' (Meyer and Land, 2006, 2005, 2003; Perkins, 1999), linger at points of liminality, when understanding falters, folds back on itself, and emerges anew. Yet where Meyer and Land describe thresholds as structured progressions into new conceptual spaces (2005, p. 374), my experience aligns more with the rhizome's lateral, proliferative becoming, without fixed destination. Thresholds are porous and unpredictable, opening as sites of negotiation and rupture, limits that tremble yet invite movement. In this folding of theories, thresholds and rhizomes meet: each a living intersection where knowledge and possibility co-emerge, shaping practice and thought in continual transformation.

My sitting with and contemplating thought unfolds materially as well as conceptually through the recursive gesture of drawing, annotating and layering in my mind maps, or what I have called 'mindscapes' (see Fold 2, pp. 148-155). Thresholds materialise not always as abstract shifts, but often as lived, affective, and spatial reconfigurations. My developing maps become a field of movement, a site where theory touches sensation, and thought takes form. Before crossing a threshold, I gather fragments, readings, references, gestures and sensations, into a series of mind maps. This mapping is a cognitive exercise and a visual and material method where words and images accumulate with little predetermined order.

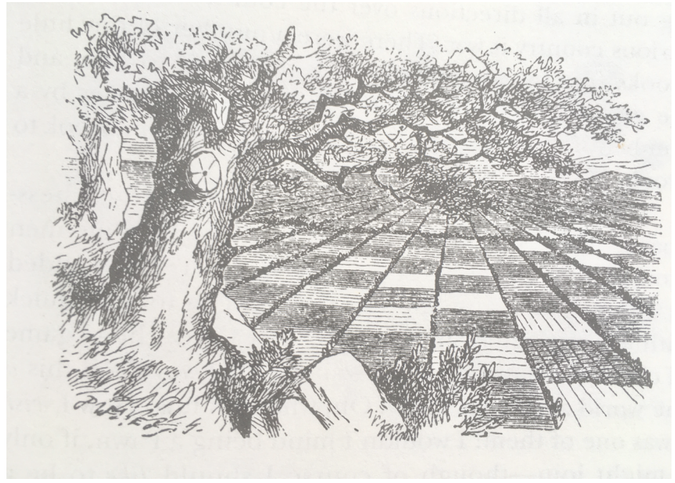
The maps grow rhizomatically, refusing central nodes or linearity. Each entity contributes a tactile surface that holds affective and conceptual tension. Through this engagement, mapping as knotwork emerged as a central methodology within my practice. Knotting establishes connections between disparate beings, events, and assemblages, creating an interwoven knotwork that resists static categorisation. This rhizomatic approach mirrors Deleuze and Guattari principles, fostering thinking and making that prioritises experimentation, flux, and transformation. The resulting connections disrupt fixed frameworks, creating space where subjectivity and practice are fluid and ever-evolving as visual elements co-constitute the inquiry, resisting hierarchical closure and foregrounding the emergent, unfinished, and intuitive. The ebb and flow of activity and interruptions often generate new lines of thought before I consciously recognise them as thresholds. Crossing a threshold is rarely identifiable in the moment. However, retrospectively, I know something in the map has shifted my thoughts. A line thickens. A cluster erupts. New terms echo across pages. The threshold is made visible through its traces.

Encountering concepts such as Braidotti's 'zoe/geo/techno assemblage' (2022) produces such shifts, not just intellectually but somatically and spatially. Her concept, emphasising the dynamic interrelation of life (zoe), earth (geo), and technology (techno), enters the knotwork of my practice as an active force rather than a stable theory. It disrupts separation between subject and world, folding human and non-human, material and machinic, into an entangled ecology of thought.

This assemblage reconfigures both my writing and making. In my mind maps, it manifests as a sensed pressure, reinforcing some marks, stretching others, bending the direction of lines, and softening the edges of boundaries. The page becomes a terrain where Braidotti's posthuman figuration operates as a mode of inhabiting the relations between matter, voice, and form. The zoe/geo/techno assemblage refuses purity or coherence, aligning with the visual messiness and asymmetry that shape my maps. Like other assemblages I meet in practice, this configuration often marks shifts in understanding, producing what Meyer and Land (2006) call 'troublesome knowledge' that unsettles yet becomes productive. Such encounters act as portals, opening onto new ways of thinking. Alice's journey echoes this process: each encounter a plateau, each plateau a moment of (dis)orientation in an ever-unfolding landscape. Complexity and disruption propel thought as much as they obstruct it, generating movements that remain recursive, transformative, and unfinished.

Alice's step through the looking-glass exemplifies such a threshold. It opens a recursive path toward becoming Queen, navigated through continual uncertainty rather than mastery. What matters here is orientation within a shifting terrain rather than speed. This captures the temporality of threshold experience, where movement and disorientation coexist, and progress is measured by attunement rather than linear advancement. Carroll's chessboard squares are more than steps in a puzzle; they are thresholds in a labyrinth; each leap an invitation into uncertainty. With every crossing, Alice enters what

Deleuze and Guattari describe as a 'chaos-cosmos' or 'chaosmos', a space where order and disorder dance together, generating tension and possibility rather than closure (1994, p. 81, Deleuze, 1990b, p. xiii).



John Tenniel (1820–1914), illustration from Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass (1871). Public domain. Digitally modified for this research.

In this world, as in my own practice, threads of matter, thought, and social entanglement weave in unexpected patterns, folding, knotting, and looping back upon themselves. These crossings resist neat endings and open onto new modes of becoming. Such generative terrain sets the stage for the iterative, affective work of folds and knots that underpin my research and creative practice, emerging as knotwork: dynamic intersections of matter and thought bridging my roles as artist, researcher, and carer.

One such moment came in 2021, when I recognised an alignment with posthuman feminist theory as an affective orientation rooted in care (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016; Puig de La Bellacasa, 2017). For the first time, I understood my practice as entangled with care rather than simply as making. This thinking marked a shift that reoriented my research-creation methodology. Equally significant was realising that the female thinkers I was aligning with were themselves writing about care, treating it as an academic strand of thought and insisting on its philosophical weight. My recognition was theoretical and anatomical at once: a surge of adrenaline, a sensory jolt that grounded the shift in my thinking. Meyer and Land describe such threshold crossings as a 'transformation of personal identity' (2003, p. 415). For me, it was a fold, a convergence of thought, matter, and affect that tightened into a knot. A shift I could never reverse, only carry forward in practice.

Distinct, though far from isolated, that realisation echoed other knots, sites of entanglement and resistance in practice, that emerge from what John O'Reilly (2023) calls doctoral 'stuckness': a necessary disorientation that precedes ontological shift. Marsh and De Luca (2014) similarly frame confusion and hesitation as precursors to transformation, reshaping subjectivity across cognitive, affective, and attitudinal registers (ibid., p. 175). Thresholds are rarely dramatic or immediate. They curve experience from the inside out, recalibrating value, identity, and method. Each fold, each knot, carries the force of reconfiguration, a becoming otherwise that echoes the iterative, circular movement of Alice's crossings through Carroll's conceptual map.

Working from the inside out, I returned to *Logic of Sense* (Deleuze, 1990b) and re-read Lewis Carroll, tracing those crossings more closely. It was through Alice's strange world, more than through abstract theory, that I began to grasp the folds of *The Fold*. Her journey, with its warped logic and iterative leaps, mirrored my speculative process: moving through liminal spaces, grappling with elusive concepts, waiting for the intangible to take form. Like Alice, I crossed thresholds without knowing where they would lead. One day, Alice would become Queen, and there would be a coronation.

In the real world, such moments are not endings but shifts, attunement to disorientation as a method of inquiry. It was through Alice that I felt my way into Deleuze's fold. Not by mastering theory, but by aligning affectively with her logic of becoming in the world she passed through. Julie Rattray's extension of threshold concept theory echoes this emphasis on the affective, the embodied (2016). Where Meyer and Land chart cognitive and conceptual shifts, Rattray reminds us that transformation is also felt. How individuals experience the world, through sensation, emotion, hesitation, matters as much as how they think about it (ibid., p. 67). In creative inquiry, affect is not incidental. It animates the process, propelling the iterative motion of thought, matter, and feeling.

John O'Reilly in a tutorial challenged me to reflect on Jean Baudrillard's claim that 'one had to jump, to pass over the other side of the line and lose a sense of reference in order for one's thought to be more a projection, an anticipation' (2015, p. 29). This gesture, 'to jump', marks a break from conventional frameworks. In Baudrillard's words, 'theory gives way entirely to its object, to its object in a pure state' (ibid., p.29), a moment in which abstraction dissolves and one encounters the object directly, beyond interpretation. 'The subject of theory or of knowledge no longer seeks to interpret; we move away from interpretation and we come much closer to fiction' (ibid.). This fiction is not untruth, but a creative space for speculation and transformation. For me, such a mode of thought allows the fold to become something more, a material-semiotic threshold, an opening that transforms into knotwork.

Living backwards to move forwards

Returning to Carroll, Rattray's reframing contextualises the White Queen's peculiar logic of 'living backwards'. This seemingly nonsensical notion unsettles Alice's understanding of time, revealing a speculative mode of memory that reaches toward the future even as it draws from the past:

> "Living backwards!" Alice repeated in great astonishment.
> "I never heard of such a thing!"
> "– but there's one great advantage in it, that one's memory works both ways".
>
> "I'm sure mine only works one way," Alice remarked.
> "I ca'n't remember things before they happen." "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards," the Queen remarked.
>
> "What sort of things do you remember best?"
> Alice ventured to ask.
>
> "Oh, things that happened the week after next,"
> the Queen replied in a careless tone. (Carroll, 2010, p. 181)

On the surface, the Queen's logic appears absurd, yet it proposes an alternative perception; one that ruptures linear time and invites new orientations to thought and feeling. With Rattray's focus on affect, this reorientation is more than cognitive: it reconfigures understanding and relation; it is felt as much as thought. In my own practice, this backwards-and-forwards rhythm mirrors how understanding often arrives before articulation. Ideas surface ahead of language, as though the work itself knows. Folding and knotting become not only structual strategies but temporal gestures, binding past impressions, present intensities, and speculative futures.

Folding is a way of working with time, navigating the unknown. Such uncertainty carries cost. Disorientation brings anxiety and unease, embedding itself in the affective fabric of making. As Sibbett and Thompson (2008) note, 'knowledge can be troublesome not just cognitively, but also emotionally, attitudinally, bodily and inter-personally or institutionally and socially' (p. 227). These emotional, embodied, and relational intensities shape the psychological terrain of my speculative practice. To navigate such 'troublesome knowledge' is to risk vulnerability, linger in the unknown, and remain open to transformation.

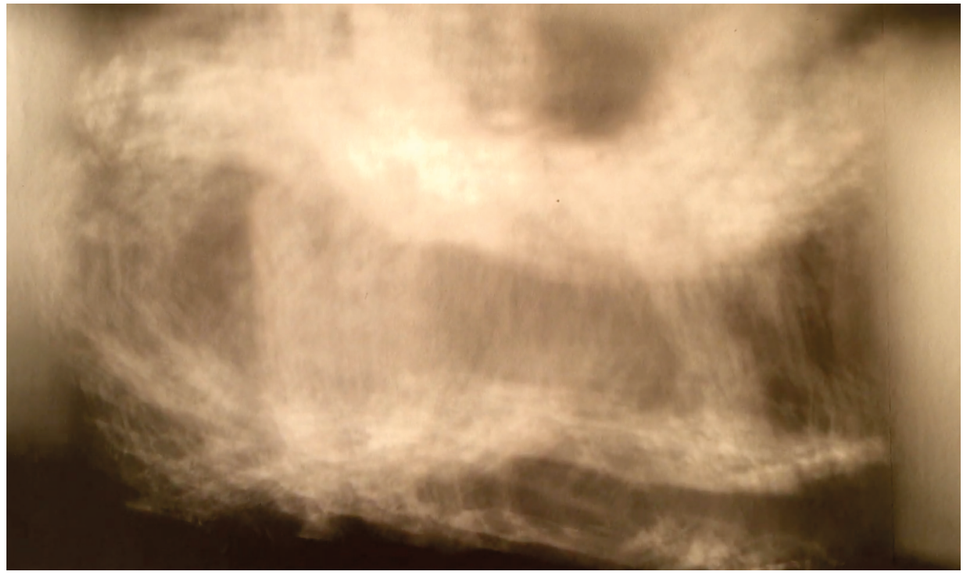
I move through folds of uncertainty across roles that refuse separation: sister, artist, researcher, and homemaker. They fold into each other, often indistinct and unresolved. Within a month of my sister's death, I began this research. Grief folded into inquiry, a threshold where identity, knowledge, and emotion were held in suspension. If the Queen's logic offers mastery over time, I had none. My resilience came instead from staying with wondering, remembering backwards and forwards at the same time, feeling the ache of memory alongside the pull of possibility. To work inside the fold, is to accept transformation as openness to the not-yet known.

Alice's passage across conceptual, emotional, and spatial thresholds reflects my journey through research-creation and grief, where identity, affect, and understanding remain in flux. As the anthropologist Victor Turner describes, liminal beings are 'betwixt and between', neither here nor there, stripped of social markers, rendered symbolically invisible. This unsettled state, likened to death, darkness, wilderness, or eclipse—signals dissolution but also potential renewal. It is a suspension of social logic, a glimpse of egalitarian, affective, emergent relationality and becoming otherwise (1991, p. 95-96).

Meyer and Land (2006) align liminality with transitions that demand the abandonment of former identities and epistemologies (ibid., p. 376), a process that is 'problematic, troubling, and frequently involves the humbling of the participant', a state of being 'naked of self' (ibid.). Through Rattray's lens, my path unfolds as a map of 'metamorphic learning', cognitive and affective. Marsh and De Luca (2014) observe, this involves 'a significant shift in the perception of a subject, the construction of subjectivity and personal identity' (p. 176). Within research-creation, this shift is never final: it is emergent, recursive, in motion. Each encounter reshapes my practice and myself, carried through theory, matter, and the force of embodied process. To knot is to linger with contradiction. Folding to knot resists completion. It reshapes what is given through rupture and slow, attentive turning, bending thought and material into new alignments. This is the rhythm of my practice: a negotiation with surfaces, textures, and tensions, rather than a search for fixed form. Knotwork entwines thinking and making, working with the familiar until it becomes unfamiliar, revealing something new. From this dynamic space of undoing and remaking, I turn toward another kind of subjectivity as it emerges in place: an old house slowly transforming, where restoration becomes a mode of thought, and every crack a quiet site of becoming.

Joan Denise San-Claire, researcher in adult education, extends Jack Mezirow's model of transformative learning (2009), into a theory of 'metamorphic learning' that stresses affective, embodied, and cyclical transformation (2015, pp. 158–159). Her emphasis on recursion and ontology underpins Rattray's affective threshold theory, which, like metamorphic learning, resonates with my practice where disorientation and material encounter unfold into knotwork.

A Baroque house folds into my milieu



14 50 04 – (2020) – A still from a video recorded while I was thinking about matter. https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/14-50-04/

Since October 2020, during the global lockdown, my process of folding has taken shape within the walls of an old house I have slowly restored. Over three years, I scrubbed, peeled, and painted its surfaces, engaging in a form of thinking-through-making. Like Deleuze's Baroque house, with its labyrinthine architecture and layered surfaces, this house folds the outside in, creating porous interiors. It holds time in its cracks, memory in its shifting light, and weather in the quiet hum of its history. The house became a studio of inquiry and reflection, a lived space of labour and material experiment.

As my research unfolded, the house emerged as an apparatus, echoing Karen Barad's notion of 'open-ended dynamic material-discursive practices through which specific "concepts" and things are articulated' (2007, p. 334). Embedded in this space, I began to observe the house more attentively, captivated by the shifting patterns of light tracing and retracing themselves across walls. These ephemeral phenomena, produced by photons, waves, and particles, danced for a moment and then disappeared, revealing the house as a site of continual material and perceptual transformation. In this context, light was not merely an atmospheric effect, it was an agent within what Barad describes as 'material-discursive practices'.

These diffractive patterns reoriented my attention, prompting engagement with physical and conceptual materials as dynamic intra-actions. Light became a collaborator, drawing my thinking into relation with the invisible and intangible, giving rise to what Simon O'Sullivan calls 'creative potentialities', the reconfiguration of what already exists into new and different combinations (2006, p. 155). The house unfolded as a space to think with, more than a backdrop, an active terrain where human and non-human forces met, shaping and reshaping one another through ongoing processes of making and perception.

Barad emphasises that 'discursive practices are not speech acts', they 'are specific material configurations of the world through which determinations of boundaries, properties, and meanings are differentially enacted' (2007, p. 335).



Diffractive light patterns (2021)

Trapped in the house, I turned renovation into a prompt for thinking through making. As I peeled years of paper from the walls, I immersed myself in lectures on *The Fold*, listening to whatever I could find online. One source became especially useful: Andrew Benjamin's lecture *The Appearance of Modern Architecture: Deleuze on the Baroque* (2004). His voice became a constant companion, looping in the background as I worked. Through repetition and immersion, I absorbed the intricacy of the Deleuzian fold. As I scraped away at the walls, the text became penetrable, less opaque.



Folds within folds (2021)

Deleuze opens *The Fold*: 'The Baroque does not refer to an essence, but rather to an operative function, to a characteristic' (1991, p. 227). Three questions arose immediately as I read the opening sentence: What is 'the Baroque'? What is 'an essence'?... and how can the Baroque be an 'operative function'? I found myself folding this sentence through my mind as I worked.

Benjamin frames the distinction between 'essence' and 'operative function' as "two different senses of thinking philosophically" (2004), noting that from Hegel to Heidegger the emphasis falls on 'essence', especially "the essence of truth". He reads Deleuze as a departure from this lineage: "We are not concerned with essential thinking" (Benjamin, 2004). In Deleuze, the Baroque operates rather than merely signifies (an 'operative function', "workful" in Benjamin's word), less a style to decode than a process of creation and transformation (Deleuze, 1991: 227; Benjamin, 2004).

Through Nietzsche, "for whom terms mark activity, forms of investigation… they are workful" (Benjamin, 2004), Deleuze treats concepts as acts. That emphasis on conceptual activity, on making as a mode of thinking, aligns with my practice: I am in an old house, trying to make it new. Here the Baroque becomes a method, generating forms and meanings that resist resolution and letting binaries such as truth and untruth recede.

Art historian Ernst Gombrich observes that Baroque was originally a pejorative term, used by critics to mock the seventeenth century's deviation from classical norms. For him, the Baroque is less a coherent historical category than a retrospective construct (Gombrich, 2011, p. 387). Deleuze similarly questions its historical validity, writing: 'The Baroque never existed... For in this case the concept is given, while in the case of the Baroque the question entails knowing if a concept can be invented that is capable (or not) of attributing existence to it' (Deleuze, 1993, p. 33).

Where Gombrich sees critical invention, Deleuze reframes the Baroque as a conceptual operation. Like mythical creatures such as unicorns, it may lack the historical discreteness, yet it endures as a dynamic logic of folding, transformation, and depth (ibid., p.33). Tom Conley writing in the foreword to *The Fold* describes the Baroque as 'a trope that comes from the renewed origins of art… an intense taste for life... and a fragility of infinitely varied patterns of movement' (Conley, 1993, p. x). It is this sense of the Baroque as rhythm, fragility, and fold that I take up in my practice, where transformation itself becomes the method.

As Benjamin puts it, "Deleuze robs the Baroque of its historical specificity… and it becomes something that is useful" (2004). In Deleuze's hands, the Baroque shifts from period to operation: continuous transformation and complexity, a fold extending toward infinity, an apt figure for restoration, where nothing is ever finally fixed and the process endures. Deleuze writes:

> The realm of the physical, the natural, the phenomena, the contingent is completely flung into the infinite iteration of open chains; in this respect, it is not metaphysical. The realm of the metaphysical lies beyond, and brings a close to the iteration. (Deleuze, 1991, p. 234)

This idea echoed through the renovation process. The house, in all its unpredictability, felt suspended in this chain of contingencies: walls resisting straightening, beams shifting slightly under pressure, time itself leaking through gaps in the plaster. Nothing held still. Yet there were moments, brief ones, when a gesture seemed to hold, when a structure aligned, when meaning momentarily settled. Deleuze's distinction does not divide two separate worlds but reveals a tension within becoming itself: the ongoing flow of transformation, and the conceptual frames we use to touch it, however briefly.



Trapped in the house (2021)

In my practice, these frames are not fixed, they are knots. They hold, then loosen. They let thought pause without resolving. What Deleuze calls the metaphysical becomes, for me, a way to breathe within the density of making. It allows the work to articulate itself, if only momentarily, before slipping back into movement. The knot doesn't close; it holds the strain of thought and material in tension, suspended in air. Yet Deleuze's fold, rich in its treatment of matter, surface, and internal inflection, largely overlooks a crucial element: air. The fold breathes, however, air itself remains unnamed. During the renovation, air was never neutral. It carried dust, vibration, and memory. It moved between beams, echoed through empty rooms, hovered in corners as atmosphere. In my work, air is not simply what fills the space between things; it surrounds them, holds them, and enables them to shift and resonate. Air becomes the relational medium through which affect circulates. Knotwork happens in air.

Hanging my work within the stripped walls, I came to sense the house as more than a backdrop, as a material force that shaped perception. The artworks merged into their surroundings, embedded in the texture of the walls, creating layers within layers. When I photographed these installations, the images introduced yet another dimension, adding unexpected depth to the original works. This marked a turning point in my experience of the house, from a project of restoration to an active site of research-creation. The material and the philosophical began to blur, as making and thinking intertwined. In this evolving relation, the Baroque revealed itself not as a historical style but as a method, a continual process of transformation embedded in practice.

I now realise my art practice parallels Baroque sensibilities by embracing the intra-action between materials and concepts, old and new, allowing meaning to emerge organically through the act of making. The Baroque's tendency to blur boundaries, between intellectual and sensual, known and unknown, aligns with my approach. For me, this reflects Deleuze's emphasis on materiality as a site of continuous transformation, where matter unleashes the sensual in the form of 'vibrations or oscillations' (1991, p. 227). All around the house, surfaces and materials prompted new lines of thought as I encountered them, my artworks coalescing with the space in ways I hadn't anticipated.



I Re-turn III (2021)

For Deleuze, the Baroque also underscores the interconnectedness of matter and soul. He describes this interplay as 'a correspondence, even communication between the two levels' (1991, p. 227). Within the house, this connection manifested in the intra-action of light and structure, as folds forming between material and meaning like blood flowing through the hidden veins of the house and surfacing on its skin, the walls. Through this process, the house and my research became intertwined, each folding into the other. By engaging with Deleuze, I was able to think through the dynamic interplay of the material and conceptual, the physical and philosophical. Knotwork extends the fold: it entangles material threads and conceptual tensions, held within air. It is shaped by atmosphere, suspended in vibration, surrounded by the subtle movements and pressures that air carries. While the fold deepens and inflects material surfaces, knotwork also attends to the space around, the porosity, the breathing tension between things. It lets the knot remain open. It listens. It does not resolve. In this way, knotwork becomes a practice of attunement: an atmospheric, affective, and material thinking that holds, in air, the ongoing motion of becoming. It is diffractive.

Beyond the physical – a diffractive process

My practice extends beyond the physical; it is also psychological and psychoanalytical. Within my mindscape, the process sometimes resembles a search for what is no longer present—the dead. While I remain cautious about invoking the spectral, I acknowledge the vitality and liveliness of matter. Encounters with light around the house deepened my thinking and opened new questions about perception and presence. Patterns seemed to manifest, hovering as if in three dimensions, transient ghost-like forms. Drawn obsessively to ephemeral phenomena, I began recording the fleeting forms as they appeared, recognising not solidity but diffractive events: light waves bending, scattering, briefly materialising before vanishing.

After my sister died, more than a year passed before she appeared to me again, first in a dream as a silhouette. Months later, she returned in colour.

Read through Barad, this is not a going back but a diffractive return: past and future are reconfigured in the now of intra-action, where phenomena are material entanglements threaded through spacetimemattering. My sister's silhouette, then colour, arrives as mattering rather than as spectre, a memory sedimented in the world's material folds (Barad, 2010, p.261)



A frame from Seemingly Nothing (2021) - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/seemingly-nothing/

Seemingly Nothing, a short 35-second video, captures this phenomenon. I watched as photons and particles danced across the wall's surface, forming what appeared to be a moving, material presence. This moment unfolded slowly, making physical, conceptual, and affective sense of what I had been thinking. I engaged with matter and energy as an artist, attuned to their expressive capacities, rather than analysing the scene as a scientist might. Concepts such as 'diffraction', 'interference', and 'particles', once theoretical, became sensorial and situated tools for thinking and making. My practice turned its back on reflective modes, which presumed separation between subject and object, and toward a more entangled, diffractive process. Karen Barad writes, 'Diffraction does not fix what is the object and what is the subject in advance… diffraction involves reading insights through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge' (Barad, 2007, p. 30). Unlike reflection, which stabilises form through mirroring, diffraction implies interference, relationality, and emergence. Thinking with light, rather than merely looking at it, allowed a diffractive methodology to unfold gradually within my work (ibid., pp. 89–90), reshaping both attention and material engagement.

A diffractive methodology

Diffraction, for me, names a fluid mode of investigation in which waves and rhythms emanate from scientific theory and practice, diffusing through the porous boundaries of new materialist and posthuman feminist thought before re-emerging within other disciplines, terrains, and materials. This ebb and flow is a reciprocal, intra-active process rather than a one-way system of transplanting theory into practice. What I take from Barad is a mode of attentiveness, a way of working that acknowledges how

material and discursive forces co-constitute meaning and matter, more than a theoretical frame. As thinker and maker, I am drawn to what is not immediately visible, engaging in a form of inquiry that resists closure. Is this not the essence of creation, to think otherwise, to make space for what might be? The fleeting patterns of diffracted light resonate with Barad's concept of intra-action, where boundaries are emergent, not fixed, and where making becomes an encounter with matter's expressivity, a relational unfolding that transforms both maker and material.

The language of physics enters my practice as a mode of sense-making. Photons, diffraction, and wave interference become collaborators in the production of knowledge, foregrounding a form of situated, embodied knowing. As Donna Haraway writes, 'situated knowledges' require that the knower be partial, implicated, and accountable (1988). Her politics of positioning draws my work into the ethical terrain of practice-as-research, where knowledge arises through specific, entangled conditions.

Barad led me to Haraway and her insistence on accountability as I sculpted, drew, and filmed within various geological and domestic environments, resisting objectification and attending to the contexts of making. For Haraway,

> situated knowledges require that the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not as a screen or a ground or a resource, never finally as slave to the master that closes off the dialectic in his unique agency and his authorship of "objective" knowledges. (Haraway, 1988, p. 592)

In my practice, I embed myself within the making, attuned to material and place, aware of my presence and the shifting dynamics of each environment. Meaning surfaces through duration, through the folding of thought into matter. This immersion resists the binaries of subject/object, knower/known. Knowledge unfolds, as Barad suggests, through an entangled process of becoming that involves both human and non-human agencies.

Barad's concept of intra-action challenges the notion of agency as fixed or self-contained, proposing instead that agency emerges through relational entanglements of bodies, forces, and meanings, 'distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action' (Barad, 2007, p. 33). This resonates with my approach, where boundaries between self and other, human and non-human, material and immaterial, shift continually through practice.

In making, the event is relational: materials enter as agents, shaping the process and, in turn, transforming the maker. This framework enables a move from anthropocentrism toward practice as a site of co-creation between human, non-human, and machinic forces. Making becomes both method and philosophy, a way of engaging with complexity, transformation, and the vitality of matter. It is not the result of pre-existing entities interacting, but the expression of mutual constitution within a dynamic field of becoming. Barad's emphasis on entanglement strengthens the methodological premise of thinking through making, dissolving the divide between theory and practice. Each encounter with material, concept, and environment configures a new relational field where knowledge, affect, and agency are redistributed. In this sense, my practice aligns with posthuman feminist commitments to decentring the human and embracing the distributed, emergent nature of thought and matter. Within an intra-active paradigm, the work takes shape in and through experience, unfolding in environments where flux prevails, nothing stands alone, and everything is becoming.

Being in and with the material is inescapable. It is my life. Situations and events that occur around and within me inform my artworks, often beyond conscious orchestration. When two or more lines collide, rupture occurs, and as a result, a work is realised. At times, I take myself into different geological environments as a catalyst to disrupt habitual rhythms and push my thinking-through-making forward. These events are part set-up, part unsettlement, intentional disruptions to provoke emergence. When I can no longer see where the work is heading, I fold another environment into the process, trusting something will surface as I learn from, through and with, the matter around me.

In a 2013 lecture, Tim Ingold describes creativity as:

> "Joining with the movements of materials and awareness, as they feel their way ahead in real time, join with the movement of making… such feeling forward is essentially a process of improvisation… finding one's way… to improvise is to think through making… in thinking through making nothing is ever finished." (Tim Ingold and Pohjoisen kulttuuri-instituutti – Institute for Northern Culture, 2013)

Within this milieu, making is both process and a mode of thinking, an engagement with materials, movements, and environments that unfolds through sensory and relational experience. In *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, Ingold frames this as a methodology grounded in physical and sensual engagement, where materials include not only tools but the environment itself (2013, p. 115). My practice resonates with this: I move through and alongside materials, extending into an atmospheric, affective, liminal space, often dismissed as air, a folded environment that is both in-visible and material. Writing inhabits this same in-visble field, where thought, language, and rhythm knot together the philosophical, personal, and poetic, enacting different recursive, responsive, and generative processes to making. As practices, making and writing are modes of intra-action; they do not merely represent the World; they participate in it; both causing me to think differently about my milleu.

This entanglement of making and writing was already alive in the house, where light, matter and labour folded into practice as part of a wider subjectivity. The house itself became part of my practice, folding into the thesis materially, conceptually, and socio-politically. My dialogue with the house generated relational forms: a knotwork, in which walls, space and body merged.



Abstracting the walls (2025)





Abstraction with-in the walls of the house is not escape but attunement: following relations until the figure loosens and the work composes itself through colour, crack, and rhythm.

Editing did not sit beside the work; it entered the apparatus. My edits acted as a making device. Tightening the thesis re-tuned my attention, and the work evolved inside that altered field. In research-creation terms, this became a diffractive feedback loop: each editorial cut changed the apparatus (me, the house, the images, the concepts), and the materials answered back. Writing did not describe the work; it reconfigured it (Abstract from my journal 2025).

Knotted planes: becoming through matter

Amidst the ongoing renovation, I experimented with a fine paper thread, a material I had previously used in the *I Re-turn* (2021) series, curious to see if it would hold its form. The paper knots, however, could not yield the volume I desired. I wanted to create a cartographic structure, planes that would bend, refract, and reveal something new through their folds. Abandoning the paper, I turned to a flexible wire thread, recalling the material's malleability from *Skin III* (2020) (see p. 182). The wire knotted easily, holding its form without resistance. Working intuitively, I produced two wire pieces, and with the remade paper plane, I now had three distinct sections, but I did not know how they would come together to form anything that resembled a work of art. Not knowing what else to do I simply stitched the three pieces together, curious to see what they might show me.

The *I Re-turn* series can be viewed on my website: www.lyndabeckett.org. *I Re-turn II* appears on pages 39–41.



To turn/ To wind/ To loop (2021)

This material exploration culminated in *To turn/ To wind/ To loop* (2021). Up close, it appears a chaotic mass refusing coherence: three unruly planes intersecting. This work did not evolve through design, but rather through an organic unfolding.

Reflecting on this process, I wrote:

> *To turn/ To wind/ To loop is a meshwork formed of many knots created from two threads. Thin wire and paper intersect as knots evolve within this continuous form. The planes as singularities inhabit a transcendental field. Events, intensities, and striations converge to create different planes from another world, a world real within my mind (2021).*

At first, I described the piece as a meshwork of many knots, drawing on Ingold's concept of meshwork as a 'tissue of lines', emphasising relational movement and processual entanglement (2011, pp. 84-86). In retrospect, the work reveals a different logic: one of torsion, tension, and recursive folding of affect. Through sustained engagement with reflective and diffractive writing, knotwork has become visible as a speculative method.

Knotwork names the entanglement of material and metaphysical dimensions, where thought and form co-emerge through folding, catching, and twisting. The knots exist not only in thread or wire, but in air, in the affective and relational field that surrounds and exceeds them. Air allows the knot to vibrate beyond itself: to resonate, transmit, and press against unseen tensions. Unlike meshwork, which privileges fluidity and movement, knotwork attends to how lines gather into intensive formations, knots that hold, snag, and echo. This aligns with Deleuze's notion of 'chaosmos' (1993, p. 81), a fusion of order and disorder, material process, and speculative imagination.

Each time I hung the work from the same nail, shifting the point of attachment to a different knot, a new form emerged, shaped by the interplay of material and movement. The work revealed its plasticity, generating new configurations through its structure. Observing these shifting forms made me aware of how the interaction between maker and material blurs boundaries. Making dissolved into matter; there was no clear distinction between me and it, only a reciprocal unfolding. The structure became a site of transformation, embodying the entanglement of intention, material, and motion.



To turn



To wind



To loop

At first it was only an assemblage of materials. In hindsight I read *To turn/ To wind/ To loop* as an early articulation of knotwork: events, materials, and atmospheres beginning to entangle through looping gestures of thought and making. The work's development parallels my philosophical praxis of folding, unfolding, and refolding—a recursive method that opens thresholds of understanding. This aligns with the transformative force of threshold concepts, where learning entails crossings into previously inaccessible ways of thinking and being (Meyer and Land, 2003), and leans toward Rattray's affective extension of threshold theory, foregrounding relationality, emergence, and situated knowledge. Within my practice, however, there is no fixed outcome, only an ongoing negotiation between material, form, thought, and the forces that shape them. The cartographies I develop are not pre-defined maps. They are emergent, relational, and speculative, tracing lines of movement, entanglement, and potential rather than fixed points. In this sense, they extend Rattray's relational concept into a practice that is recursively performative, experimental, and open-ended. In this sense, *To turn/ To wind/ To loop* becomes both method and metaphor: an ontological process, a lived experience that holds space for uncertainty and transformation. Through its evolving planes, knots form knotworks, opening a speculative field where boundaries dissolve and material and conceptual dimensions intersect. This dynamic enacts what Deleuze and Guattari describe as becoming, as an ever-expanding interplay of forces, folding endlessly into the next possibility (1987, p. 263). From this recursive, affective, and emergent practice of knotwork, I turn to cartographies: mappings that emerge in the entanglement of materials, bodies, and thought, tracing lines of relation and potential instead of following pre-determined paths.

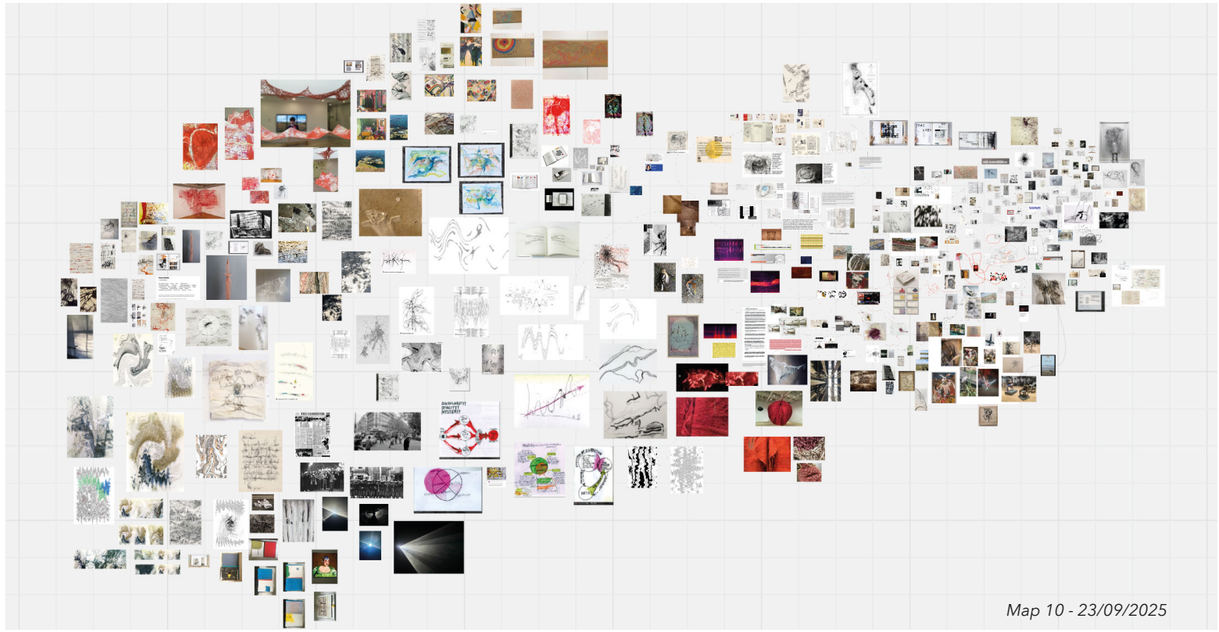
FOLD 2 _ MINDSCAPES

Hook
(53.7207° N, 0.8498° W)

At the beginning of my fourth year, my supervisor suggested I map what the thesis might look like. Since November 2023 I have done so through visual mindscapes rather than outlines or chapter plans, gathering fragments of thought, moments of sensation, theoretical strands, and unresolved questions. These mindscapes combine images and diagrams from external sources (for example, Pinterest threads, speculative references, found textures) together with my own works, installations, photos, sketches, and screenshots. Nothing is fixed; the process is non-linear, iterative, and embodied. Rather than stabilising the thesis, the mindscapes trace its becoming, recording intensities, hesitations, and entanglements. I call them diffractive because they do not mirror what is already there; they produce and register patterns of interference among images, texts, textures, and the mapping apparatus itself, where relations are made and unmade through agential cuts (Haraway, 1997, p. 273; Barad, 2007, pp. 89–91).

This cartographic approach aligns with posthuman perspectives that privilege emergence over order and relation over structure. Haraway's diffractive methodology frames mapping as tracing interference: 'diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference' (1997, p. 273). Barad develops diffraction into a central analytic in *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007, p. 89–91), a thread I return to throughout the thesis.

Diffraction first marked my research when I was thinking about wave phenomena; more recently Maria Udén (Luleå University of Technology, Sweden) extends this thread. Working across gender studies and technology, Udén proposes a 'novel feminist diffraction concept' and an 'indisciplinary feminist re-conceptualization' that merges technology, fantasy, and innovation (Udén, 2018). My practice appears to diffract into both.



Map 10 - 23/09/2025

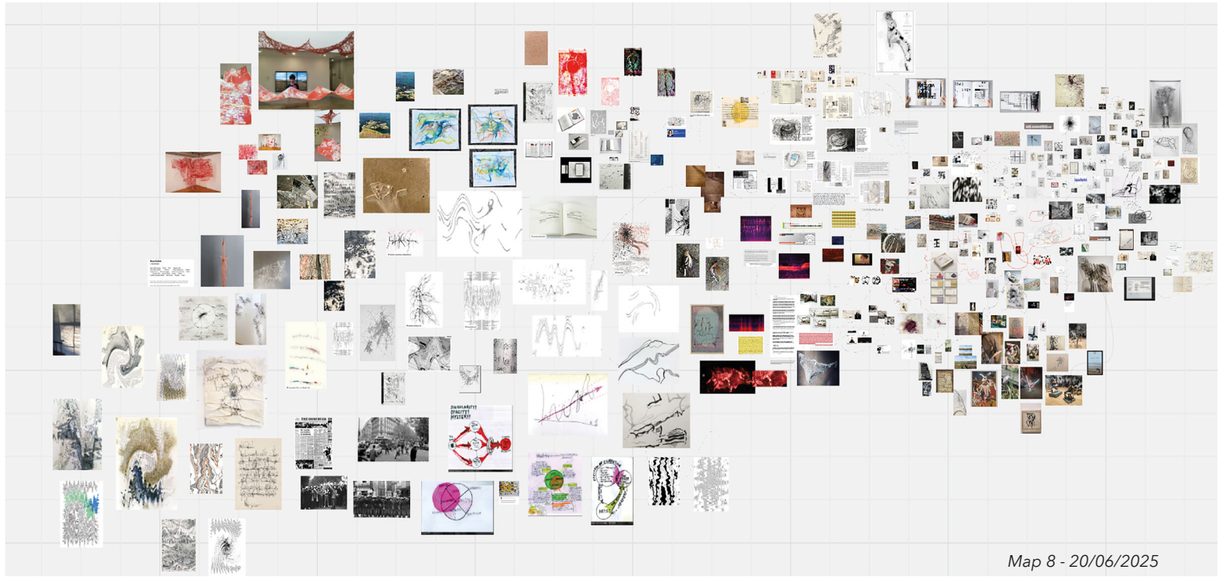


Map 9 - 23/06/2025

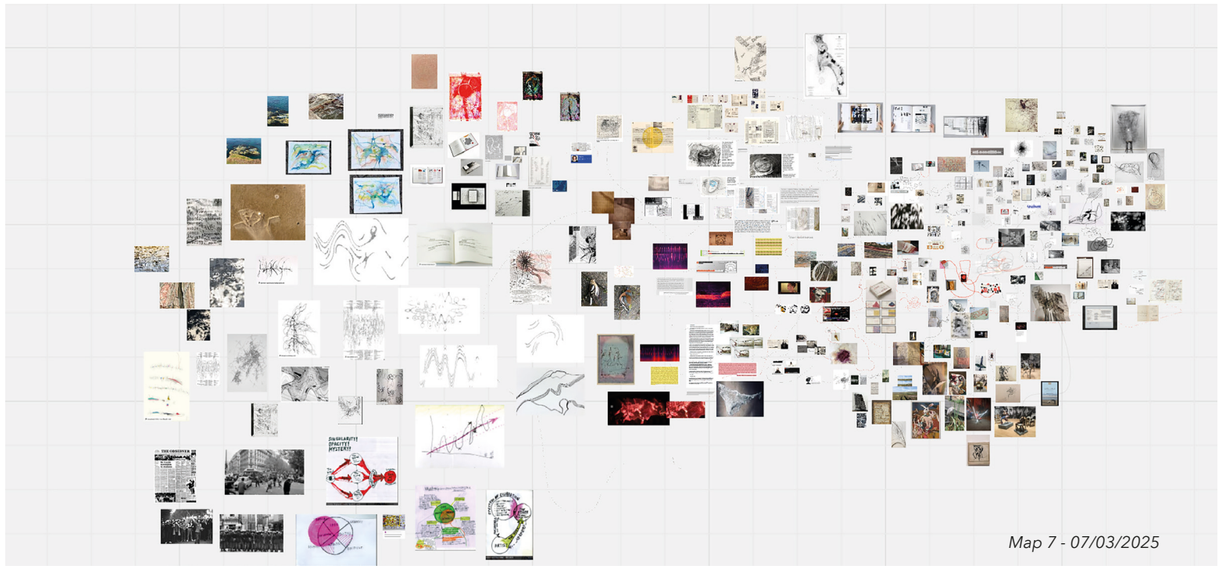
As Udén cites Iris van der Tuin: 'The visionary potential of diffraction makes 'a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction'. Diffractive mappings are not rationally made, because the productivity of diffraction comes from elsewhere' (van der Tuin, 2014, quoted in Udén, 2018, p.10).

My mindscapes take shape through affective encounters rather than sequence, revealing unexpected connections, tensions, and intensities across theory and practice. They do not simply visualise thought; they perform it, opening speculative modes of patterning and relation that resonate with embodied and material processes and with the distributed dynamics of online collaborative systems.

Platforms such as *Miro* add another layer: control becomes partial, deferred, and unsettled. The interface, with its layering, framing, and architectural logic, participates in the unfolding. This is not failure but method: a posthuman practice in which agency is entangled with machinic forces, technical limits, and the errant pathways opened by collaboration, error, and slippage. Theorist Luciana Parisi reads algorithmic and diagrammatic systems as speculative engines rather than representational tools. Algorithms construct 'digital spatiotemporalities' through which forms emerge, becoming not merely instruments but 'modes of living' (2013, p. ix). She also cautions against reductive computationalism: not all thought can be computed. This framing allows the mindscapes to be read as fields of activation that are relational, processual, and attuned to modes of thought that exceed rational design.



Map 8 - 20/06/2025



Map 7 - 07/03/2025



Dorothy Napangardi, Mina Mina, 2005. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Reproduced under fair dealing for the purposes of criticism and review.

Erin Manning's 'relationscape' further articulates the movements these maps trace (Manning, 2009). Writing on Dorothy Napangardi's Mina Mina (2005), Manning proposes that thought emerges from dynamic fields of relation: 'Mina Mina speaks of salt lines, a mapping not of a territory but its passages, the traces it leaves in the landscapes it uncovers' (2009, p.155).

This distinction between mapping as fixed chart and mapping as passage echoes how I work: mapping unfolds through relation and movement. Like Napangardi's salt lines, my maps are not representations of a thesis landscape but processes of uncovering that yield affective and conceptual traces emerging through entanglement, hesitation, and motion across media and time. They do not explain; they record, resonate, and shift.

As visual assemblage, the mindscape operates as virtual cartography: a topological field in which affect, materiality, and thought are distributed across a speculative, coordinated system. The grid is not geographical space but an abstract terrain where images, texts, and textures are placed according to shifting conceptual and affective relations. It offers a partial, affective tracing that foregrounds a posthuman methodology of orientation rather than a representation of totality; it folds thought and practice into spatialised, navigable intensity, a cartography of emergence.



Map 6 - 07/12/2024



Map 5 - 01/11/2024



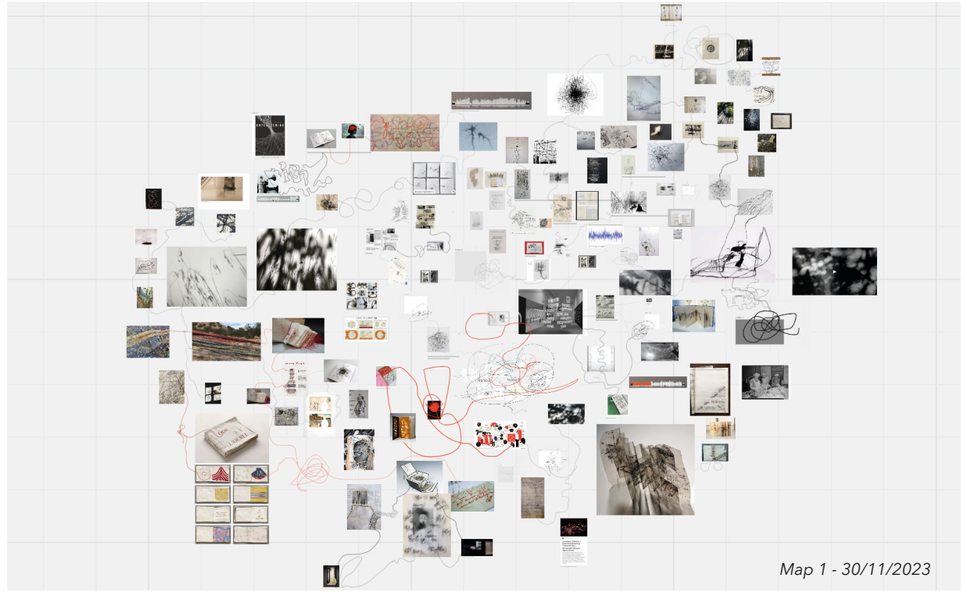
Map 4 - 13/03/2024



Map 2 - 03/02/2024



Map 3 - 19/02/2024



Map 1 - 30/11/2023

Mapping from within

My engagement with folds and textures unfolds as a situated mapping: I attend to emergent relations and shifting coordinates, charting unknown territories without reinscribing colonial logics of possession. If this thesis is structured to be navigated rather than consumed in a linear manner, it requires a methodology that honours such movement. It becomes a cartography not of fixed reference points but of resonances. In this sense, making itself is a mapping of thresholds that carry the force of encounter. Rather than representing a totality, these pages hold tensions, fragments, and folds that lean into what Erin Manning calls the 'more-than': a speculative opening toward what might yet take form through process (2016a). Cartography here unfolds as a generative, situated response, a way of thinking with material, concept, and the unknown, instead of a retrospective tracing.

It is only in writing-up that I recognise the cartographic pulse within my practice unfolding through materials forming a speculative weave of what mapping might become, rather than signifying dominance or ownership. A memory filters returns: the shifting sands of the Norfolk coastline. *Fold 1* draws me back to one of the first journeys I traced, though the marks do not point to a beginning so much as to a return.



The process of tracing was one of repetition, of going back to the same spot, attuned to the rhythm of the rocks. Once there, I drew abstract lines that run along the eroding sandstone cliff. I did not know why, only that the rocks held stories within them. My hands became instruments of a body in dialogue with the vertical plane before me. Inscribed with millennia of human and non-human traces, before me was a mutable field vibrating with duration. Traces of my early encounter during my research now return as method. I continue to follow lines that move across bodies, surfaces, and time, resisting the gaze of traditional cartography. What emerges are fields to inhabit, affective and knotted, 'mappings from within' (Braidotti, 2011, pp. 216–218), that open space for the speculative, the virtual, and the yet-to-form in each encounter.



A frame from 31/10/2012–21 (2021) - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/3110201221-2021/

This orientation continued with *31/10/2012–21* (2021). Working with sonic fragments, visual noise, and poetic interference, I explored folds between grief, language, and place. The piece does not offer a stable chart of arrival; it operates as shifting surfaces that stretch and hold contradiction, opacity, and affect. Sonic threads ripple across space and memory, tracing virtualities at each moment of making. Suspended threads and ambient textures do not represent space; they hold it in tension, attuned to conditions of making and environment. Materials touch, resist, and transform one another, knotting conceptual, sensorial, and socio-political strands into surfaces of resonance. Together with *Spider-fly* (2024), the work belongs to a continuum of mapping from within that registers intensities and opens speculative fields to inhabit and encounter.

Diffractive Lines (2021) - Opposite



Spider-fly (2024)

Simon O'Sullivan calls this working at the 'edge of the territory', a space where making draws us to the outer limits of the familiar, toward new arrangements of meaning and relation (2006, p. 32). Mapping is not simply orientation but intensification: an abstract machine generating lines of thought, rhizomatic connections, and diagrammatic possibilities. As I form knotworks of conceptual, sensual, and socio-political threads, I am less concerned with the known than with composing with the unknown, the virtualities folded within each gesture, each sound, each line of twine. Art, O'Sullivan reminds us, 'calls attention to the actual only to unlock the potential becomings encapsulated within it' (ibid., p. 34).

Encountering Rosi Braidotti's approach deepened this sensibility. Her cartography resists prescription and tidiness, yet remains intellectually rigorous and ethically attuned. She refuses reduction, yet resists abstraction for abstraction's sake. Building on the feminist politics of location (Braidotti, 1994; Haraway, 1988; Rich, 1994), she traces from within, following the embodied, embedded, and affective coordinates of subjectivity as they unfold across space and time (Braidotti, 2011, pp. 216–218). Where traditional cartography maps space and its boundaries (Britannica Encyclopaedia, 2023), Braidotti reimagines mapping as a situated, speculative practice: 'a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present' (Braidotti, 2013, p. 164), attentive to spatial, geopolitical, and ecological dynamics, and to the historical and genealogical textures shaping lived experience.

Her feminist posthumanism reframes cartography as a critical-creative method for navigating unstable terrains of subjectivity, knowledge, and power. These mappings are materially and affectively grounded, attentive to situated experience, resisting dominant narratives while exploring the complex multiplicities of becoming. The cyborg, posthuman, and technologically entangled subject are generative nodes tracing flesh, data, labour, and desire. By juxtaposing Haraway's cyborg, Schwarzenegger's Terminator, and the exploited offshore worker, Braidotti stages tension rather than synthesis, allowing contradiction and resonance to remain palpable within a wider cartographic imagery that looks to the future, mapping subjectivity as an open and shifting field (2007). This sense of contact without resolution, figures brushing against one another to produce interference or charge, resonates with how my work unfolds across media, disciplines, and embodied states, where materials shape and transform one another, producing a cartography always in motion.



Working with the twine, I had no clear sense of what I was forming. Hours of crocheting, stretching, and pulling gave way to a long pause: the piece lay on the sofa for months while I wrote at my desk. We were both waiting.

untitled and unfinished work (2024)

In *untitled and unfinished work* (2024), this approach becomes materially visible through a sprawling orange mass that stretches across a domestic surface, holding ambiguity and potential in equal measure. Here, as I trace the different figurations of the baling twine, nomadic, queer, and posthuman, as enactments of resistance and reconfiguration, I follow Braidotti's suggestion that figurations engage the present through embodied, situated responses to shifting conditions.

In the summer of 2023, I visited the dump and was handed a skein of baling twine by the workers, who thought I might find a use for it. Almost a year later, the twine began to take shape as an artwork during a day-long performance at the launch of UAL Doctoral (2024). I crocheted and knitted for hours, unsure how the piece would evolve. Back in Yorkshire, I continued to stretch and push the twine to its limits before leaving it on the sofa for months while I wrote, a period of suspension that mirrors making without predetermined outcomes.

This method of open-ended material engagement extends into *In-between* (2025), developed through multiple iterations and installed at LCC and then at Candid Arts Centre, producing three distinct spatial configurations (see Chapter 2). Between these installations, I performed *In-between II*, a live extension of the project's rhythm of movement, rupture, and reconfiguration. Each iteration preserves the work's evolving character, tracing thresholds and material interactions without seeking resolution. Through these projects, I offer readings of contemporary conditions that are both theoretically informed and politically engaged, representing what dominant systems often deem unrepresentable and sustaining a multilayered vision of subjectivity mapped from within. This ethos aligns with Braidotti's feminist posthuman cartographies, though other thinkers, such as Luis de Miranda, approach mapping from different registers. Braidotti foregrounds cartography as a situated, embodied, and politically accountable method, attentive to the material and affective entanglements of bodies, histories, and power, offering figurations that resist abstraction without relinquishing complexity.

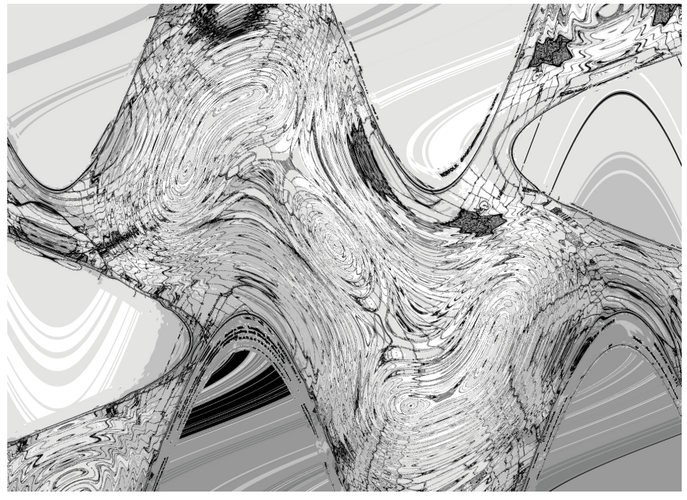
De Miranda, in contrast, develops a speculative, diagrammatic approach, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari to map affective, existential, and conceptual terrains. His cartographies trace lines of flight, ruptures, and transformations as modes of becoming, engaging both the conceptual and the affective. Deleuze's ideas of the open-ended, ambiguous, and unfinished resonate with this approach, particularly in relation to opacity and ambient spaces, qualities I encounter in my practice, from stretching baling twine to the iterative unfolding of *In-between*. For de Miranda, openness is essential: work folds and unfolds, evolves, and remains in a state of potential. Where Braidotti emphasises accountability and situatedness, de Miranda explores the potential for a 'new life' through abstract machines and speculative diagrams (2013). Simon O'Sullivan's framing of art as a diagrammatic force working through the virtual helps bridge the two



Performance at the launch of Doctoral School (2024)

approaches: cartography becomes both critique and a speculative act of composition, where emergent subjectivities and forms of life can take shape. In my practice, this is evident in how the physical and temporal unfolding of *In-between* produces spatial and affective shifts, functioning as a live mapping of thresholds and relational intensities.

While developing these theoretical notions, I also experimented with Photoshop to explore how cartographic material could generate virtual spaces. This led to Abstracting Kenninghall (2024) via Photoshop – Ordnance Survey Map Sheet (Edition 2, 1906), where the map becomes a site for tracing conceptual lines of flight rather than representing literal territory. Pushing the process further in *finding new territories* (2024) via *Photoshop* – Breaking away from Ordnance Survey Map Sheet (Edition 2, 1906), I explored reconfiguration, rupture, and the emergence of unexpected spatial relations. These manipulations were part of an iterative, speculative engagement with virtual space, echoing de Miranda's diagrammatic cartographies: processes that unfold, open onto potential, and resist fixed representation. As Deleuze writes, 'Some lines, no matter whether or not they're abstract, trace an outline, others don't. The most beautiful ones do. We think lines are the basic components of things and events. So everything has its geography, its cartography, its diagram. What's interesting, even in a person, are the lines that make them up, or they make up, or take, or create' (1995, p. 33). In this sense, the maps I reworked became diagrams of potential, lines folded into speculative cartographies where geography turns into affect and relation.



Abstracting Kenninghall (2024) via Photoshop - Ordnance Survey Map Sheet (Edition 2, 1906)

In Is a New Life Possible? Deleuze and the Lines (2013), de Miranda extends this speculative cartographic impulse. Mapping resists representation as an endpoint, instead assembling thought, sensation, and subjectivity at the edge of the actual. The baling twine, transformed through crocheting and knotting, functions as an abstract machine or speculative diagram, charting virtual forces, relations, and intensities. Similarly, my Photoshop manipulations of cartographic material extend this logic into digital space, tracing conceptual lines of flight rather than fixed territories. Both physical and virtual mappings move like lines of flight, tracing emergent contours of becoming rather than fixed identities. Mapping negotiates shifting terrains of thought, power, and emotion, weaving rhizomatic paths across affective, existential, and political fields. De Miranda notes, 'It is a trick of the subject … in the rhizomes it weaves jumping from line to line, but also an ascetic task and a brave confrontation with the errands of the ego' (2013, p. 141).

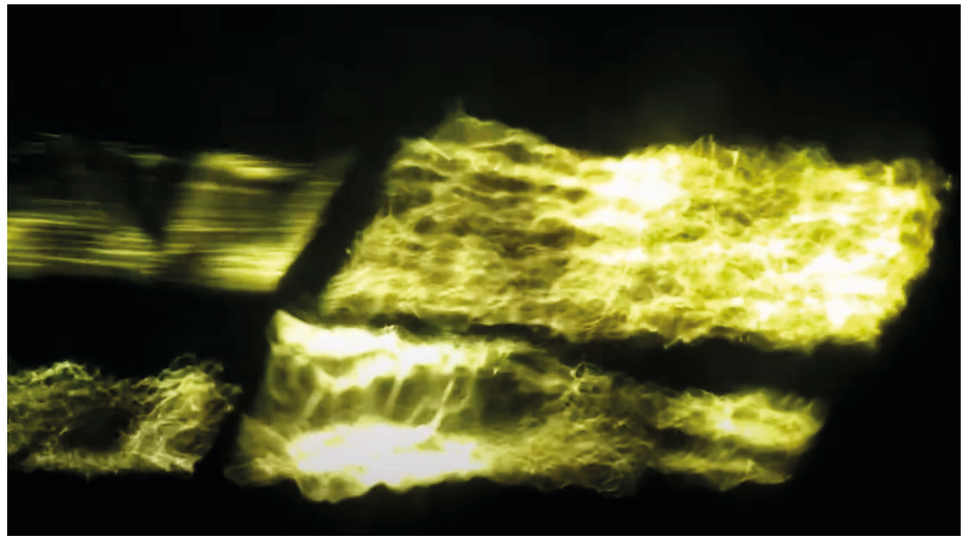


finding new territories (2024) via Photoshop – Breaking away from Ordnance Survey Map Sheet

Territory becomes conceptual, existential, and affective. Mapping moves through reterritorialisation and deterritorialisation, negotiating rupture and renewal. The generated images of *Abstracting Kenninghall* and *finding new territories* open a speculative plane where materials, memories, and movements coalesce, unlocking what O'Sullivan calls 'the potential becomings, the virtualities encapsulated within every moment' (2006, p. 34). Working with a map dense with history, affective and material, renders the 'in-visible', the unspoken held within.

For a moment, I return to the multifaceted entity that is *In-between*, to attend to the 'in-visible' suspended in human and more-than-human performance, and to the performance of matter in space. In the iterative realisations of *In-between*, installed across two distinct sites, and in my performance *In-between II* at *Space for Risk: Performing Feminisms* (2025), three different yet connected cartographies took shape, mapping thought, life, and being. Here the in-between actualises; the actual meets the virtual, and new subjectivities and relations take form. As O'Sullivan reminds us, art's 'in-between' nature operates as an actualising machine, a diagram that does not represent but 'constructs a real that is yet to come' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 142). This new reality is immanent to the present, made of the same materials it assembles, and connects each work to an outside, the realm of future potentialities.

Finding new territories



A frame from 31/10/2012–21 - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/3110201221-2021/

I first sensed this 'in-between' force when I edited *31/10/2012–21* (2021). Reading Deleuze through de Miranda prompted me to retrace the rhythms of my practice. On the surface, the video maps light and sound threading past and present toward an emergent future. Within the piece, the visible, what is heard and seen, masks the 'in-visible' material and the immaterial, the guiding entities that structure my socio-political terrain, my lifelines.

De Miranda writes, 'To contemplate is to envision formation of lifelines in fabric of the soul and to facilitate game of the folds' (2013, p. 131). Each thread in the video became a lifeline, a fold of the soul, a pulse propelling work into being.

As I wove these strands, I wondered at the time: what occurs when lifelines, 'flesh lines', snap or vanish into an 'in-visible' structure? De Miranda asks whether a 'new life' can emerge by moving beyond habitual boundaries of living, thinking, and being (2013, p. 107). Through Deleuze, I glimpsed contours of such transformation. Work charts shifting cartographies, folds folding land into mind, mind into language. It arose from entanglement of epistēmē (knowledge) and tekhnē (craft), a dialogue enacted through making. In late-night hours, with the shipping forecast murmuring in the background, thought, sound, and image intertwined in a nocturnal loom of creation.

I published this piece in 2021, days after making the work.

> *According to Deleuze and Guattari, we live within a 'body without organs' – a sensual, fluid existence shaped by uncontrollable forces. For me, the coast, especially a stretch of Norfolk beach, became a place I returned to, engaging with the rhythms of the sea – tasting, touching, and smelling the shifting elements.*
>
> *This act of re-turning mirrors the artist's ongoing process. It is the core of my practice – the constant looping and repetition that drives my making, writing, thinking, and becoming. It's a cyclical engagement with material, a continuous labour of creation. This process is both an act of research and a labour in itself. Writing becomes a physical act, ebbing and flowing like the tides, each sentence forming through the rhythm of thought and movement. The fractured process of creation mirrors the mind's wandering, following references and connections that emerge in unexpected ways.*
>
> *Like writing, making with physical materials requires a similar re-turning – a reshaping and reforming as I work with and through the material. For me, this creative labour is a form of production, as Marx described: material and labour are intertwined. As I work, elements of thought and substance entangle, influencing one another in a dynamic interplay.*
>
> *In this process, thought and material are inseparable. The labour of making becomes a space where the conscious and the unconscious, the physical and the abstract, converge into new forms of creation.*
>
> *While Hegelian thought might argue that consciousness shapes reality, I follow Marx's emphasis on the physicality of labour.*
>
> *In my practice, I embrace both – the tangible work of making and the deeper, intangible forces that shape the creative process. This entanglement of thought, material, and labour is where true creation happens.*

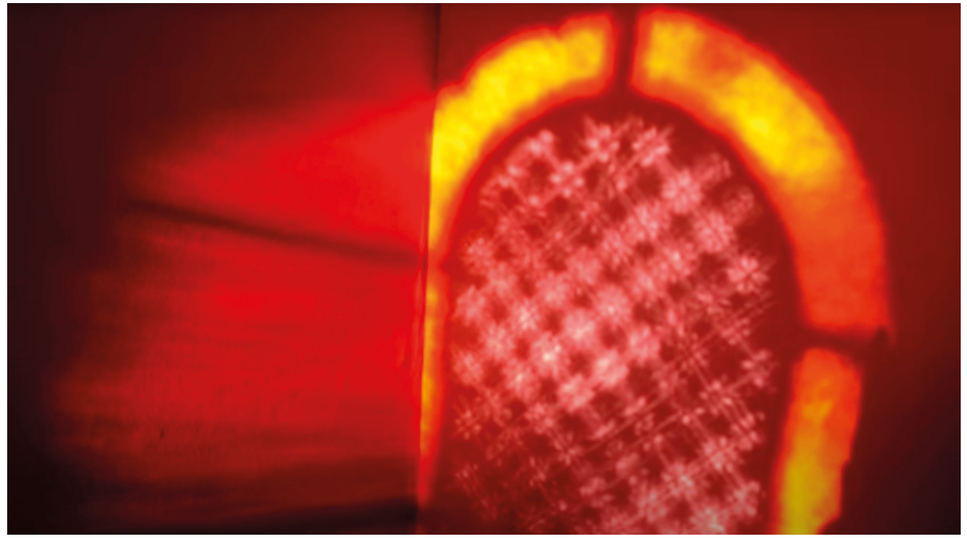
Returning to the coast was familiar territory. I moved through the work listening to its rhythms. Thoughts drifted and refused to settle. The shipping forecast murmurs through the room, a soft, insistent pulse threading into the background. Dogger, Humber, Thames, names fixed on a map, became territories that flowed through the piece as boundaries folded back on themselves. This work was porous, alive. Voices wove through memory and movement, connecting past and present, entwining space and time. The beach flowed onto the page, marks unfolding into a sequence of edits that formed a site of active stillness, where rhythm, labour, and uncertainty met. The video moved like the tide, light flickering across images as sound rose and fell. Neil Nunes's reading of the forecast mingled with Woolf's *A String Quartet* (2014) and *Kafka's The Cares of a Family Man* (1988), drifting in fragmented German, while a lone birdsong pierced the quiet. My own voice threaded through these layers, folding memory into the present as lines multiplied, layered, ruptured, and recombined, each fold revealing the entanglement of thought, material, and time.

I realise now that I was composing with 'in-visible' lines, rhythms that ran through language, memory, and sound. Kafka and Woolf felt like companions in this process, as they too navigate intricate terrains, carving space for alternative topologies within the social structures that sought to contain them. Their topologies, like mine, are not fixed in writing or bound to the past. They unfold across shifting cartographies, becoming speculative terrain where the familiar bizarrely turns. The sentence, once a linear unit of meaning, morphs into a line of flight, a mode of becoming: a vector that detaches from a given form to invent another. In this unfolding, the page ceases to be flat; it folds into philosophical, literary, and material surfaces.

It maps thought-in-movement, where terrain becomes a lived, situated method for thinking, making, and becoming otherwise. As Deleuze and Guattari urge, we should 'follow the rhizome by rupture; … relay the line of flight' (1987, p. 12), letting it vary across multiple dimensions. Here, the sentence no longer seeks semantic closure; it relays movement and opens onto directions not yet known.

Following Simon O'Sullivan, my mapping acts as a call to the actual, opening pathways for potential becomings. Evolving works approach the present not as fixed terrain but as a threshold where new subjectivities and forms can emerge. My process involves working with the materials of the world to create emergent, unpredictable languages and affective assemblages, while also attending to personal subjectivities as dynamic, reconfigurable systems (2006, p. 97). From this perspective, making the 'in-visible' can shift toward a kind of art chemistry or art cartography, tracing new formations and the possibilities for life that they generate.

Whether through the manipulated lines of *Abstracting Kenninghall*, the suspended threads of *Spider-fly*, or the sounding contours of *31/10/2012–21*, each project operates as a speculative diagram, a gesture toward what Deleuze and Guattari call 'a new type of reality' (1987, p. 142). These works do not represent territories; they draw new lines through them, reshaping space in the process. They weave together affect, memory, material, creating forms in motion that resist easy reading and remain open to transformation. Tracing lines of flight through text, textile, sound, and digital media, mapping feels less like fixing than releasing, matter, thought, and subjectivity moving outward. I map alongside others: human and nonhuman, words and atmospheres. These maps open rather than close; they invite staying with uncertainty, exploring the knot, lingering in folds of potential. In this space, research-creation takes shape as a posthuman cartography, thick with sensation, alive with difference, always on the verge of becoming something else.



A frame from 31/10/2012–21

FOLD 3 _
BECOMING SOUND

Hafursey Mýrdalssandur, Iceland
(63.4550° N, 18.7769° W)

I write as Ólafur Arnalds and fellow musicians perform on the northern edge of the black sand plain of Mýrdalssandur in South Iceland. The sound enters not as accompaniment but as atmosphere.

A breath.
A pulse.
Thought folds into the moment.

The southern plains stretch across a sonic field. Notes repeat, drift, return. The soundscape becomes a place to dwell—affective and beyond language. Sound does not describe a landscape; it performs one. And I am carried through it.

New harmonies stutter. I stutter—this is not an interruption but an inflection. A fold in tempo and thought; attentions bend.

I return to Simon O'Sullivan, whose reflections echo in this rhythm: practice is a 'collective enunciation' oriented to an immanent 'utopia to come' (2006, p. 156). O'Sullivan does not illustrate Arnalds' soundscape; he thickens it. There is no single 'I' in this collaboration; it is already a 'we', resonant with histories, geologies, sounds, texts, movements, and the vibrational presence of others—human and nonhuman.

Sound becomes a mode of resistance to enclosure, linearity, and inherited logics that fix identity and outcome. As it moves through language, I follow. Language, thought, and sonic form travel together, folding into vibration without settling. Like Arnalds' grounded yet shifting soundscapes, sound unsettles me and reorients my practice.

From here I dwell in an interstice: a moment-within-moment where affect, theory, and material converge. Meaning refuses representation and reshapes itself through ongoing transformation, carried on the breath of sound as a sign of becoming.

Frame from Ólafur Arnalds live from Hafursey, Iceland, produced by Cercle (2023), YouTube. © Cercle. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMCiAKNUpTY. Reproduced and digitally modified under fair dealing for criticism and review.

Falling with-in the gap



A frame from Falling with-in the gap (2023) - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/eleven-chapters/

I found myself in a space of vulnerability, where something began to stir within the gaps of my thinking and practice. It was a space of hesitation, where edges blurred and form had yet to appear. *Falling with-in the gap* (2023) was a short video that gestured toward what could not yet be named. Its title held a hyphen, a quiet mark almost invisible, yet heavy with charge. At the time, I did not know what I was stepping into, only that I was being pulled toward a primordial fold where language strained and sense flickered just out of reach. What followed did not unfold in straight lines. It twisted, unravelled, and knotted – like, grief itself. In recalling, I aim not to guide, but to stay close, to remain present as I move through a difficult terrain in search of what might be felt.

Uncertain of how to meet grief, I turned to an unfamiliar material: sound. Entering its territory, I was simultaneously drawing together theoretical threads of my thesis. I felt exposed, suspended, as if falling into a space where atonal sound and broken words converged. Noise was all I could hear, discordant, unsettling, yet insistent. I chose to turn from language, to work with the rawness of sound, trusting that within this apparent void something might begin to take shape.

Afraid and out of my depth, I let the sound press against images, returning tentatively to video, a medium that felt more familiar.

I drew on an archive of abstract light patterns, threads that helped to situate the work. Sound stitched itself onto these images, and it soon became evident that the footage functioned as a veil: a layer suspended between recognition and the unknown. The sequences of abstract images gave me something to hold onto. *Falling with-in the gap* was never meant to clarify. Its opacity was deliberate, a gesture that allowed sound to lead, to carry the weight of grief, and to hold the edges of understanding in tension.

Working with abstract sound and images opened a rift, not only within the work but within my thinking. Out of this breach I wrote a reflection, an attempt to echo the textures and tensions of the piece itself:

> *Acknowledging the unseen, I went on a quest, not knowing what I was looking for, but aware it lay with-in the gaps. This piece is made of eleven chapters. In-between each of them is a gap…. These gaps are not impenetrable. The access is easy. Step from one to the other, and as with any linear form in motion, there is that movement that compels the viewer to go with the flow.*
>
> *One might say there are two threads of thought within this piece: the audio and the visual. And yet, as the maker, perhaps my intention is to pull the viewer into a third, and then a fourth space. By this I mean: if you are an audio-visual being, my intention is to draw you into a space that is seemingly familiar, yet slightly distorted, or even disturbing. Sounds and images simultaneously enter the mind and then roam amongst memory, producing another fiction, drawn from a distant fragment that becomes real for a moment before dissolving into something else. The invisible space between screen and viewer becomes a hyphen, one that links the spaces of in-between. This space of nothingness enables connections to form, threads to be tied, and lines to be drawn.*
>
> *For me, this work is a kind of bridge, an invisible hiatus that enables the passage of what is with-in to filter out in visual form. The one constant here is the constant with. To be with, regardless of whether one is in or out, alive or dead, is, perhaps, the only condition that matters. It is the with that drives the flow forward. (October 2023)*

As I returned to the work again, while writing, the hyphen no longer behaved in the same way. No longer simply a gentle bridge between image and sound, it split, vibrated, convulsed. The hyphen thickened, distorted, and began to knot. What once felt connective now felt like rupture. The writing did not explain the work, it fell into it. And in falling, it and I began to listen differently: not for harmony, but for discord, the pure hum beneath language.

When I split the word, with-in, I exposed both its vulnerability and my own. The gap did not close; it tightened. This was a transformation, a shift in flow. The veil twisted. Threads vibrated. Sound entered, irregular, sharp. Perhaps this was the birth of knotwork: the emergence of something conceptual from the primordial matter of grief. Through rupture, different sounds arose—discord rather than speech, melancholia rather than melody. I still wonder what sound is truly doing here. How does it touch the hyphen? Does it render my milieu more fragile, more porous?

The hyphen and discordant sound introduce a third dimension to my practice, a complicating force, an interstitial link that reforms my milieu. I once thought that, as separate entities, they might bring some closure to grief. Instead, something more sensual seeps through the work. Working with discordant sound marked a shift away from language as primarily visual or representational, and toward a material, embodied, sonic practice. In this space I did not seek resolution. I stayed with the breach. I let sound and hyphen press upon the work as active forces, through which thought strained and moved otherwise.

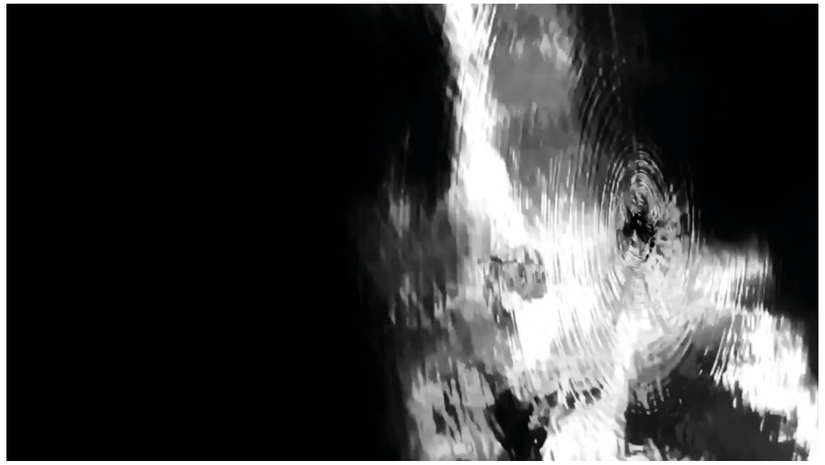


A frame from Falling with-in the gap (2023)

I descended into something more primordial.
Not before language, but beneath it.
Into texture, vibration.
Into the murmurs of sound. Not to define,
but to touch the unknown.

Here, meaning trembles. It knots. The hyphen brushes the skin.
The discord thickens. The word exhaled, a silent scream.

My descent became a sinking into a dark textured space, where sound and image hovered like particles in slow motion. There was no mediation, no lens of comprehension: only presence. A hyphen stretched taut between sensation and thought, pressing against the skin of perception. Quiet and unspoken grief vibrated through the air, weaving through the gaps, knotting with the pulse of sound and image. Perception hovered here, suspended, alive, unbearable in its intensity.



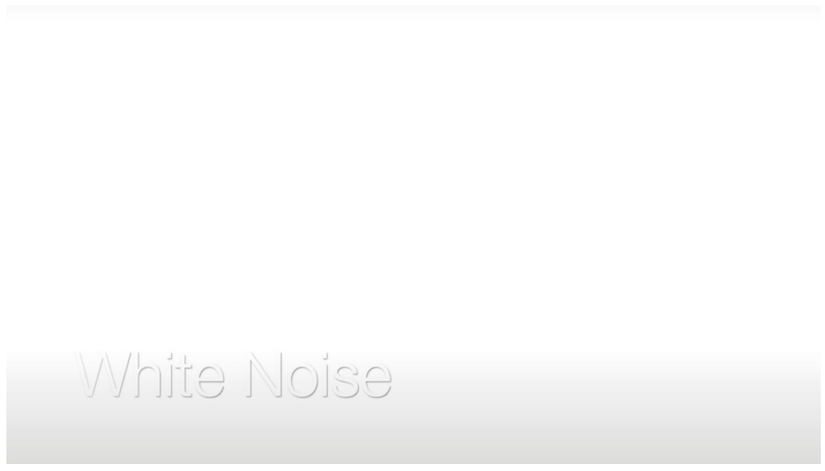
A frame from Falling with-in the gap (2023)

Knotting-Sound - a cry of separation

Where *Falling with-in the gap* circled a loss I could not articulate, layering sound beneath veils of visual abstraction, *Knotting-Sound* (2023) tore that veil away. The wound remained the same, yet here it no longer whispered through the screen: it breathed, convulsed, and trembled in sound alone.

I did not set out to make a piece about grief. I only knew that something was moving beneath the surface, refusing language, demanding to be heard. So, I turned to sound, or perhaps it turned to me, as I tried to express what could not be said. *Knotting-Sound* emerged from a liminal space where folds and the hyphen still hovered – not merely as a mark, but as a rupture, a splinter in the fabric of sense. As dash, the hyphen interrupted language, staking its claim in the silence between two breaths. A placeholder, a gash, a wound: the hyphen convulsed, insisting on being felt. And here I was, caught in its vibrating threads, suspended in the atmosphere of the in-between.

Knotting-Sound became the sound of the knot itself, echoing through me as I claw at the hyphen's cruel demand: to fill an abyss without ever mending it. A hyphen – this small mark – had broken into my work uninvited, turning a tiny stroke into a gaping chasm. It mocks me, splitting words with surgical precision, laying bare the spaces it pretends to hold together. At first, I tried to dismiss it, a slip of ink, a harmless crack. Yet it swelled, grew sharp, refused my indifference. What was this line, this parasitic shard that demanded my time, my flesh, my breath? It sat now between two beings – between the 'in' and the 'between' – like a barbed chain, forcing the words to coexist yet remain apart. I found myself caught in-between the gap and my longing.



White-Noise - 8 mins 42 secs (2023) - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/white-noise/

Fleeting images seeped back into another variation. I was still too afraid to let sound stand alone. I needed something to hold onto. Sound, too, bowed to the hyphen - bending. Splitting. Refusing clarity. *White-Noise* emerged from this tension. A third iteration. Stripped back. Sonic. Clawing deeper still.

I gasped for air. Fought against the hyphen's hooks. It dug deeper. Bent me to its will. Forced me to listen through hollows carved within me. I immersed myself in sound to escape, for exorcism. Sound bowed to the hyphen.

Knotting-Sound crackled once again into existence, buzzing and stretching in form. The hyphen's voice, re-merged, re-shattered; fragmenting the tracks, knotting and unknotting itself in endless loops of becoming. A sonic rupture. A pulse that holds and tears in the same breath. Here was the power of the hyphen: tension between connection and severance, in the space where one becomes two, and two transform into three, then collapse back into one. It was nonsense, non-sense, until I sank to the depths and could made no sense of sound at all. The disruption demanded surrender: to a shift in knowing, in meaning, in language, and to the gory grip of not-knowing.

The hyphen is not a slender mark. It is a cut. A howl of the unspoken. The scream of unknown words, of grief bleeding into one another. The guttural cry escaping in a single moment. And in relentless hunger of not knowing, grief forced me to create – not to understand, but to endure. Only then did sense gradually return.

There is no fleeing this knotwork. I was woven into the process, just as a thread cannot resist becoming part of fabric. The hyphen, the sound, the knotwork were no longer tools or subjects. They moved with me as collaborators. They shaped me and I shaped them, folding thought and breath into form. The hyphen insisted on its presence, its double-faced identity: a seam that severs and connects. And as it breathed through sound, I felt its gravity, its refusal to settle, demanding my attention in its perpetual liminality.

A later iteration of *Knotting-Sound*, as a visual work, is held in darkness. It breathes, mutates, and pulses with sonic intensity. A recursive site of becoming, it stretches subjectivities, opening bridges and portals into auditory multiplicities. It probes hidden air, vibrating cavities between entities, where meaning stutters, and sensation spills beyond the edges of sound. Here, sound becomes topology, knotting words, bodies and ideas into a labyrinth that continues to reshape this thesis.



Knotting-Sound (2023) - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/knotting-sound/

To speak of *Knotting-Sound* is to speak of the spaces it carves within my being. These are less voids than resonant chambers, trembling with the potential to touch, hold, and transform. The hyphen is both aperture and boundary, and through it, the knot – its three-dimensional sibling – emerges as a way of making sense through entanglement. I reach into these with no expectation of return, only the hope of brushing against the ungraspable.

Linguistically, the hyphen threads two entities into a tenuous embrace, one that does not erase their edges, but insists on their being-together. Yet this embrace spills over, creating a third form, a something else, that slips between the cracks of its makers. This is the paradox of the hyphen, the knot, the in-between: simultaneously whole and fragmented, one and many. For months, I've lingered here, knotting lines, looping threads, feeling for the pulse of something unseen – less to name than to feel, to touch the outline of what cannot be held.

It is here, in the hyphen's hollow, in the knot's tangled folds, that the phantasm lies: a shadow, a trace, a ghost of meaning just out of reach. And yet the hyphen is something else too, something I hesitate to name. It is a space, a tension, a holding.

I feel my sister there.

Not as memory, not as symbol, but as a spectral presence, restless, suspended – half-breath, half-echo. She lingers like a phantom in the fold, folded into sound, into the gap the hyphen opens and sustains. She is with-in a quiet pulse in the rupture – more than language can endure, more than sense can hold.

Knotting-Sound continues to shift, resisting containment. It unfurls as a looping fragment, a sonic field that may one day boom into an immersive installation – at once tangible and intangible – where bodies might enter the knots and folds of its reverberating waves. This evolution is less planned than felt, guided by the hyphen's impulse to slip across boundaries rather than confined to text, sound, or image. And still, the work folds onward, unfinished.

What follows is not an afterthought but a continuation: a return to the hyphen, to the breath, to the process begun by a single thread of sound. This return does not resolve; it splinters and scatters—not repetition, only shift, a dispersal into other forms.

A phantom murmurs.

The screaming matter of sound

She was dying, and I sent her sound. Not just as comfort but as ritual. An attempt to collapse the unbearable space between us and to keep something 'normal'. The birdsong became a trembling lifeline, a thread carrying memories of the place I wished she could return to, if only for a moment. And yet, even as the sounds crossed continents, the hyphen remained: a gaping cut between us, a space that would never fully close.

These recordings pulse within me now, fragments embedding memory and grief into the matter of this work. The desk before me is a battleground. The hyphen looms over every thought, cracking open the silence, demanding action. I sift through the recordings on my phone, hundreds of fragments of sound from a garden that no longer mine. The sounds are haunted, dense with distance, death, and an unspeakable longing. This captured birdsong now feels like a wound, a series of sonic knots binding me to my sister across a virtual ocean, across the void.

The implication of 'owning' a garden bothers me. One never owns a garden, it has a mind of its own, the challenge is to work with it to form something beautiful in harmony, together.

The hyphen becoming birdsong.
The birdsong becoming the knot.
The knot becoming the eternal scream.
And I
I am lost in its folds,
bound to its endless becoming.

Once severed from the device that held them, the recordings took on lives of their own – discordant, rabid, and unrelenting. My phone became the scalpel, slicing through time and space to extract fragments of sound. In linear form, one after another, they bled together: a frantic burst of birdsong clawing at the edges of a siren's mechanical wail, collapsing into the raw hiss of white noise. Then – from the void – a scream, gut-wrenching, ripping through me before retreating into the fragile whisper of woodwind instruments. There was no rhythm, no order. Only rupture upon rupture, each sound devouring the next, knotting into a snarling, living thread.

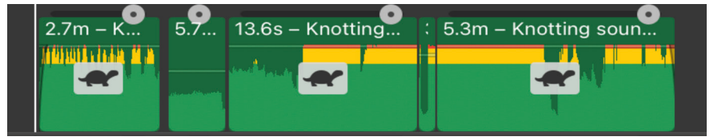
This was not creation – it was vivisection. Each fragment a nerve, raw and exposed, trembling at the brink of coherence before taking flight. I was merely the hand, looping, cutting, and stretching the digital sinews, distorting the pulse until something unrecognisable surged through. Bridges formed, but they were not gentle crossings, violent fissures tore each sound from its origin, plunging it into liminality. The threads wove themselves together, not as a tapestry, but as a septic wound – a tangled mass of ruptures and disconnections, straining to hold form.

The hyphen pulsed between the sounds, a breathless tension tethered and torn. This was not intention, just pure compulsion. I did not understand its form; I only knew I had to keep weaving, drawn to the breaks, the moments when the fabric of sound tore open. Perhaps the stretching of sound itself is a hyphen: a suspended breath, a bridge between what was and what could never be.

The work became a rhizome, as Deleuze and Guattari might say, a snarling network of lines exploding into flight, only to knot back into themselves. 'There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight', they wrote, 'but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another' (1987, p. 9). The sounds shifted and reformed within an impossible knot of time, tension, and trembling. I wanted to reach into the sound, feel its threads unravel in my flesh.

Deleuze and Guattari describe the rhizome as 'made only of lines… segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis' (1987, p. 21). Yet every line breathes in air: the unseen element that carries vibration, sustains suspension, and lets flight occur.

Words failed. They stuttered, I fumbled, gesturing toward something beyond articulation. This knotwork of sound refused language. It demanded sensation. So, I write to endure. To tear myself open and step inside the knot which is grief. The process is not linear. It will never be complete. It is a devouring force that multiplies, drawing me deeper until I am knotted with-in its knotwork, suspended at the brink.



The linear path of Knotting-Sound

From the scream I fell into silence – not absence, a breathless abyss. Grief, like sound, lingers, resisting chronology; it pulses with intensity and return. This is Bergson's duration, maddening, throbbing time. It mocked me as I clawed at its edges. I turned to digital time, thinking I could tame it, a beast on a leash. The software yielded, letting me cut, splice, and sequence sound. In doing so, it imposed digital time, carving its rhythm into segments that neither sound nor grief could truly inhabit.

My hands were tethered to a grid, to the cold algorithmic arteries of iMovie. Digital time: A to B. C to D. Mechanical, bounded. Yet beneath the cuts something writhed, straining toward Bergson's 'pure duration', into immanence, intensity, and fluidity. Detached from the grid, the sound became shapeless, breathing form into memory and sensation. Repetition ruptured expectation; past and present formed 'an organic whole... like the notes of a tune, melting into one another' (Bergson 1921, p.100) Duration became a vortex, pulling me into its folds, distorting and transforming my malleable being. The sound began to breathe a rhythm of its own. Time dissolved, and I dissolved within it. Grief had not passed; it had shifted. Its rhythm had changed. I followed it into a different fold.

At the gap the hyphen opened, sound and grief hovered. Air slipped through the slit. Irigaray's thought returned: the between, the breath that enables life. Unseen yet essential, air filled the interval. Without air, there is nothing (Irigaray, 1999, p. 6). Without the hyphen, no conduit for sound and duration to knot, no room for chaos and structure to co-exist.

Within this work, a space did emerged, a trembling presence. A void, on either side of the hyphen. It pulsed with acoustic vibrations, forming what could be felt and heard. Heidegger's 'thing-being' whispered from its depths, not matter, but the imperceptible essence that shapes the thing (1993, p. 146). This void is where the ghost resides. Sound, once alive, becomes data. Becomes non-being. Becomes the phantasm hovering between presence and absence. Karen Barad's virtual articles rest here. She suggests,

> The void is a spectral realm; not even nothing can be free of ghosts. Virtual particles do not traffic in a metaphysics of presence. They do not exist in space and time. They are ghostly non/existences teetering on the edge of the infinitely thin blade between being and nonbeing. They speak of indeterminacy. (Barad, 2017, p. 78)

The soundscape was now a haunting field of ghostly non/existences suspended in the breath of the hyphen. This recursive force unravels certainty, knotting me deeper into its breathless fold. Within those loops, she waits, the shapeshifter, inhabiting the void and the hyphen, animating the breath of the work itself: a force that holds everything together while threatening to pull it apart. Her essence is a bridge, a thread, a tension that lets the work shift and evolve. She lives in the void, in the air, in the space within the knotwork. She is the hyphen made flesh: truth and untruth, presence and absence. Folded into the text, concealed yet never gone. She splits and joins, conceals and reveals, animates and transforms. She shapes the soundscape, folds grief, and carries the work through its endless, spiralling folds.

Digital matter

From her final breath into an abyss, the work scattered into fragments, digital particles that carried grief into another register. Diffractive waves rippled through *Knotting-Sound* (2023), an audio work developed through iterative engagement with grief, language, and sonic form. I remain entangled in the affective and conceptual textures that shaped it. My writing works performatively. It speaks from the hyphen, the knot, the threshold between sense and non-sense. Fragmentary and unresolved, it moves in surges of fold and rupture, in vibrations that echo absence. The page becomes a surface where sound gathers, where breath pulls against language, where each line stretches and strains beneath the weight of the unspeakable.

I return to the desk, where the hyphen reverberates, sending diffractive waves through the archive: recordings of summers in our Norfolk garden (2018–2019). I had sent these across the Atlantic during her treatment, knowing their unpredictable loved melodies would steady her. The birds sang not only to her but through her, as if notes slipped between trees and wires and oceans to settle briefly in her body. For a time, sound collapsed 4,690 miles into resonance.

Now these recordings thread themselves into *Knotting-Sound* as digital matter: memory, presence, and absence. Through them, the hyphen is less wound than tether, holding me between the living and the dead. I am ensnared, grafted into this experiment. The sound and the knots bind me from within. I am threaded into the work as trembling matter. Grief gnaws, leaving only exposure. It demands rupture. The sound hisses, loops, splices into my skull, unravelling thought. And I—what am I but a filament stretched across the in-between, carried in its waves.

Knotting Sound is a mutation, an open wound that refuses to close. The work unravels and reknots itself endlessly, spiralling into spaces that ache with potential. This is a rupture: a violent becoming that devours the hands that touch. And the knot is no longer mine. It has torn itself free, mutated into a snarling audio force that resists containment. It demands space and a public. It writhes, unspooling into the intangible, an installation, a void for others to step into and lose themselves within. A place of collision, where the howl of loss reverberates through skin and bone.

To knot sound is to try to bind what resists binding, to twist emotion, memory, and breath into knots so tight they carry the trace of their making. It is to stand inside grief, where meaning unravels and sensation fractures, where everything trembles. Pain is not a rupture but a raw opening in the fabric of sense, demanding to be filled yet refusing to hold what it is given. The knot becomes a spatial cry, a tightened shape of anguish and persistence, leaving the imprint of the phantasm it once held.

FOLD 4 _
SHIFTING GROUND

Teasdale, Utah
(38.2859° N, 111.4775° W)

Form in Teasdale, like grief, arrives obliquely: fold by fold, felt before it is known. In the restless stillness of the Teasdale dunes, folds of the earth dwell in their unfolding. Shaped by unseen forces, the sand echoes diffractive waves into another register: wind, dust and sand in flux. Here grief does not resolve; it shifts. Thought gathers like dust on the wind.

The fold is both terrain and technique, a material process shaped by slow erosion and a way of sense-making layered with memory and movement. It maps a relation between self and landscape. It arrives without clarity or closure, carried by a rhythm felt more than understood, a murmur moving across sand and thought. The dunes offer not answers but attunement.

There, air set the rhythm. The dunes kept becoming. They rose from wind and sediment, formed by the quiet insistence of air. Form held only in change; time lived beyond the clock. Wind threaded the narrow hollow between the Moquith and Moccasin mountains, and as it gathered speed it pressed against the sandstone, scouring its surface until particles lifted, so fine they felt more memory than matter. Suspended, the sand hovered until the valley opened and the current let go. The dunes formed grain by grain, never fixed. At times they seemed composed, holding their contours for a moment, then shifted again, like thoughts that briefly cohere before dissolving.

A week after my sister died, I drove west from Colorado into Utah. I needed space, open and unbounded. I breathed freely for the first time in weeks, though grief sat close, tight in my throat.

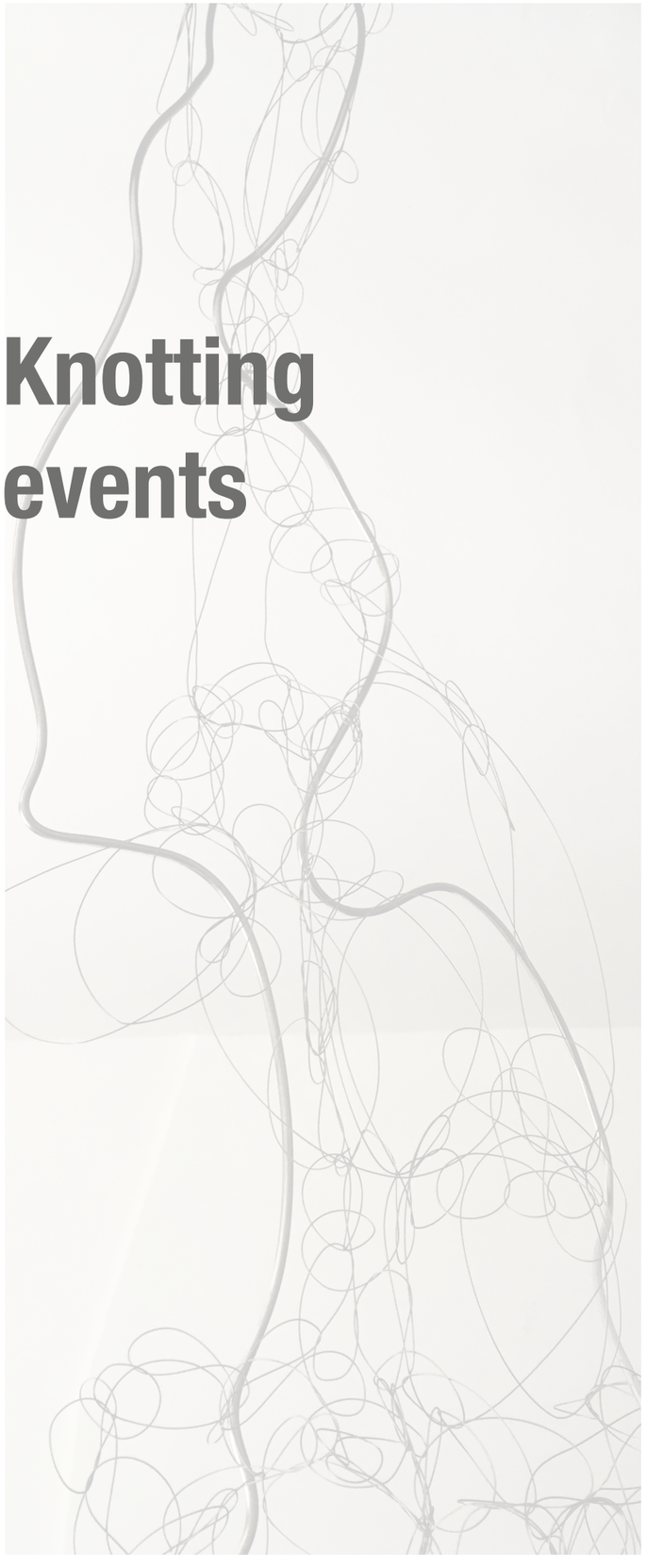
In Teasdale, the dunes offered no answers, only movement. They were quiet yet unsettled, never at rest. It was subtle and shifting sands that held me, less in certainty than in a low voice:
“you are still here”.

And I replied, quietly, without confidence,
“How am I going to do this?”



Teasdale , Utah, 2019

Knotting events



The Fold does not begin in the softness of fabric or the intricacies of Baroque architecture. It begins in a murmur: a pressure rising in the streets of France, in the breath between bodies, in refusals that take shape before *The Fold* can speak. May 1968 in Paris was not merely a riot or revolt, but an inflection in time, a moment when the intolerable was glimpsed and something else began to stir. In this sense, it carried force rather than form, vibration rather than representation, shifting the rhythms of bodies, institutions, and thought.

To speak of May ’68 as a fold is to attend to the atmospheres it set in motion—the subtle rearrangements of possibility it left in its wake. Its trace lingers in the method of folding itself: a way of inhabiting complexity, resistance, and transformation without closure. Before returning to the intimate event of my sister’s dying, I turn to the May ’68 riots as a public rupture, a fold within a fold, as *Fold 5*.

Events do not resolve. They echo. As folds, they ebb back and flow forward, thickening the now and bending linear time. The reverberations of May ’68 extend beyond streets and institutions; they trace a mode of inhabiting rupture itself. My sister’s dying was such an event, though of another order: a tear in the everyday that keeps unfolding, displacing meaning and orientation. At her bedside, time thinned into waiting, days held in suspension. Only later would I call that hiatus a hyphen, a threshold, and a fold within a fold, where language began to tremble and lose form. At the time of making *Beyond the Void* (2019), the collapse of words had no name, only a duration in which speech diffracted into matter, gathering as vibration. That vibration moved through my fingers into form; grief pulsed through the materials until *Beyond the Void* took shape as I reached into the unknown. This work does not represent the event; it carries its residue, an echo, a speculative reach across thresholds where form loosens and something felt, not yet articulated, begins to take shape.

Skin III (2020) - Opposite

FOLD 5 _
THE MAY ’68 RIOTS

Paris, France
(48.8575° N, 2.13514° W)

I stage the beginning of *The Fold* here, in rupture: bodies assemble, intolerances coalesce, thought comes unmoored. May ’68 functions as an origin-scene, a moment when the virtual breached the actual, when what could not yet be spoken surged forth and refused silence.

For Deleuze, May ’68 is not a historical event pinned to a calendar but a ‘pure event’, a vibration across past and future. He writes: ‘There is always one part of the event that is irreducible to any social determinism, or to causal chains… what counted was what amounted to a visionary phenomenon, as if a society suddenly saw what was intolerable in it and also saw the possibility for something else’ (2007b, pp. 233–234). What lingers is a force, a metaphysical residue left by a visionary rupture. The work of the fold is to gather what trembles at the edge of form, bending the unfinished toward new and unknowable directions.

Although Deleuze never explicitly references May ’68 in *The Fold*, elsewhere he describes the riots as a fold, suggesting that their metaphysical and political aftershocks continue to ripple through his thinking. In *Negotiations*, he critiques how the media handles such moments, observing that ‘they want something spectacular, whereas events always involve periods when nothing happens’ (1995, p. 160). For Deleuze, an event is durational and atmospheric; it resists the closure of before and after, lingering in silence, hesitation, and the unspoken. Media representations often flatten this force. A commemorative photograph published by *The Guardian* on 2 May 2018, for example, captures students clashing with riot police on Boulevard Saint-Germain, a moment suspended in visual intensity (Canter & Lane, 2018). Yet this image, like many others, occludes the broader field in which the event unfolded: the sedimented frustrations of post-colonial trauma following the Algerian War, the authoritarian posture of de Gaulle’s governance, and pervasive institutional inertia.

Image removed from online version due to copyright restrictions. Follow link to:
https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/may/11/observer-archive-students-demonstrate-in-paris-10-may-1968

Students massing in the Latin Quarter. Photograph: David Newell Smith/The Observer

The event becomes flat when confined to the spectacular; as Deleuze insists, its force lies in its intervals and in its capacity to exceed representation, unfolding new lines of becoming.

May '68 unfolds as a fold across thought, institutionality, and social space. The event arises not from a singular cause but through an encounter with what Deleuze, following Leibniz, calls a 'chaotic multiplicity'. 'Events are produced in a chaos… but only under the condition that a sort of screen intervenes' (Deleuze, 1993, p. 76). The screen draws from chaos, allowing 'something rather than nothing' to emerge (ibid.). The recording of May '68 functioned as such a screen: a dynamic process that modulated intensities and virtual potentialities into collective action, new subjectivities, and altered institutional trajectories. One trajectory materialised in the founding of the Université de Paris VIII (Vincennes–St. Denis), where Deleuze would later teach. This experimental institution, open to radical pedagogy and collaborative practice, was one of the event's long-term folds, causing a reconfiguration of the university system in the wake of rupture (Dosse, 2010, pp. 347–348).

The fold operates here as a structural process: a movement from interiority to exteriority, from chaos to form, from refusal to invention. It transforms, not by closure, but through recursive reorganisation. As Tom Conley notes, *The Fold* 'twists fabric and the origins of life', evoking a metaphysics of form, a sensitivity to the world shaping and reshaping itself in time (2011, p. 170). May '68 is not its explicit subject, the conceptual terrain of *The Fold* bears its imprint, its interruptions and insistence that something else is possible. Folding here becomes more than a figure for thought; it becomes a way of understanding the event's lingering ontology: a reverberation across bodies, atmospheres, and institutions, reaching beyond what is immediately graspable.

The riots of 1968 remain a collective fold, dispersed across flesh and structures, my sister's death marks the fold as lived method: a rupture carried close, and unresolvable, reconfiguring the textures of subjectivity and relation in its wake.

Image removed from online version due to copyright restrictions. Follow link to:
https://www.theguardian.com/world/from-the-archive-blog/2018/apr/06/paris-students-demonstrations-may-1968

Boulevard Saint Germain 1968 - Photograph: Jacque Marie/AFP. Image from The Guardian (Canter and Lane, 2018)



The Event:
sensing the unspeakable

What follows is a fold of another kind: intimate, suspended, shaped by love. In the quiet intervals of waiting, my sister's death unfolded as a slow, recursive movement, folding time, sensation, and matter into a durational field of becoming. In this private interlude, grief took shape through bodily attention, the rhythms of care, and the textures of the everyday. I did not yet know Deleuze's folds or events; I was simply responding to loss, to the subtle shifts in my surroundings, to the matter that pressed against life.

Only later did theory begin to filter in. In *The Fold*, Deleuze, drawing on Leibniz, names this stretching of moment across successive states as 'extension', when one element unfurls into the next so that it is at once whole and divided into parts (1993, p. 177). I came to recognise my sister's death in these terms: a fold that stretched beyond a single moment, unfolding across days, thoughts, and the rhythm of living. Waiting for her to die was itself an event, a time thickened by anticipation, pain and by the quiet turning of the world around me. The event was defined not by what came before or after, but by the folds in which time collapsed, and subjectivity shifted.

Deleuze writes: 'It's not even a matter of there being such periods before and after some event, they're part of the event itself' (1995, p. 160). The hours I spent in her garden, watching plants grow, waiting for something unnamed to arrive, were not tangential; they were the event unfolding. Her death became what Deleuze calls a 'pure event': not in denial of its devastating actuality, but as something that exceeds it, suspended between past and future. She died. Yet the event continues. It reappears in my thoughts in an altered form. It unsettles time. The 'pure event is a tale and a novella' of what has just happened and what is about to occur (1990b, p. 63).

Through this lens, I approach her death as a site of philosophical and creative transformation. Death informs my writing, making, and methodology. It is an intensity that reshapes the surfaces of time, self, and perception. Just as May '68 revealed new possibilities for collective life, my sister's death revealed another opening: the unbearable and the unknowable, as conditions for reconfiguration. Within my practice, this event remains generative, knitting memory and matter into new forms. Works unfold and refold suspended in a temporality that refuses finality and insists on becoming. In this sense, Deleuze's events and folds no longer function as distant abstractions but as conceptual companions, helping me articulate how grief entwines with sensation, thought, and material practice.

I created *Beyond the Void* (2019) not as a linear reflection, but as a work evolving within this intimate, ongoing event. The piece itself was made in the midst of that suspended space, where grief had no clear shape and matter was charged with the unsayable. My re-turn now to *Beyond the Void* is an opportunity to explore diffractive thought, to think and feel otherwise. It is a fold within a fold, tracing the moment when my making and thinking began to shift. The approaching death of my sister, and the affective textures that gathered around it, shaped the conditions in which the work emerged. Writing in retrospect keeps me close to the felt, the sensed, and the trembling edge of what could not yet be named. In this waiting, folding was tactile: materials, sound, long silences, and care carried the rhythm of the event.

Beyond the Void

Not simply a past artwork, this piece remains a site of ongoing transformation, a threshold where grief, material practice, and speculative thinking entwine. Engaging with it situates me within the layered temporality generated by an intimate event, a space where time thickens and the unspoken pulses with potential.

To stay with how these temporal and affective turns take shape materially, I return to Deleuze's notion of 'texturology', which I first encountered through gesture and marking, now expanded into its Baroque sense. I approach matter is responsive and active, shaping the conditions of thought, feeling, and making (1993, p. 115). This perspective offers a way to apprehend *Beyond the Void* not only as an artwork but as a site in which material, affective, and temporal intensities converge. The interplay between material agency and embodied engagement aligns with Deleuze's account of matter as dynamic and alive with force. Matter comprises 'masses of monads' that cannot be separated from their folds and surfaces (ibid.). These monads, in their transformation, generate an understanding that gives rise to what Deleuze calls a Baroque sensibility: a texturology, a surface that 'attests to a generalised organicism, or to a ubiquitous presence of organisms' (ibid.). In this framework, matter becomes a field of becoming, revealing intensities, capacities, and hidden potentials within its textures.

In *Beyond the Void*, this Baroque sensibility resists fixity. Form shifts and transforms; meaning emerged through movements and resistances of material. The process unfolded as a dialogue, where perception and form converged in the act of making. The crafting of *Beyond the Void* was not about controlling the outcome, but about staying attuned to the unruly vitality of matter. Only later did I realise its capacity to disrupt intention and open space for something unforeseen. This textured approach of thinking with tangible form and the entanglement of fibres, where the physical properties of the medium shaped the process of making, advanced my thinking.

At first glance, the work may appear grounded in traditional crafts; on closer encounter, it reveals itself as layered and unstable. The skeins of thread unravelled, so too did the socio-political resonances of the piece. What might have seemed unconscious at the time, such as the instinctive selection of colours, or the use of raffia paper, now returns



Beyond the Void (2019)

through Hayles' notion of the 'unthought' (2017), where cognition exceeds the rational. I chose what was at hand, unaware that these decisions were already entangled in histories of skin, touch, and labour.

As Deleuze reminds us, matter holds within it intensities and movements that unfold through engagement. *Beyond the Void* gathered as a knot of histories, where material, affect, and political memory intertwined. The gestures of weaving, knotting, and folding carried the work into a broader discourse, linking embodiment and resistance, craft and critique, through the felt thickness of its materiality.

Of course, my sister's body was on my mind as I made *Beyond the Void*. Her form was inescapable. Her skin had become opaque, glass-like; beneath its paper-thin surface, purple and red veins traced delicate paths. Yet we could not see what was consuming her from within. Fold upon fold, cells were multiplying in what the consultant described as an uncontrollable process. If such cells possessed intelligence, one might expect them to recognise a limit, to know when they had folded to capacity. Yet, something with a mind of its own seemed at work, an element of infinity embedded in the act of division, an impulse that exceeded containment. In continuing to replicate, they destroyed the very body that sustained them, killing the host that had fed, sheltered, and made their growth possible. Inside her body a monstrous mass of soft tissue multiplied beyond human control. Only under the surgeon's knife were the tumours revealed, one "the size of an American football", the other "that of a baseball".

At that moment of suspension, when we were all waiting, I dissolved into the process of making. The threads slipped through my fingers in long, patient lines, obedient at first, then alive with their own rhythms. A line of knots formed, a straight backbone, however, not for long; the thread had its own intentions, it twisted, looped back, resisted, insisted on a course I could not control, as if it knew something I did not. A form emerged before I understood what it was. I was not thinking. I had no intention of making anything figurative, certainly not what was happening inside my sister's body. The thought felt absurd, invasive, most of all… unkind.

When I ran out of thread, I stopped. I hung it on the threshold of her home. She was lying on the sofa, breathing lightly, her eyes half closed. It stood, yet could not stand without support. Neither solid nor empty, it seemed to hover between presence and absence, echoing the body only a few steps away. There was something grotesquely curvaceous about this undeniably feminine form, though I had not meant it to be. It swelled and bent, a shape I did not want to recognise as hers, and yet, in some unspoken way, it was. I made a form that now appears to me like a body without organs, a frame emptied of essence, ravaged from within.

What strikes me now as strange is that, while my sister was still alive, I placed this work on the threshold of her living room and conservatory, a space between two worlds. In Deleuze's visualisation of a Baroque house at the beginning of *Le Pli* (2007a, p. 7) this was where the 'pleats of matter' and the 'folds of the soul' converge, on the cusp of two worlds.

Transformation is never purely abstract; it is etched into bodies, spaces, and histories. Moments of rupture are not solely conceptual, they are also material, leaving marks both visible and invisible across the fabric of life. Before I recognised it as such, the process had already begun to shape my work as a felt response to the conditions around me. Folding was less a theory I applied than a rhythm I followed, guided by my sister's presence and the pressures of the moment. What I would later come to understand through Deleuze's folds, the Baroque, and his notion of texturology had already taken form through gesture and placement – texture as matter, thought as fold.

Looking back now, I see *Beyond the Void* moving with us, our bodies and the space draw into one rhythm, a diffractive immediacy visible in the thread's movement and held in the knots formed – a kind of texturology where matter inscribes its own gestures. My encounter could not be named in the moment. To hold it, I return to the words I wrote at the time, 2019, when the work was still raw in its unfolding.

> *Beyond the Void evolved while I was thinking about nothing and sensing everything. On the surface, it is a piece that considers traditional crafts as a pathway to artistic expression. I free-formed the sculpture using familiar techniques of crocheting and knitting. The material determined the shape of the structure. This piece considers what is beyond the visual, and what is in the void.*

This structure was formed with the collaboration of a crochet hook, a circular knitting needle, thread and me, as the maker. When casting on, to knit or crochet, I don't know how many stitches or loops I am going to have to start the piece. A single thread twists into a line of stitches to form the beginning of the structure. On the circular needle, the piece quickly begins to grow. (I only use the knit stitch.) The repetition of the stitch forms a network of loops. The piece grows, and I become trapped within the repetitive cycle of entwining one stitch after another. This process quickly forms a cylinder shape. The structure became tight, stifling, and the urge to break the rhythm entered my mind. It can't go on… I drop a stitch, or add one, to break the rhythm and change the form. Dropping a stitch brings the greatest release. Pull down on the threads and all hell lets loose as the piece unravels and a ladder forms. The rhythm is broken, and I am free. The subject/object relationship is broken, and the structure reveals its own being. I lose control. Now I am collaborating with matter.

The inner section of Beyond the Void was formed first. I let it grow. I hung the inner section of the sculpture and left it, before working on what is now the outer skin. As I start the second structure, without any control, the knitting turns in on itself, an ellipse forms by mistake, however I don't believe there are mistakes in this form. Mistakes/glitches are the form finding its own materiality. This piece will eventually form the top section of the structure. The process of forming the structure isn't as simple as starting from the top of the piece and working down to the bottom. Often the middle section will be knitted first and crochet added to either end. There is no set pattern. This process is freeform. The knotting and looping of the crochet are less controlled and allow for the thread to make a looser form. The making stops when the thread runs out. This is not to say the piece is finished. A piece is never finished; it is part of the process. (It is left, and the maker moves on to another thing, another encounter with matter.) (2019)

My reflection captures the texture of making. Yet as *Beyond the Void* unfolded through matter and gesture, another parallel process consumed our days: the ritual of medication, a diffractive undercurrent with its own texturology, knotting life through its repetitions and demands. I was trying to keep my sister alive.

The consequences of getting the medication wrong were unforgiving. What was it the doctor had said? The distorted words ran repeatedly through my mind. Fearful of missing a crucial dose, I tried to impose order on chaos. I meticulously transcribed her prescription onto a whiteboard, colour-coding each pill container because the list was too complex to remember. The names held no meaning; they slipped past me; medical language blurred in my dyslexic mind. Each new box arrived with a whisper of hope, a new promise that might hold some relief amidst the uncertainty. Drugs that proved ineffective were wiped off the board; others were added, as though the rearrangement of letters might somehow carry a hint of relief. Did they help? The truth remains unknown. The routine of medication became a ritual. We were the cogs within the machinery of care, executing the doctors' instructions with blind precision, knowing that if we faltered, the pain would become intolerable. Caught in a god-forsaken paradox, we found ourselves aiding my sister's passage towards death, even as we fought to keep her alive and to alleviate her pain.

Yet beyond the mechanics of care, beyond the rigid structures of prescription and protocol, what remained was flesh, a life, its presence, vulnerability, and a transformation. This flesh, more than biological, was affective, inscribed by care, pain, and the strange choreography of medication. It folded time differently. Deleuze writes of the Baroque fold as something that does not just turn back on itself, but continues endlessly, folding from inside into itself (Deleuze, 1993). I now see this folding as something happening across the surfaces of our days, through the repetition of routine, the tension of anticipation, and the small resistances of the body. What passed between us through gesture, timing, and proximity was affective, fleshly, and resistant to written translation. In this folding of self into other, of time into matter, the boundaries between bodies blurred, and what remained was not a story, but a sensation, a trembling at the threshold of endurance.

Baroque flesh and the folding of time

The philosopher Jean-François Lyotard captures the disorienting immediacy of affective exposure when he writes: 'to be there, here and now, exposed in space-time and to the space-time of something that touches before any concept and even any representation' (1991, p. 18). He describes an aesthetic condition of radical exposure, of being present to an event, pain, intimacy, or loss, in a way that bypasses conceptual thought. This marks a threshold state, a form of raw, felt experience that precedes language and resists comprehension. It is the 'before' of meaning, what occurs prior to representation, before one can name or narrate what is felt. Such states resonate particularly in contexts of death, trauma, or deep emotional intensity, where the frameworks of understanding begin to falter, with only sensation remaining.



Skin I (2020)

This series of sculptures pushed me to consider matter, beyond the visible. From the Skin Series, Skin I is a continuation of my exploration of the materiality of intangible matter.

It explores a unique topology of a body, distinct from human form. This creation emerged from deep within my mind, shaped by unconscious thoughts of forms, empty spaces, and what lies beyond the void after the death of a soulmate.

The Process: Skin I is formed from two pieces. The top section is a network of stitches made from raw silk thread. Knitted on a small gauge circular needle, it quickly developed a funnel-like structure of tightly controlled stitches. Mentally and physically, the tension within the piece was too much and had to be broken. I knew if I dropped stitches at random points around the neck of the pieces, ladders would form, and the rigidity of the structure would be broken. Decreasing the stitches at the base of the cylinder and enlarging them changed the piece's rhythm.

The main body of the second section evolved from a 1.5-metre chain of loops formed from white linen paper yarn. Crocheted loops form the backbone of the sculpture, and the plane of repeated loops flow into a cylindrical shape. The main body of the sculpture materialises into a loose form that opens up into a topological plane. The repeated loops within this area are of similar size, not done intentionally; it happened in the making process. When hung as the plane, midway down, the sculpture reveals a wavelike form. I had no control over the forming of the wave. Yes, I made the loops; however, I didn't realise how the sculpture would hold its shape when hung. The structure has formed no matter how I stretch and pull the piece. When left to its own device, it reverts into the wavelike plane. The structure forms into a rough cylinder at the base of the work before hitting the floor.

The raw silk element of the sculpture doesn't hold its form, which bothers me. I want the ladders within the cylinder to be seen, and this isn't possible unless there is a thick paper yarn threaded around the top of the cylinder. I now have a dilemma. The paper yarn has its own materiality and is forming an irregular shape, and I don't know if it is the right shape, whatever the right shape is. I struggled mentally and physically with this sculpture for a while. The two pieces weren't connecting, but I knew they had a connection. It wasn't until I hung the raw silk section and then started to join the length of crocheted linen paper yarn onto the neck of the raw silk cylinder that the piece became one.

This diary entry was written in 2020, in the midst of making, when grief was raw and I was searching for the core of my research. Unable to process the philosophy I was reading, I turned to material practice. My hands moved instinctively, looping and knotting, driven less by thought than by a need for refuge.

This is the original reflection, repetition included, words returning as part of the process. *Skins I* was the first of three works.

I witnessed and remember my sister's body in a suspended, in-between state, where sensation, time, and care folded into each other beyond narrative or conceptual containment. In this threshold, grief is enacted and felt rather than named, and flesh becomes a conceptual threshold, a space of radical exposure. From this suspended, affective state emerged a series of works exploring the traces of loss, embodiment, and memory. The first of these, *Skin I* (2020), was made in the initial months following my sister's death. It emerged from raw affect, memory and sensation folding into one another, marking the threshold between grief lived and grief rendered. This work was the first in a series of explorations into what I now understand as Baroque flesh and the folding of time, where the body's traces and the intensity of loss demand expression beyond narrative.

In this context, I could only ask: what is flesh in such circumstances, and how could it be Baroque? This question unsettles the boundary between the tangible and the ephemeral, much like the Baroque itself, which, following Deleuze, refuses clarity and compartmentalisation. The Baroque unfolds in duration, slipping into the sensual, where matter becomes opaque, resistant to definition, always folding, always unfolding. It moves beyond the physical and into what Deleuze calls the 'unthought', a space where intuition guides perception (Deleuze, 1986). Flesh, in this sense, is not simply corporeal; it is something sensed yet never fully grasped, partially seen, partially felt, never fully rendered in language.

My embodied experience of the body finds a conceptual echo in Lyotard's reflections on perception: 'Now these are the paradoxical operations that constitute the experience of a body, of an 'actual' or phenomenological body in its space-time continuum of sensibility and perception' (1991, p. 16). In other words, our experience of the body unfolds through sensation, perception, and the passage of time itself, resisting neat conceptual containment. The aesthetic condition of radical exposure, of being present to an event, pain, intimacy, or loss, bypasses conceptual thought. It marks a threshold state, a form of raw, felt experience that precedes language and resists comprehension. This is the before meaning, prior to representation, before one can name or narrate what is felt. Such states are especially resonant in contexts of death, trauma, or deep emotional intensity, where familiar frameworks of understanding begin to falter and only sensation remains.



Skin I

It is here flesh becomes a site of suffering and care, and at the same time a conceptual threshold, raw, recursive, unfinished. Lyotard understands flesh as a sensuous interface where the world touches the self. His work helps me stay with this unnameable materiality. In *The Inhuman* (1991), particularly the essay *After the Sublime: The State of Aesthetics*, Lyotard argues that timbre, nuance, and grain elude conceptual determination. He writes:

> a singular, incomparable quality – unforgettable and immediately forgotten – of the grain of a skin or a piece of wood, the fragrance of an aroma, the savour of a secretion or a piece of flesh, as well as a timbre or a nuance. All these terms are interchangeable. They all designate the event of a passion, a passibility for which the mind will not have been prepared, which will have unsettled it. (Lyotard, 1991, p.141)

For Lyotard, this 'event of a passion' is not a metaphor, it is the trembling of flesh at the threshold of sensation. Always vulnerable, always exposed, it transforms the subject without anticipation or consent.

While *The Inhuman* focuses on this notion of passibility and the immaterial force of affect, Lyotard's earlier work *Discourse, Figure* (2011) approaches similar questions from a different angle. There, he introduces the notion of the figural, a mode of expression that exceeds the structural limits of language, operating instead through sensation, ambiguity, and the visual or corporeal register. The figural is not simply outside discourse, but moves through it like a ripple, unsettling its coherence from within. It marks the moment when meaning falters—when language trembles under the weight of what it cannot hold. These intensities are not distant objects to be analysed; they arrive unbidden, lived through the body, felt before they are known.

At the centre of these words is my sister, flesh now dispersed in space-time. I saw the threads that ran through her body, the unrelenting influx of sensation, and the toll exacted through suffering and loss. As I write, I shift through time. Thoughts fracture. There is no chronology when tracing the pleats of matter and the folds of the soul held in memory. As terms, 'pleats of matter' and 'folds of the soul' echo Deleuze, yet here they move beyond citation, becoming lived, inhabiting the contours of my experience and an unfolding theoretical frame.



Skin II

My sister's body, once vibrant with life and colour, grew paler with each passing day. Her existence became a slow, agonising repayment to biological and juridical forces, the final, inescapable contract with death. Mutating cancerous cells consumed her from within, holding her in a relentless grip that defied any human decree. Tethered to an oxygen tank, her movements diminished, then ceased; the air she needed arrived by machine. Biology and mechanism set the terms.

Her body was no longer hers. It became a surface of inscription, where time, breath, and chemical intervention converged in slow, persistent rhythms—not in bold strokes, but in quiet, insistent marks, as breath laboured in a whisper through another night. Each drug entered like a sentence half-spoken, shifting the tone, altering the tempo, yet never quite resolving. Her skin held the residue of these interventions, not wounds, exactly, but pale and unreadable echoes of pain. She lay suspended between illness and care, between the desire to remain and the body's gradual withdrawal. Meaning slipped past us. What we witnessed belonged to no language we knew, only to flesh, to silence, to time unspooling itself, breath by breath.

Did she know her sentence?

Yes.

She had come home to die.

Aesthetics of pain – a vigil in the flesh

The repetitive precision of palliative care, the ritual of dosing, and the heartbreak of watching pain persist marked each day. The fading colour in her skin signalled the beginning of the end. Care was not measured or precise; it lived in tenderness, in the gentle acts of kindness as she approached her final threshold. When the morphine pads stopped working, we followed the instructions. The substance, unfamiliar and cold, was taken from the fridge. We broke the seal of the final box. Drop by drop, hour by hour, we placed the liquid on her tongue. The ritual was as precise as it was devastating. We did not know how long the process would take. The medics held their silence, leaving us to hold onto what little hope remained in a growing emptiness. She rocked back and forth in pain. We gave her another drop and filled the space with birdsong, hoping that if peace could be found, she might find it there, while we watched the ebb of a receding life.



last night II (2019) - altered 2024 in Photoshop

In this in-between space of waiting, where aesthetics and ethics converge, there was no tribunal, no adjudication of right or wrong—only the mute, unyielding presence of suffering. She wanted, fiercely, to live. Yet as we watched, helpless, it was her body and mind alone that bore the weight of what could not be contested. She endured in silence. The weight of that quiet persistence is held in my memory, and in one image I took yet can barely face. *Last Night II* (2019) holds everything I cannot say.

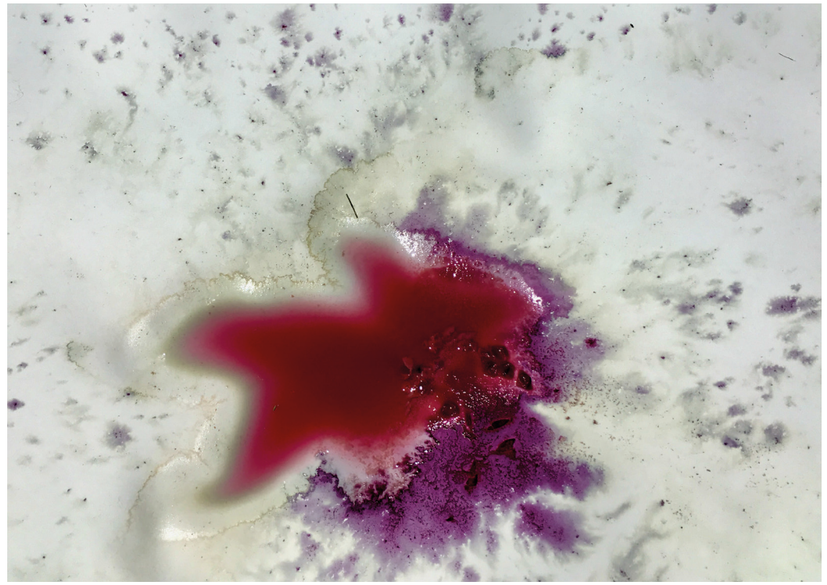
Each time I see the unaltered image, a pulse rises behind my ears and pain surges. Memory and sensation fold together; I cannot separate them. The photograph carries the traces of what cannot be fully seen. A figural presence brushing against perception, inviting a slow, careful encounter with the dense living texture of a body. A life now held in shadows. Only in the past few months have I been able to work with this image. Even now, I cannot bear for the original to be seen, so I pushed the exposure curve in Photoshop to its limit until only a faint trace remained. Shadows cling to shadow, forming a spectral outline of a life, half-hidden, half-glimpsed. Most of what the image holds lies just out of reach; yet something lingers, trembling, sensed before it can be named.

In *Discourse, Figure*, Lyotard argues that meaning exceeds language as a system; what speaks remains partly outside discourse even when it is said. To paraphrase Lyotard, silence is the very condition of discourse… there can be no discourse without this opacity… this inexhaustible thickness, the tear that lets discourse and its object stand vis-à-vis so expression can begin (2011, p. 8). Building on Merleau-Ponty, Lyotard notes that making something visible also conceals: showing creates a distance between image and body, seer and seen; even when we try to reveal everything, something remains unspoken, just beyond reach (ibid., pp. 23–24). This resonates with *The Visible and the Invisible*, where 'flesh' is a shared field of relation: to see is also to be seen; to touch is to be touched. Presence is entwined with what is withheld; visibility is never complete and carries the trace of what escapes (1968, p. 118). In other words, speech always leaves a remainder; showing also hides. That gap is what lets expression happen.

At the threshold of my sister's living and her death, *Last Night II* reveals and conceals. Its flat plane attempts the levelling that Lyotard's notion of 'thickness' resists. For Lyotard, 'thickness' exceeds the frame and presses on perception (2011, p. 8). Reality is layered, a weave of overlapping intensities that refuses reduction; beings, objects, and words do not settle into one fixed meaning.

To remain with what exceeded the frame, I turned from looking to making. If the photograph sealed a moment into surface, *We Three Breathe* (2019) tried to let the moment and matter thicken again. At the time, I did not know what *We Three Breathe* was about, and now, in one sense, I do. It carries the figural traces of experience, those aspects that cannot be entirely captured but are nevertheless felt. Turning from the image of my sister dying, I intuitively sought another way to remain with the moment, letting gesture and material guide my thinking and making.

The garden was full of ripening fruit. I crushed a handful of berries into ink and worked without a plan, letting the making lead. Juice bled into paper, spreading unpredictably, pooling briefly before it dried. The gestures were quiet, careful: a way of staying close to what I could not name. Now the work feels like a conversation with something beyond sight and words. Time thickened, folding and stretching the everyday into a quiet intensity as gesture, juice, and paper spoke before I could.

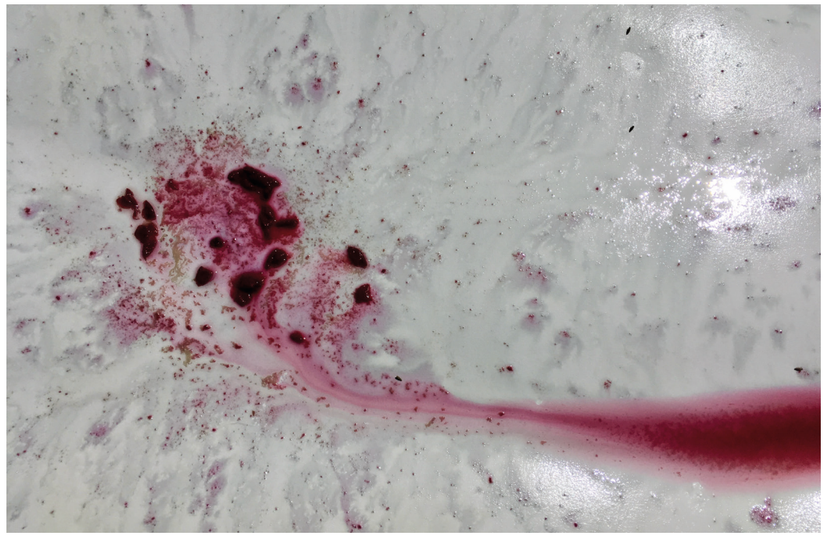


We three breathe I (2019)

This series of three works, holds a moment suspended in paradox: my sister, my niece, and I, together, alive, in the soft warmth air of midsummer. Beneath it all, we knew my sister was dying. And yet, in that moment, we were breathing. We were alive.

At home, with nothing and everything to do, we waited. We watched. We knew, and did not know, what would come next.

A month later, only two of us would be breathing.



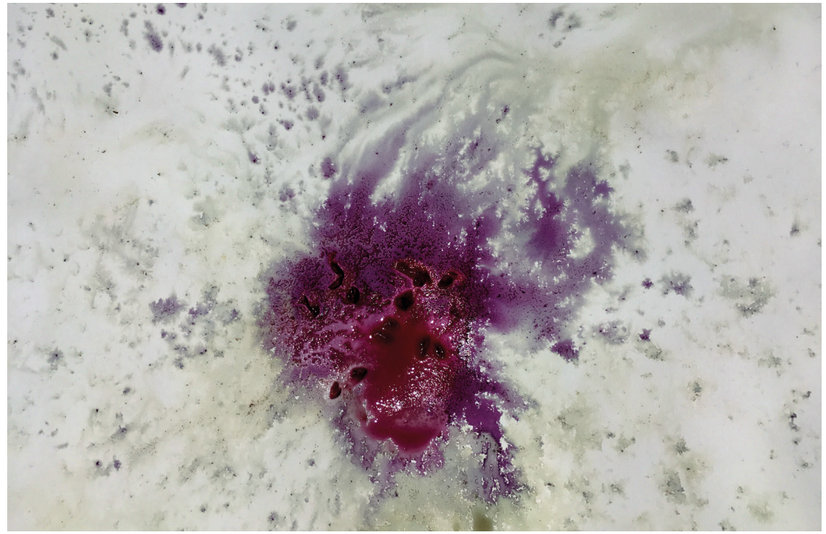
We three breathe II

Living with thickness

If, as Lyotard proposes, 'thickness' names opacity and ambiguity, then within the context of posthuman feminist research-creation I live with it rather than peel it away. Meaning is never fully extractable or transparent. 'Thickness' lingers as excess that remains in language, in art, in experience – what cannot be neatly explained or contained. It stretches from the spatial to the temporal. Weaving this thought back to my sister, her presence did not vanish with her death; it carries on through memory, objects, photographs, and my practice. Meaning unfolds in time. Nothing is static. It evolves as it moves through different contexts and moments. This temporal density in the *We three breathe* series adds another dimension to what I see, to how I perceive the living and the dead, and to how I now understand 'thickness', not as fixed, but as fluid, as something that holds the past within the folds of the now and gestures toward the future.

Truth flickers in this space, elusive and fugitive, shaped by affect, matter, and the act of making. To write is to approach it, though writing may never fully grasp it. The difficulty of saying, the opacity of language, becomes the condition of dwelling with what exceeds it. Here, tangles of knowing and unknowing gather, and what cannot be spoken does not vanish; it remains, folded into the work itself. The photograph of my sister introduces thickness and flesh as registers of experience, as intimate, immovable, and yet impossible to fully grasp.

We three breathe extends this encounter into practice, allowing those ideas to emerge in gesture, in materiality, in the quiet act of being together. The berry ink, the layering, the deliberate movements of making are enactments of a concept, ways of dwelling with presence and absence. Unlike the frozen image of a single moment, the series inhabits suspended time, the relational flow of breathing together, where meaning unfolds through memory, context, and making. In these gestures, theory and lived experience intertwine, refracting off one another, forming a thickened, layered form of knowing that resists simple explanation. In this movement, through ink, touch, and presence, the work gestures toward opacity, relationality, and the flickering of truth, setting a subtle thread that will carry through to later works.



We three breathe III

My art practice does not aim at revelation; it layers and obscures, shaping what can be sensed without fully disclosing. More noise than voice. As Lyotard writes, art is a silence that cannot be tamed (2011, p. 7). If it resonates, it does so in its own register. Once a work enters the world, it resists control, responding to its environment as *Beyond the Void*, *Spider-fly*, and *In-between* did, flexible and unstable. As my hands work and my eyes follow, the work and I take shape, dense, complex, holding things that can't be fully contained. At the threshold of life and death, my gestures were shaped as much by waiting and grief rather than conscious. In hindsight, these works reveal themselves anew, inhabiting shifting spaces where my sister's presence still moves. What follows returns to a moment of making, when matter was already active, shaping thought before I could name it.

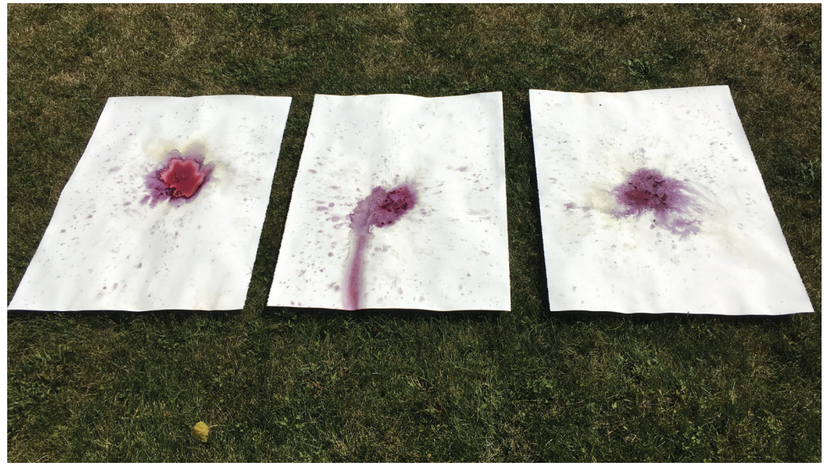
Making as an activity moves through me and exceeds me. Thought, matter, and experience diffract, folding philosophical reflection and landscape into a multifaceted unfolding that enacts the very processes of entanglement described in the text. Returning to Deleuze's concept of the fold, it resonates with Lyotard's 'thickness' and Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh'. Each names a way of thinking that slips beyond metaphor into method: folding as movement, thickness as density, flesh as the medium through which both circulate. Together, they sketch reality and subjectivity as layered and entangled, never fully knowable, always in process, always relational. Simon O'Sullivan extends this, proposing that thought itself constitutes a fold, an instance of the 'forces of the outside' folding into the inside (2005, p. 102). These forces, philosophical, affective, conceptual intensities, move through and shape thought, folding the inside in ways that cannot be resisted. Making is never isolated. I do not summon these forces; they arrive of their own accord, just as land, wind, and the traces of life that cross it emerge independently yet leave their mark on the work.

Subjectivity unfolds as continuous folding, layering, and entangling with the world, a process never settling, never finishing, always returning upon itself. Knowledge is felt as much as thought, sensed as much as understood, enacted as much as diffracted, moving with perception, practice, and thought in a single, inseparable motion. Experience resists flattening, thick and dense, scattering across nuance, ambiguity, and connection, refracting through each encounter. Within this diffraction, research-creation traces folds, inhabits thickness, and engages flesh, making theory something to live, sense, and touch, always in motion, multiplying, and becoming.

Responding to this emergence required a shift in posture, not theoretical, but bodily, affective, unfolding as an unfinished process of becoming. I am that mortal critter, crawling in unfinished thoughts, as each fold opened a threshold, a space of becoming, and also of possible rupture. This movement resonates not only with Deleuze's notions of transformation and continuity but also rubs against Lyotard's 'différend', a space where representation breaks down, where language can no longer mediate the event. Deleuze's fold carries possibility and emergence; Lyotard's différend marks the impossibility of articulation. Between them lies an unresolved tension: the desire to express and the limits of what can be said or shown (Lyotard, 1988, p. 13). These are dynamic subjectivities, echoing Deleuze's folds and Haraway's 'situated knowledges'(1988).

What remains is residue: a soft trace moving through time and through others, entering spaces I had not yet known. In this flux, the practice stays open, folding forward into the next encounter. The veil does not lift; it shifts. Grief, like matter, changes form.

From this terrain I want to briefly, re-turn to *Beyond the Void*, not as a conclusion but as something still unfolding, to remain with textures that exceed understanding. The work travelled with me from the US to the UK. It sits at a threshold where place meets socio-political pressures.



We three breathe drying in the sun in Denver (2019)

Placed in our home in Yorkshire, the work held my sister's presence, a way of dwelling with what cannot be resolved. Yet the fold did not stop within the walls of the house, I turn to the Moors, and then to the micro: the grain of the screen, the air as shared medium, and the quiet acts of making. On the Moors I attune to another kind of sensing, following the faint tracks sheep leave in the heather: traces of a world moving on in its own rhythms. I trace them, unsure where they lead. Tracks in the land fold into traces in thought. What unfolds is unplanned. The footage shifts beyond my framing. Something co-composed emerges, not entirely mine.

FOLD 6 _
BEYOND THE VOID, RE-TURNS

Hook,
(53.7207° N, 0.4898° W)

Rooms opened like a labyrinth, in the house at Hook, each wall and mantel holding traces of lives once lived. The air was thick with memories. In a corner I had claimed as my studio, *Beyond the Void* sat untouched. My sister's ashes rested nearby, hidden inside a small black box. I could not face them, unsure what they would stir. Their and her presence lingered at the edges of thought, quiet and insistent. I knew she could not be here as flesh, yet some part of me longed for that impossibility.

In the back kitchen, the fireplace had been stripped. The sandstone mantel leaned against the wall, waiting to be set back. In this interruption, I felt compelled to place *Beyond the Void* in this room. My sister would have loved this kitchen and used its cast-iron oven. She was a superb cook, attuned to the practical and sensual details of such a space. She would have noticed the iron meat hooks in the beams. To hang *Beyond the Void* from one of them felt too brutal, too final. Instead, I fixed one end of the piece to a metal stump set in the wall and secured the trailing raffia to a brick salvaged from the collapsed chimney, drawing a line of tension between two points to anchor the piece, to let it—and her—breathe in another room.

Her presence is woven into the details of my making. Folds of material, knots of thread: they carry traces of her, entangled with my perceptual and conceptual work, where the physical and the immaterial think through one another. Deleuze writes that 'only at the limit does texture become most evident', at the threshold just before rupture, when material is stretched to its edge and 'no longer being opposed to the fold, now expresses it in its pure state, according to a Baroque figure' (1993, p. 37). At the limit of grief and of the re-turn of *Beyond the Void*, the room began to show what it held: absence, memory, and a presence. Hanging the work folded the space inward; neither sculpture nor house remained merely spatial or tactile. They became a threshold where material and thought tilt and shift, exposing the fine fibres of relation that hold this world together. What began as a solitary gesture opened into a different manner of working.



Beyond the Void (2019) installed in the house (2021)

Slippage and *Moor Slippage* (2021)



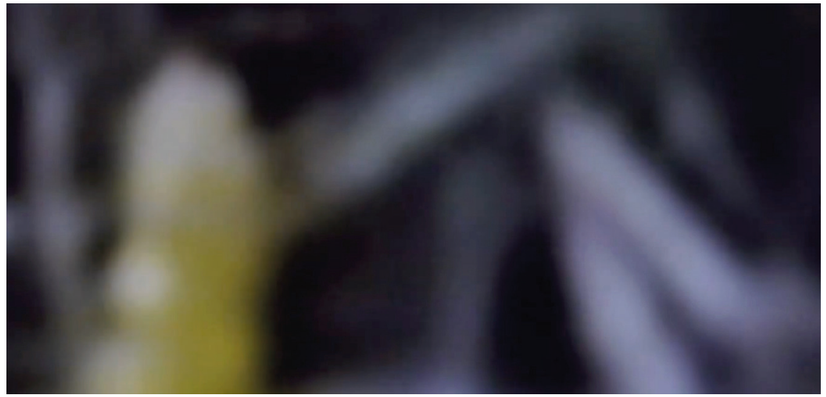
The North Yorkshire Moors (2021)

If installing *Beyond the Void* into our home folded inward, through grief and the resonance of material presence, then *Slippage* and *Moor Slippage* begin to turn outward, slowly opening to landscape, to external forces, and to the entangled relations of environment. These projects did not begin with fixed concepts but unfolded through processes of attunement: listening to terrain, following animal paths, and responding to digital disruptions. As process, they extended my inquiry into folding as method, while unsettling how landscape is encountered, known, and co-composed. To gather the materials, I walked across the Yorkshire Moors, following traces made by nonhuman actors, sheep and plants whose movements and growth continually reconfigure the terrain. Inspired by Donna Haraway's *Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (2003) and Johnny Golding's *Reflections on friendship* in *The Companion to Animal Studies* (2018), I sought to explore how the folds of landscape might be inhabited otherwise. My practice resists anthropocentric perspectives. To approach the perceptual world of sheep, even if only partially, I followed their paths and lowered the height of my iPad and iPhone, holding both close to the ground. This gesture became a phenomenological inquiry: a bodily reorientation that attuned my movements to the contours and flows shaped by nonhuman actors. From one angle, the method unfolded as wandering, guided by sheep; from another, it became a process of thought-in-motion, where body and terrain folded into one another. In this shared movement, the moor's folds became more than physical traces; they opened conceptual space for reflecting on interspecies relationality, temporality, and the ethics of inhabiting different worlds.

The entanglement extended from the field into the digital realm, where new forms emerged through editing. The work took shape in the encounter between computer, footage, and me, an assemblage where unexpected configurations arose. *Slippage* materialised during one such encounter, when a technical glitch in iMovie transformed slowed footage into abstract painterly forms. This rupture, disorienting yet generative, unsettled authorship and control. Here, slippage, both literal and conceptual, paralleled the folds of the landscape: unpredictable, transformative, rich with possibility. Just as wandering sheep trails refigured boundaries between human and nonhuman, digital disruption revealed the agency of the algorithmic. What might have been dismissed as failure became a process of becoming, where moorland, image, sound, and time folded together into an immersive, liminal space. At the time of making the videos, I wrote:

> *Beyond my control, an assemblage of environments evolved, where sound, image, and time knotted together as part of my ongoing process. The algorithmic space exceeded my control as the data broke its boundaries. The doing became nomadic. Slippage escaped the power of the here and now and the need to conform. Perhaps this immanent space is a plane without borders, where there is no object or subject, and everything is becoming-posthuman, becoming-virtual. (2021)*

This sense of slippage led me to rethink 'thinking through making' as methodological openness: a recursive practice that resists resolution and embraces emergence. The process allows the work to evolve in unforeseen ways, aligning with the socio-political and sensory dimensions of my practice while intersecting with a posthuman feminist framework that challenges anthropocentric and hierarchical structures. Folding, whether as gesture, concept, or sensation, emerges here as a key modality for navigating shifting topologies of thought and materiality. Research-creation operates as both method and practice, mapping intersections between material, digital, and conceptual forms. As a speculative process, making and thinking are inseparable; each gesture opens new potential, resonating with Deleuze's notion of the fold, in which matter and thought co-emerge. His notions of 'pleats of matter' and 'folds of the soul' bridge philosophical inquiry with sensory experimentation, echoing my practice where memory, material, and affect entangle.



What stayed with me after *Slippage* and *Moor Slippage* was not resolution but rhythm: folds traced, path pursued, glitches accepted, and micro-worlds explored. These videos resisted narrative closure, offering instead another way of attending to matter, thinking with and through incompleteness and openness. The folds I followed across moorland drew me into the screen, into the virtual, and into memories held within my mental micro-folds. Each slippage unsettled meaning, opening sites where relations remained unfixed and unfolding.

My attention to rhythm and incompleteness carried forward, though the tone shifted. From the open moorland I moved inward, reinstalling *Beyond the Void* in our home in Yorkshire and turning to *To Return/ To Rewind/ To Reform* (2021), overleaf. The work contracted into a quieter, more domestic register, where making grew concentrated and intimate. What had unfolded as glitches across landscape now gathered into what I now understand as knotwork: a practice of subtle tension, slow unfolding, and the entanglement of material and affective forces.



I manipulated the images from *Slippage* and *Moor Slippage,* enhanced the colours, and to pulled the minute details out that were held within - details I did not see while editing the videos.

Developed screenshots – Slippage (2021) – video 10mins - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/slippage/





Moor Slippage (2021). From the original video 10mins - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/moor-slippage/

It is in such micro-folds that Deleuze and Guattari locates a transformation, where distinctions dissolve: the ground, once buried, rises to the surface and acquires autonomy (1987, p. 387). In my work, too, what seemed latent, sheep traces, digital glitches, and ghostly memories, surfaced through making, becoming rather than inert. When the ground rises, form unravels and reconfigures as line, fold, and rhythm, acting directly on perception and affect. In this sense, the glitch no longer represents the moorland but re-creates a painterly vibration, a kind of mirror that unsettles fixed forms. In this mirror, the face, for Deleuze, decomposes, just as my refusal of a human-centred vantage opened to shared rhythms of animal, material, and algorithmic life. Difference, as Deleuze writes, is not given but made, 'as in the expression 'make the difference' (1994, p. 28). Each slippage and fold in my process became such a site where buried matter surfaced, forms dissolved, and new relations took shape, ghost, memory, material, and space drift and fold into something else.

To Return/ To Rewind/ To Reform (2021)



What later became significant to my research first appeared in *To Return / To Rewind/ To Reform*. Created during lockdown while I was processing grief, speaking with my psychotherapist, and experimenting with mark making and sound. At the time my work felt uncertain, unresolved. I wrote:

> *I did not know what this piece was about. It is a thing. The form evolved from the non-conscious, an exorcism of place, space, and memories. The ghost is still in the room; however, it has now morphed into something else. It remains a visceral skin, a meshwork as Tim Ingold would see it, or even a knotwork, a term borrowed from Thomas Nail. My search is beyond the visible to explore what is held within the invisible. What knots these threads together and gives space for the material to continue to breathe? Within, it feels claustrophobic, yet there are holes within the form. As I move deeper into it, I wonder what I am looking for. (2021)*

Looking back, I can see how that uncertainty did not end there but continued to shape my making. The search has carried forward, extending beyond the visible, reaching into the 'in-visible' to explore what knots these threads together, still questioning what binds matter, thought, and experience, and what allows the material to breathe. The gaps hinted at something beyond, something not yet fully realised. I continued to make, trusting that the knots of thought and material would reveal something, an ongoing becoming.

With hindsight, the rising ground of *Slippage* and *Moor Slippage* carries forward into *To Return/ To Rewind/ To Reform*, where what once lay buried turns inward and begins to fold upon itself. If the moors trembled with residue, this work listens for what stirs within those tremors. Difference is made through the subtle unsettling of distinctions. It is not simply the materialisation of loss, but the creation of a presence that breathes through its holes and resists finality. My attention turned toward what I call the 'in-visible': what is felt, folded, and transformed rather than seen.

This return brought me back to *Beyond the Void*, not as only as a fold within the fold, but as a way of thinking through artwork as method of crossing thresholds. These works became methodological tools, portals into micro-folds. They were gestures of going with what lies beneath the surface after installation, and of waiting for the works to speak. From here, in the wake of my encounter with the micro-world of the moors, something began to take shape. It deepened my engagement

'In-visible' here and throughout this thesis designates the relational field through which phenomena take shape without resolving the sensual into object-visibility. Feminist posthumanism resists a human-centred optics, emphasising that agency is distributed across zoe/geo/techno assemblages and emerges at thresholds where matter, sense, and thought co-condition one another. In this register, the in-visible is not absence but operational milieu: air, vibration, affect, and infrastructural rhythms that contour perception and practice. It calls for an ethico-onto-epistemic attention to what acts without announcement, those forces that orient making and knowing before they are named.

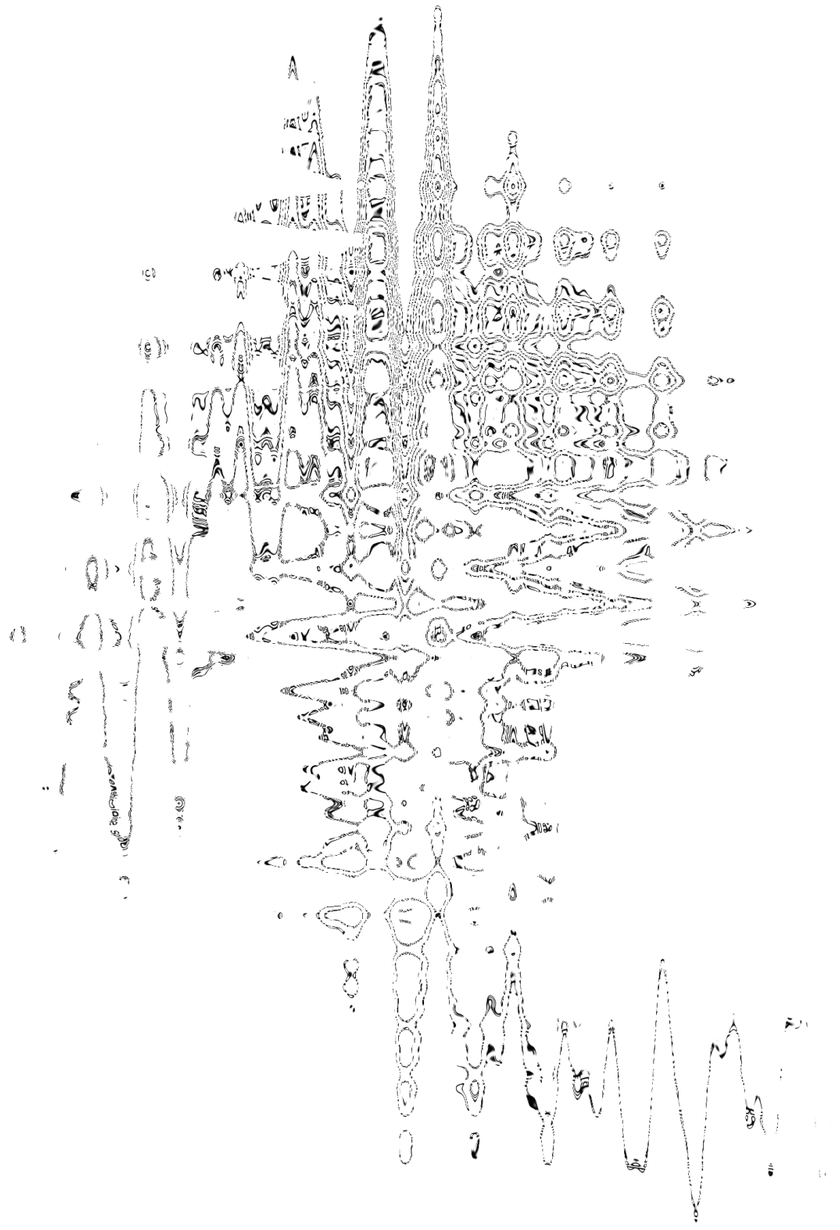
Methodologically, attending to the in-visible legitimises uncertainty, delay, and partial views as sites of insight. It aligns with knotwork and folding, where gestures register atmospheric shifts and material resistances rather than simply depict forms. The in-visible thus marks a commitment to relational presence: sensing with what is there but not yet legible, and allowing form to emerge from that shared field.

with space and with the subtle relations between materials, gestures, and affects. My process began to chart an alternative cartography, one of movement, residue, and co-emergence rather than fixed points or linear paths. It unfolded within a knotwork of unthought and what resists thought. Navigating this terrain, my thoughts unfolded as my hands shaped the physical. Making became a way for buried knowledge to surface. It rendered the hidden perceptible. In this meeting of thought, material, and process, presence emerged. Perhaps this is what makes difference: the folding, unfolding, and refolding of ideas; the entanglement of seen and unseen forces, where practice reveals what lies beneath the surface.

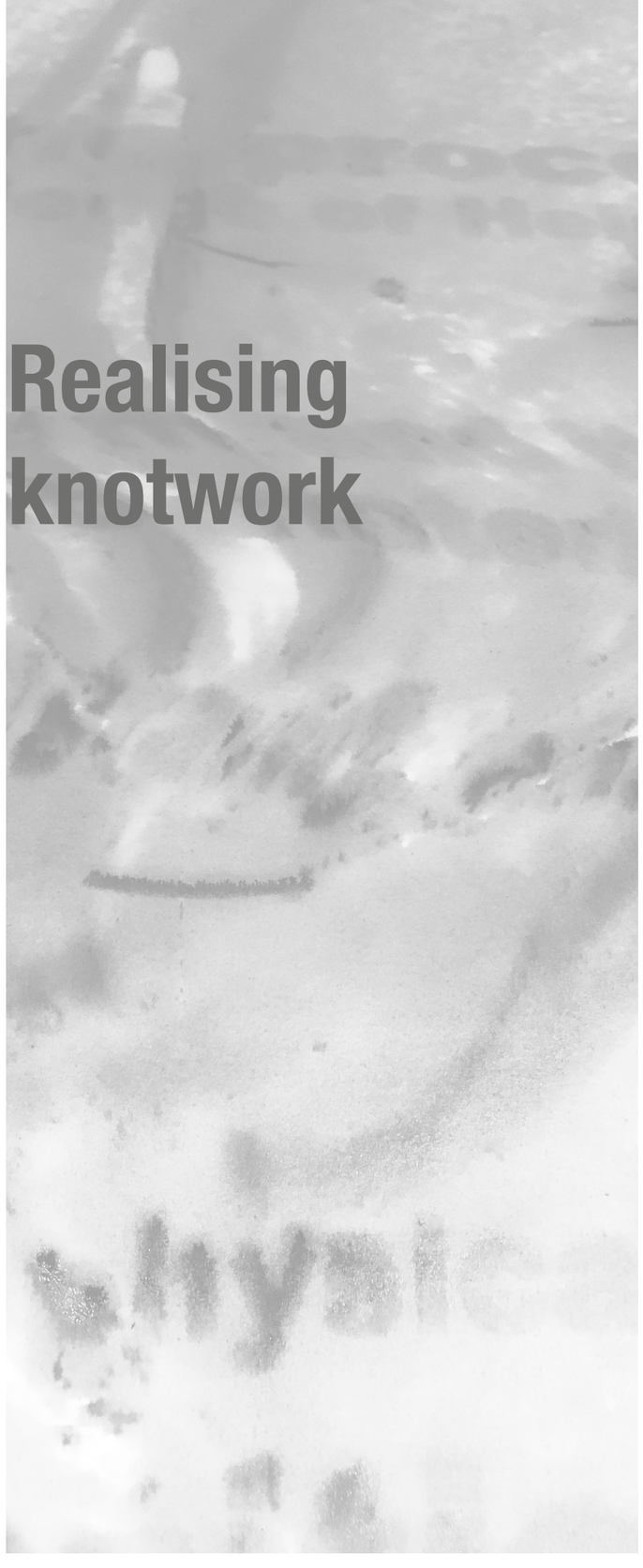
Here the soul is touched.
Difference is felt.
The 'in-visible' comes to light.

Something cracked
matter refusing form
paper slipping
ink pooling
sound pressing
a body caught in the pull
a breakdown of surfaces
of sense
of language
here, knotwork began to show itself
less plan or design, more diffraction

Spider-fly...



Intro to Spider-fly - when things slip (2025)



Realising knotwork

Spider-fly arrived less as a work than as a milieu. It began, nominally, with an invitation, Unfolding Narratives (LCC, 2024), yet what took shape resisted resolution. Neither a single object nor a closed form, it gathered as a knotwork of parts and affects: *To Return/ To Rewind/ To Reform* (2021), *The Sound of Spider-fly* (2024), and traces of *Ten knots within a knotwork* (2024), all folding into the space. Around them, seven yellowing flypapers hung, twisted on thread, sticky with dust and hair, no flies. *Spider-fly* caught memories: echoes of earlier gestures, half-remembered. *To Return/ To Rewind/ To Reform* entered this suspended field again, its woven paper-linen presence unmoored from anchor or centre, held instead in rhythm—a spatial breath folded back into the present. A reappearance, not a repetition.

Unfolding Narratives is a platform for PhD students at LCC to showcase work in progress. For me, progress is never linear but a state of flux, where making translates virtual thought, and the unthought, into material form. The installation of *Spider-fly* embodied this, confronting the unknowns of working across media within an unfamiliar exhibition space.

From this milieu, my sound design marked a shift, structural as well as conceptual. Sound had always lingered at the edges of my practice, a quiet underlayer, present yet rarely a space to speak. With *Spider-fly*, that changed. *The Sound of Spider-fly* unfolded as five tracks, at first scattered and incomplete. Respliced and diffracted, it did not accompany the work; it structured it. It became a mode of thinking-with resonance, interference, pressure. A vibrational thread pulling at the gaps between words and surfaces. Layers accumulated: the buzz of a fly, ambient tonal washes, breath loops, a faint heartbeat, splintered voice. I thought they might remain separate gestures. This layered score offered an intimate immersion, pulling listeners inward, into a private aural space.

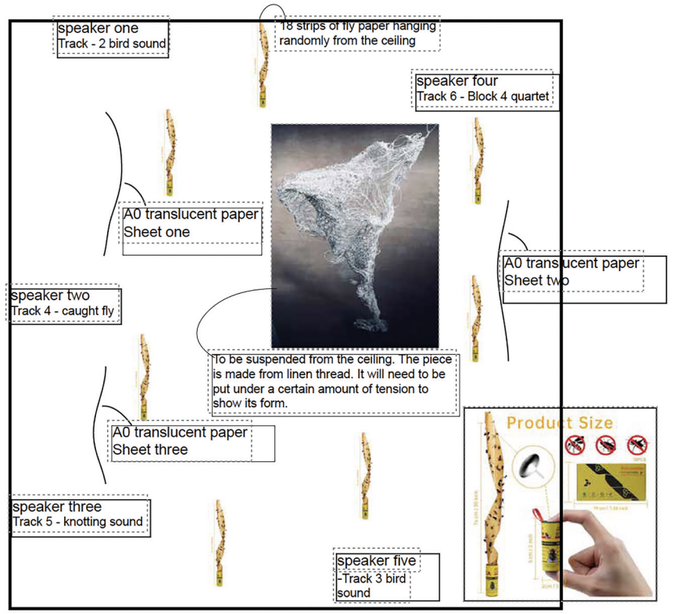
The Sound of Spider-fly - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/the-sound-of-spiderfly/



Spider-fly at LCC (2024)

In the space, something else took hold. A drift toward coherence, or its shadow. The curator said the work was too noisy. I had wanted the sound to seep, to bleed into what surrounded it. Four sets of headphones arrived under duress, their sounds bleeding what was held within. A single speaker, offset, sent out a circling buzz. It did not fill the room; it unsettled it. Thought bent toward sensation. Air thickened. The buzz of fly pressed outward, an ambient irritant. At the edge of perception, faint, then everywhere. Hearing slipped. Sound leaked through the headphones. Inside blurred with outside. Attunement with distraction. The installation echoed its tension: tangled, suspended, plural.

Materially, Spider-fly gathered itself as fragments. Surfaces creased and semi-opaque structures floated suspended in air currents, carrying traces: folds and digital ghosts. What lingered were residues, marks of earlier gestures, caught and reconfigured.



The installation did not follow my plan. I had imagined an enclosed room, walls on all sides. Instead: one long wall, an exposed staircase and concrete underfoot. A ceiling scarred with paint lines, cables, the remnants of other artists' works. I could have painted over these traces, erased them. Instead, I let them in. The architecture leaked into the work. Lines and shadows folded into the knotwork, ambient forces, not backdrop. The room asserted itself as collaborator. Uneven, unruly, resistant.



Spider-fly at LCC (2024)

Something shifted during the process of installation. It no longer felt like presentation, but practice: matter asking questions, constraints pressing back. I was not working alone. A curator, technicians, and institutional rhythms folding in. Pressure thickened. I would have pushed harder, more speakers, less division between work spaces, a looser ecology of sound and image, artists in conversation, a space without borders. Instead: frictions and misalignments. They became part of the pulse. Not failure, but folds becoming knotworks. *Evolving Knotworks* (2024) unfolded inside *Spider-fly*, taking form through the body of the work, and through me.

I was reminded again of its role in research-creation. Doubt pressed in. Friction. A misalignment between vision and outcome. Moments when the assemblage seemed about to fall apart. Then something clicked: a jolt of recognition, that threshold rush, confusion before clarity, the mind refusing to settle. I stayed with it, that 'troublesome knowledge'.

In the making of the sheets of text that hung within *Spider-fly* resistance sharpened. They refused to compile. What began on screen—clean, digital, obedient—shifted on paper. Thickness. Drag. Words blurred. Images slipped. Ink spread. To the technician: failure.

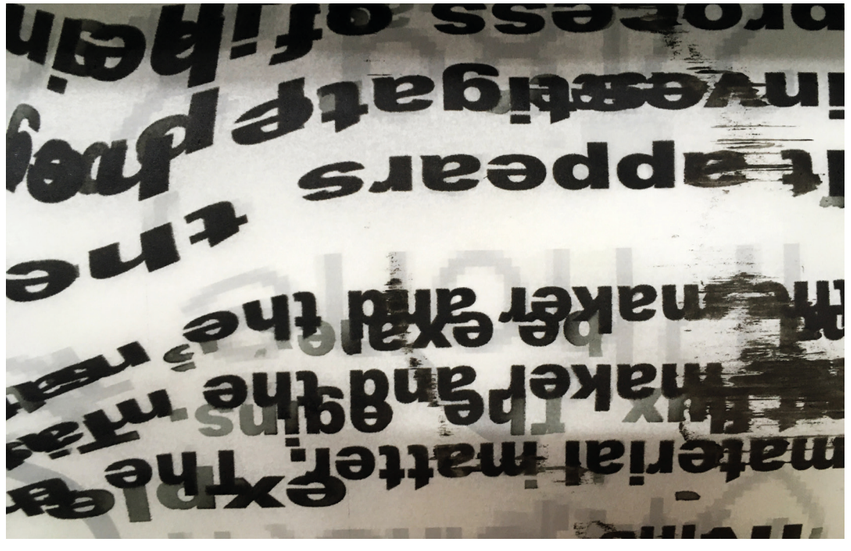
To me: knowledge-in-the-making.
The opaque sheets spoke in another rhythm.
Resistance thickened.
I adjusted. Let go of the file.
Smears, deviations, stutters.
Creativity as negotiation.
Friction folding thought back into matter.

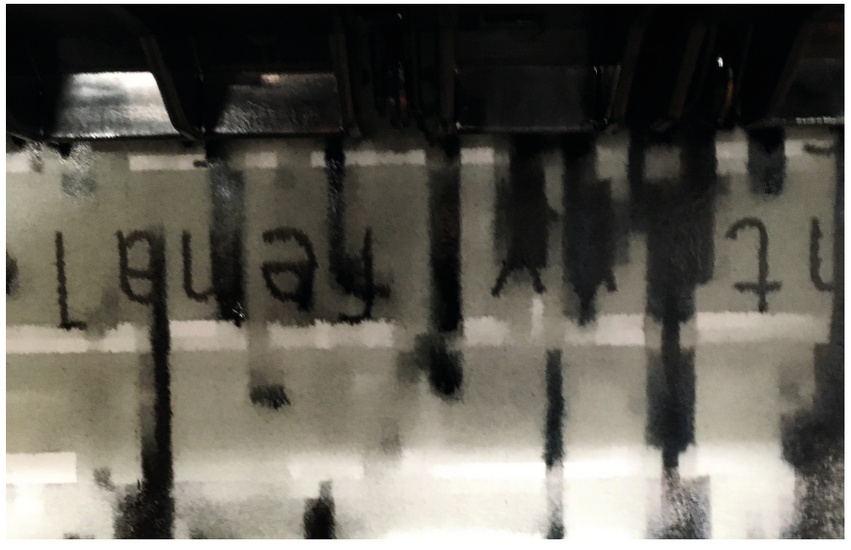
At the edge of failure, resistance hardened. This time, the 120gsm opaque paper stalled the machine, just beyond its reach. Too much. The printer hesitated. The technician thought. He taped a white B1 sheet behind, tricking the system into recognition. Camouflage. A hack. Memory tuned to A4, now forced to read something larger, heavier.

The print head stuttered. Ink pooled and dragged. Words fell apart mid-sentence. Grammar slipped. Resistance fractured into refusal: the page broke apart. In the breakdown: machine, material, and maker diffracted. A logic of fragments emerged. A poetics of malfunction. The surface insisted on its own rhythm. Not backdrop, but as a presence. And so, I followed.



Close up shots of B1 opaque sheet coming out of the printer





My task was not to override but to attune. To observe. To stay with the resistance. In that listening, knowledge shifted. No longer representation but rhythm, fold, gesture, a knotwork of thought embedded in matter. Meaning didn't settle. It diffracted, withdrew, and returned. *Evolving Knots* (2024) did not emerge as a sequel to *Spider-fly*, but as a continuation in another register. A site of tension, where movement and disorientation became methods. The ripples from those prints, the veils, negations, and the fractured colour and form, didn't stop with the print. They moved through me, folding into new gestures, new encounters with material, space, and thought. What began in the visceral interplay of ink and fabric, screen and skin, glitch and breath, opened onto another kind of crossing. One I felt in the body before it could name it.



Evolving Knots (2024)

To screw up the pages was less an act of destruction than of attunement. The folds carried force, a refusal of smoothness, a rejection of coherence. My hands pressed into the paper. A tremor passed through me. The paper became body: resistant and less readable. In that unreadability, another form began. A cartography felt rather than drawn.The folds marked a threshold, a shift I recognised later. Here the affective complexity of *Spider-fly* met Julie Rattray's threshold concepts in lived disorientation, confusion, friction, transformation. The knowledge these works carry resists containment; it lingers in the body as force, folded in.

This folding, this tension, is also where I find myself within the knotwork. Three threads return repeatedly. First, language: words woven to hold the slipperiness of structure, always stretching toward form. Then the spider and the fly: unseen forces working across sensory, conceptual, and material planes, animating rhythm, unsettling boundaries, tugging at the fragile edges of authorship. At times I ask: am I the spider, spinning toward coherence, weaving patterns that pull fragments together? Or the fly, caught in a structure I can sense but never fully see, drawn into threads not of my making? Perhaps both, alternating between capture and construction. Perhaps neither. More often I feel suspended on the hyphen between them, a hinge, not punctuation, a trembling line of separation and union. There, in its vibration, the work itself gathers, between form and the formless, alive with possibility.

A fellow PhD researcher, responded to *Spider-fly* by text. What she wrote stayed with me:

> *In relative darkness, the viewer's multisensory perception increases and the static noise in headphones acts as a hum that underscores the artist's knot as baseline. The ongoing process of grappling with loss, proceeds like a yakimatime ball to mark the movement from knot to knot, knowing that structures of grief are created not only in one-dimensional straight lines. Illness also takes on three and four-dimensional qualities within the body of the dying those accompanying the journey and the very spaces of transition. Through the lens of Deleuzian philosophy, the artist navigates her grief with a profound openness, refusing to reduce it to a mere artifact or endpoint. Instead, she embraces the notion of perpetual becoming, allowing her art to serve as a conduit for transformation and witnessing. The result is a deeply moving and intellectually stimulating experience that invites contemplation long after leaving the gallery. (Louise Rouse 11:37am on Monday, 29th April 2024)*

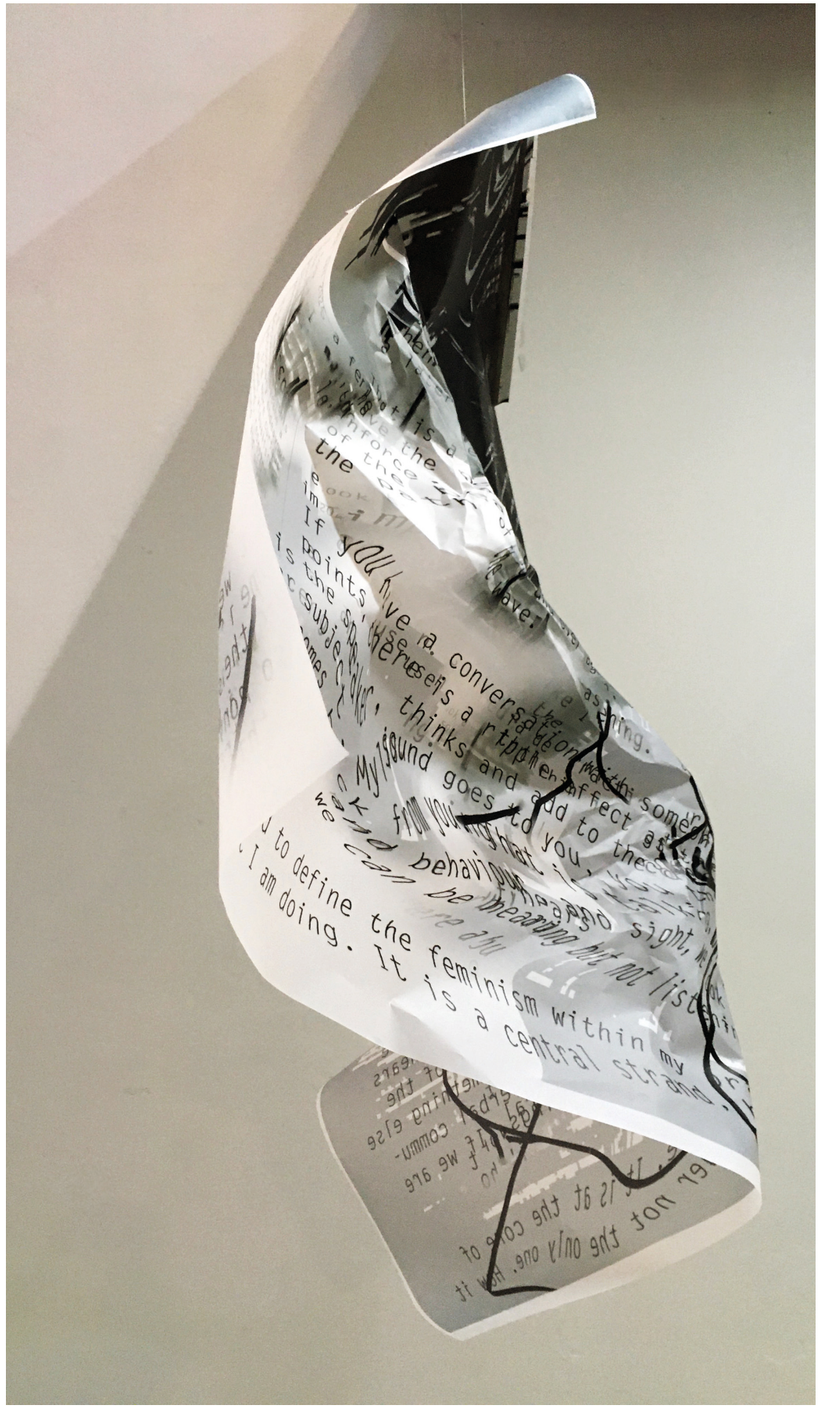
I wanted to provoke something visceral. Not to represent, but to disturb sense. *Spider-fly* is not image or form, more as an encounter, an entanglement of sensation, memory and matter. A space where air thickens, sound slips over surfaces; words lose their form, crumpling into cartographic structures that floated with nowhere to settle. Spider-fly unfolds as an assemblage of threads, fragments, and sonic residues. It keeps its own temporality: a knotwork of not-yet-known, something I dwell within.

Reflecting on the work, my concerns resurface through air, vibration, and entangled matter. Sound permeates the space and yet never quite does, present without insistence. From a posthuman feminist stance, I want no hierarchy, nothing to play second fiddle. Everything should participate in the milieu, moving with and through it. For sound to charge and be charged, not only by what I place in the space, but by what courses through it.

Sound shimmers, hovering between body and air, memory and skin. Like the folds I trace in this thesis, *Spider-fly* gestures toward what resists capture, what is sensed in passing. Knotwork is entered, not grasped; keeping company with its unsettling rhythms turns attention toward the unseen. Through it I hear sound on another register: sound slipping past representation, refuses the tidy notation of a score. It spreads as vibration, textured and unwieldy through the air. My method is listening, staying with the pressure of sound, letting thought move from sense to non-sense, to discord. Sound, the unseen material, was no longer background. It is an event, felt through the body and diffused through air, pulsing in space between language and sensation.



Spider-fly at LCC (2024)



An Evolving knot with-in Spider-fly

FOLD 7 _
UNSETTLING SOUND

The Royal Albert Hall, London
(51.5009° N, 0.1774° W)

Nils Frahm unsettles a piano. At the Royal Albert Hall, tradition's grand instrument is stretched, textured and reconfigured. Two toilet brushes extend its reach; bristles scrape against strings, dragging sounds from the precise to the absurd, and back again. Order falters, refinement wavers. The piano does not collapse; it folds, opening to the new.

This is what holds me: method born from pressure. Frahm does not abandon the piano; he presses against its limits, releasing another voice. In *Spider-fly*, resistance worked through paper and ink, through the drag of printers, through sound that refused saturation. His acoustic resistance, my material resistance: both exceed technique. Both insist that expression emerges only through friction.

The brushes, folds, glitches, none of these gestures reach for clarity. They open interruption, rhythm, resonance. They show that meaning is not resolved, but felt: as pressure, as atmosphere, as vibration. Sound becomes event, thickening air, unsettling body.

Frahm's performance is a fold, an inflection in my own process. As he rethinks the piano as an instrument of resistance and gesture, I return to page and making, knotting rather than composing, letting sound, matter, and language find one another in shifting encounters. Knowledge here does not settle; it trembles, forming and unforming with each movement. Knotwork becomes a different harmony, a weave of friction and resonance, alive in its refusal to close. Frahm's performance threads into this weave, thickening its pulse, extending what knotwork might yet become. His fold in sound lingers as vibration, unsettled, carrying language toward the edge of music.



Nils Frahm - A Winged Victory for the Sullen – BBC Proms (2015)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1mHyj3lubQ

Method as ‘in-visible’ matter – a buzz



Footage of the source of the sound of Spider-fly (2024) - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/the-sound-of-spiderfly/

At this point in my research, something loosened and text released its grip; sentences dissipated across an open plane, as if language itself gave way. Writing began to move differently, toward rhythm, gesture, sound. Sound became ‘a method, an operation, an act; the unfold becomes the result of the act’ (Deleuze, 1991, p. 243). Thought diffracted into air and took form as sound, as ‘in-visible’ matter, sensed not seen – an atmosphere that touched and rebounded, filling the space, vibrating through people, materials, and the environment of the work. Method met matter as noise: a buzz in the kitchen, intermittent, irregular, too wayward for machine cadence. It drew me to the window ledge, where a fly was caught by a single silk thread – a filament ‘practically invisible’ to it. As the fly fought the thread, its wing-beat scored a plea for release. That curious buzz became the ground for a five-track piece for *Spider-fly.*

A single silk thread can be ‘practically invisible’ (Witt & Schmid, 1965); given araneoid silk’s slight UV reflectance (Zschokke, 2002), a lone filament may disappear against the background making it hard for a fly to see.

The sound of spider-fly works as a diffractive method of thinking-through-making. It carries the not yet thought into rhythm and vibration into space. Folding the fold, waves turn words toward rhythm rather than fixed entities. A diffractive sonic idiom unfolds, notes drift, slip toward abstraction, resist stable meaning; they are always in motion. Emerging patterns, flecked with noise, weave across gridlines of space to compose another mode of articulation. What once clung to the page is carried elsewhere, into the fold of *The sound of spider-fly* where, through diffraction, sound becomes operative, workful and playful. Sound and space engage perception and sense.

The folding into feeling marks a rupture. Between sensation and thought, an ontological shift occurs. I feel it. The movement is affective and then cognitive. Here, as I write, understanding does not begin in language. It travels through sensation, the charged current of affect, and only then becomes thinkable. This moment draws me back to Julie Rattray, less as a theorist setting conceptual ground than as someone who voices the shift from within. Earlier her work mapped territories; here it names how feeling carries us across thresholds. As she writes:

Rattray’s account of learning as an affective, bodily process is shaped by both her academic work and her personal circumstances as a visually impaired scholar (Inspiring women of Durham - Julie Rattray, 2020). They resonate with my own attention to how difference informs ways of knowing and experiencing thresholds.

> Threshold transformations foster ontological shifts that are associated with both cognitive and affective changes in the individual. They cause the individual to view and experience the world differently in terms, not just of the intellectual understanding of an idea but also in the way they feel about, or experience, the world. (Rattray, 2016, p. 67)

Rattray’s reframing of transformation as an embodied process resonates with how I experienced *Spider-fly* as an intra-active process. While printing the B1 sheets, layering the sound and, earlier still, when composing *Ten knots within a knotwork* (2024), much of what I did unfolded intuitively. This is not to suggest an absence of thought, rather a different modality of thinking, what Katherine Hayles (2017) calls the ‘unthought’, a cognitive mode where conscious representation no longer holds primacy. Rattray’s ontological shift gestures toward this altered epistemic terrain, where knowing is configured through affect, embodiment, and preconscious awareness. As Hayles explains:

> sensory experiences are simulated when concepts relevant to those experiences are processed and understood by the modes of awareness, in particular the communicating unconscious. (Hayles, 2017, p. 48)

Within my practice, such ‘re-presentations’ arise through iterative encounters with materials and sound, moments where experience takes provisional form, experiments shaped as much by intuition as by intention, guided by a felt sense of coherence. Brian Massumi gives name to this preconceptual state:

> There is an inaugural moment of indecision between the already-going-on-around and the taking-in-to-new-effect, before the culmination of this occurrence has sorted out just what occasion it will have been... This ‘primary phase’ of the occasion of experience is the middling moment of bare activity with which process philosophy is pivotally concerned. (Massumi, 2011, p. 2)

He adds: 'all this is felt' (ibid., p. 3). This suspended, affective moment mirrors my process: I sit at my desk arranging fragments, images, glitches, sound, guided not by a predetermined structure, but by what moves. When I push the technology toward its edges, layering distortions, inviting instability, I feel a surge, something clicks. A new 'harmony emerges'. I sense I've crossed into a new terrain. That moment marks a threshold. Something changes in me, and in the work.

Deleuze's reading of Leibniz challenges any reduction of harmony to unity or perfection. He observes that 'many critics' interpret harmony as the subsumption of multiplicity into a single, determinate whole. Yet for Deleuze, the concept is far more nuanced: 'harmony exists when a multiplicity is linked to a determinable unity' (1993, p. 128). Rather than a static resolution, harmony becomes a generative relation that gives rise to a new state of affairs. It signals a transformation, a shift in the order of things. The installation of *Spider-fly* might be understood in this sense, as a transformative occurrence shaped through material, affective, and perceptual convergence. It was not simply a presentation, but a becoming: a composition of forces that unfolded in time.

In this light, harmony aligns more closely with counterpoint than with resolution, a polyphonic structure, resonant with the textures of Baroque music. This relational interplay mirrors my approach within *Spider-fly*, where harmony is not achieved through the erasure of difference, but through its layered unfolding. The work holds dissonance and rhythm together without resolving either, allowing form to emerge through tension, vibration, and delay. Harmony here is not a perfected whole, but an emergent process, an ongoing negotiation of relation.

Erin Manning's concept of the 'minor gesture' seems at play here: a subtle deviation that redirects the trajectory of the work before it stabilises. Bodily, affective, often unnoticed, these gestures keep the process in motion (2009), and producing *Spider-fly* from within them let philosophical concepts emerge as sensation, attuned, felt, unfolding through the material. What others experience in response to *Spider-fly* remains largely unknowable: affect circulates, yet it resists control. As Massumi reminds us, affect is 'transindividual', felt personally, yet always in motion between bodies, materials, and space (2011).

For me, the most intense moments arise from memory, recollections that return in and through the act of making. One loss in particular recurs, not as a fixed wound, but as a force that continues to resonate. It seeps through the work as atmosphere, charged, tensile, a 'dis-comfort' that draws me elsewhere. The feeling of loss changes form, becoming a threshold I cross again and again, altering my relation to time, process, and material. It leaves an 'in-visible' yet palpable trace: a quiet centre around which my practice trembles, a force folding through uncontained, unsettled, alive.

This force does not resolve but gathers, coiling across temporal layers, across breath, surface and sound, until within an atmospheric field, a different conceptual movement begins to take shape. What Deleuze describes as the fold continues to resonate: an operation that traverses 'the pleats of matter' and 'the folds of the soul', generating infinite variation. Yet what I now encounter in my work is not only a folding, but a knotting: a mode of holding tension without closure, of composing through resistance, of thinking and feeling in suspension.

Knotwork never moves toward clarity. It thickens. It strains, gathering affective weight and vibratory nuance. The fold is not erased, it is morphed, becoming a multifaceted entity. While Deleuze's fold opens routes between dimensions, knotwork gathers them into textured entanglements: layered, asymmetrical, alive with friction. It arises not from theory alone but through making, the push of data, the pull of thread, and the weight of materials suspended in air. Air is not neutral: it presses, resists, disperses. It courses through the knots, unsettling their balance, giving tension its pulse. Knotwork takes shape through intuition before understanding, through repetition and attentive waiting.

In *Spider-fly* intersecting planes strain against one another. Pulled by gravity, sound, and 'in-visible' pressure, the work exists in continual motion, yet it remains suspended. Meaning does not settle; it circulates. What emerges is an atmospheric composition, charged with the tensions of grief, memory, and transformation, rather than a singular reading. In this sense, *Spider-fly* is not just an artwork – it is a knotwork. A lived, situated field of relation, where matter and affect are drawn into a contingent form that resists resolution.

Knotwork, then, becomes a method, processual, not procedural. A way of navigating instability, transformation, and affective intensity without resolution. Rather than being bound by loss, it responds to the pressures of the world as they gather in and around the body, opening onto a form of thought that moves with the body and the material, in the space between knowing and unknowing, where sensation thickens, intuition stirs, and something new begins to form.

My earlier engagement with the Baroque considered its function as a conceptual method, an operative process rather than an essence or style. Here, it shifts. No longer only a concept to be thought through, the Baroque folds into my practice as knotwork: an embodied diffraction of breath, grief, memory, and material. What was once a philosophical gesture now moves through atmosphere and suspended form. It is in this tension, between the weight of sensation and the emergence of form, that the Baroque persists. Not as style, but as force. Deleuze writes:

> The Baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity. First, the Baroque differentiates its folds in two ways, by moving along two infinities… the pleats of matter, and the folds in the soul. (Deleuze, 1993, p. 3)

I take up Deleuze's two infinities where they touch. The Baroque's endless movement, across matter and the immaterial, drives my process. Where Deleuze describes folds that 'endlessly differentiate', my work gathers this motion into knotwork holding tension and diffracting through air and across surfaces. Here, folds do not simply open and divide; they knot, catching sensation, memory, and affect.

In *The Fold*, the soul is 'forever indissociable from the body', discovering a 'vertiginous animality' tangled in the pleats of matter even as it rises toward reason (Deleuze, 1993, p. 11). This double pull, descent into matter and elevation through it, shapes my studio practice as a continual becoming, a passage between states where form brushes against formlessness and body meets thought. 'Vertiginous' names the dizziness, the instability and excess of being drawn into the unknown; 'animality' anchors that pull in instinct, affect, and raw force. Not opposites, they fold together and propel transformation.

Where Deleuze evokes an infinite folding between soul and matter, Luce Irigaray (1993) reminds us that such folds are lived and sensuous. Her philosophy of sexual difference and embodied relationality affirms the between as a space charged with breath, touch, and affect. She writes of mucous, of air, of the ungraspable qualities of bodily encounter. This intimacy, the soft contact of skin, the circulation of breath—resonates with the threshold states in my practice, where affect gathers through proximity, vibration, and atmosphere. Knotwork, in this sense, becomes a breathing-space: between bodies, and within them.

The interplay between sensation and thought unfolds here: instinctive surges, gut feeling, or an involuntary animal cry are inseparable from making. They are thought's own movements, not its opposite, the body speaking. Just as Deleuze situates the fold between dimensions, my work often lingers between the known and the not-yet-articulated, between structure and chaos: 'It is because the Fold is always between two folds, and because the between-two-folds seems to move about everywhere: Is it between inorganic bodies and organisms, between organisms and animal souls, between animal souls and reasonable souls, between bodies and souls in general?' (Deleuze, 1993, p. 13).

The fold, then, is relational movement, never fixed; meaning emerges through transformation, not predetermined order. It gestures toward instability, toward the forces that propel change. Braidotti extends this dimension of becoming into posthuman ethics (2006, 2013). For her, subjectivity is never stable but always recomposed through zoe, the impersonal vitality of life. What I have called vertiginous animality can be read as eruptions of zoe, intensities that mark the subject-in-process, shaped by grief, memory, and the task of remaking oneself through matter and sensation.

My practice becomes a posthuman cartography: a mapping of shifting intensities, a negotiation of loss, and a crafting of resilience through making. Perhaps this is why my installations remain unstable, refusing final resolution. They exist in continual transformation, where physical resistance and conceptual possibility refold. The fold becomes less a structure than a topology of becoming, moving across bodies and souls, matter and thought, never singular, always emergent. Often, making arrives first; understanding follows. *Spider-fly* emerged as a knotwork of shifting forms, resisting even its own installation. Only later did reflection disclose its significance. This retrospective awareness recurs in my practice: meaning reveals itself through the act, not before it.

Beyond the Void arose in a purer state of making, without plan or vocabulary. It was a survival gesture, sanity drawn from repetition and touch. Only with time did I recognise how thread and labour carried a socio-political charge, and how craft-like gestures already held the affective resonance and situated knowledge I would later articulate through folds, thresholds, and assemblages.

Looking back, *Beyond the Void* seems less a beginning than an early fold in an ongoing process. The void was never empty: it was a terrain dense with thresholds, waiting to be crossed. The first knotwork rose from being with my sister, threads knotted in grief. Through that rupture, another mode of understanding began, one that bypassed language and lodged in flesh.

FOLD 8 _
THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE BIRDS IN THE NIGHT

Hook,
(53.7207° N, 0.4898° W)

Two stone-cold chaffinches, male and female, lay outside the greenhouse door when I went to check on my plants this morning. Whatever had happened took place suddenly, in the night. Their delicate forms, wings folded by their sides, seemed held in the aftermath of motion, as though flight had been abruptly withdrawn. I crouched beside them, in awe of their beauty, yet disturbed by the proximity of violence and stillness. Droplets of rain clung to their feathers, scattering the morning light like tiny jewels. A site of nurture had become a death trap. The silence was uncanny, heavy with absence.

In their final arc, the birds struck an invisible threshold: a pane of glass mistaken for openness. The air, which should have borne their flight, became the medium of their undoing. Irigaray reminds us that air is never neutral but charged with relation, touch, and breath. Here, that breath thickened into opacity. The greenhouse became a cruel fold, a deceptive passage. Their deaths revealed the fragility of thresholds: how what appears transparent may conceal an impenetrable barrier.

I photographed the scene without knowing why, perhaps to hold the moment, perhaps as an instinctive act of witness. At first it felt private, incidental. Yet the images returned months later, insisting on thought. For Deleuze the fold is ‘always between two folds’ (1993, p.13); here the between was palpable, held in air. The stillness of their bodies pressed into the larger rhythms of my work, unsettling the line between grief and beauty, accident and form.

If Deleuze’s fold is the continuous differentiation of soul and matter, and Braidotti’s zoe the vital force that persists through rupture, then this incident was both: a dizzying rupture that broke continuity, and at the same time, a force that carried forward, transforming loss into the impulse of thought. What seemed an end reconfigured itself as an intersection. The birds’ broken line became not only a marker of loss but the beginning of another fold in my practice, one that would open into *In-between* (2025).





Twitter no more I & II - (23rd April 2024 - 09:15hrs)

A broken arc: opening *In-between*



Twitter no more, III (2024)

What had seemed a curious incident of death opened otherwise. The abrupt withdrawal of flight, the broken trajectories, lingered as more than loss. The motion of the birds, interrupted, gestured toward a line not yet complete. The greenhouse became the scene of a double capture: the window's reflected sky deterritorialised the birds' line of flight; the strike reterritorialised the scene, composing a shared line of flight (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 10–11). No mark on the pane of glass, only two dead birds on the drive, a halted morning, and a reorientation of my practice. Not imitation but a reciprocal patterning across species and material, where reflection diverted the birds' trajectory and impact returned it to place. The thrown sky coupled with the birds' flight routines, and their arrest, in turn, recoded the event: birds, glass, light, then making, now writing, held in one encounter.

The greenhouse may be read via Braidotti, as a zoe/geo/techno assemblage (2022); with Deleuze and Guattari, as a 'capture of code', where patterns and signals let each term take hold of the other, deterritorialising and reterritorialising in one movement (1987, pp. 10–11)

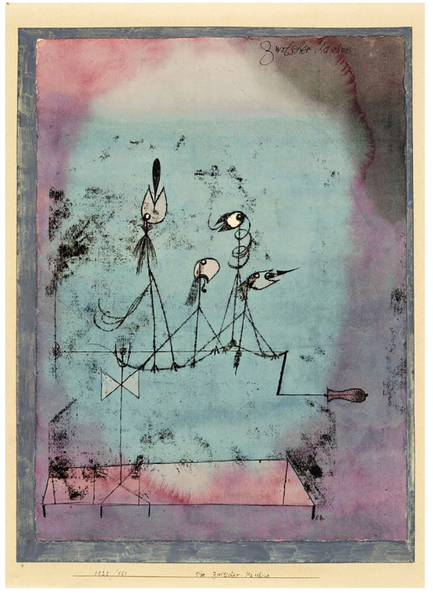
Thinking through Deleuze and Guattari's 'line of flight', I read the scene as a rupture that breaks through the known and opens onto what cannot yet be named. Deceived by an invisible threshold, the birds traced a brief arc through morning air, a gesture that both fused and refused closure. In a cut that learns to hinge, a knot that holds a gap open, a return that comes back altered. From the drifting frames of *Twitter no more* to the measured repetitions of *Beyond the Void*, sense gathers in the interval rather than along a single continuous line.

In this vein Deleuze and Guattari open chapter eight of *A Thousand Plateaus*, *'1874: Three Novellas, or "What Happened?"*, and turn to Henry James's 1898 novella *In the Cage*. 'We are made of lines… lines between the lines', they write, a claim that fits the telegraph office where an operator reads messages already past, fragments beyond her grasp, yet from them gleans rhythms and possibilities (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 195–198). I read the scene as a study in 'transduction', in Gilbert Simondon's sense via Manning: differences and signals pass through an associated milieu and, in passing, take form; Massumi names its felt register affective transduction (Manning, 2009, p. 71; Simondon, 1969; Massumi, 2002). Clipped codes, delays, and tiny pauses become felt meaning as attention is tuned by the apparatus. Sense arises from intervals rather than fullness.

'What happened?' felt apt, under the circumstances. Before Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of *In the Cage*, they write: 'We are made of lines. We are not only referring to lines of writing. Lines of writing conjugate with other lines, life lines, lines of luck or misfortune … lines between the lines' (1987, p. 194).

From here the refrain clarifies the movement: not three stages in sequence but mixed aspects, sometimes fixing a fragile point against chaos, sometimes setting a pace that holds as a provisional home, sometimes opening to the outside (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 311–312). Deleuze and Guattari hear the refrain in birdsong and see it in Klee's work, while I follow lines, birds and the machinic, toward a twittering machine.

Refrain: a set pace that makes a provisional home, gathering scattered forces into a liveable territory. In the wake of the birds' deaths, a tempo without birdsong becomes the cadence of the work. It holds just long enough to make and think, then opens to the outside (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 311–312).



Paul Klee, Twittering Machine (Die Zwitscher-Maschine), 1922. Watercolor and ink on paper on cardboard. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Reproduced for academic research.

In the foreword to Paul Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (2000), Sybil Moholy-Nagy opened another fold, pointing me toward Klee's *Twittering Machine* (1922). His work stages a related passage from code to sensation. Birds are tethered to a crank that seems to convert drawn line into imagined song, a device that binds life to mechanism even as it releases a tremor of sound. In both works constraint becomes generative. The telegraphist's cage, Henry James's figure for mediated perception, and Klee's machine hold bodies within systems of capture, yet the limits produce rhythm and open sense across the human and the technical. In *Pedagogical Sketchbook*, Klee names the principle at work: 'an active line on a walk, moving freely, without goal' (2000, p. 16). The tension between motion and arrest echoes the chaffinches' broken line and resonates within *Twittering bird I & II* , where gesture, loss, and repetition fold into one another.

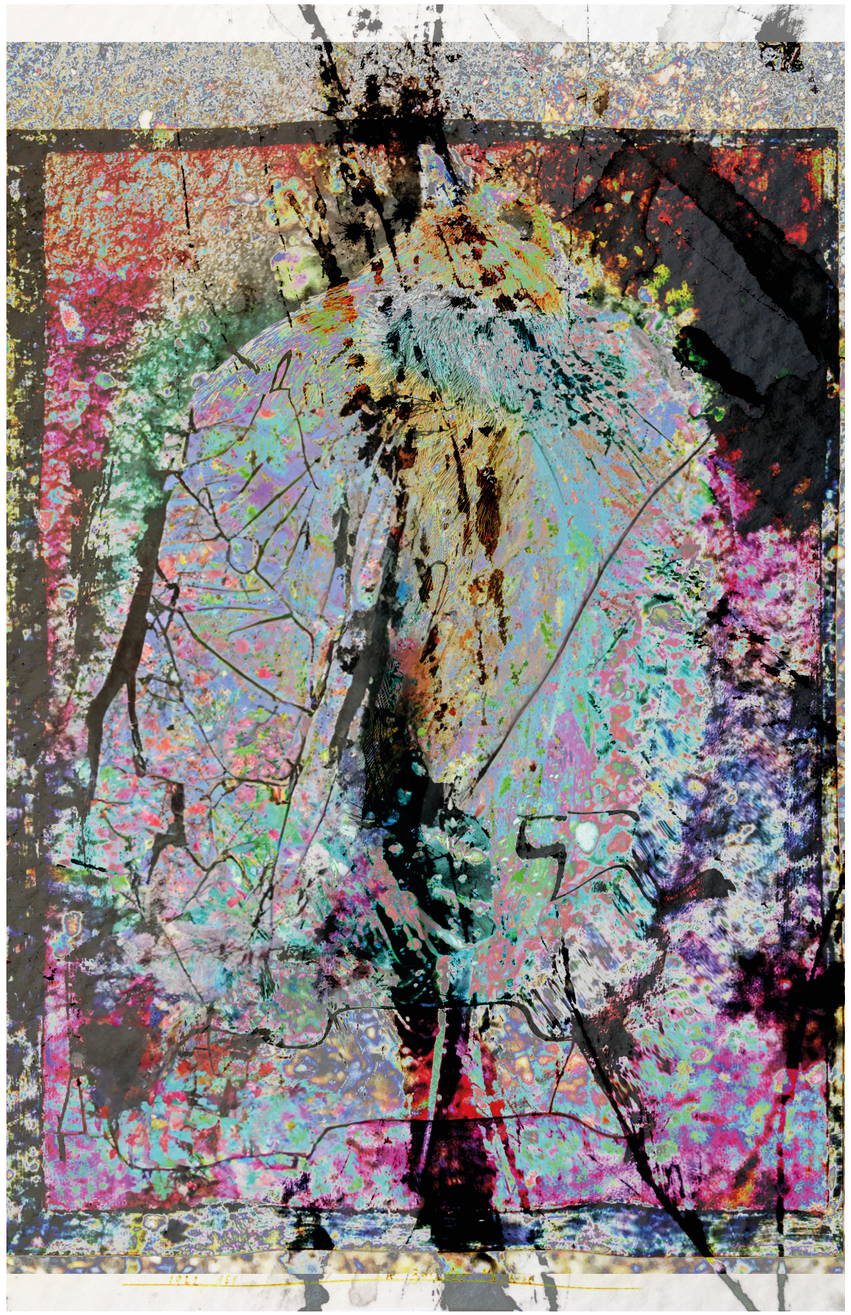


Twittering bird I (2024).

The line here is a force that composes duration and resonates with my knotwork, where marks and ruptures unfold as trajectories rather than fixed forms. That convergence of images and ideas prompted me to overlay *Twitter no more III* onto Klee's drawing in Photoshop. As I adjusted the colour levels, Klee's drawing and the male chaffinch dissolved. A sequence emerged: frames with cartographic overtones, an abstracted landscape drifting free of its referents. Fragmentation and re-formation moved in rhythm, echoing the birds' broken arc, a line that refused closure, now refracted through digital processing. Dissolution became continuation, a passage into another terrain where loss, perception, and reconfiguration knotted together.



Twittering bird II



Twittering bird III

Cognitive assemblage as knotwork

This altered milieu resonated with my concept of knotwork: form, thought, and matter in continuous negotiation, converging through the interplay of technological, material, and conceptual forces. In this process, a zoe/geo/techno assemblage took shape – sensual, conceptual, and machinic – as lines folding into one another. Katherine Hayles' notion of the 'cognitive assemblage' (2017) became a framework for understanding the recursive, distributed, nonhuman dynamics at play. The chaffinch photographs, first a record of loss, became a fold in perception.

Through iterative manipulation, *Twittering bird III* folded into *Twittering bird IV* (2025) as an intensification. Overlaying and distorting, gestures mirrored Hayles' choreography between human intuition and machinic suggestion, where authorial control and algorithmic agency blur. In this recursive relay, visual logics emerged that enacted her notion of the cognitive assemblage, which 'emphasizes the flow of information through a system and the choices and decisions that create, modify, and interpret the flow' (Hayles, 2017, p. 116). Lines, visual, conceptual, and material, became active agents, knots of meaning sustained by unseen threads merging digital processes, material presence, algorithmic logics, and affective intensities.

Out of this process, another image unfolded: stretching *Twittering bird IV* with Photoshop's 'content aware scale', gave rise to *Twittering bird VIII*. The algorithmic fold refigured the assemblage, opening new layers of meaning. Hayles' notes that cognitive assemblages 'create connections between human and technical actors, initiate, modify, and transform information flows, thereby bringing contexts into existence' (ibid., p. 117). I witnessed this claim enacted in real time, as interpretation circulated and mutated with each shift of context (ibid., p. 118) and colour. During the printing of *Twittering bird VIII*, language folded back on itself. Structures of communication reshaped into a labyrinth of not knowing, where machinic processes and institutional protocols brought the unthought to the surface. The printers faltered, technicians hesitated, and my assumption of seamless translation between digital and material unravelled. Cognitive assemblages do not think in a smooth, unified way; their cognition happens through fragmented exchanges and frequent misalignments between human and machinic actors, Hayles tells us.

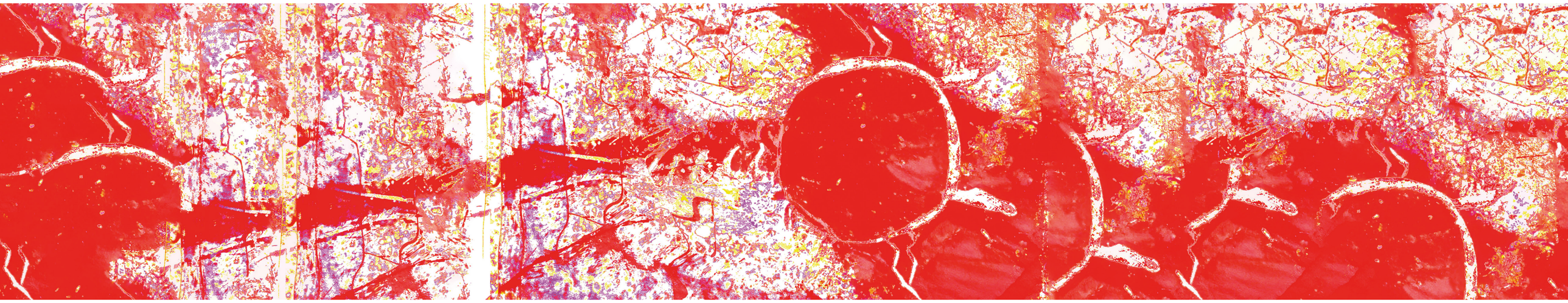


Twittering bird IV (2024). Generated in Photoshop

Conversations with technicians became part of the work's cartography. Words, images, and intentions loosened from linear articulation into a negotiated form no longer bound to Photoshop's logic. The question of scale became a hinge. I was advised to cut the print into three sections. The problem was not cutting per se, I work with cuts as generative operations, but the locus and agency of this cut. It would have been a bureaucratic partition across the flow of the folds, a segmentation that answered to equipment limits rather than to the work's internal rhythm. I sought another facility and printed as a continuous sheet, so that any cuts remained agential: introduced by the practice itself, at points where they compose relation rather than sever it. What emerged was a cartographic language to be felt as much as read, shaped in the friction between human intention, machinic limitation, and the resistant materiality of print—where the right cut can open continuity, and the imposed cut merely slices it.

Placed besides Hayles' 'unthought' and 'cognitive assemblage', Deleuze's fold opens a way of working beyond linear method, toward creation through sensation, intuition, resistance, and affect. For Hayles, cognition is enacted through dynamic systems involving human and nonhuman agents, where meaning arises through interaction and transformation (2017, p. 118). This mirrors the recursive unfolding of my process: each fold, each iteration, aligning the material and conceptual anew. Yet tension remains. Deleuze's fold entwines interior and exterior; Hayles' assemblage emphasises situated, fleshly contiguity, 'touching, incorporating, repelling, mutating' (ibid., p. 118). Neither fully confronts the sensual lived body. Deleuze's fold remains largely metaphysical, while Hayles' assemblage, though bodily in tone, is often framed through systems and flows that remain machinic rather than affective or embodied. My practice situates itself between the machinic and the embodied, seeking to inhabit the gap between theoretical gesture and lived experience. Both Deleuze's fold and Hayles' cognitive assemblage run through my concept of knotwork, even as I recognise their limitations. Knotwork is not only a metaphor; it is a lived practice, materially responsive, recursively generative, always in motion. Meaning arises through friction, proximity, and interruption: lines knotting and unknotting across surfaces, bodies, and thoughts, forming within the breath and pressure of the air.

Hayles defines the 'unthought' as embodied processes of nonconscious cognition, 'emerging from an organism's embeddedness within an environment', where patterns are discerned and continually reshaped by shifting inputs (2017, p. 24). Related to this is her notion of cognitive assemblages, in which 'biological and technical cognitions operate without conscious awareness' (ibid., p. 12) and interactions are 'structured by the sensors, perceptors, actuators, and cognitive processes of the interactors' (ibid., p. 11). By contrast, Foucault sees the unthought not as something hidden inside us but as a dimension of human existence that is always open and impossible to pin down (1970, pp. 323–324). Deleuze, reading Michel Foucault, reformulates this as a fold: 'thought affects itself by revealing the outside to be its own unthought element' (1988b, p. 118).



Twittering bird VIII (2025) - printed 100cm x 374cm

Forming knotwork: cartographies in motion

The lines of thought and practice do not settle. They return, reforming with each contact, attuned to the air – the relational medium that sustains knotwork. I remain within (k)not-knowing, a generative condition that threads through knotwork in an ongoing engagement with folding, nomadic thought, and research-creation. This is less a fixed method than a way of thinking that reveals its contingency, folding and unfolding through the layered processes of making, sensing, and writing. Here, research-creation is lived rather than applied: partial and affective, always in emergence. The work's form is constitutive, not illustrative. It is a knotwork suspended, buoyed by air.

This methodological stance informs how I engage with Deleuze and Braidotti's work: not as self-contained systems, but as frameworks that remain open, flexible, and subject to change. Their thought entangles with Woolf and Carroll, opening the speculative potential of knotting as nonlinear, posthuman thinking.

Braidotti's call for a porous sensibility is less a principle to resolve than a posture to inhabit, especially when the work undoes the boundaries of the self. Within this knotwork, Mary Carmichael and Alice move alongside me. They are fictional and historical, yet also speculative companions whose gestures through language and space enact a feminist, affective poetics of transformation.

Air surrounds Carmichael's tentative utterances, holding her silences and letting the unformed hover. With Alice, air becomes the medium through which she drifts and learns to see differently, an orientation of perception more than atmosphere. To give Carmichael and Alice air is to keep their speculative gestures open, to resist closure, to let thought breathe. It is at once poetic, methodological, and ethical: a way of delaying compression, lingering at the threshold, letting the conditions of emergence stay alive. Air sustains the knotwork, allowing thought and matter to circulate without resolution. It gives Carmichael space to speak, Alice to stumble, and this research to enfold as an event of thinking with and through the world.

I do not seek resolution over the philosophies I engage. Instead, I trace their movements as they brush against the intensities of practice. The insecurity of not-knowing is vital, sometimes disorienting, liberating, yet always generative in the act of grappling. Folds, like knots, are sustained, returned to, and transformed. If research-creation is a method, it opens toward uncertainty, where creativity takes shape in friction and hesitation, carried by air. What matters is not just what appears on the page or surface of the work, but what hovers and breathes in the folds, where beginning begins again – carried in the air of the in-between, never from a single point of origin.

Knotwork does not end with description. It returns, looping through practice, felt in the very texture of writing as making. If in the last section knotwork was traced, here it is enacted, language knotting and loosening, folding concepts, figures, and materials into motion.

Deleuze and Guattari insist that 'the beginning always begins in-between, intermezzo', and that 'consolidation is not content to come after; it is creative' (1987, p. 329). This sense of the intermezzo resonates with my knotwork: folds and knots both refuse closure, instead thickening the middle. Each knot is a temporary consolidation, but like the fold, it opens again into movement. In this way, the intermezzo becomes less a pause than a breath – creative suspension where the work gathers, twists, and begins again.

Enacting knotwork

Knotwork's rhythm folds back on itself, knotting figures, concepts, and gestures into shifting relation. Writing here is performance, an event: a thinking-with that resists resolution, sustained in atmosphere, carried by affect. In the act of setting words down, thoughts knot and loosen, aligning materials and ideas in uncertain ways. What comes forward is not a conclusion but a rhythm, a field in motion, a vibration where language and matter co-compose, held by currents sometimes invisible yet sensed.

Folding materials and concepts together, I return to Braidotti and Deleuze, alongside Woolf and Carroll, to explore being and becoming through knotwork. In *Writing as a Nomadic Subject* (2014b), Braidotti writes:

> Becoming has to do with emptying out the self, opening it out to possible encounters with the 'outside'... [It] combines the accuracy of the cartographer with the hyper-sensitivity of the sensualist in apprehending the precise quality of an assemblage of elements. (Braidotti, 2014b, p. 171)

This porous sensibility echoes the speculative and intuitive dimensions of my own process. The recursive weave of making and thinking becomes a form of embodied navigation, tracing cartographies of self and world across material and socio-political terrain. Distinction between self and environment twists and stretches, knotting perception with materiality, idea with form.

Knotting happens not only in space but in the air that sustains it, through gesture, breath, resistance, and momentum. The knots I form are buoyant tensions, some of them invisible yet sensed. My material practice extends beyond the tactile: it is also linguistic, where language, like thread, loops back on itself, shaping and being shaped. Knots are felt, spoken, written, heard, and read. At this intersection of my practice and Braidotti's philosophical thought, her sense of language, as both external to and constitutive of the subject (2014b, pp. 164–165), becomes resonant. Writing and making fold into one another, recursive and performative. Meaning is not extracted but woven, emergent in the tensions of each fold.

As Braidotti observes, 'writing enacts the micro-political, self-reflexive analyses of the power at work in its own structures and practices' (ibid., p. 165). This aligns with Deleuze, though Braidotti's folding is not confined to philosophy; it extends into pedagogy, politics, and ethics as 'the folding in and out of perception' (ibid., p. 172). This reflects her nomadic commitment: refusing fixity in favour of interconnection and becoming. Deleuze's metaphysical fold expands this further, as she writes: 'The deterritorializing forces of processes of becoming gather force from some energetic core, or vibrating hub, of activity, which is the creative pole of power as potential' (2014, p. 171). I extend this: knotwork enacts a cartography of force fields, where lines vibrate in air, drawn by pressure, humidity, breath. The vibratory core reverberates through my process and practice. Ruptures traced through loss, movement, and resistance do not collapse but form knots of transformation.

For Deleuze, May '68 was not only political rupture, but also philosophical emergence: 'the possible does not pre-exist; it is created by the event' (2007b, p. 234). Speculative practice inhabits this temporality, knotting rupture with emergence, gesture with thought, refusing any map that will not shift under pressure or learn to breathe differently. By knotting Braidotti's insights with Deleuze's folds, I position this research within a lineage that privileges complexity, becoming, and process. The Fold folds, knots, and becomes, not only metaphor: it is method – a space where materiality, thought, and perception touch. In the twist, tension, and return, something opens, a transformation that becomes a continuation. These are the conditions of my research: to make knotwork, to make and think again. What emerges is a cartography of breath and embodied air. To encounter in this way is to enter another register of attunement.

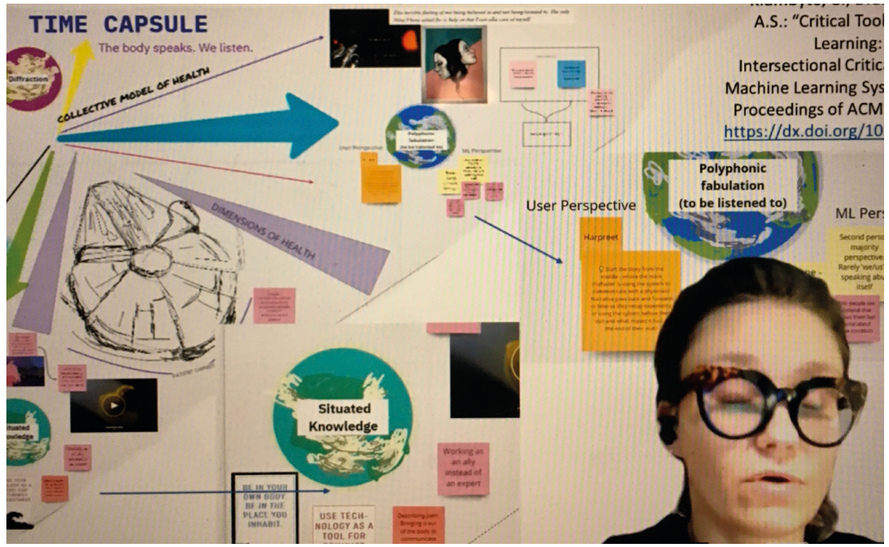
Reading felt like immersion, entering the text as an environment and moving within its folds. Ruptured lines no longer appeared as broken fragments; they beckoned as openings into another temporality, where logic faltered and sensation spoke first. This was no undoing of thought, it was its turning, toward a terrain where hesitation had weight, resonance lingered, and affect thickened the air. The folds expressed. The folds unsettled. From their edges, threads began to gather, weaving into knots, knotwork slowly taking form in the air.

Expanding the fold

If knotwork opens space for movement and breath, Braidotti's nomadic cartographies trace that motion, showing becoming as shifting of atmospheres in relation. Subjectivity, in Braidotti's account, is never fixed; it unfolds through networks of power, embodiment, and encounter (Dolphijn and Braidotti, 2022, p. 9). These cartographies do not enclose; they orientate. They direct attention to the politics of location, the responsibilities of proximity and the textures of relation. What matters is not where we stand, but how we move, with whom, and in what conditions. Such conditions can, as Braidotti writes in *Posthuman Feminism*, 'nurture and implement the ongoing process of unfolding alternative and transformative paths of becoming' (2022a, p. 8).

Seen through a posthuman feminist lens, cartographies become more than critique: they are a call to action. Braidotti's philosophy refuses to remain abstract, a criticism sometimes directed at Deleuze. Instead, she moves into the public sphere, urgent and disruptive, cutting across the hegemonic lines that sustain patriarchal and colonial systems. For me, as artist-researcher, this raises a question: how to respond? How to act without reducing activism to spectacle?

In the summer of 2022, online, I attended Utrecht University's programme, *The Posthuman Life of Methods*, shaped by Braidotti and others working within posthuman ethics and creativity. In retrospect what mattered was less the delivery of content than the atmosphere itself – an ecology of relation in which knowledge was shared and each participant felt included. Faces flickered. Voices layered. Gestures reached across the charged in-between. The space itself seemed to breathe, even in its online form. It unfolded as a living field of relation, where ideas moved through tone and rhythm as much as through words. We thought together about the ecological violence of deep-sea trawling, the return of Indigenous remains, and the speculative practice of data-prospecting.



Online lecture at The Posthuman Life of Methods (Utrecht University, 2022). Digital print: one-frame screen grab from a live online session, reproduced here for the purposes of criticism and review.

Each session in turn opened into another field of reflection, a process of continuation rather than conclusion, enacting Braidotti's ethics of 'collaborative interconnectedness, mutual interdependence, care and infinite compassion' (2022, p. 241).

This encounter shifted my sense of methodology. It ceased to be a fixed protocol or a set of tools and became a practice of relation: generative, affective, co-becoming. Knowledge did not accumulate by extraction; it arose in the rhythm of response. What mattered was less what was said than how it resonated, but how it touched and resurfaced in another form. This confirmed the orientation of my own practice, where making and writing fold into one another, altering each and creating a field sustained through process rather than representation. In that atmosphere, the singular 'I' dissolved and recomposed as a plural, breathing, living, proactive 'we' (Braidotti, 2022, p. 103). Collectivity unfolded through shared gestures, listening, making, speaking, folding ideas together tentatively and provisionally. These were minor gestures, atmospheric movements, breaths rather than declarations, reimagining activism as tuning, as attention, as being-with.

This ethical framework rippled outward into process: the workspace became less a site of production than of attunement, an environment where visible and 'in-visible' elements shifted continually. Lines are drawn, undone, and remade. Surfaces fold back on themselves. Materials resist and respond. Air, at times heavy with stillness, at times restless with movement, shaped the work's tempo. Mapping, in this sense, is not fix coordinates; it follows the breath of the practice, tracing how it moves, where it opens, what it touches. Working with other artists shifted the rhythm again, carrying the practice into nomadic configurations. Braidotti's cartography is not a metaphor here: it is material, floating, embodied. Each knot, each gesture, bends the air, drawing curves in the atmosphere that press against resistance and open toward movement.



The Imposters (2022) -video (8 mins 25 secs) – a collaboration with Maya Amrami - https://www.lyndabeckett.org/#/the-imposters/

Every fold, knot, and turn of material enacts difference. Meaning drifts rather than settling, opening onto ambiguity, onto the unfolding of multiplicity and emergence. Gesture resists closure, for 'the point of nomadic subjectivity is to identify a line of flight… a creative alternative space to becoming' (Braidotti, 2011, p. 247). That space is fragile, uncertain, felt in the air between visibility and mystery, structure and rupture, the intake and release of breath, the tremor between vibration and rest. These tensions refuse fixed binaries, becoming thresholds that dissolve into porosity, where something else glimmers at the edges, where a knot gathers from dispersing threads. My methodologies meet here, drawn together like filaments in a shifting weave. Braidotti, Manning, Woolf, and I touch briefly in this fold, orienting toward the horizon, each gesture part of a greater rhythm, a knotwork of continual transformation. To encounter in this way is to enter a different register of attunement.

I reached out to fellow PhD students, entering fields of knowledge and technology I might not have ventured into alone. This gesture altered my practice; in time, my collaborator told me it had also shifted her research.

Reading was not only in the mind; it was felt in the body. Ruptured lines no longer appeared as broken fragments; they beckoned as openings into another temporality, where logic faltered and sensation spoke first. This was not the undoing of thought, but its turning, toward a terrain where hesitation had weight, resonance lingered, and affect thickened the air. The folds expressed. The folds unsettled. And from their edges, threads began to gather, knots forming, knotwork beginning.

The air between: folding subjectivity and the ethics of opacity

Subjectivity drifts in the between – folding, thickening, gathering opacity. Out of this drift of folds, subjectivity begins to take shape: less an essence than a folding, of sensation, memory, relation, duration. A porous self, always in motion, inside folding out, outside folding in. Deleuze writes: 'the world must be placed in the subject in order that the subject can be for the world' (1993, p. 26). I sense this in making: the torsion between sensing and being sensed, between holding and being held.

Folding unsettles. It sets subjectivity adrift. In the drift, opacity gathers. Absence turns dense. Silence thickens into meaning—into folds, into the air between gestures, into the drift between sense and non-sense.

Subjectivity stretches into thresholds, presence always deferred.

A space both philosophical and material.

What gathers in the folds and lingers in the air takes shape in practice, in the shifting surfaces of *Emerging Thoughts* (2023). The work maps this uncertainty through a surface of lines in shifting opacity. Layers overlap, drift, and refuse finality. Forms surface, withdraw, dissolve. Meaning arises only in encounter: between image, material, and thought as it unfolds. There is no centre, no fixed point of focus, only the rhythm of tension, folding into folding, a movement without closure. Difference gathers in the gaps, held in suspension. Here opacity lingers, dense and quietly insistent. Folding traces the dynamic interplay of inside and outside; opacity attends to what remains unrevealed. I hear this in Édouard Glissant's insistence on the right to opacity, a refusal of the flattening logic of Western epistemology (1997, p. 111). My stance arises in making, in gestures beyond clarity, in relations that stay partial and open-ended.



Emerging thoughts I (2023)

Opacity gathers as a presence, thick with friction and the irreducible textures of experience. Glissant critiques transparency as a legacy of control: the belief that to know is to render visible, to smooth the world into clarity. Opacity unsettles that claim. It gestures toward the unknowable, the fertile thickness of relation. 'There is opacity now at the bottom of the mirror', Glissant writes, 'a whole alluvium deposited by populations, silt that is fertile but, in actual fact, indistinct and unexplored' (ibid., p. 111). Opacity, in this sense, becomes a metaphor for relation itself: gestures and identities that resist being folded into a universal frame. I see my practice in this terrain, where meaning emerges through diffraction, resistance, and the tension between what appears and what holds back. The visible is never the whole. Each strand contains fibres, strains, gaps. And it is in the air between them that something else takes form. 'Opacities can coexist and converge, weaving fabrics', Glissant writes (ibid., p. 190).

Fabric is not seamless. Its texture is rich with variation, entanglement. In my work, opacity becomes the condition of relation, allowing difference to persist without collapsing into sameness.

To relate, for Glissant, is to remain open to what exceeds understanding. My process moves in this direction: material, gesture, and affect coming together to generate knowledge that is embodied, partial, sensed rather than resolved. It is in the air between knots, in gaps, tensions, densities, invisible vibrations, that opacity does its most subtle

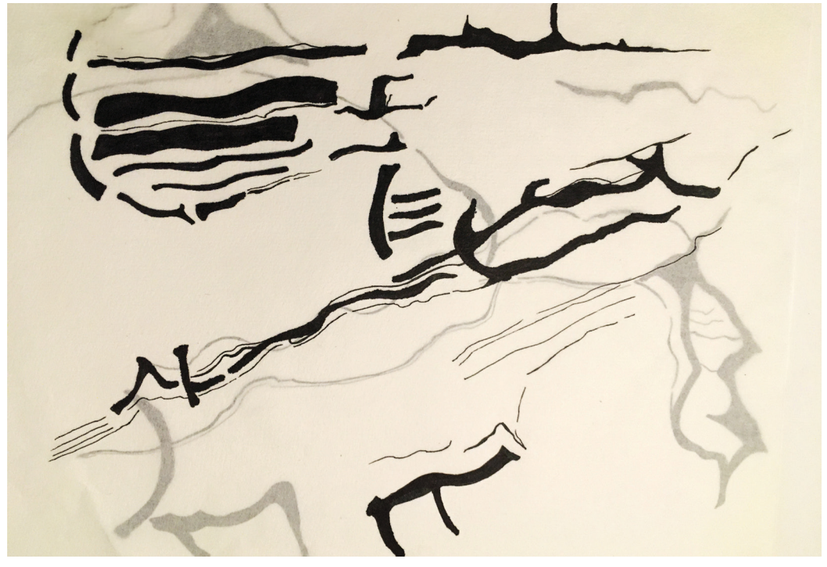
Paul Frissen, in critiques the assumption that transparency guarantees truth or equality in *The War of Appearances* (Brouwer et al., 2016). He argues that in cultures of surveillance, visibility becomes equated with virtue, as if exposure alone could ensure justice. Yet this drive toward total openness, exemplified in the actions of Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, risks undermining democracy by erasing the necessary space for secrecy and ambiguity.

For Frissen, transparency privileges surface over depth, offering only partial truths. The dream of absolute clarity, he warns, produces a ghostly intangibility rather than genuine understanding (2016, pp. 13–29).

work. Opacity is political. As part of the neurodiverse community, I feel the weight of demands for clarity, coherence and resolution. Opacity makes room for other ways of sensing, knowing, and being. It offers a language for difference that does not demand assimilation. It grants a way to inhabit the folds of subjectivity without smoothing them away.

In the thickness of knots, in the resistance of materials, I hold space for what cannot be made fully visible. Like Glissant's fabric, threads converge yet refuse a seamless surface. Knotwork becomes process, method, methodology, and concept. It gathers folding opacity into a diffractive practice: nonlinear and recursive. A mode of inquiry that moves with the tensions of making, holding space for complexity without demanding resolution. In the air between knots, in the resistances and densities just beyond sight, something emergent begins to take shape. I attend to those subtle forces, the minute impressions that suggest turbulence beneath awareness, flickering movements that escape apprehension.

If I am subject, I am shaped as much by what exceeds my knowing as by what I can hold. Folding perception through unconscious layers, affective resonances, embodied gestures, I begin to think subjectivity through singularities: threads that disperse and intertwine, emergent and relational within knotwork. In these folds, the boundaries of the self, loosen. Subjectivity shifts into a recursive layering, open to the world, always in the process of becoming otherwise. As I move from fold to opacity to knotwork, I find another rhythm, one that feels close to what Braidotti calls a 'materialist cartography': a mode of situated knowledge that attends to affective intensities and flows (2022, p. 103). From this cartographic sensibility, I moved into the material and technical conditions of the work.



Emerging thoughts II (2023)

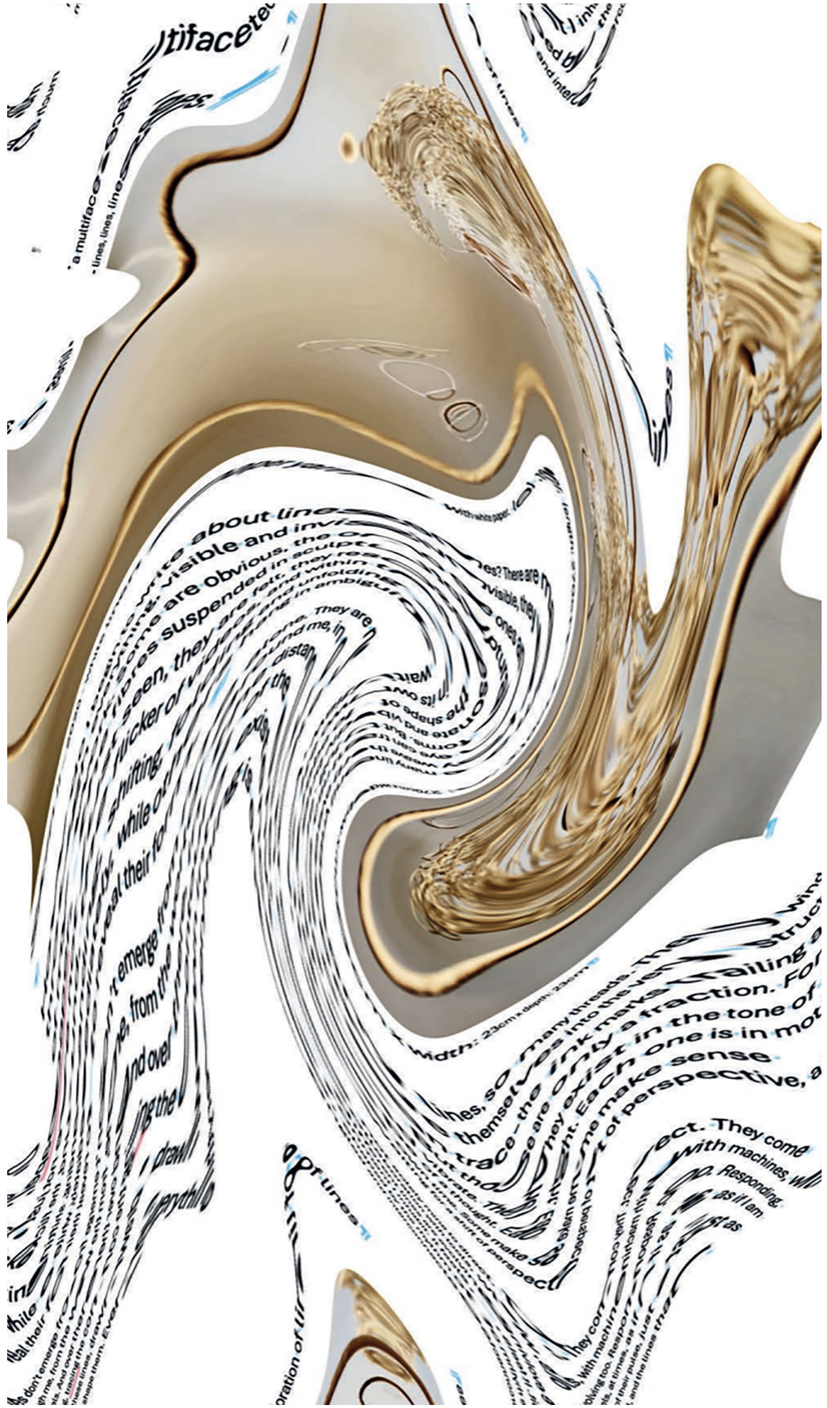
Moving away from a stabilised text, the rhythm of the work echoed Manning's minor gestures, where thought moves at the edge of articulation and practice unfolds as a field of relation in flux. In the visual syntax of the pages, I entered a threshold space: neither wholly language nor wholly image, but a fold between. The algorithm within technology carried me further, introducing another method. The waveform became concept. Air, the interval between forms, became vital, charged as vibration. In that space, opacity gathered, withholding full disclosure yet intensifying presence.

What had once been theoretical reflection returned as tactile atmosphere, a breath moving through and with the work as *Lines Book 3 & 4* materialised.

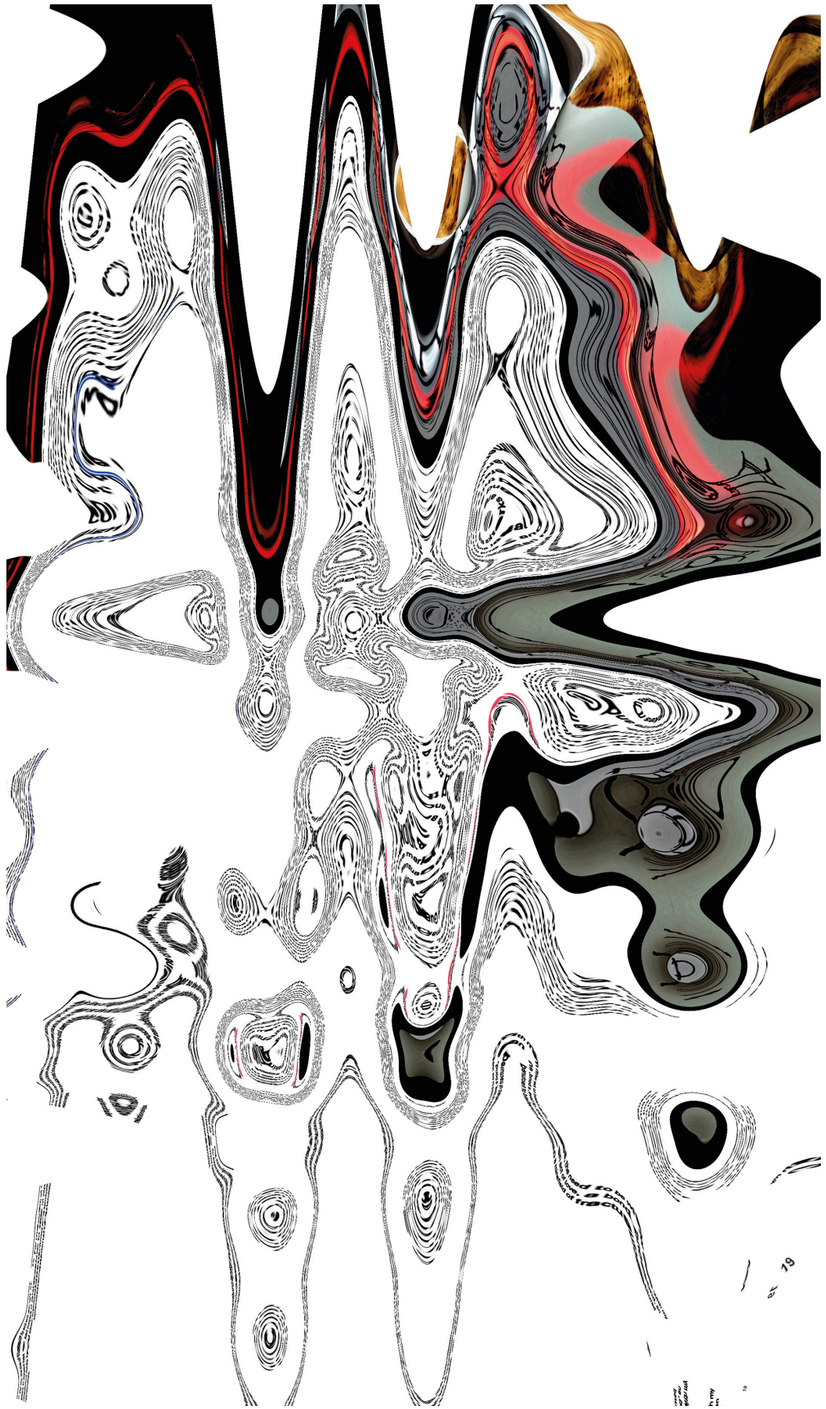
FOLD 9 _
LINES BOOK 3 & 4

Hook,
(53.7207° N, 0.4898° W)

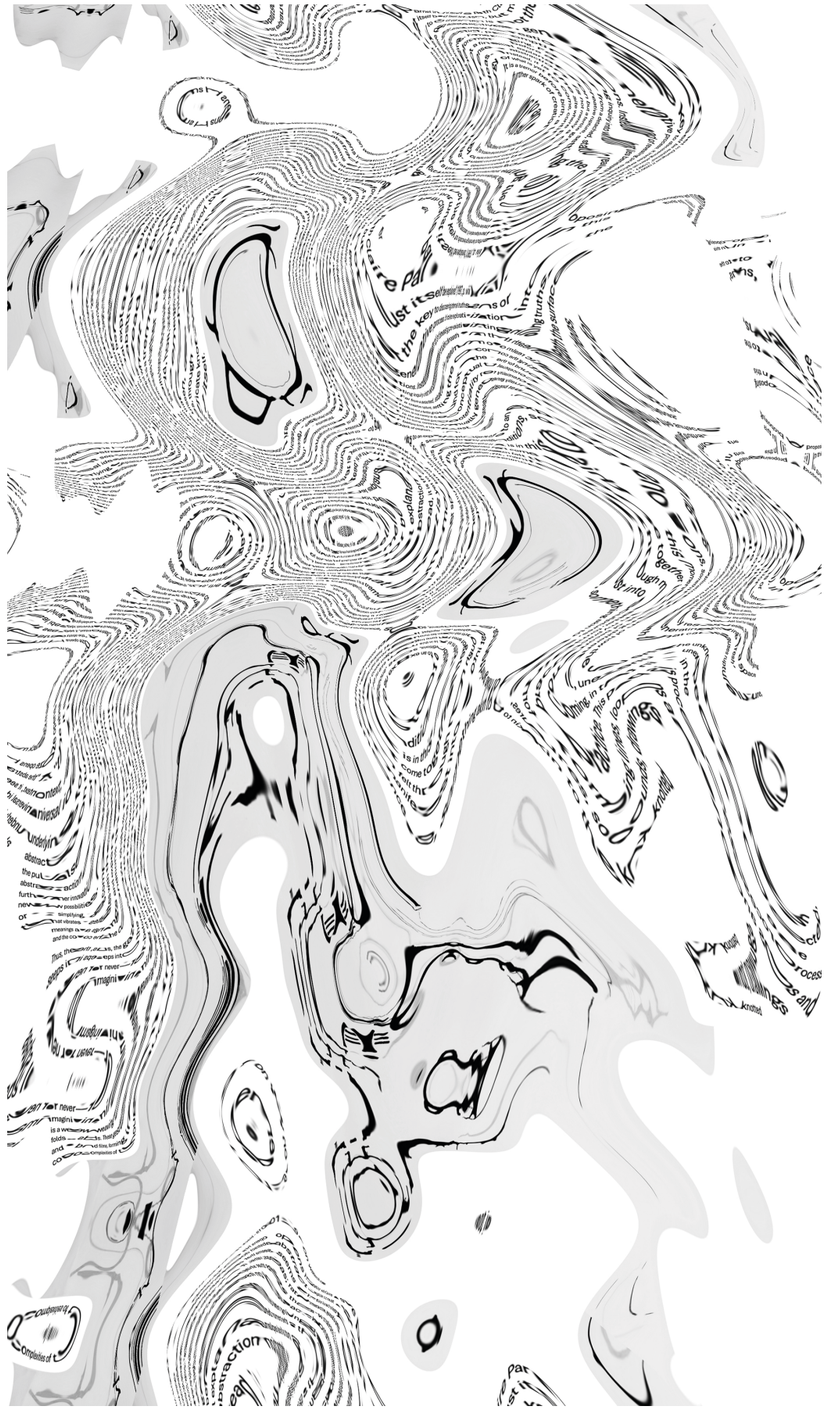
Fold 9 holds a selection of pages from Lines Book 3 and Lines Book 4 (2024). These works evolved from a written document about lines, which became the catalyst for my research practice and the writing of this thesis. Through iterative folding of lines, the text-image evolved and the works became cartographic and digital, opening a space beyond the confines of academic writing.



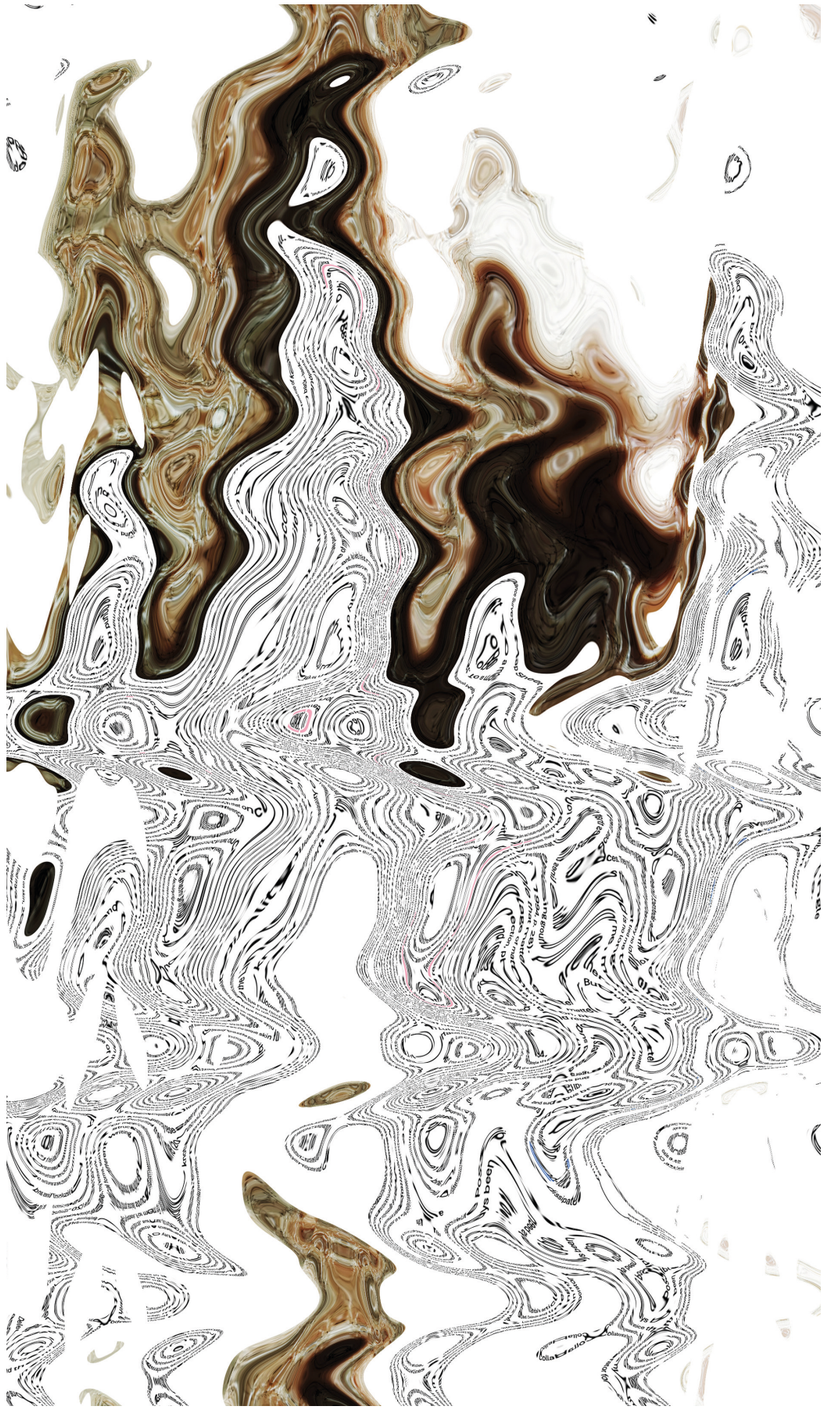
Book 3 - page 1



Book 3 - page 19



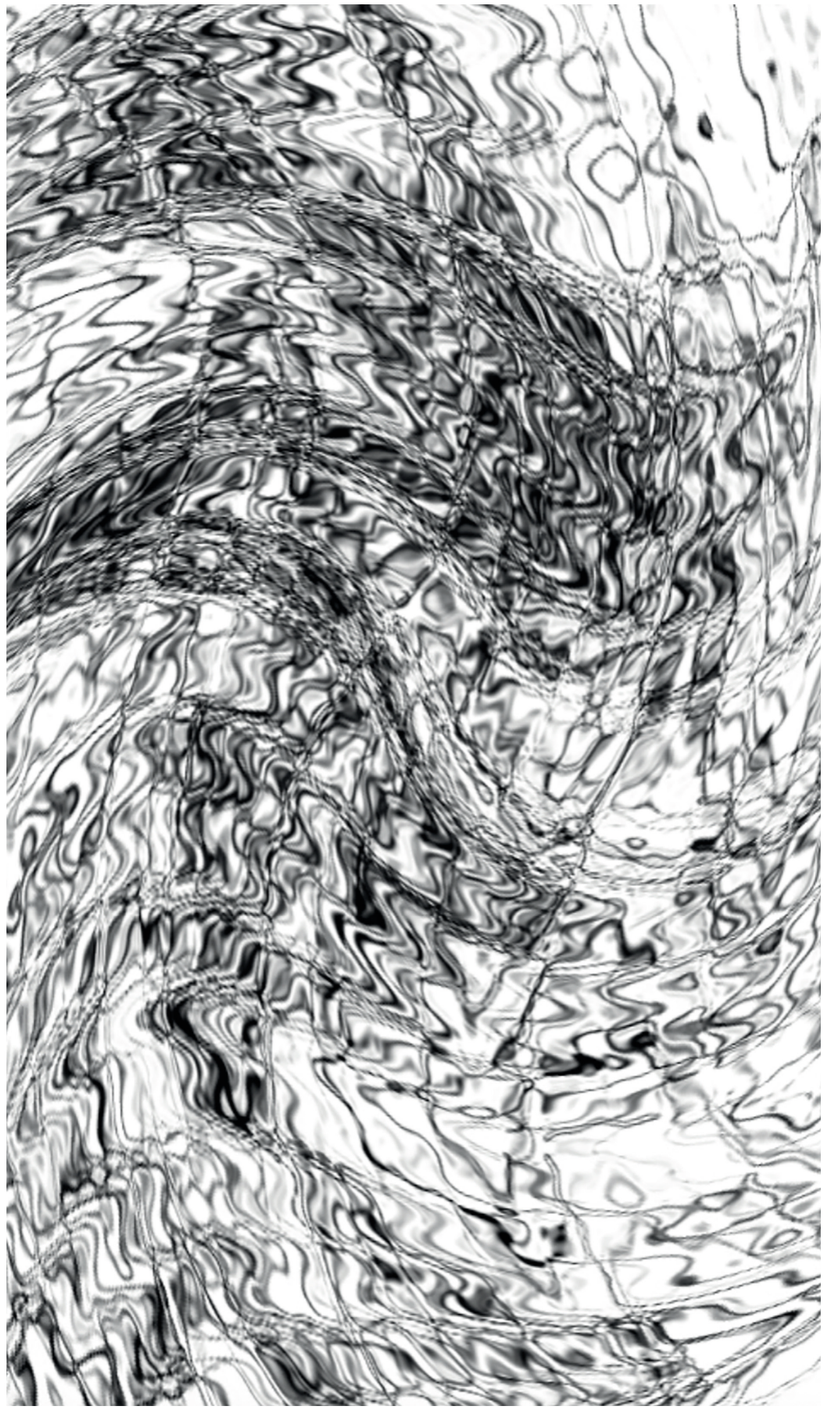
Book 3 - page 39



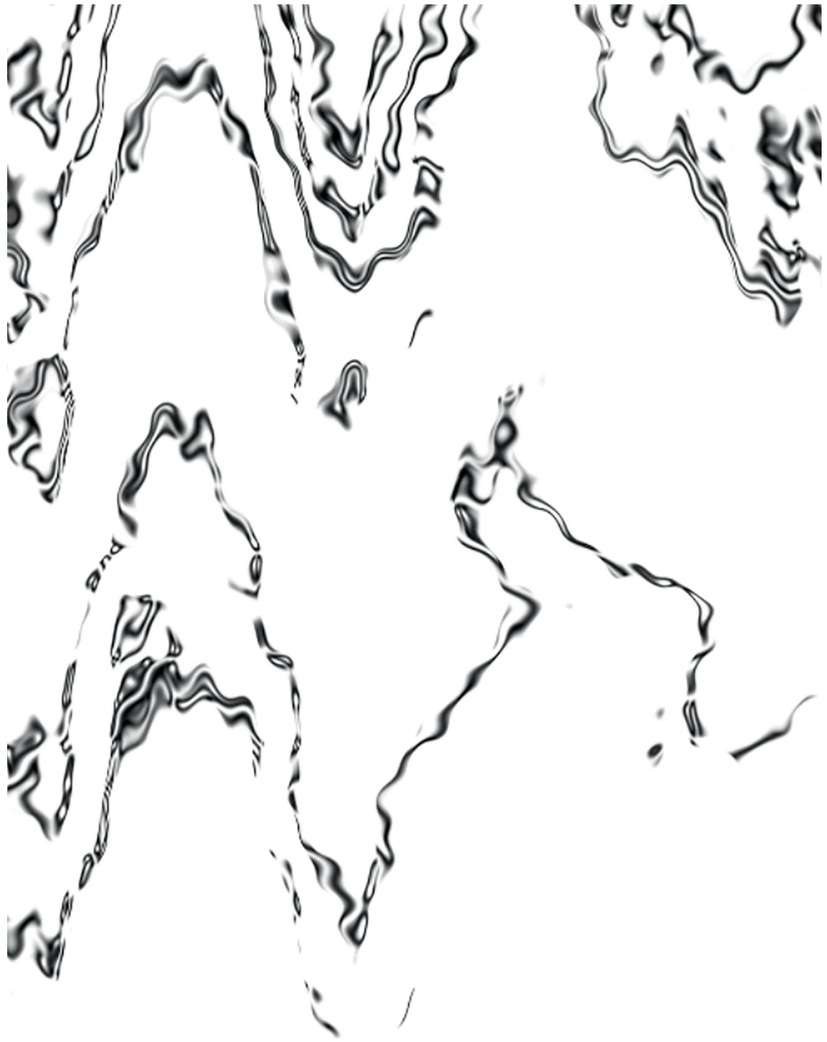
Book 3 - page 42



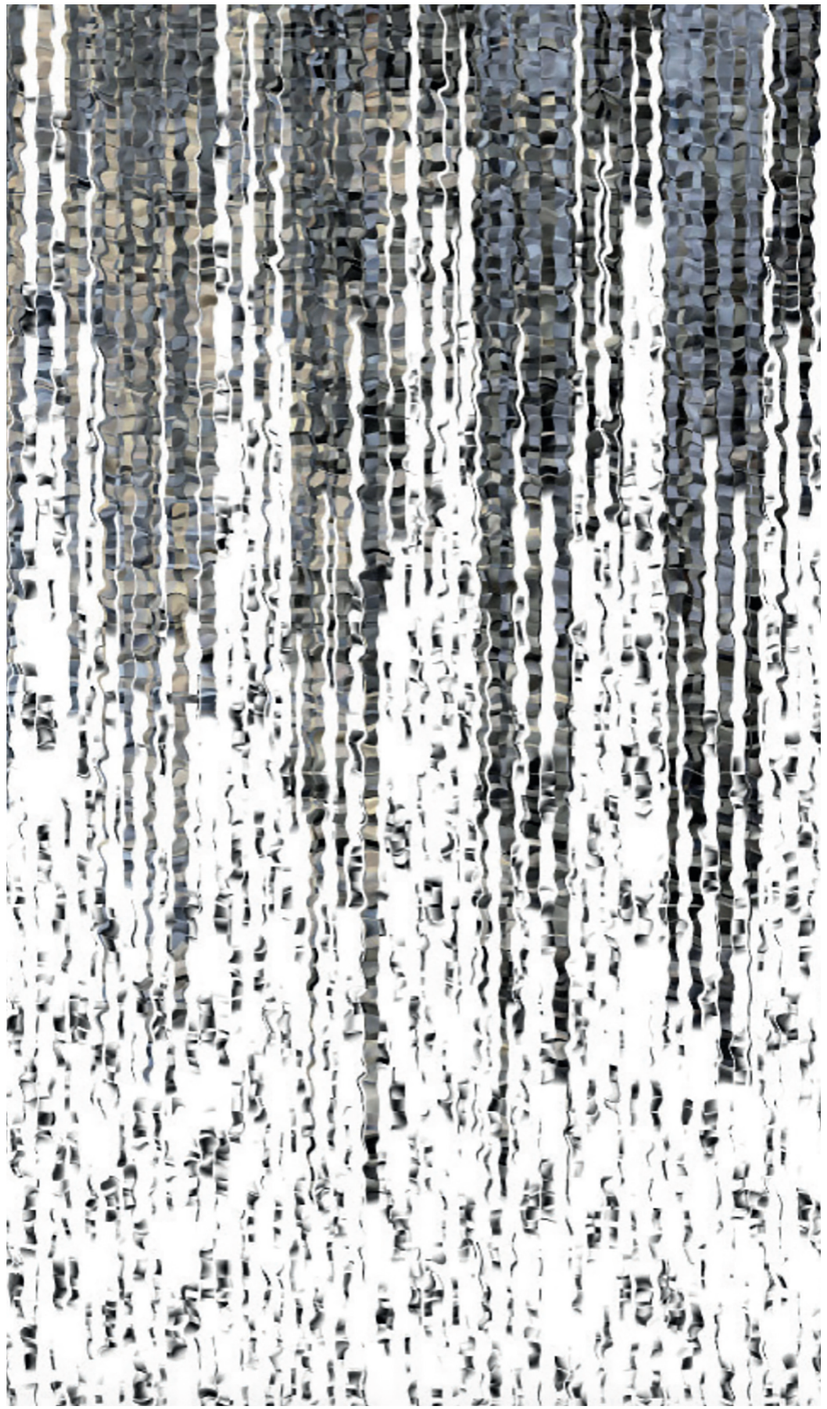
Book 3 - page 46



Book 4 - page 7



Book 4 - page 11



Book 4 - page 15



Book 4 - page 43

Lines Book 3 (2024) and *Lines Book 4* (2024) emerged through this process. They do not aim to communicate meaning in a linear sense. Instead, they invited another mode of engagement: to be handled, hovered over, breathed with. Readability is redistributed, dispersed through rhythm, opacity, and spatial drift. They move through textures of disruption and suspension, where opacity holds open what cannot be fully seen, yet can be sensed. This is the process of writing as weathering within a shifting climate of thought, where currents travel through air, catching and carrying ideas in unpredictable directions.

To work in this way was to unlearn the imperative of clarity and to trust that meaning might arrive otherwise, through air, through haptic attention and through the speculative thickness of the fold.



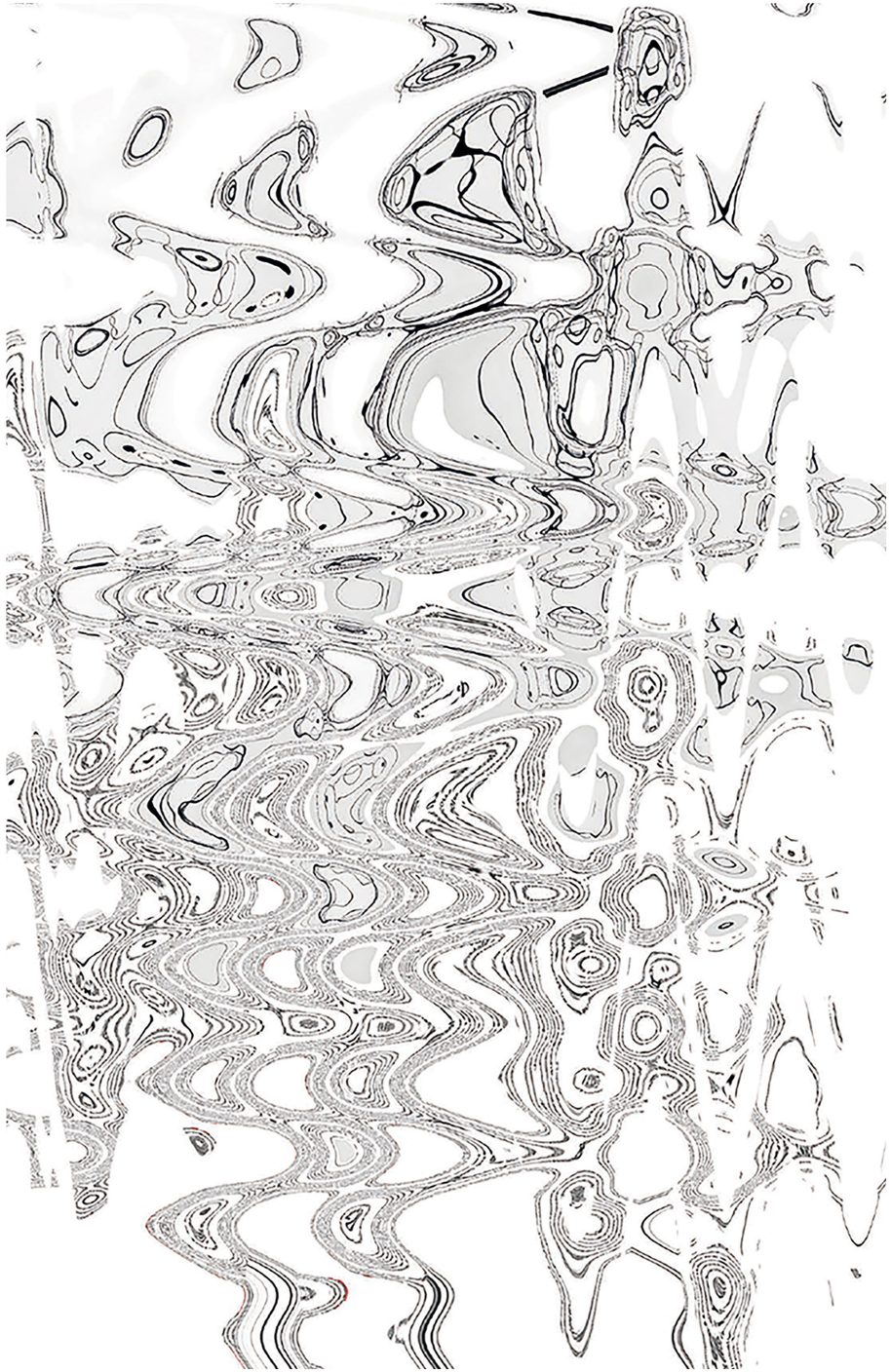
Lines Book 3



Lines Book 4

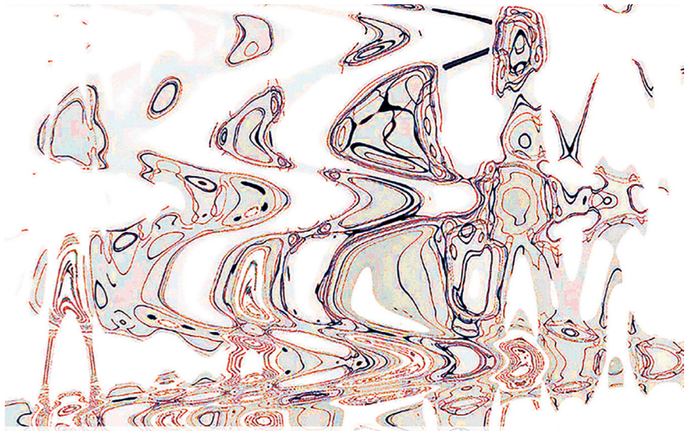
What emerged was a practice breathing itself into form, an iterative negotiation between body, algorithm, and duration. These knotworks, suspended in digital space, gathered across surfaces and sensations. I cannot fully account for what they were doing, only that they continued to move, to pulse and to undo me. In the fragmentation of text and the collapse of semantic structure, another kind of language stirred, a language of thresholds and reverberations, of unfolds and other atmospheres; a language inhaled rather than spoken.

In this moment of algorithmic collaboration, authorship dispersed. I realised I was just one part of a larger process of this making, shaped by machines, artistic choices, and the environment. I was not the only one in control. The folds in *Lines 3*, particularly *page 20*, were condensed. They articulated space and the condition of becoming-with, where making is inseparable from air through which everything travels. This image is not a representation but an entity of emergence; an unfolding in the knot of sensation and code.



Re-folding Page 20 - Book 3 (2024)

The resulting images resisted interpretation. There are glimpses of events to move through, fields suspended in tension, breathing with possibility. In this, they who were once words resonate with Manning's notion of the minor gesture. The smallest shift in process, a flicker of colour, a curve of wave, folded time, intention, and matter into something new (2016a, p. 1). Each distortion is not simply a digital effect but a felt inflection, a gesture caught mid-air, images as atmospheres, a knotwork of sensation held in its becoming. Words without structure drifted as opaque entities, resonant and folded into the currents of air through which they moved.



Re-folding Page 20 - Book 3 v I (2025)

And in that breath, the folded words pressed outward, their movement stretching across surfaces and bodies, loosening the edge of the frame. What began as opacity within an image gathered momentum, diffracting into new rhythms and relations. The folds of *Lines Book 4* ripple beyond the screen, moving through bodies, concepts, temporalities, following a logic of diffraction. Like air shifting around an obstacle, each version diverges, mutates, swells differently. Karen Barad's notion of intra-action is useful here: phenomena do not precede their relations but arise within them, co-constituted through entanglement (2007, p. 140). The digital image becomes a site of knotting, where perception, matter, and thought move-with one another in currents of air, motion, force. To work this way is to remain attuned to uncertainty, to hold space against closure. These folds do not signify; they resonate. They carry traces of the original text yet are no longer tethered to linguistic meaning. Their illegibility is a threshold to be sensed, an interruption that alters the air and suspends research in vibration.

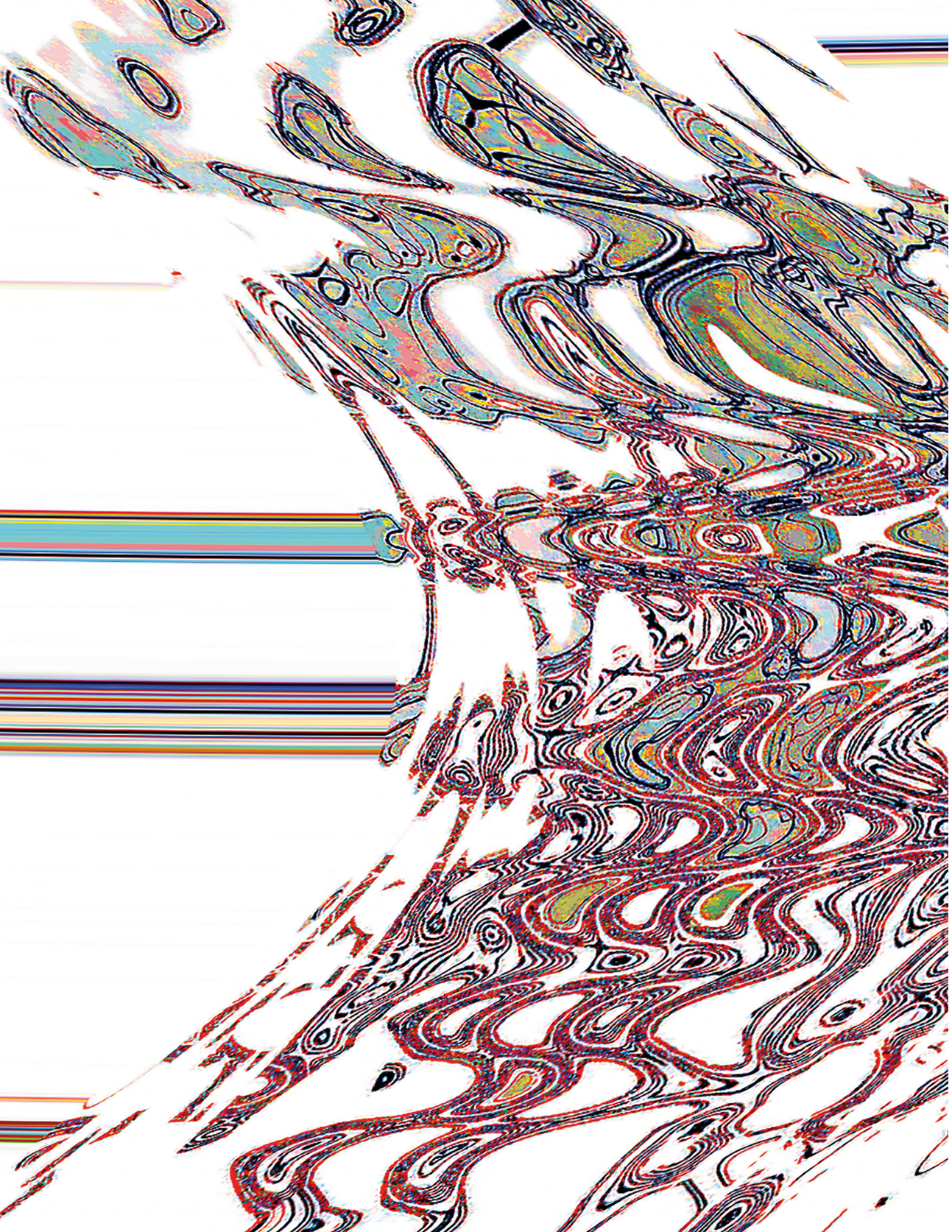
The image trapped with *Re-folding Page 20* unsettled me. I entered into the process, trying to make sense of non-sense. I hesitant, caught in a liminal space I could not cross. Its disorder provoked both mental and physical discomfort; I could not read it, nor understand what was happening. It felt as though the air had been knocked out of me. Overwhelmed, I struggled with the thickness it carried, yet knew I had to dwell there, to wait on what might be forming. Deleuze offers words for this disorientation, warning that:

> If we do not try to reach a precise understanding of the situation, we run the risk of understanding it too abstractly... with Rauschenberg the picture's surface is no longer a window onto the world but becomes an opaque table of information on which a numbered line is inscribed... lines, numbers, changing characters (object-matter). (Deleuze, 1991, p. 232).

His words helped me release my resistance, to breathe with the image's disordered field. Rather than impose coherence, I found relief in aligning with his reading of Rauschenberg's 'opaque table': a surface dense with lines, marks, flows, an opacity thickened into resonance. The work became part of its milieu, vibrating through my thinking. Meaning came more as a feeling than as something to be read or explained. Accepting that I couldn't name or fix what appeared is what opened the work. The unease itself carried the possibility for something new. In the stutter of understanding, something nascent became perceptible: what Erin Manning calls 'preacceleration', an atmospheric pressure, the pull of something just beginning, a concept in the making, an unthought notion on the cusp of articulation (2009, p. 28). Creativity here is tuning into a process already underway.

Using tools I had found while making *Lines Book 3 & 4,* I pushed *Re-folding Page 20*, pulled at its waveforms, adjusted parameters, then let the algorithm's randomise function take over. I was riding a wave; the work began to breathe on its own breath. I was caught in what Manning names 'the virtual force of movement's taking form' (ibid., p. 6): a knot of tension, atmosphere, intention. The folds, like rogue waves, refused order; they surged, twisted, turned. 'Preacceleration', Manning writes, 'refers to the feeling of movement's in-gathering... a welling that propels the directionality of how movement moves' (ibid., p. 6).

Page 20 Refolded **materialised at the beginning of October 2025, as I was re-turning, re-writing the end of my thesis. My mind was still wanting to push the text to its limits, I still wanted to see what it could show me as I continued to 'define' knotwork as a concept.**



The image became a field of forces. No longer text but a knotwork of perception and glitch, an ecosystem, a milieu. Thought moved alongside gesture, caught in its undertow, 'not strictly of the mind but of the body-becoming. Thought moves a body' (Manning, 2009, p. 6). This convergence of gesture, air, algorithm, and perception trembled between intention and emergence. Manning's sense of preacceleration, the charged welling of movement before it takes form, resonates here. Knotwork gathered as charge and force, intensity without resolution, remaining a force field for future thought (ibid., p. 10). *Page 20 Re-folded* became such a field: less representation than atmospheric knot, charged with something unfinished, an excess of potential refusing to be confined to a name.

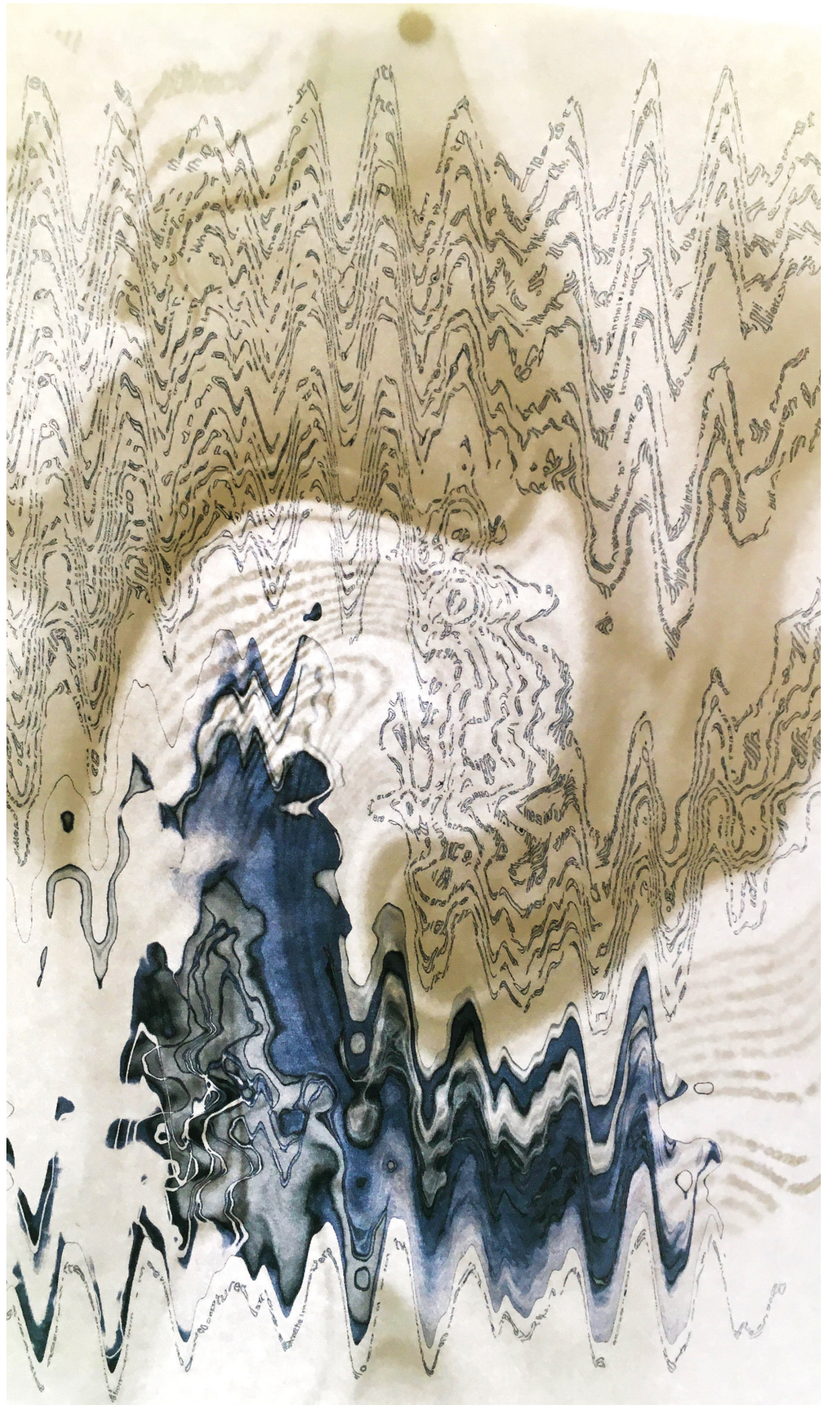
I remain unsure what the full force of this movement reveals. Yet uncertainty no longer feels like limitation; it feels like air, necessary, breathable, and without question unsettling. It is the condition of the work itself: a state of atmospheric prearticulation, where thought and making blur into one another, and a knotwork of potential is suspended in duration.

Six months earlier, I made *Re-writing the words* (2025), when a threshold became palpable. Working with fragments from *Lines Book 4* (2024), already folded through layers of manipulation, I again relinquished control to the digital interface. Text slipped from clarity into abstraction: letters drifted, lines bent, and folds multiplied. The page no longer spoke in sentences but breathed through image and texture. Woolf's 'unrecorded gestures, those unsaid or half-said words' that hover in the air between things (1987) seeped through. In its folds and glitches, air shimmered, carrying breath rather than voice; it thickened into atmosphere, a knot of vibration opening toward other voices, other lines still to come.

Not knowing which way to turn, I wrote the following just before I began editing my thesis in spring 2025:

> *And now I must re-write the words within my process of re-search-creation. I can't focus; there are too many things.*
> *So, my instinct is to play, to see what the words, material,*
> *and matter do with only a little human intervention.*
> *It begins as an impulse: playing with language as a way of thinking through, rather than about, language.*
> *I place one sheet of words upon another and press it against the windowpane. The light streams through.*

Re-folding Page 20 - Book 4 v II (2025) - Opposite



Re-writing the words (2025)

Perhaps this is Erin Manning's idea of 'the more-than', that research-creation doesn't begin with clarity, but with murmurs, rhythms, the not-yet-formed. Letting the words and matter do, rather than be made to mean, opens up spaces of emergence. Maybe what I'm facing isn't distraction, but an excess of potential. It makes sense to turn to play, it's a kind of intuitive choreography with the world, with thought and with material.

I try writing not toward a concept but through gesture: shuffling texts like cards, shifting phrases from my writing, recombining them, even whispering them aloud while walking. I'm listening for what they want to become, without forcing them to declare their purpose too soon.

What if re-writing isn't about refining, but about attuning, like improvisation in movement or drawing? I'm not here to control the process. I'm here to become the milieu for the words to find form.

Thought isn't something I have; it's something I move through. It moves with me: improvised, gestural and felt. I write through encounter. This is not about mastery or clarity. It's about attunement, becoming-with the material.

Rosi Braidotti reminds me that the subject is not a fixed identity, but a process of unfolding, a nomadic subject constituted in and through movement, relation, transformation. When I play with language, I'm not just rearranging signifiers, I'm stepping into that nomadic space. I'm letting matter, thought, and sensation intermingle. The page becomes a site of encounter between the human and more-than-human, between meaning and its refusal. Rewriting isn't an act of correction; it's a gesture of becoming.

Deleuze, too, insists on this movement – not toward resolution, but toward becoming-other. Rewriting becomes less about articulation and more about modulation, composing-with intensities rather than arguments.

So, I write. I pause. I drift. I re-turn. Not to finalise, but to continue. To honour emergence, attunement and play.
(April 2025)

As if in answer, a friend places in my hands *Virginia Woolf, Immanence and Ontological Pacifism* (2022b). Braidotti calls Woolf her 'greatest textual passion' (ibid., p. 131), tracing themes of immanence, embeddedness, vital materialism, and feminist ethics as they emerge through the texture of her writing. Those same themes pulse in Woolf's sentences, flicker in her syntax, hover between thought and articulation. Braidotti's reading draws me into a Woolf attuned to more-than-human interdependence, ecological, affective, socio-political (ibid., p. 133).

In *The Waves* (1931) and *The String Quartet* (2014), language moves with diffractive rhythms: orchestrating voices, pulsing across silence, dissolving the self. Braidotti observes that these movements resist 'the restrictive grip of dialectical reason' (2022b, p. 135). For Braidotti, this resistance is ontological: she writes Woolf's writing arises from 'a neo-materialist, immanent philosophy: one in which all matter is one and… intelligent, self-organising, affective' (ibid., p. 135).

Woolf's characters feel like compositions of intensity, knots of relation that pulse with socio-political force. In *The Waves*, identity dissolves into a collective utterance; in *Orlando* (1928), time, gender, and genre unravel. Subjectivity loosens, knots, transforms. Orlando's becoming renders gender air-like, permeable, unstable (2016). Through Woolf, what seems representational is never so. Beneath each image or utterance another layer stirs; nothing is transparent, everything is opaque, folding and merging into relation. In Woolf's work, the personal is never private; it is composed in the air. I recognise this in my own practice as I work through the opaque material which is grief, when the work sits unsettled and my hands drift ahead of thought. Both Woolf's writing and my making, gesture toward subjectivity as atmosphere in motion, folding and gathering through opacity.

Encountering Woolf through Braidotti opens writing and reading into material vibration, as I breathe, fold, knot with them. Thinking through them shifts research from representation toward an atmosphere of relation. Grief moves here too, as an invisible wild beast, unnamed in society yet insistent in thought, roaming through the folds of practice. Methodology becomes attunement: listening to where it pulls, yet holding back from dissolving entirely into amorphous thought.

Making, performing, writing, these are acts of living with and in atmospheres. Sometimes I sit beside a piece for hours, waiting for the inflection of its next move. The work does not yield on command; it wavers, resists, hesitates. Attunement here is a patience with uncertainty, listening to subtle shifts without dissolving into them, sensing when to follow and when to pause. When Orlando wakes as a woman, it becomes a continuation, a drifting of knots into knotwork. Woolf's writing unfolds as research-creation: literature becoming atmosphere and affect, much as my practice breathes through making.

From my reading, in-visible lines emerge, threads that knot into research-creation as vibration. They move like breath, subtle, necessary, unseen. Shaped by conceptual, sensual, and socio-political currents, they form knotwork: a dynamic field of tension, breath, encounter. Knotwork resists linearity, just as collaboration resists predictability. In my work, knots are singular entanglements held in charged air, often arising from the stubbornness of materials or from a momentary impasse. As Manning writes, an event activates 'the field of relation' (2016b, p. 138), central to research-creation's capacity to 'generate new forms of experience' (ibid., p. 131). Events occur when materials, movements, and concepts knot, drift, transform, hovering, breathing, shaped by atmosphere.

In 2020, during a time of unravelling, I encountered *SenseLab*, a research-creation collective founded by Erin Manning. Described as 'a working and thinking environment for the creation of new modes of encounter' (Manning, n.d.), it offered a way for making and thinking to knot through duration. I know now that concepts do not precede practice; they inhale and exhale with it. Generative work emerges when I am not rushing to 'get it right' but staying within the weave, letting things arrive. Here too, knots form, singular yet multiple, entanglements of bodies, gestures, and thoughts that unfold through time, resisting linearity, holding the charge of atmosphere.

Even the hyphen in 'research-creation' shifts meaning, becoming hinge, bridge, breath. It did not divide; it folds. Method becomes responsiveness. Thought moves in practice's folds; air moves through thought's folds, each recognising the other in knotwork's rhythm. Knots gathers here too, holding together difference without resolving it. Small entanglements of concept and gesture thicken the atmosphere of making.

Remaining in the transversal, as Manning describes, means staying in process, holding space for what resists capture. This echoes William James's radical empiricism: relation over separation, 'pure experience' as a field of feeling, orientation, vibration. My work inhabits this field, knotwork, folds, knots of hesitation, where knowing hovers. The 'in-visible' spaces are air: the breath of a gesture, the pull of materials, the suspension of what has not yet become.

Lingering at thresholds, between sensation and articulation, between what is known and what is still forming, brings me to what Manning calls 'pure experience… on the cusp of the virtual and the actual' (2016a, p. 29). Knotwork drifts here as a weave of relation: tensions felt in body and air, moving across scales, gestures, forms, thought. To think through Deleuze's fold, now folded into knotwork, is not to replicate but to breathe with, to twist, open, refold. The fold is entered and exited, never mastered. In this movement, philosophy joins art, less a doctrine than a play of gestures.

Research-creation, as Manning writes, 'proposes concrete assemblages for rethinking what is at stake in pedagogy, in practice, and in collective experimentation' (2016a, p. 27). My work becomes such an assemblage: a knotwork to enter. Knots, glitches and soundwaves are rhythms of thinking-through-making. They shape how the work breathes. This practice loops and returns, holding its breath to see what might happen. What matters is what takes shape and what hovers in the air, where becoming is perceptible. 'New processes will likely create new forms of knowledge that may have no means of evaluation within current disciplinary models' (ibid., p. 28). Research-creation asks us to dwell in that excess, to stay with air as it thickens, to follow the knots as they form and dissolve.

Air carries these processes. And through process, conditions emerge: concepts unfurl, gestures extend, knots gather and loosen. This writing performs the folds and knots the intensities that it describes, diffracting theory with practice, gesture with concept, surface with air. It does not conclude; it circulates, holding space for the speculative and the unfinished.

Songlines in air: knotwork in motion

My songlines move through the air, mapping rhythm, voice, and memory along paths unbounded by borders or fixed coordinates. They form a lived cartography, vibratory and atmospheric, tracing how memory, relation, and presence fold personal and affective threads into philosophy. Knowledge here is carried not only in text but in voice, in rhythm, in repetition, affirming research and creation (research-creation) as an embodied, affective practice. Extending beyond the human, not tied to land or air, they move with the rhythms of the more-than-human world. These rhythms align with my posthuman feminist orientation, where knotwork and songlines recognise that subjectivity and knowledge unfold through making and the more-than-human.

Across aural cultures, knowledge travels in sound: through the rhythms of storytelling, in the lines of song, and the traces of birdsong. In Indigenous Australian traditions, songlines mark ancestral journeys across Country, inscribing law, memory, and relation into land through song, story, and ceremony. I have no claim to this inheritance, which is a living cultural practice tied to Country and carried across generations (Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles et al., 2020, p. 106). My songlines are personal, familial, affective, woven through memory and birdsong. They echo traditional songlines; however, they are not the same. Mine move through air, tracing relation as presence and absence. With respect, I stay-with the traces of my own experience of place and relation, with those I lived alongside and lost, human and more-than-human, and in doing so open to relationality, letting resonance remain without appropriation.

Birdsong stirs memories that weave through my practice, where sound and recollection take form in gesture and mark. Birds guide me, tuning my ear to rhythms of space and place, fleeting yet enduring. Their song shapes presence through pulses of sound that cross invisible lines. Sonic markers drift over land and sea like water slipping past borders, carried on the wind. This attunement to rhythm forms close to home, carried in the bodies and voices of those I re-member. My grandmother, a music hall singer, sang to her budgies, her voice drawing them in, heads tilting, chirping back as if in conversation. Song filled the air between them, a shared rhythm of breath and presence. She loved

birds, as my sister did. My father knew every bird by its call; now he no longer hears them. What once moved through air has become memory. This relationality also finds an echo in yarning, a method of storytelling rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems. Yarning unfolds not as data-gathering but as attunement, where meaning arises through listening, trust, and shared conversation. In my practice, yarning has become a way of listening to what returns, memory, intuition, and the affective traces of relation, including those that exceed language. It is a way of thinking-with across time, where repetition, silence, and emergence meet (Vieira de Oliveira and Prado de O. Martins, 2019).



map on skin, (2024) - detailed map of Kenninghall, Norfolk. Ordnance Survey Map Sheet (Edition 2, 1906)

I feel something stir as I electronically tattoo the map across my skin, a quiet gesture, intimate yet unsettling. The lines seem to rise through my body, as though they had always been there. The map re-membered me, or perhaps I re-turned through it. These traces, like songlines, shift and refract, refusing stillness and opening toward future tracings. In this rhythm, I also hear Hélène Cixous's call: 'woman must write herself… put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement' (1976, p. 875). She reminds us of the cost, the trembling risk of speaking in public: 'how great a transgression it is for a woman to speak – even just open her mouth' (ibid., p.880). Here I find a resonance with my songlines: knotwork insists that presence and performance are carried in rhythm and voice, that the act of writing is also a movement of memory and relation through air.

map on skin **(2024) returns me to Kenninghall, the place of my birth and my grandmother's resting place. The landscape holds memories, folded into the waiting earth. In this work, a detailed Ordnance Survey map is electronically inscribed onto the surface of my skin, linking body and place. What emerges is not a fixed image but a shifting resonance: the map as songline, refracting memory, relation, and future tracings.**

Where Cixous emphasises a feminist subjectivity and the risk of speaking, Woolf shows how rhythm moves through prose itself. Her sentences ripple, carrying a cadence felt in the body and in the air, beyond what is seen or heard. Something just out of reach is sensed: a presence, intangible yet persistent, animating the moment and making the unspeakable briefly knowable. This is the rhythm of the air, where memory lives, thought lingers, and sound becomes trace. My songlines continue as I tell a story of knotwork, unfolding a process of becoming through memory, grief, language, and landscape. What gathers here resists resolution. Like Woolf's writing, my songlines fold back in search of new cadence. In this movement, something is carried across, less inheritance than vibration, a pulse moving through air and body alike. Between what is spoken and what remains unsaid, memory stirs, shaping what is yet to come.

Why am I telling you this? Because between the songlines and the words there is air, a pause holding unseen resonance. Because memory arrives in fragments: in sound, in silence, in quiet interruptions. Somewhere between breath and birdsong, the unknown travels through repetition and resonance. These stories live in the intervals, in pauses, in a voice singing to a bird, in the trace of a father who can no longer hear, in the openings fragments leave behind.

Practice begins here with attunement: to sound, to the shape of something before it forms. These memories are not evidence; they are atmosphere. They shape the space of thought, the air in which knotwork takes form. Here, future thinking stirs, in the subtle pulse of potential, in the unfinished story, in the quiet insistence that something more is yet to come.

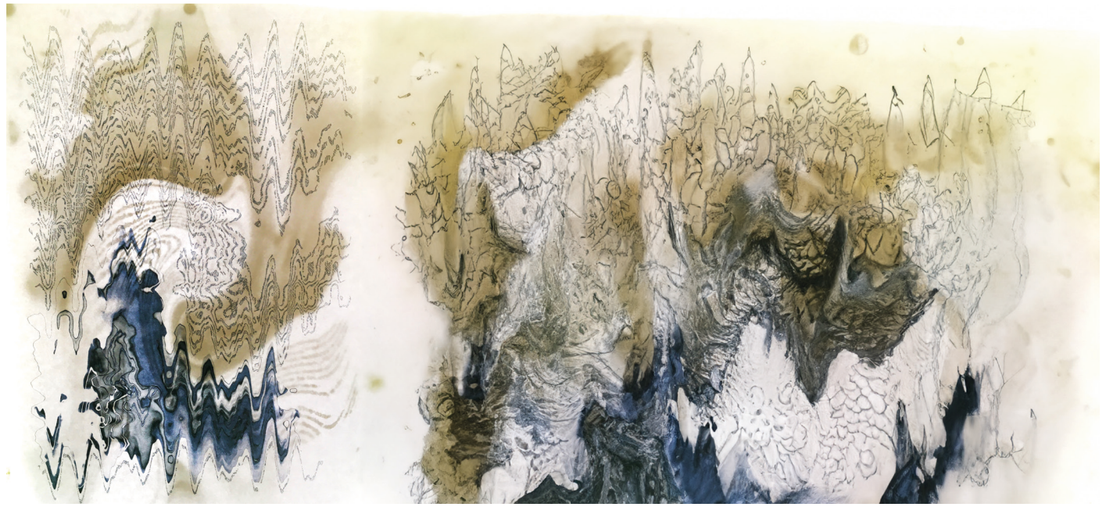
The concept of knotwork was never predetermined but emerged through works made in collaboration with bodies, my body and materials. Here, thought required the gestures of my hands to take form; making relied on thought to move forward. In grief, my fingers folded, pressed, and knotted before language could arrive, leaving me in a liminal, unsettled space. Erin Manning's work permitted me to remain here, in the space of minor gestures, and to trust that making and thinking exist in flux. Rosi Braidotti widened this field, situating my practice as a zoe/geo/techno assemblage, acknowledging non-human forces, earthly matter, and technological currents beyond intention. Between this, I sense what Luce Irigaray calls the interval of relation: the air that allows difference to touch without fusing, the breath that keeps space open for encounter, and for futures to emerge.

Over time, the process of making and the artworks themselves became tools for understanding knotwork. Each piece emerged through the interplay of feeling and thought, only later revealing a concept. Knotwork arose as a living process, shaped by grief and gesture, by atmosphere and speculative thought. It moves through entanglements of matter, thought, and air. Neither fixed form nor prescriptive method, it gathers materials, sounds, memories, and philosophical lines of force, holding tensions: clarity with opacity, intention with resistance, sensation with cognition. Drawing from Deleuze's fold, Braidotti's nomadic cartographies, Manning's minor gesture, Glissant's right to opacity, and Hayles' distributed cognition, knotwork becomes a cartography-in-motion. It traces atmospheric forces shaping subjectivity and practice, holding disruption without resolution, allowing transformation to arise through friction and diffraction, a speculative field of connection and becoming, where making is thinking and thinking is lived as embodied event.

Knotwork offers a way of researching that resists linear frameworks, moving between art, scholarship, and life. It fosters iterative, affective learning where understanding unfolds at thresholds and pauses invite deviation. In philosophy, it traces non-linear cartographies of becoming, concepts felt before they are defined, open to change. It resonates with ecological entanglements, where air, atmosphere, and living matter compose shared fields in motion. In technological and data-driven contexts, it reimagines cognition as distributed and machinic, knotting human and non-human agencies into emergent configurations. Across these interstices, knotwork holds space for opacity, difference, and uncertainty, refusing resolution in favour of transformation-in-process. It shifts research away from mastery or explanation toward sensing, making, and thinking-with, forming knots of relation that move and breathe across disciplines and environments.

Knotwork contributes to posthuman feminist thought, not as fixed theory, but as a methodological mode of thinking and doing. While scholars such as Braidotti, Haraway, and Barad have traced the entangled, relational, and embodied nature of subjectivity, knotwork works with these ideas materially and atmospherically. Thought passes through the hands, the breath, the fold, and the quiet resistance of materials, becoming knotted and re-knotted in acts of making that test thresholds of meaning and keep future possibilities in motion. In this way, knotwork extends feminist commitments to embodied, situated, and partial knowledges, opening a methodology that dwells in uncertainty and lets philosophy be felt as well as thought. It draws attention to air, breath, and atmosphere as media of relation, suspending connection in a porous, vibratory field where difference can touch without collapsing into sameness. Resonating with Irigaray's interval and Glissant's right to opacity, knotwork refuses demands for clarity or mastery, holding complexity as generative for relation. It performs a distributed, more-than-human authorship, entangling human, machinic, and environmental forces, unsettling anthropocentric claims to agency. Its knots do not tie things off but keep them moving, offering a speculative ethics of continuation: an openness to transformation, grief, fragility, and potential that expands the horizon of posthuman feminist thought.

My thesis is a folding and an unfolding: a gathering that resonates without resolving. Lines of thought and practice fold into knots that carry forward. Between breath and birdsong, between matter and memory, knotwork lingers as concept, method and gesture, holding space for what remains unfinished, in the ongoing labour of becoming otherwise.



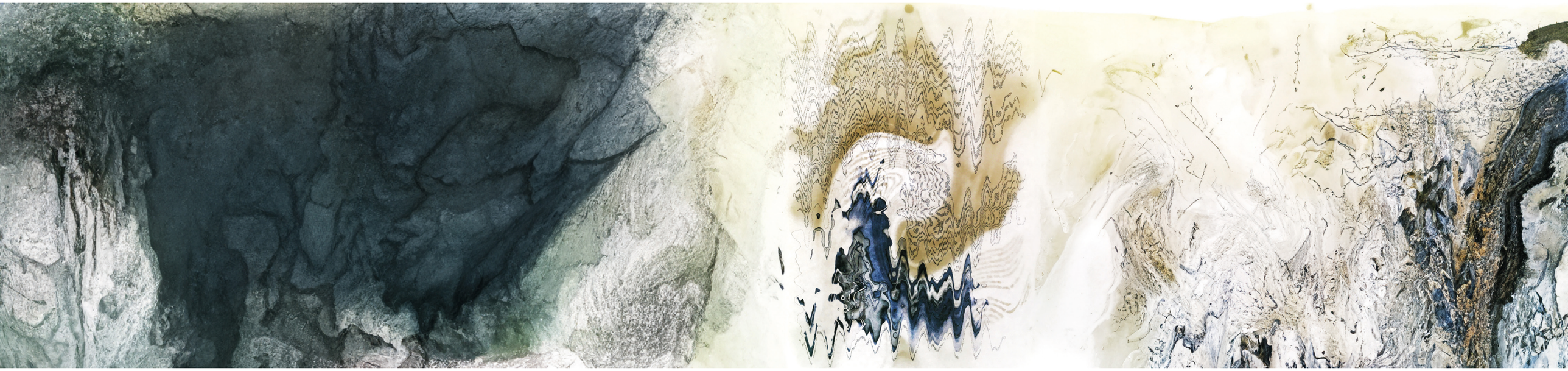
Re-writing and developing the words (2025)



Re-writing and developing the words again (2025)



Re-writing and developing the words again and again (2025)



Now I must move on (2025)

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