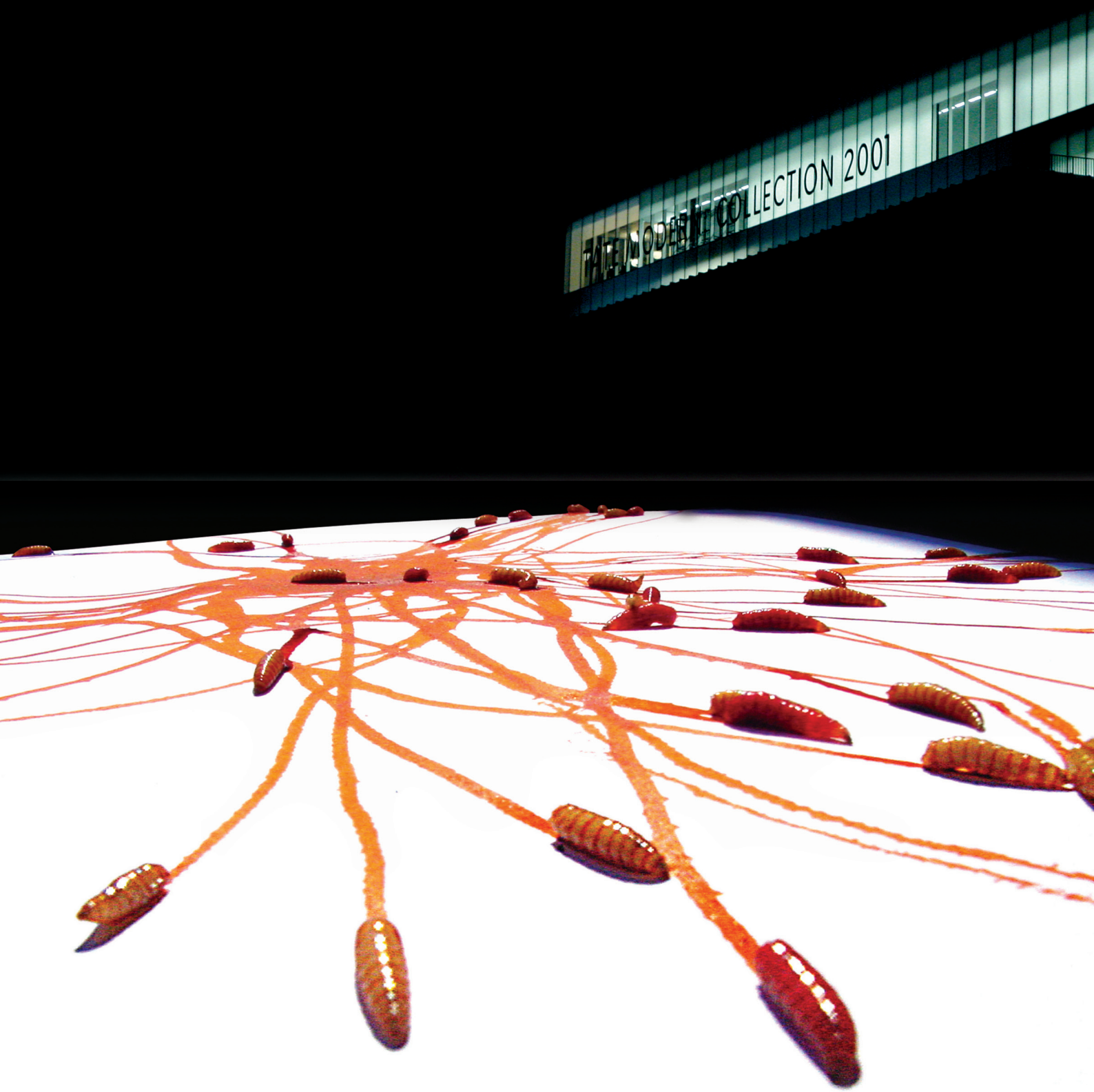

Appendix B

Overview of Previous Work

Lohmann, Julia C.

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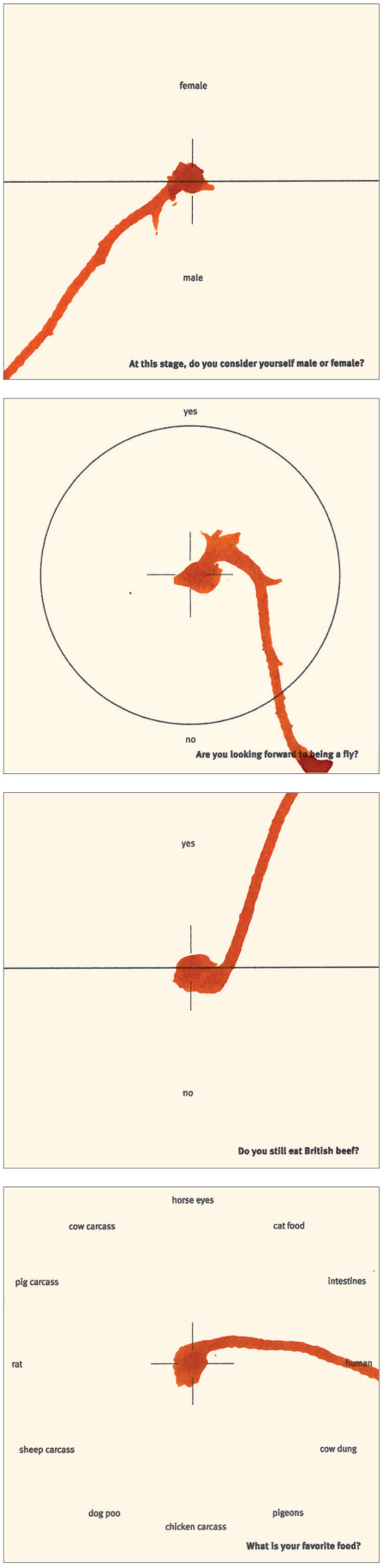

fig. 1: *Maggot questionnaires*

1 MAGGOTYPES, 2001

Performance, book

My 2001 BA Graphic Design graduation project was based on the subject of growth and decay. It involved living maggots as co-creators. Maggots grow by decaying other organisms so, after experiments involving sprouting potatoes, fungi and mould, and to challenge myself even further, I bought a pint of bluebottle fly maggots in the bait shop Gerrys of Wimbledon. I studied them, observing their movements, reactions to light and touch, feeling their tingling on my hand and followed their transformation into chrysalis. What fascinated me most, however, was how handling the maggots transformed my attitude towards them. I began to see them as individuals, instead of a squirming mass. Every maggot exhibited certain unique characteristics, for instance in the probing, sweeping movement of their heads before deciding on the best way to proceed. They reminded me of my own explorative design process, its successes and failures. The maggots also created beautiful, serrated lines when they were placed on a blob of ink. My initial disgust and hesitance quickly transformed into fascination and wonder, and my husband Gero Grundmann and I decided to share this transformative experience with a public.

We staged Art Raid, an unofficial maggot exhibition and performance in the East Room of the Tate Modern, a then

fig. 2: *Gero Grundmann and Maggotypes Tate Modern display*

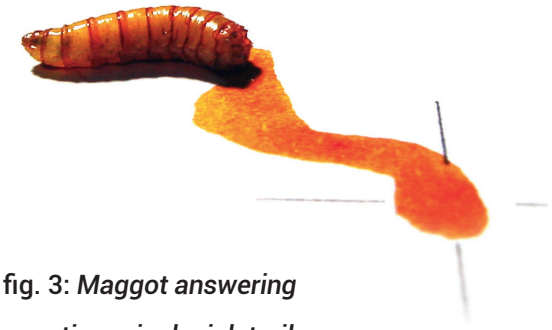

fig. 3: *Maggot answering questionnaire by ink trail*

uninvigilated space without art displays, but accessed by many Tate visitors for the view of the River Thames. Our exhibition there consisted of a washing line between two pillars displaying the maggots' artwork and a performance with maggots filling out questionnaires and drawing on maps. Based on our experiences working with maggots and the discovery of their individuality, we decided to adopt and perform the role of curators, presenting performances by the maggots. I had designed maggot questionnaires with a starting point at their centre, surrounded by answers arranged in a circle. We would place a single maggot in a drop of eco-friendly ink at the centre point. It would then crawl away, drawing an ink trail towards an answer.

Initially, many audience members were hesitant to approach the table on which the maggot Q&A session took place. However, as the 'insect artist' told us – via ink-trail – its gender, name, political orientation and aspirations for the future, the audience was visibly drawn in, coming closer and in the end, someone posed a question we would hear time and again: »What happens with Bertrand now?« (the maggot's chosen name) »You are not going to kill him, are you?«

The performance involved our audience in an accelerated reenactment of my own transformation through the design project. It created a collective moment of rupture, a suspension of our cultural construct of reality, similar to what children experience in play: an experimential but linear narrative. The audience members were drawn into an alternative construction of reality, a bubble in which maggots were treated as individuals and displayed character traits that humans could empathise with. This moment of suspension of learned reality briefly creates a distance to what we take for granted and enables us to perceive it, not just intellectually, but also through our bodies, and to reflect upon it. Design philosopher Tony Fry (2011, preface p.ix)[1] states that: »Attachments to

habitual ways of thinking are especially hard to break. More than this, that, which is familiar and taken-for-granted fades into the background. We simply do not see, feel or think about what has become embedded in our mode of being.«

Through my work I hope to create moments of closeness, at times encroachment, and distance, through which we can perceive and challenge our habitual ways of thinking.

fig. 4: *Flock light installation*

2 FLOCK & RUMINANT BLOOMS, 2004

Light installation and lamps made of sheep stomachs

The ceiling light installation Flock and the Ruminant Bloom lights are made from preserved sheep and cow stomachs, stretched over geometric forms or hung to dry int a flowery shape. I created them as part of my MA Design Products final project at the RCA in 2004, exploring our use of animal materials in design and the value systems that underpin it. In my MA thesis 'The Killing of Animals in Contemporary Art' I had investigated the subject from a fine art perspective. The project originated in the stark contrast between the treatment and consumption of animals and animal products in Iceland and the UK.

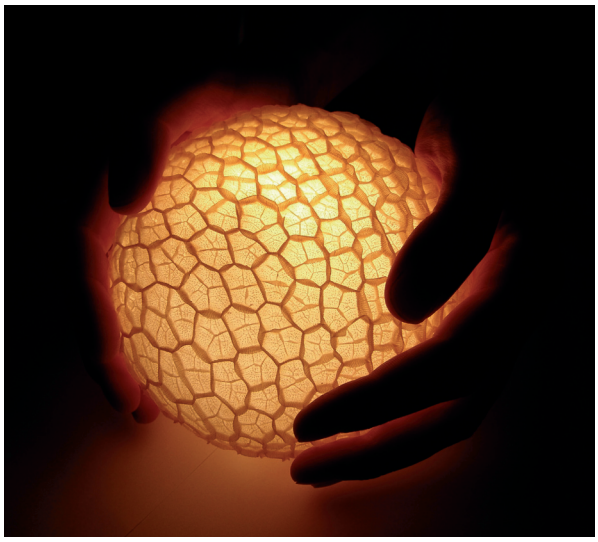

fig. 5: *Ruminant Bloom lamp*

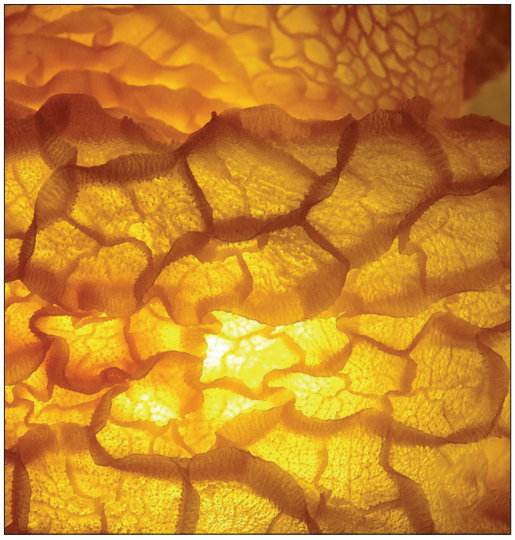

fig. 6: *Detail of Ruminant Bloom lamp*

Following my BA Graphic Design degree, the offer of a position at Pentagram Design, cancelled due to the negative business impact of the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks and a 6-month stint in AMV BBDO's advertising think tank, I had been working on a horse and sheep farm in Iceland for three months. I was looking for distance from the commerce-driven life and work in London and was fascinated by the Icelanders' direct connection with and respect for their live-stock, which includes making the best possible use of all parts of the animals once they are killed. Upon returning to London to begin my studies at the RCA, I was struck by the distance between animal products and their animal origins. In Iceland, meat was expensive. However, one could be sure that the lamb one ate at a restaurant was a lamb that had been farmed locally, spent most of its life free range in the highlands, had been rounded up on horseback, slaughtered and prepared locally. In London, supermarket shelves held items such as incredibly cheap, battered, dinosaur-shaped bits of reconstituted chicken offcuts.

These contrasting experiences led to my MA thesis and final project. My aim was to use an unusual and undervalued animal material – without an established design context – to investigate the discrepancy between the culturally-based value systems we acquire and our own individual reaction to animal materials. In the projects Ruminant Bloom, Flock and Cowbenches, I wanted to employ a work process similar to that of the Italian artist Giuseppe Penone. He is concerned with the relationship of humans and nature and how we transform natural materials into objects. By revealing their lineage back to nature, he wants to encourage us to see afresh and rethink things that surround us. At the same time, he showcases the qualities and characteristics of the materials he works with. Penone (1969, p. 83)[2] describes the overarching method of his work

as ‘thought nestling up against matter.’ I felt that first-hand experience was important and so I contacted a taxidermist in Salisbury from whom I learned the basics of how to preserve animal skins. He also took me to a knackeryard where animals unfit for human consumption are incinerated or processed into animal food, e.g. for zoos. The taxidermist, the proprietor of the knackeryard and my husband, a designer with a forestry and hunting background helped me skin animals to source animal skin and hide parts that are normally discarded, for instance hide from lower legs, cow tails and an udder. I preserved these and tried to find uses for them. I also started looking for animal skins and membranes in the local markets and halal butcher shops of Tooting Bec, where I lived at the time. This is how I found sheep stomachs. The physical act of processing the sheep stomachs, such as removing by hand the muscle and connective tissue from the stomach lining to be tanned, started a personal process of inquiry into what this animal material represents.

Within the entity sheep, the stomach is an organ with a specific range of life sustaining functions. By breaking up this entity, the stomach is transferred from its original context into a human and in this case, early-industrialised, western European context. Within this, we describe the body in terms of tissue types and usage or materials-based categories: fur (wool), skin (leather), soft-tissues (mainly food), bones (multiple hidden uses). We subdivide soft tissues into highly valued muscles (meat) and vital organs (offal) that are valued less highly.

In its traditional culinary context and categorised as offal, sheep stomach is seen as food but not valued very highly. This is because it needs to be cleaned and cooked for a long time and has a strong and unique taste and smell. Also, since it fulfilled a life-sustaining function in the sheep's body, it reminds us perhaps too strongly of our own body and the biological class of mammals, which we share with sheep. However, if we look at it from a design or manufacturing perspective, the stomach lining can also be classed as a membrane, an interior skin, filtering nutrients from food into the rest of the body.

This means that if sheep stomach is classed as a skin, we should be able to tan, process and use it like a textured, parchment-like type of leather. In doing so, we are re-contextualising it both conceptually and physically and in the process assigning a different value to it. Aesthetically, the stomach lining is intriguing because of its intricate, lacelike surface structure, each with an individual pattern. Its rich texture remains once it is transformed into a thin, tanned leather. Used in lights such as the ‘Ruminant Blooms' and ‘Flock', its delicate qualities and translucency are heightened. In this way, the lights become a tangible record of the

dialogue with the material and its inherent contextual dissonances. They physically manifest the questions I raise – and hope to trigger in viewers of the objects – about the value we assign to animal materials and the usage and value systems we have devised for them.

3 COWBENCHES, 2004–PRESENT

Leather-upholstered benches

Humans have bred and killed cows for meat, milk and leather for thousands of years. It has become a culturally accepted practice and in European cultures we generally approve of this use of bovines.

However, the historical, cultural, environmental and social context has transformed since their domestication. How cows are conceived, fed, kept and killed has changed. The number of animals we breed and the amount of beef we consume has risen enormously. The processes of leather making, the objects we make from leather and our way of using them have changed. On a scientific level, we understand the environmental impact of meat-production and the effect of methane released by bovines in particular. And still, people in the OECD area consumed a per capita average of 14kg of beef in 2015.[3]

To reflect on this issue personally and professionally as a designer, to understand – and aiming to foster reflection in others – I have designed a series of objects, described by Tim Parsons (Parsons, 2009) as 'ethical barometers'. I believe it reflects quite accurately my intention of critically probing the established view of animals in western culture and our value systems relating to our use of animal materials – and whether long-standing habits still match our current social, cultural and historical context.

fig.7: *Cowbench Lily*

fig. 8: *Herd of Cowbenches, clockwise from left to right: Eileen, Belinda, Carla, Else, Radia*

The most well-known of these objects are Cowbenches, leather-upholstered benches shaped like reclining cow torsos without heads or lower legs. They are made using traditional upholstery materials such as leather, upholstery foam, wood and paper rope. However, through their appearance and they aim to bridge the gap between goods made from animal materials and their material origins. Cowbenches consist of hand-carved upholstery foam bodies, each upholstered spine on spine with one hide of high-quality leather that retains all the natural markings accumulated throughout the cow's life. Locating the traces on the leather as in life is intended to narrate the animal's past existence. Each Cowbench has a name, documented in a passport-like certificate of authenticity referencing livestock documents. My intention was to position the benches as individual beings rather than numbered industrial products or limited edition objects.

The benches act as lenses that compress four distinct ontologies – states of being – on the transformation timeline from cow to leather sofa into one object and timeframe. Each phase comes with its own rationality and truth, sometimes conflicting with the other phases so that within a single object, they create a sense of dissonance. This is made up of the following associations: The living cow (love and compassion, shared mammal lineage) the dead body (empathy and sorrow), the skin turned into leather (objectification, transformation from nature to artifice, valuable material) and the bench or sofa (living room, private home, everyday with associations of comfort, relaxation, warmth). In this sequence they represent a shift from the immediate emotional concern towards an other being via emotional distancing and rationality as sanctioned by Western society towards care and comfort for the self only.

fig. 9: *Cowbench Antonia*

With all four phases present in the Cowbench at once, the viewer can consciously or subconsciously change the focus of his perception. Depending on his predisposition he will see one phase more prominently than the others and might become aware of them all on further inspection and reflection. He can walk around and think around the object. The Cowbench enables sensual engagement through its materiality, spiritual engagement through its body with its connotations of life and death and intellectual engagement via its contextual setting: its relation to a human user through its function as leather sofa, which implies that is a key object in our living room. Its pitch is deliberatively broad, offering access points on multiple emotional, physical and conceptual levels. Children under the age of eight almost invariably run up to the Cowbench and pat it, or ride it, scratch it and pretend to feed it (unless hindered by exhibition staff and museum codes of conduct).

The Cowbench is a relational object, meaning that its interpretation depends on the viewers' focal point. It is, what social scientist Donna Haraway (1994, p. 63)[4] calls a boundary object or a 'black hole' and describes as follows: »For the complex or boundary objects in which I am interested, the mythic, textual, political, organic and economic dimensions implode. That is, they collapse

into each other in a knot of extraordinary density that constitutes the objects themselves. In my sense, storytelling is a fraught practice for narrating complexity in such a field of knots or black holes.«

I agree with Haraway's criticism of storytelling for narrating complexity if it refers to narratives in a linear sense. The guided narrative of a story prescribes a sequence of information that pulls the listener along by a string, while complexity can best be perceived through a subjective positioning in a 'field', exposing oneself in a multi-sensory way. Most stories are cushioning the viewer from direct, sensual experience by means of language: the reader lives in the world of the story as an avatar, his sensual engagement is imagined, mediated through words, even though his goose-bumps are real.

Performance, installation and embodied experiences are ways to overcome the linearity of storytelling. When we enter a room with an object present we experience it simultaneously through our body and our mind. Our experience unfolds through our body as we move through space in relation to the object while our mind processes the experience and relates it to what we know of the world. With Ethical Barometer objects such as the Cowbench I strive for multi-layered, non-linear communication that enables the viewer to weave his own narrative structure in resonance with his field of perception. The bench fulfils its function not when it is owned and sat on, but when it is experienced and reflected upon. Like a story, it does not need to be owned but seen and engaged with for it to function.

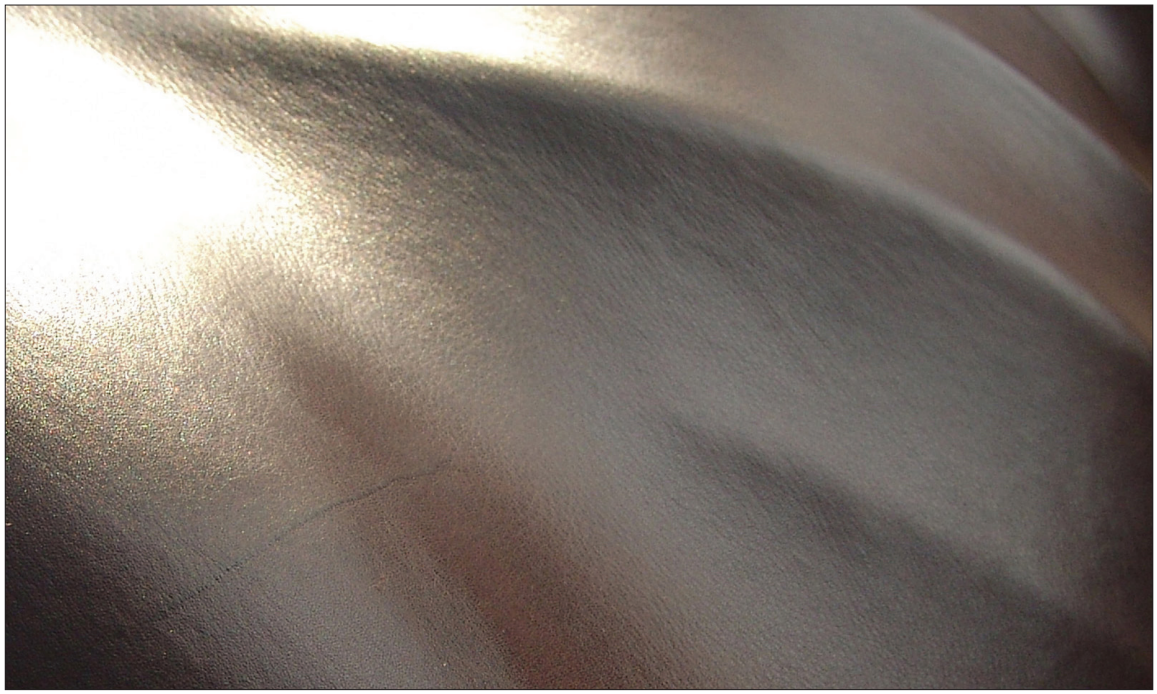

fig. 10: *Detail of Cowbench, showing scars and markings*

Ethical Barometer objects are the outcome of an investigation and immersive experiences triggering a dissonance I perceive between my instinct and my culturally acquired behaviour. For a splitsecond I am surprised at what my culture expects from me or what liberties society allows me to take. In this, instinctive truth is not formed through intellectual engagement in form of knowing, but through sensual engagement and relational positioning, in a process of becoming or being. For instance, the origins of the objects relating to the human-animal relationship lay in the disparity between urban London and rural Icelandic life, as described in the context of the Ruminant Bloom lamps.

Both the lamps and benches I created as a result were focussed on the field of design and the responsibility and attitude designers and consumers of animal-derived goods have towards their objects, including their origins. In developing them, I adapted, combined and re-contextualised processes that comply with existing ways of design and production, as well as cultural and social norms, utilising them to question the rightfulness of established forms of practice. To do this I learned tanning techniques from a taxidermist, visited a knackeryard to study animal anatomy and obtain unusual parts of animal hides to tan and made prototypes in the Alma Home leather upholstery workshop.

The latter was particularly interesting both from a craft and collaboration perspective: Since every Cowbench had a different shape, it would have been impossible to create a standard leather cutting pattern to fit all benches. Most upholsterers at Alma Home saw this as a problem and were not interested in creating new processes for the Cowbenches, for two reasons: firstly, because their training encouraged a time and work efficiency mindset based on standardised upholstery and construction methods for large-scale contracts. Secondly – and in my view more importantly – the designers the upholsterers had previously worked with had never personally discussed projects with them. It would appear they saw them as lower-ranking craftsmen making furniture to their designs. This created an attitude in which the upholsterers did just that and nothing more, even if they knew that a few slight design changes would result in a better product or finish. One craftsman summed it up like this: »The designers don't speak with us, so we don't tell them.«

Self-trained upholsterer Krzysztof Siutkowski was an exception. He was new to the company and keen to experiment. I was new too, with a non-hierarchical mindset, and so we were able to communicate at eye level and create a new way of upholstering the benches. Siutkowski would drape the leather around the foam torso and we would discuss where best to place seams – as few as possible – to create an organic, uninterrupted leather surface. He would then cut the leather

freehand and sew it into a shape 10 percent smaller than the volume of the foam torso. This he would then stretch over the Cowbench torso, pummel the leather to expand and soften it as needed and fix it to the wooden base plate of the bench. No glue was required, just tension. Krzysztof Siutkowski had an innate ability to think three-dimensionally and an intuitive understanding of anatomy. When I asked him about this he stated that before he self-taught himself upholstery, he had worked for some time as a farmhand on a German cattle farm.

4 ALIEN ARCHAEOLOGY, 2005

Performance, assemblages of found objects

Alien Archaeology was a designed performance for children and families, commissioned by the V&A in 2005 for the V&A Village Fete [5], a summer festival in the V&A's courtyard. My concept incorporated the recent redesign of the V&A courtyard and fountain, where the fete takes place and designers setup stalls with a twist offering different activities to V&A visitors. Alien Archaeology proposed the idea that every night, space-craft land in the V&A courtyard fountain as aliens visit the museum on their human history excursions and that, over the years, many lost belongings within the courtyard of the V&A. I stated that due to the large numbers of artefacts the V&A needed help from young visitors in their Alien Archaeology dig. To this end, I designed excavation tools for visitors cum alien archaeologistsand provided a sand pit in which I had hidden designed alien artefacts. They consisted of coloured plaster casts of assemblages of plastic parts,

fig. 11: *Alien Archaeology Team*

electronic components, as well as discarded fruit and vegetablesfrom my local fruit seller in Tooting Bec. When the young Archaeologists discovered a treasure they took it to our team of 'specialists' – represented by a group of designer friends, students, interns and my husband, dressed up as scientists or Indiana-Jones-style adventurer archaeologists – who contextualised their finds individually or as a panel with a spontaneously invented story: Was this multi-controller set to feeding the extra-terrestrial's pet or to controlling his planet's sunset? Which flavour of expan-dable micro-food had they found? Or was it a fragile part of the interstellar fuselage that needed to be kept in a specially coated box and refrigerated for at least 24 hours upon the Alien Archaeologists return home?

Alien Archaeology has parallels to the Maggotypes performance at Tate Modern in its aim of creating an alternative reality in a museum, involving an audience in activities that suspend what they take for granted. Both enactments were reliant on my own interaction with the audience. The experience was multimodal and multi-sensorial, with objects, actions, movements and words communicating together and dialogic, in the sense that what happened depended largely on the audience's input. The performance in Maggotypes gave a more guided, linear narrative to a collective group of visitors whereas Alien Archaeology allowed for indivi-dual narratives to emerge and different timeframes for each participant. This also extended to my collaborators. Whilst there was one overarching narrative for the activity the group hierarchy was flat and consequently,

fig. 12: *Alien Archaeology Poster*

fig.13: *Alien Archaeology excavation tool 'Countryside Companion'*

fig.14: *Alien Archaeology excavation tool*

the Alien Archaeology experts had the freedom to individually interpret their roles based on their personal perspective on the theme, their background, knowledge, interests and skills.

The team had also collaborated with me to create the alien artefacts, again at eye level and to very basic parameters: 1) The assemblage plaster casts had to look strange and 2) fit into a 5 x 5 x 5 cm cardboard box, so that children could take them home. Overall, Alien Archaeology highlighted for me the potential of collective scenario building as a group of designer-authors, as well as the usefulness of realising or enacting this alternative reality scenario to expand it conceptually and in practice.

fig. 15: *Alien Archaeology artefacts, plaster casts of found object assemblages*

5 LASTING VOID, 2007

Cast of the inside space of a calf that had died of natural causes and had been deemed unfit for human consumption.

When we see a cow, even a dead cow, we encounter it as a fellow being, with a body like our own. We feel empathy. The Lasting Void is a cast of the inside body cavity of a dead calf after the removal of its organs. The animal had died of natural causes in the field and was therefore classed as unfit for human consumption. I made it as part of an investigation into the transformation of animals into animal-based materials and products that had begun with the Ruminant Bloom lights and Cowbenches. Whereas the Cowbenches are compressing a number of processual phases into a single object, the Lasting Void is a deeper investigation into one distinct phase of the slaughter process: the moment in which our empathy ends, our attitude towards the animal shifts and we begin to perceive it as a material.

During the cow's life, the cavity the Lasting Void is a cast of is filled with organs and, in the process of slaughter, it is first emptied and later divided into ribs and other cuts of meat. The void only exists in this short moment and my aim was to create a more permanent physical record of it, as well as a memorial to an individual animal.

fig. 16: *The Lasting Void*

As an object, the Lasting Void is an abstraction that blurs the differences between species – every mammal casts a void similar to this one, the only major differences being in size and proportions. Through its abstraction away from the cow, it references our own death more strongly and symbolises our empathy and recognition of loss when we are faced with the death of a fellow mammal. This also gave rise to the title Lasting Void, which references both the wording of obituaries, such as: »The passing of (name) left a lasting void …« as well as the void as a space or volume and its permanence.

In 2007, I exhibited the Lasting Void as part of the group show 48 to the theme of 'Tabourets[6]', i.e. stools or thrones at Galerie Kreo in Paris, France. Icon Magazine (issue 051 September 2007)[7] featured the Lasting Void accompanied by process pictures of how it was made (fig. 17–20). The Italian designer and architect Alessandro Mendini[8], who also exhibited in the show, was so appalled by the subject matter and making of the piece that he wrote an open letter stating that if this piece »enters into the history books of design, this will be one of the most bitter examples, an extremely sad moment in the history of objects« (fig. 21).

The conversation with Mendini (fig. 22, 23) triggered a fundamental shift in how I think about and practice design. He empathically felt the soullessness of casting into the body of a dead mammal but thought that it was recklessness or deliberate provocation that guided me. Where before I had largely thought my objects would speak for themselves, or intentionally limited information provided alongside them to allow people to speculate and ask questions, I now understood the necessity to translate my concepts, emotions, findings and conclusions back into words. I wrote him an open letter in response, taking onboard the words of designer and educator Dubberly (2015)[9]:

»Making the tacit explicit is a requirement for effective design. Not doing so leaves design stuck in its medieval master-apprentice craft tradition, where change is slow, and innovation is difficult.«

It was the beginning of an expansion from experience- and process-led design into design research, which I am continuing with this PhD – equally enriching and challenging because I had previously almost entirely relied on objects and materials as a form of language.

The shift in the focus of my work was triggered by my discovery of seaweed and speculation about its potential as a material for design during a three-month artist residency at the S-AIR residency[10] centre in Sapporo, Japan in 2007. I have been developing seaweed as a material for making since then and will outline the progression of my work with the material before this PhD thesis and its

fig.17–20: *Casting process of The Lasting Void*

Mr Didier Krzentowski
Galerie Kreo

Milan, 6/9/2007

Dear Didier,

You know how much I admire your Galerie Kreo, so please accept this letter from me as a reflection on the design, prompted by your exhibition on “Tabourets”. I am also sending it to ICON magazine and I would also like you to show it to Julia Lohmann, whose original and unusual commitment to her work I know and admire: a search into the critical moments of genetic metamorphosis, the memory of the living animal in the shape of the inanimate sofa (“memento mori”).

Today, I read the article by Anna Bates**,** “The inside of a calf”, in the September edition of ICON. It describes the stool, by Julia, called “The Lasting Void”. I see that the plastic stool, of which twelve have been made, has been obtained using the emptied inside of an actual dead animal carcass. The designer says she has “always been interested in the transition of an animal to the product”. I am happy to have designed my stool “Enigma” as part of the collection of twenty-five artists forming part of this exhibition, but the item by Julia Lohmann leaves me with a feeling of great discomfort, which I must express to you. It is an extremely negative object, as demonstrated by the three cruel pictures published by ICON. I know full well that research in design is on the decline now and I am myself a part of that trend. I also know that design, in this fleeting era, is not motivated by ethics or by values. I know design now is not an idyll and I also know that one is forced to take extreme action to find innovations and new languages. However, Julia’s creative energy, in the case of your stool, truly seems to be badly directed. I do not understand what so much unpleasantness is supposed to demonstrate. If the photograph of her stool enters into the history books of design, this will be one of the most bitter examples, an extremely sad moment in the history of objects. It brings to mind the items made out of human skin in the concentration camps, not the horse skin chaise-longue by Le Corbusier, elephant foot stools or tribal leopard skin rugs. I can see no theoretical, aesthetic, methodological or anthropological reason which justifies the idea of immortalising a dead animal’s last breath, in order sadistically to propose it as an item for everyday use, directly expressed in its suffering. The idea is cynical and pointless, it is simply turning the torture of a dead body into entertainment. Sometimes, in the field of art, the epic sacrifice of an animal expresses the mythology of the most ancient human violence and can be transformed into language, into a denouncement and a representation (Hermann Nitsch, Damien Hirst, Marina Abramovic, Gaetano Pesce). Perhaps this is the sensitive area where Julia is working. However, she says: “stools are funny objects, they're the last one to be sat on at a party, you have to engage with this one to know what it's about”...” And this troubles me very much.

You know very well how open I am towards everything, but I care too much about life and death and the suffering of living creatures to ignore the instinct to write this letter. Perhaps Julia Lohmann is expressing a love for animals, but it is the demonstration of a cruel love which I cannot understand.

Alessandro Mendini

fig. 21: ***Alessandro Mendini’s open letter to Didier Krzentowski of Galerie Kreo, Paris, regarding The Lasting Void***

Response to a letter by Alessandro Mendini

London 24 September 2007

Dear Mr. Mendini,

I would like to thank you for your letter. I too appreciate constructive dialogue and it gives me the opportunity to outline my thoughts towards the Lasting Void. You write in your letter that you don't believe my design to be motivated by ethics or by values – I disagree.

Is an object that has the death of an animal as its starting point more ethical if it hides its origin as best as it can? In response to this question I designed the Cowbench, an object linked as closely to its animal origin as to its object outcome, the leather couch. For the Lasting Void I am exploring a different design path to those normally condoned by our culture, going back to the source of these materials, the animal. I am hoping to develop objects that will raise questions about how we interact with the world around us, how we consume resources and to which purpose we design. I believe that research does not always have to be textual but can also be undertaken on an object level.

Design has to be more than merely 'pleasant'. Our lives are increasingly mediated through objects and revolve around consumption. It is the responsibility of the designer to embed in objects an added emotional and ethical functionality. Design should stop us from becoming numb to the world and instead prompt us to rethink how we lead our lives.

You have also compared my work to art concerned with epic sacrifice – however, my subject is not art. I am concerned with design and its material origins. Some of these are derived from animals, which we have become used to seeing as expendable life forms, epic only in numbers. Thousands of cows are slaughtered every day in the EU alone, supplying us with 6.3 million tons of beef per year – in an accepted process of anonymous killing and docile consumption of nondescript products that often disguise their animal origin. The calf I used to make the Lasting Void was a waste product from this process. Deemed unfit for human consumption after it had died of natural causes in the field it was going to be incinerated. By casting the negative space inside it I preserved the memory of a single, discarded creature that was deemed of no value for conventional use.

To present the Lasting Void in an exhibition showing designers' interpretations of everyday design objects i.e. stools is in this sense attractive as the mundane nature of the objects is in keeping with our casual consumption of livestock. More importantly though the well-publicised limited edition gallery pieces give us an opportunity to communicate ideas – if we as designers are willing to leave well-trodden paths and engage in debate.

Julia Lohmann

fig. 22: *My reply to Alessandro Mendini's letter (fig. 21)*

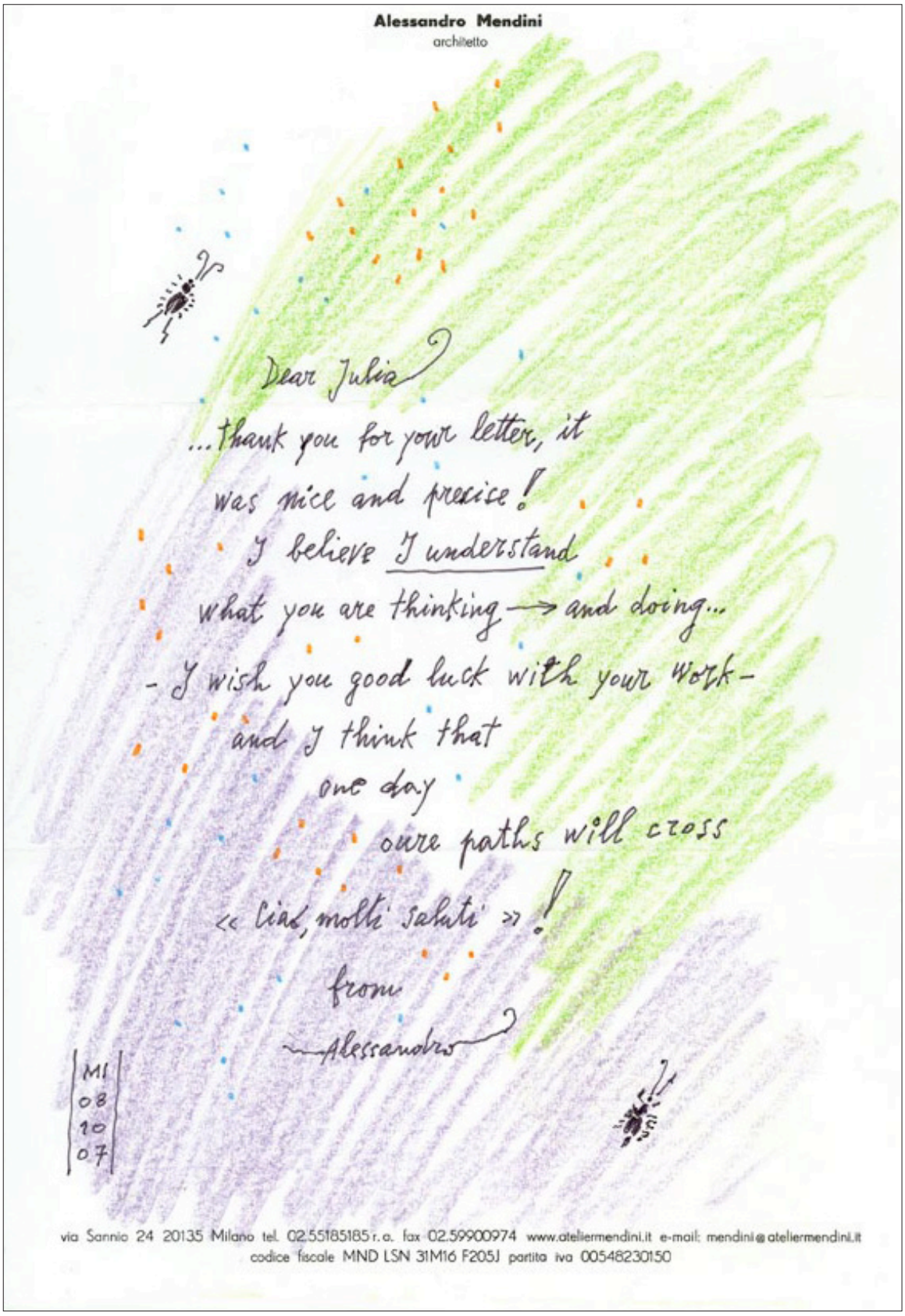

fig. 23: *Alessandro Mendini's note responding to my letter (fig. 22)*

fig. 24: *Kelp Constructs*

6 PANTA REI EXHIBITION, GALLERIA NILUFAR; MILAN, ITALY, 2008

Exhibition, workshop

In 2008, I was invited to exhibit in the Milan design gallery Galleria Nilufar[11] during the Saloni di Mobile[12]. At the time, I was concerned about what I considered to be an over-presentation objects, prioritising visual effect and luxury entertainment over innovation. These priorities and largely unreflected continuation of consumer culture did not align with the aims and intentions underpinning my practice.

I decided not to present objects but instead process, showcasing the potential of Japanese Kombu kelp. I took 10 kg of dried kelp and transformed the gallery into an open seaweed workshop, with all stages of the making process on show to the public. Together with my husband I worked with seaweed day and night, simultaneously discussing the potential of the project and the possibilities for making with kelp with the visitors to the gallery – as well as the contrast between showing process instead of products. Reactions and feedback varied,

fig. 25–27: *Working in Galleria Nilufar, Kelp Construct Lamp*

with some people from the design establishment telling me I could and should not present work in this stage. I had after all, in their view, a name to loose and visitors would expect finished work. Other visitors came time and again, marveled at what could be made from this material and discussed their ideas and visions with me.

In the process I realised that the objects the visitors and I got most excited about were the imagined objects in the visitors' minds: the lamps, jewellery and clothing items that our processes hinted at, but did not actualise. I began thinking of these visions as the 'third things', imagined aided by directly visible and accessible materials and process.

Not having a finished object opened a thinking space in the visitors' minds and encouraged sharing and dialogue. Conversations ranged from practical questions to potential applications, seaside holiday experiences, artist references and future scenarios. Much later, whilst working on this PhD thesis, I understood that this open dialogue was an important feedback loop in my design and research process, helping me articulate and verify my instinctive approach and define the direction of the project.

I also realised that the development of new materials and processes takes time, a scarce commodity in day-to-day studio practice. I began investigating research funding options.

fig. 28: *Laminarium poster*

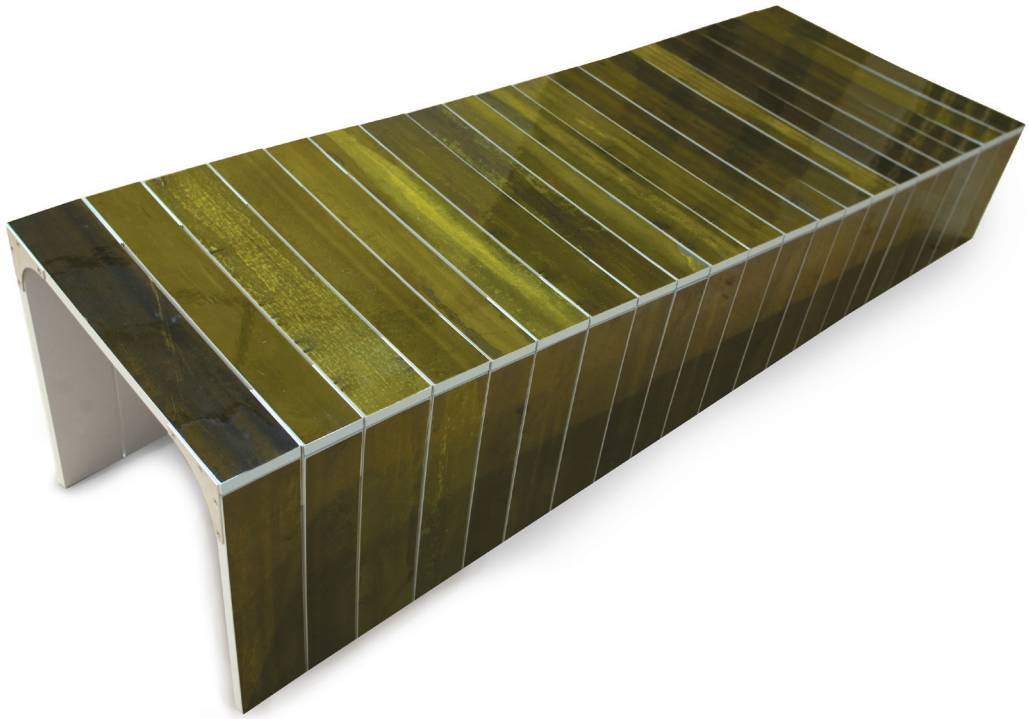

fig. 29: *Kelp-veneered Laminarium bench, in collaboration with Deutsch Werkstätten Hellerau*

7 LAMINARIUM: STANLEY PICKER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP, 2010

Residency, seaweed-based objects, e.g. lights and bench

I applied for a Stanley Picker Research Fellowship[13] at the Stanley Picker Gallery in Kingston-upon-Thames and was accepted as a fellow for a one year period. The gallery would pay for some of the time and materials I invested into the project, offer feedback and organise a solo exhibition at the end of the fellowship. In parallel, I was involved in another project with carpentry specialists at Deutsche Werkstätten in Hellerau[14], Germany, testing seaweed as a veneer. Initial tests proved successful and the company supported me in designing and making the first seaweed veneered objects, the Laminarium bench and a set of nesting tables that were shown in the Laminarium exhibition at the end of the fellowship period. I also presented a large research cabinet to display raw seaweed, other materials, models and sketches to show the project's overall process. As part of the gallery programme, we organised a series of gallery-based seaweed workshops aimed at primary school children, students and friends of the gallery.

At the Stanley Picker Gallery dialogue with the public was moderated by gallery staff and in a workshop format rather than directly and spontaneously as it was in Milan. Visitors were more engaged in making and faced with practical challenges rather than creative visions. In terms of fellowship outcomes, I learned that seaweed lends itself to practical workshops, engaging audiences regardless of age and craft experience, and connecting science (marine biology, eco-systems, chemistry and molecule chains, material science) and the humanities (craft processes, theatre, storytelling, sketching, imagination). In my practice, I began to think in material analogies – seaweed as parchment, a surface, as a veneer, and that these analogies would help me find and adapt craft techniques and knowledge from analogous fields. Working in a gallery setting made my processes transparent to others, within an established location for exhibitions, exchange and education.

8 DESIGN LAB, VIENNA DESIGN WEEK, VIENNA, AUSTRIA 2012

Open design studio, creating seaweed-based things

The organisers of Vienna Design Week[15] invited me to run a publicly accessible seaweed laboratory in 2012. I asked them to pair me with a craftsman working with one of the materials I had identified as a processual analogy to seaweed: wood, veneer, paper, parchment, textile, leather, skin or plastics and suggested a tailor, milliner, costume maker, shoemaker, leather craftsman, furrier or bookbinder. The VDW team introduced me to designer and milliner Moya Hoke[16] and to furrier Herbert Weinberger[17]. Both the milliner and the furrier had knowledge relating to the seaweed-skin-analogy. By identifying material and practice cross-overs, through dialogue and experimentation, the collaborators and I tested the viability of adapting of some of their processes for seaweed.

Fur and seaweed share a softness, which suggested sewing as a technique worth exploring to connect individual pieces. In his workshop, Weinberger tested sewing seaweed on his overcast stitching machine – a specialist tool used to sew narrow fur strips together with a beautiful, space-saving seam. We laser-cut a patterns into kelp to make a lampshade and Herbert Weinberger sewed the pieces together for us. Moya Hoke's millinery experience offered techniques in giving three-dimensional structure to flat materials, for example by means

fig. 30: *Constructing rattan framework with designer Moya Hoke*

fig. 31: *Work in the VDW Design Lab*

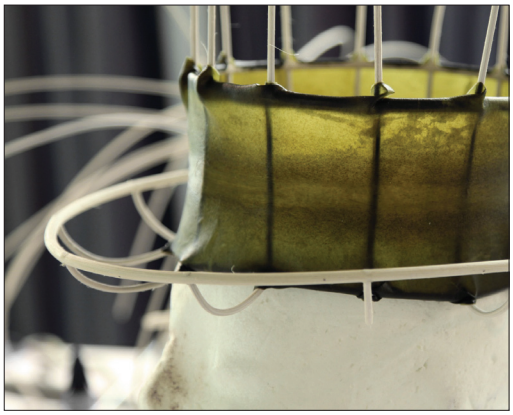

fig. 32: *Skin-on-frame construction made of rattan and kelp*

fig. 33 (last page): *The Catch Installation,* Japan 2007

of skin-on-frame structures. We decided to apply this analogy to create the structural framework for the lamp. We identified rattan, a type of vine used in millinery and upholstery, as a suitable natural frame material: like kelp, it is manipulated in a wet state and fixed in shape through drying.

At VDW Design Lab[19] I initiated the first deliberate pairings with makers from other disciplines in an open workshop format and extended the concept into adapting existing and developing new craft techniques through material analogy pairings.

END NOTES APPENDIX B

1 Fry, T. (2011): ***Design as Politics.*** Oxford: Berghttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Penone

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3 https://data.oecd.org/agroutput/meat-consumption.

4 Haraway, D. (1994): ***A game of cat's cradle: science studies, feminist theory, cultural studies.*** Configurations, 2, 59-71, p. 63

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%26A_Village_Fete

6 http://www.galeriekreo.com/fr/exposition/48-tabourets

7 https://www.iconeye.com/component/k2/item/2811-julia-lohmann-|-icon-053-|-november-2007

8 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alessandro_Mendini

9 Dubberly, H., Pangaro, P. (2015) ***Cybernetics and Human Knowing.*** Vol. 22 nos.73–82, 2–3 pp.,

10 http://www.s-air.org/residents.html

11 http://www.nilufar.com/?language=EN

13 http://www.salonemilano.it/en/

14 http://www.stanleypickergallery.org/programme/julia-lohmann/

15 http://www.dwh.de/en/welcome/

16 https://www.viennadesignweek.at/?lang_id=en

17 https://moyahoke.com/

18 http://www.viennadesignweek.at/archive.php?id=475