

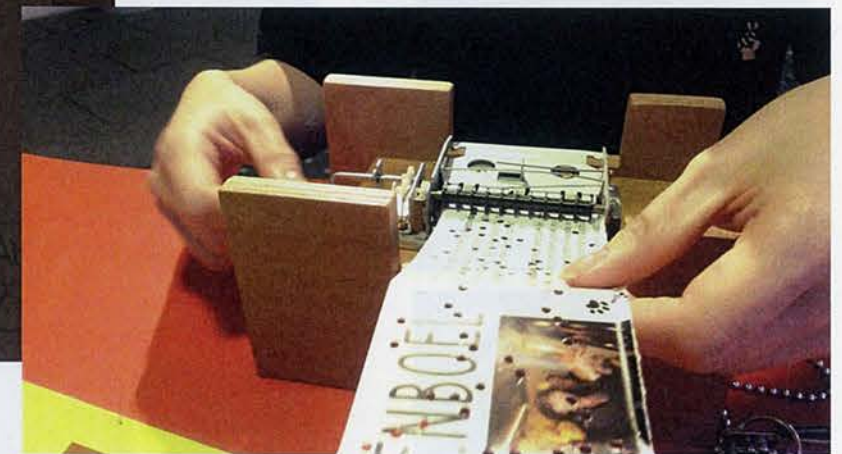




This exhibition is part of an ongoing collaboration between Lucy Meyle and Ziggy Lever. The project, which is currently titled *Working Together* is a continuation of discussions around collaborative and cooperative methods that were started with the show *Knowing You're Wrong* in 2014.

One of the strategies of *Knowing You're Wrong* (2014) was to demarcate a series of zones by painting a selection of walls yellow. We then worked alongside/off this structure separately, all the while in constant communication. Earlier this year we developed a series of texts in the form of letters. These were written almost exclusively on long train trips, while traveling between major cities. We were interested in writing in a conversational manner and gathering images from a multitude of places, as a means to casually record and unpick ideas and sensations experienced at the time of writing. Through conversation we can explore and question the points of difference and similarity in our shared memories.

That text has been reproduced here.

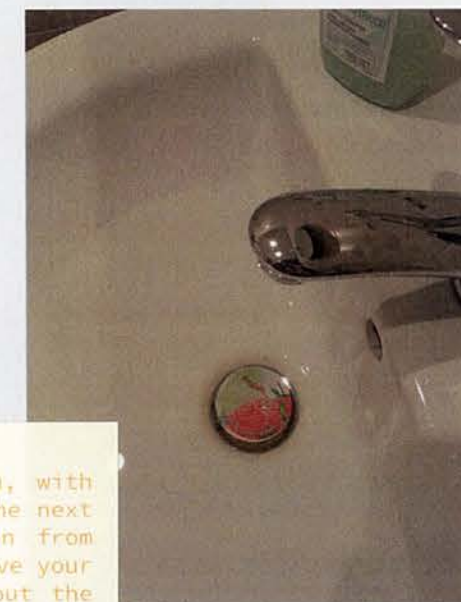


Using entrance ticket to make music



Topiary trimming





erve jam packet as a sink plug



Dear Lucy,  
I thought I would write to you, with the hope you would respond in the next few pages. We are on the train from Frankfurt to Leipzig, and you have your headphones on and are looking out the window. I've just started reading Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, and am enjoying her descriptions of the San Bernardino Valley in *Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream*. It has reminded me, as I notice the reflection of the seats out the window of the train doubling, their colours splitting into brown-red and khaki greens, of how narrative might be at the core of our discussions. Particularly in relation to our idea that by telling a story you are in some way clouding other aspects of reality. I think about the construction of stories in both our practices; and an interest in exploring sites - albeit in very different ways.

Ziggy,  
We are now on the train from Leipzig to Dresden. I was thinking about what you wrote for the whole journey and I think you're right - there is something within both our practices that talks to 'storytelling' in (at the very least) a loose way. Maybe less 'storytelling' than what the implications and conversations are around 'storytellers', what it means to be an author or a director of attention towards something instead of a strict narrator.

When we were sitting on the last train, we were across from each other over a table. You were facing backwards and I was facing forwards. You kept pointing things out to me in the passing landscape - things I had seen before you due to our sitting positions - but that you



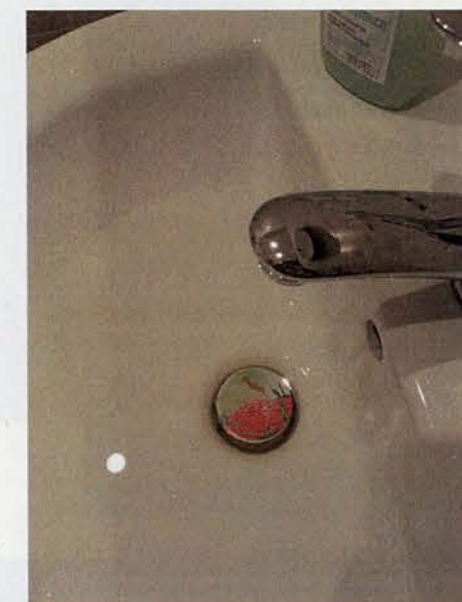


altered my memory of those things by re-directing my attention to them. I think about my work something like that - like directing a gaze rather than conjuring anything tangible.

Lucy,  
I found it very interesting that you talked about memory altering when I pointed things out to you on our last train. It made me think about synchronistic moments, like when we shared both our headphones after 'dancing' at each other. You were listening to some down-tempo electronica and I was listening to a soul mixtape. The tone was so different yet we could dance to the same tempo.

I must confess I was slightly anxious about our collaboration, but now not so much.

Our time in Dresden was eye opening. It was great to stay with Caro and listen to her ideas about asking the right questions, and not answering others. Her continual insistence on thinking with the body seemed in line with some of our thinking, and brought some of these abstract ideas into a concrete form for me - especially when we mimicked that actor/dancer during the intermission of [the play we went to] *In Act and Thought* (which I thought was the best part?). [The actor told us 'there is an intermission now, but I have to stay here and do this for fifteen minutes' - he then made a figure-eight movement with both hands, fists clenched but thumbs out, which he did repeat for the whole intermission]



Single-serve jam packet as a sink plug







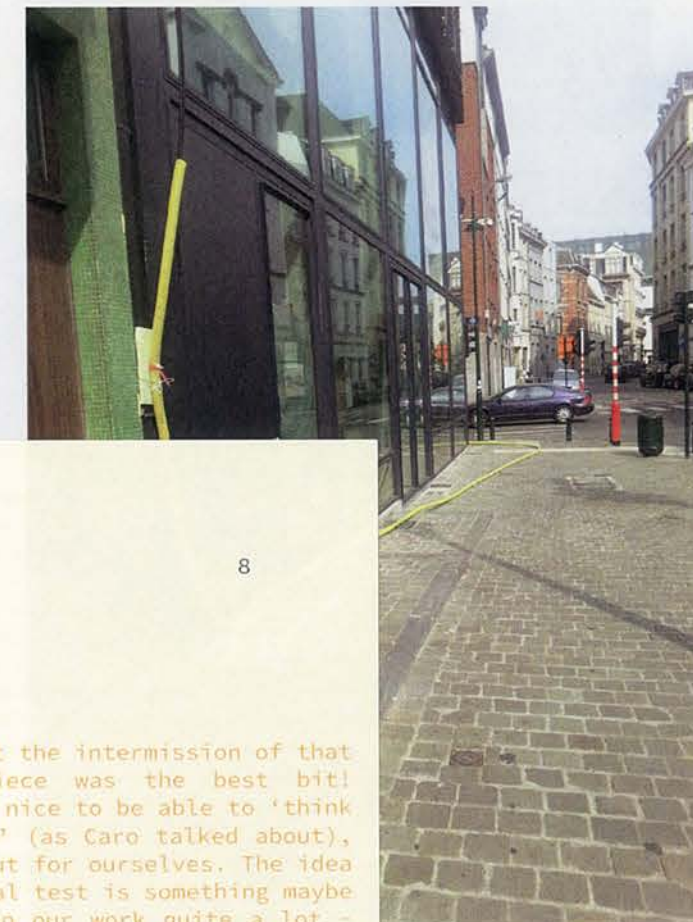
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Slice of bread



Footage of Matisse making a cut-out



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To Ziggy,

I also thought the intermission of that dance/play piece was the best bit! Mostly it was nice to be able to 'think with the body' (as Caro talked about), and test it out for ourselves. The idea of the physical test is something maybe we both use in our work quite a lot - instead of sketching or drawing. We saw a film of Matisse in Amsterdam (where we have just left) of him making paper cut outs. Starting off with scissors confidently and with purpose, he then held the pieces (still connected) together - twisting them, folding them, shifting them, until some new mixture of form appeared and he would move towards it. Though I know we both like to think theoretically also, I feel the most interesting work for me always comes out of this 'thinking with the body' - the movement and action involved loosens something up for me, letting me be more surprised or more flexible.

Lucy-

I think for me thinking with the body can be extended into a multiple part process. It's like Matisse with his cut-outs, there is a shape or movement I want to make, which is negated by what I can make, and then looked back upon as a movement for future action. I think this probably takes place simultaneously.





I have noticed that the appropriation of others' stories/narratives/objects and aesthetics is at every turn, particularly in Paris and in The Netherlands, you have just pointed out an advert in the magazine that was left on the train of a white man with Tā Moko on one side of his face, and it reminded me of Andre Bresson's studio at the Centre Pompidou, which was full of various objects and tools from the Pacific, which were not labelled or addressed as taonga. Where do our stories come from, and how many degrees of cultural appropriation does it take to create 'original' European art? Suddenly the movement we were doing with our hands [from the dance show] has become poi in my mind. I also notice how cultural appropriation was not addressed in the European galleries we visited.

I have just read *Pigment Pur and the Corpo Da Cor* which looks at Yves Klein and Helio Oiticica's use of pigment as material to 'break free from painting'. Both exhibited pure pigment. Klein, in short, commercialised IKB when he patented it, making the colour specific and legally unattainable. Oiticica, reacting to Brazil's booming modernity and the neo-concrete movement, used pigment as a participatory medium, where the interlocutors transmute materials into colour, both literally and corporally. Maybe Oiticica's work is useful for our story, and for thinking with the body?



Slice of bread

Ziggy,  
I've never heard of Oiticica's work before, but it sounds very interesting! I'm imagining interlocutors getting pigment on themselves and then (accidentally or purposefully) making



Footage of Matisse making a cut-out



Yellow line going around corner







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Resting

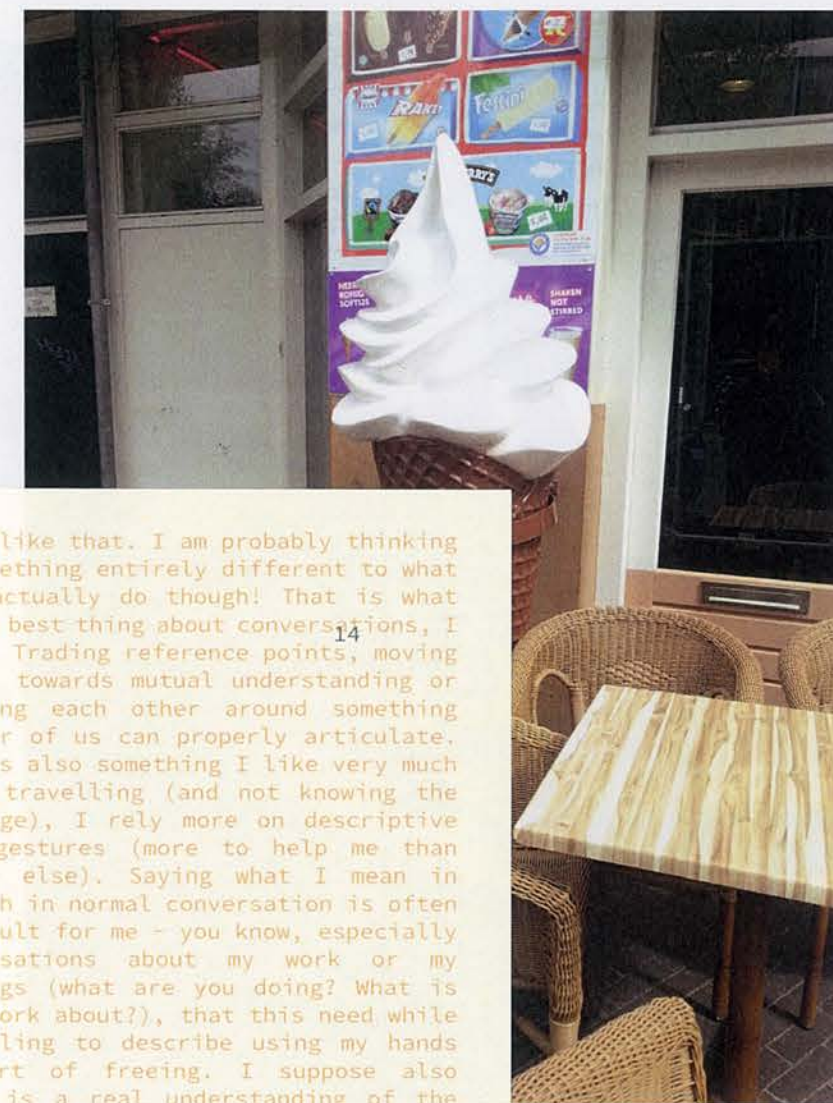




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Needs work (1)



marks like that. I am probably thinking of something entirely different to what they actually do though! That is what is the best thing about conversations, I think. Trading reference points, moving closer towards mutual understanding or circling each other around something neither of us can properly articulate. That is also something I like very much about travelling (and not knowing the language), I rely more on descriptive hand gestures (more to help me than anyone else). Saying what I mean in English in normal conversation is often difficult for me - you know, especially conversations about my work or my feelings (what are you doing? What is your work about?), that this need while travelling to describe using my hands is sort of freeing. I suppose also there is a real understanding of the barrier to conversations here (it is obvious: I don't speak Italian), so we move past it towards the realities of communicating, trying to put the other at ease by trying hard. There is an interview with Bjork where she talks about the importance of putting people at ease when you're interviewing them (especially for a job, but also at other times), in order to see the best they can offer. I think I'm guilty back home of not being open to being at ease in conversations - I need to remember that a conversation is not so high-stakes but rather like a constellation of ideas and attempts at communicating that is better seen as a whole.

Lucy,  
Your phrase 'constellation of ideas' reminded me of an artwork we saw in Paris, *Topo's Game* by Jean Michel Sanejouand, 1963.





Two players arrange rocks on a field and the game ends when both players agree to their configuration. Of course, real-life conversation is not really directed towards such an outcome. I like to imagine the sounds of the rocks as they are placed on the field (marble) as being similar to large knuckle bones, or throwing pebbles at rock piles. I also imagine the sound to have some distant and distinct quality, which when heard will prompt some other memory, something that exists in the deep, but that I am not yet ready to receive. Sounds from our journey have stayed present in my mind. When we went to see Beezy Bailey and Brian Eno's works in Venice, there was this door... wait I'll start a little earlier- You had walked on ahead as I was trying unsuccessfully to record one of the sound paintings. When I came round the corner you were sitting on the stairs and listening to a pianist practice through a closed door. This seemed to undo and remake Eno's (and his collaborator's) works, a portal to something both new and real, and so serendipitous that it was also very unreal too. As you sat and listened I used my camera to look through a crack in the door, but the room seemed empty, just two windows, silhouettes, and maybe a chair. Some people passed us, unaware of the rare type of moment we were witnessing, talking loudly as they shuffled past us.

Ziggy,  
I was slack at replying, so I'm writing this as we are working towards a show at ST Paul Street gallery 3. Listening to that person play piano till feels close, though. I felt a bit guilty listening in



Strap-in the soft serve





Jean Michel Sanejouand *Topo's Game* 1963



on someone practising like that but I guess (since it was in a music school), they would be used to it? The idea of someone watching me practise feels very embarrassing, but then again, isn't that what we are doing here? Practising ideas, practising working together, practising that conversational movement of ideas that alter slightly with every reply. I don't feel embarrassed doing this, though I might if we do make this into a publication! Working together really does take practise (like the piano player) and we are also taking the step of 'practising in public' (again, like the piano player). That idea appeals to me a lot - that working, and working together is just continual practising. I know we use that word a lot in school, but it has taken on a different meaning than what the word 'practising' means to me when I think about listening in to that music student making really fine changes to phrasing and dynamics.

Lucy,  
The differences between practising and rehearsing could be interesting to think about. Rehearsing is always directed something, an event whereas practise doesn't necessarily occupy the same rhythms. Practise is habitual, daily. Practise plays the long game, and rehearsal builds in tension towards an event, like a show. I tried to look through a gap in the door, which I couldn't help but think of as Duchamp's last work *Entant Donnés*. The curtain I saw moved slowly in and out with the wind, pressing up and forming to the window. The room was still aside from this ebbing and flowing, almost unnaturally slow. The gap through which I was looking created a sort of screen,







Jean Michel Sanejo

a filter for all colour - rendering the scene grey. I moved side to side but couldn't see anything else. This memory has stayed with me, given some great importance in dreams and other ideas of late.

These are some things that I notice everyday walking into work:

The neighbour has planted a Magnolia tree in the traffic island outside our house. Every time I see it it reminds me of the massive "northernmost Magnolia in the world!" that we saw at the Chelsea Physic Gardens. On the day the tree was planted, I took a photograph of it, which we printed and used in our work *Storage Solutions* (2015). Today the magnolia is looking a bit sad, and will need to be re-planted into deeper soil. Opposite the tree I always look at the neighbours persimmons, and how they are held back from the fence by thick car tie downs (I am nosey!). At the bottom of our street there is a steel frame for a sign, which looks like it would make a good chin-ups bar, although it is very low. It is painted sky blue. I think often about the strange mix of suburban and industrial buildings. When walking over the bridge the other day, I looked down at the branches of a tree through the gaps in the wall. A kind of strobing effect makes the tree look like a stop motion animation. There are holes cut into the perspex which allow you to look down at the space between motorways, converging and zooming off into different directions. A new building is being built, shop fronts made to order with glass doors, concrete floors and awkward pillars. A uniform structure. A blank-ish slate. I remember the time a large tree blew down onto the road, and I sat on a bench next to it all morning.







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Needs work (2)

Hitching a ride

Ziggy,  
That image of not being able to see inside the room seems to relate to our co-operation and collaboration a bit. In making this work together, over the past weeks has been sort of like what you describe (for me, anyway). Sometimes you share ideas or drawings with me that seem incredibly opaque, and I get annoyed because I don't understand them! When we are walking together the opposite happens - you point things out to me (like the persimmon tree's stabilising ropes) and I get annoyed because I can already see them! The difficulties of balancing amounts of information while collaborating is constant. Trying hard, but not really understanding, or trying too hard and then getting the wrong end of things. Too much information or communication prescribes action, too little and we are both in the dark. It reminds me of the Rietveld Schröder House in some way. Everything was colour-coded: red for living room, yellow for the bathroom, and so on. But at the same time everything was modular and could be re-purposed. The 'information' or usefulness of one thing flowing into another thing.

Perhaps that is best: making little slivers of things out - but not really getting the whole thing - then repurposing and reverberating that back. Practice, movement, memories, all just getting bounced around in these letters and then back out into... somewhere else. I guess that is what I've been getting at a bit in this writing - that conversations are not so high-stakes, that we're testing things out, that everything is really just practise.





Hitching a ride

LUCY MEYLE  
ZIGGY LEVER  
WORKING  
TOGETHER

WED 23 - FRI 25 SEPT  
2015