

midterm response

Hi Harpreet, What follows is a very unpolished assesment of my current thinking here. More of a journal entry than anything else. I hope that's OK.

After being here (in MFADT) for a couple months I belive I am persuing the following learning goal: to know when to engage in blindly intuitive making and when to engage in research based, highly considered making. So far my life has revolved around intuitive making, an inexplicable itch. Making first and assigning meaning second. I am here, however, to be challenged and that challenge is to become intentional.

On Wednesday, Franco and I went out and had a beer after class. It felt a bit irresponsible from a time management perspective, but it was really helpful to talk about the midterm process totally outside of school while it was so fresh. The bulk of our conversation focused on language. One aspect of Franco's presentation which I really appreciated was the framework he developed to decrcribe what he was discussing. For me, language is a big focus right now as I think about what it means to be intentional in my work. In order to be intentional we need to posses the language to describe our intent. Finding the appropriate language to use to describe what I'm seeing and trying to achieve feels like the next, most important step in my process.

The easiest place to look for language is in what others have already written. I spent some time looking for this during the year before I came to school, but without knowing the languae to look for and use in my search it was difficult to find a path of work to follow. This was frustrating, because I'm usually pretty good at self directed research and reading. Anyway, I'm definitely in the right place now with the right people to guide me in asking questions and building a foundation of thought for finding answers. Language allows you not only to describe, but question a field.

On the topic of building foundation, I spoke with Tega Brain two weeks ago. I was extremely nervous and practiced a lot. It was a great conversation and she was very generous with her time and knowledge. (As and aside, I am so incredibly excited and grateful be in this place where everyone is willing ot speak with me and discuss the things I'm interested in! I have felt out of place for so much of my academic and professional life it is wonderful to leave taht feeling behind.) I first asked her what frameworks she had encoutnered over her career which have helped lend more specific language and structure to the way the natural and manmade worlds are described and designated. She provided me with many useful references that address that broad ideas I'm trying to learn about.

The conversation naturally flowed into the next question I wanted to ask which was about the similarities between natural optimization processes and manmade or technological optimization procesed. We agreed that the scale of time and the objective of optimization tend to be the distinguishing factors between the two. In the same vein, she described an overarching urge in her work to replicate manmade systems in natural ways, often relying on this idea of optimization. It was helpful to hear that specific sense of purpose stated in such plain language.

Finally I asked her about the feeling of uncertainty which I am trying to investigate which I fell exists in a lot of her work. She asked if I was trying to describe the uncanny valley. I don't think I am, at least not "the" uncanny valley. I believe that the unvanny vally is an appropriate technique to describe what I'm talking about, it is accurate in reflecting the feeling of unease, but is specifically describes a human centric condition. What about more broad, natural existence? That is what I'm after. Maybe someone with a better understanding of this question will tell me that the question itself is unnecessary and has already been answered, but that's for me to find out

on my own.

Thinking a bit about the review itself, I found the process of preparing the presentation much more helpful than delivering the presentaion. Feedback was certainly useful, but I think I could've structured my presentation to make it more helpful. By framing a few specific questions for the audience to ponder I could've directed the feedback. Definitely need to rememebr that next time. Coming up with questions for others to asses for you impllies that know what help you need with so that you can ask for it. A little circular by definition.

I really liked mark's suggestion of framing the project in diferent ways to understand it better. I'm not sure I entirely know how to go about doing that, but I'm definitely going to try. Richard's coments about following my intuition toward this vein of inquire was helpful in that it made me think more specifically about the sometimes conflicting roles of intuition and intention in this process. The thoughtful feedback from class was overwhelming in how geenrouis it was (again, feeling lucky to be here)! In many of my classmates' comments I head the same question, which Tanve said really well: what do you want people to take away from your work? Again, a suggestion to focus on my intent.

Overall, the focus on building research and background before engaging in making has made me a lttle bit wary of my own ideas. I think this new degree of consideration is good, but I also recognize that it's important to let an urge to create drive your forward momentum. As I grow as thinkiner and come to understand the space I'm trying to exist in, my process will naturally become more considered. But I've got to start somewhere, and that's right now with the excitement and ideas I have in this moment.

There is a lot of reading ahead of me. Below is an accumulated list from the last month or so.

accumulated reading list and internet suggestions

Biomimicry - Janine Benyus (my dad...who has a weird knack for giving me important books at critical moments, like the Toaster Project right when it came out during my senior year of highschool)

seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees - Lawrence Welschler (Ed Andrews)

Anthropocene Thesis (not actually the name) - Donna Haraway (Tega Brain)

Against the Anthropocene - T. J. Demos (Tega Brain)

Exhallation - Ted Chang (Tega Brain)

The Sciences of the Artificial - Herbert Simon (Mark ?)

Life's Edge - Carl Zimmer (me)

Making and Being -

Internet followups from Tega Brain:

<http://www.greyroom.org/issues/68/72/the-smartness-mandate-notes-toward-a-critique/>

<https://alanwarburton.co.uk/fairytales>

<https://jods.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/lewis-arista-pechawis-kite/release/1>

<http://www.madlab.cc/>

think this one is the donna haraway

<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/75/67125/tentacular-thinking-anthropocene-capitalocene-chthuluc>

Internet followups from Harpreet:

look at ISEA 2021

https://www.ianingram.org/machines/2009_squirrelrel.html

https://www.google.com/search?q=bodies+in+motion&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS719US719&sxsrf=A0aemvI9jBtAv21633968526778&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiJ7vKM38LzAhXrQ98KHbZjBGoQ_AUoAnoECAIQBA&biw=1440&bih=766&dpr=2

<https://vimeo.com/220895476>

<https://news.mit.edu/2018/creating-3-d-printed-motion-sculptures-from-2-d-videos-mit-csail-09>

<https://vvvv.org/blog/bodies-in-motion-humanscale-milan-design-week-2019#:~:text=Bodies%20in%20Motion%20is%20an,scientific%20approach%20to%20furniture%20design>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_v3J6D6R_nI&ab_channel=HumanscaleHQ

philip beesley

<https://www.christianhubert.com/writing/assemblage>

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137025012_4

Internet followups from Richard The:

Design Triennale, Broken Nature

RadioLab – Breathing podcast

https://www.lozano-hemmer.com/last_breath.php

from Guin: <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/history-and-sustainability-of>

from Tanve: The Year the Earth Changed - David Attenborough