

The Center for Art Research (CFAR) is a collaborative, artist-run platform for experimentation and exchange rooted in art making. CFAR cultivates diverse modes of engagement related to the practices of contemporary artists by supporting speculative Research, Discourse, Exhibition, and Publication. CFAR is directed by the faculty in the University of Oregon's Department of Art and is sustained by the contributions of individuals and institutions from around the world.



CFAR's Catalytic Conversations serve the practices of individuals and groups by providing opportunities to engage a small body of thinkers in discourse related to a particular question, line of thinking, or project still in development. Catalytic Conversations have impacted the work of participants in ways ranging from contributions to books and curatorial projects to journal papers, art projects, and proposals for changes to legislation. Groups are assembled in response to an identified theme and typically include students, colleagues, visiting professionals, and community members. In addition to artists and art historians with a variety of research focuses, CFAR has enlisted specialists from other fields including cultural theorists, social activists, scientists, philosophers, anthropologists, poets, linguists, attorneys, psychologists, and municipal administrators from within and outside the University of Oregon. These conversations typically occur for two to three hours and are recorded, transcribed, and archived as reference material for those involved.

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Center for  
Art Research



Craft and the Hyperobject was the first Catalytic Conversation conducted with the intention to serve a public audience; by documenting a conversation convened on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to consider craft in proximity to the hyperobject, a term coined by Timothy Morton in his 2013 book Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World. For this work, CFAR brought together Anthea Black, Garth Clark, Sonja Dahl, Jovencio de la Paz, Brian Gillis, Bean Gilsdorf, Nicki Green, Namita Gupta Wiggers, Anya Kivarkis, Bukola Koiki, Stacy Jo Scott, Shannon Stratton, and Lori Talcott, a group of people representing a range of practices, life experiences, stakes in the field, and thinking related to craft.

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CATALYTIC CONVERSATION CRAFT AND THE HYPEROBJECT

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BUKOLA KOIKI  
STACY JO SCOTT  
SHANNON STRATTON  
LORI TALCOTT



# CATALYTIC CONVERSATION: CRAFT AND THE HYPEROBJECT



Eugene, OR

# CATALYTIC CONVERSATION: CRAFT AND THE HYPEROBJECT

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**Research** – CFAR brings together artists and scholars from around the world to catalyze unexpected connections and outcomes related to the practice-based research of affiliates. CFAR takes an expanded view of art research by supporting individual and collaborative projects, residencies, and a variety of initiatives that happen within and outside of studio practice. CFAR research responds fluidly to dynamic currents in society and culture that are relevant to a range of people and communities.

**Discourse** – CFAR challenges, synthesizes, and expands engagement with contemporary art through diverse approaches that include studio dialogue, public lectures and symposia, experimental gatherings, and more focused seminars and workshops. By approaching art practice as a catalytic mode of inquiry, center affiliates also work with colleagues from adjacent fields to develop transdisciplinary discourse that is relevant to broad constituencies.

**Exhibition** – CFAR makes visible the work of contemporary artists through the Center and with partners by facilitating exhibitions and alternative forms of public display in local, national, and international spheres. Activities range from gallery exhibitions and site-responsive installations to experimental screenings, performances, and social actions.

**Publication** – CFAR publications vary in form and content, proliferating art thinking related to the experiences and conditions of contemporary life. Publications, authored by center affiliates and others, are both printed and web-based, and include essays, monographs, periodicals, public archives, editioned art multiples, and other experimental forms.

CFAR endeavors to serve artists, arts workers, and communities by creating space and agency for a range of practices, voices, and experiences in ways that are equitable and inclusive for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, heritage, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic position, political perspective, cultural beliefs and traditions.





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# Organizer's Note

*Craft and the Hyperobject* documents a Center for Art Research (CFAR) Catalytic Conversation held on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with Anthea Black, Garth Clark, Sonja Dahl, Jovencio de la Paz, Brian Gillis, Bean Gilsdorf, Nicki Green, Namita Gupta Wiggers, Anya Kivarkis, Bukola Koiki, Stacy Jo Scott, Shannon Stratton, and Lori Talcott to explore notions of craft through the structure of a hyperobject.

CFAR's *Catalytic Conversations* serve the creative practices of individuals and groups by giving them an opportunity to engage a small body of thinkers in ways that contribute to a project or line of thinking that is in development. These conversations are recorded, transcribed, and archived as reference materials for those involved. This particular *Catalytic Conversation* was the first that CFAR conducted with intent to publish.

*Craft and the Hyperobject* is the latest of a series of engagements that University of Oregon's community of craft-related artists, Sonja Dahl, Jovencio de la Paz, Brian Gillis, Anya Kivarkis, and Stacy Jo Scott, have facilitated using practice-based research, teaching, and speculative discourse to explore craft. After coming together as colleagues at the University of Oregon, we first organized a Summer Craft Forum in 2016 where artists working in ceramics, fibers, metals, and printmaking were invited to the UO campus to work in the studios together, share meals, and hold public conversations related to participants' work and thinking. After this forum we continued to work together through studio collaborations and exhibitions, conference panels, lectures, and workshops, by organizing public events, teaching at the UO and institutions around the United States, working together on institutional and governmental initiatives, and collaborating with other UO colleagues to found the Center for Art Research.

The *Craft and the Hyperobject* conversation was convened to consider craft in proximity to the hyperobject, a term coined by Timothy Morton in his 2013 book *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*. In this text, Morton explores the idea of a hyperobject in five parts, or that which is viscous, undulates temporally, is nonlocal, phasing, and interobjective, to explain objects so massively distributed in time and space that they transcend spatiotemporal specificity or legible, tangible, or discretely definable knowing. We chose the framework of

the hyperobject to initiate a thought experiment that might allow for the consideration of craft in ways that aren't preoccupied by previous craft discourse, disproportionately focused on valuation, or positioned as supplemental to other fields, but rather something that is of and in relation to craft on terms that are meaningful to related people and histories.

For this work, we assembled a group of people who represent a range of practices, stakes in the field, and thinking related to craft, and also have the capacity to think speculatively in a cooperative and rigorous think-tank environment. With each correspondence in advance of the Catalytic Conversation, the group received information about project goals, a primer outlining the structure of a hyperobject, and a schedule of events for the day we assembled. With our last communication we also sent the introduction to Morton's text as a primer to seed the discussion.

This conversation was not intended as a place to perform knowledge, valorize ideas, or establish a new canon, but rather a space to honor and draw from participants' diverse experiences, knowledge, and perspectives in order to explore craft thinking in fresh and relevant ways. We assumed this short conversation would be inconclusive, and ultimately function more as a catalyst for future inquiry than a series of resolved thoughts. So, in addition to the conversation transcript, we have also included a bibliography of materials that were referenced in the conversation, inform participants' thinking more generally, or are such that seem important to be thinking about at this moment.

By making this content available through the CFAR website and other forms of digital distribution, and by printing a limited-edition book to distribute to 400 individuals, educational programs, and libraries, we hope that this document serves as a catalytic object to seed further discourse.

Sonja Dahl  
Jovencio de la Paz  
Brian Gillis  
Anya Kivarkis  
Stacy Jo Scott





## ROLL CALL

|                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Anthea Black         | San Francisco, CA |
| Garth Clark          | Santa Fe, NM      |
| Sonja Dahl           | Eugene, OR        |
| Jovencio de la Paz   | Eugene, OR        |
| Brian Gillis         | Eugene, OR        |
| Bean Gilsdorf        | Portland, OR      |
| Nicki Green          | San Francisco, CA |
| Namita Gupta Wiggers | Portland, OR      |
| Anya Kivarkis        | Eugene, OR        |
| Bukola Koiki         | Richmond, VA      |
| Stacy Jo Scott       | Eugene, OR        |
| Shannon Stratton     | Chicago, IL       |
| Lori Talcott         | Seattle, WA       |



15:00:00      Craft Hyperobject  
January 29, 2020  
3:00–7:00pm PST

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| 15:12:28 | 15:16:08 |
| 15:12:50 | 15:16:30 |
| 15:13:12 | 15:16:52 |
| 15:13:34 | 15:17:14 |
| 15:13:56 | 15:17:36 |
| 15:14:18 | 15:17:58 |

**Brian Gillis:** Good afternoon, my name is Brian Gillis. I'm the Director of the Center for Art Research, what we call CFAR. I am also a faculty member in the Department of Art and co-coordinator of the Ceramics Area. My colleagues and I are very excited about today's Catalytic Conversation, and the possibilities for it to resonate beyond this event, and I want to thank you for making the trip here to work with us today.

I'm going to begin by introducing the project and speak to some logistics, and then hand it off to my colleague Sonja Dahl to discuss some terms for engagement. Following that, our discussants, the thirteen of us, will each take a few moments to introduce any preliminary thoughts and questions they have, and then we will get into the discussion following a brief break. As you know, we are recording this discussion for transcription, so we ask that contributors project accordingly, and that you all are patient if we need to make adjustments to technology throughout the event.

Before we start, I'd also like to take a moment to recognize that the land that this building is on, and the places that this university has used to live and work in, is the occupied territory of the Kalapuya people. With today's gathering, and the work we do here daily, we acknowledge our occupation and pay respect to the Kalapuya people and the Confederate Tribes of the Grande Ronde as the past, present, and future stewards of this land.

As many of you know, CFAR was launched last year as a platform for experimentation and exchange related to contemporary art practice. The center's primary mission is to serve contemporary art practice by creating opportunities for artists and arts workers to engage speculative research, discourse, exhibition, and publication in ways that might otherwise not be possible. One of the ways we've been doing this is by facilitating Catalytic Conversation with artists, writers, designers, curators, and thinkers who participate in speculative dialogue around a central question or concept.



Today's conversation will use the Catalytic Conversation format to consider craft in proximity to and through the structure of the hyperobject, a term coined by Timothy Morton in his 2013 book *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*. Morton uses this term to explain objects so massively distributed in time and space that they transcend spatiotemporal specificity or legible, tangible, or discretely definable knowing. We are interested in using the idea of a hyperobject as a framework to think about craft in ways that aren't necessarily mired in old discourse or disproportionately focused on value binaries or relationships to other fields, but rather something that is of and in relation to craft on terms that are meaningful to related people and histories.

This conversation will be transcribed, and then situated alongside additional materials as a way to further challenge, locate, and expand what we touch upon here. This work will then be distributed internationally in book form for free to about 400 artists, designers, curators, arts writers, and art institutions with investments in the field of craft.

To generate content for this project, we have assembled a group of people who represent a range of practices, stakes in the field, and thinking related to craft, who also have the capacity to think speculatively in a cooperative and intellectually rigorous think-tank environment. After each discussant makes a brief introduction, the conversation itself will be a fluid, responsive, and far-reaching enterprise that touches on and opens up things that can later be responded to. This project is not about the performance of knowledge, valorizing ideas, or establishing a new canon, but rather employing participants' diverse experiences, knowledge, and perspectives to explore craft thinking in fresh ways. This short conversation will undoubtedly be inconclusive, and ultimately function more as a catalyst for future inquiry than a series of resolved thoughts.

Before moving on to introductions, my colleague, Sonja, is going to lay out the terms of engagement and give us an idea of how the conversation will flow.

**Sonja Dahl:** Welcome everyone. We are so excited that you are all here with us. This is an amazing group of people and we are all coming together from so many different ways of being embedded in this idea of craft and that is what's so exciting to us. This is a group of powerful voices. You probably read already in that last email that we sent out, some notes about how we'd like the conversation to flow. I just want to review that, so that we're all on the same page. We recognize that our time here is relatively short. There are thirteen voices in the room, and we want to make sure that this is a space that is equitable and available for everyone's voice, that we all have ways of engaging that feel comfortable and right, and all have a chance to share. Also, those of us who are hosting the event, the five of

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us, will be helping to facilitate as needed, as the conversation unfolds. If the conversation needs a little redirecting, you can expect that we might pipe up for that. But also, we'll be available and aware if anything needs to be addressed in the flow of conversation. Specifically, if anybody feels like they're not having a chance to get their thoughts out there, I'm going to go over a couple practical things for how we can pay attention to that and make sure that everyone has equal opportunity to speak. I know that when I've been in large group conversations before, things are exciting, and it's engaged, and there are so many ideas flying around, sometimes I feel like I have trouble actually inserting my voice. So, this is meant to make sure that we all have ways to get our voices heard. I'm just going to review what was already in the email so that we all remember where we're at and ways for keeping the conversation mutual, equal, and respectful.

Please come to this group with the spirit of openness and mutuality. Please respect and use each other's pronouns when speaking to and of each other; you can share your pronouns during our intros as we each go around. Please be respectful of each other's feelings and your own, and be respectful of all cultures, races, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions, class backgrounds, abilities, and perspectives when speaking. Please be self-aware about your own participation and privileges. For example, if you speak often or dominate the conversation, please just remember to sit back so that others have an equal opportunity to speak up. Likewise, if you're feeling shy, however you feel comfortable to join the conversation, please do so. Be prepared to listen attentively while others are speaking and avoid interrupting anyone else. Again, this is being transcribed, so for practical purposes, but also for mutual respect we ask that we try to avoid talking over each other at any point. When someone else indicates that they have something to say, please make space for that person to speak up. The best way for us to do that is to raise your hand if you feel like you have something to say and you haven't found a way in. You can raise your hand and then we ask that the whole group recognize that gesture and make space for that individual to share. So that's a great and very easy way for us to make sure that everyone gets a chance to be heard. Please, we ask that you respect any redirections of the facilitators.

Can we just raise our hands to indicate who are, those of us who are facilitators? Thank you all.

We will have some breaks built in, but if anyone feels like they need a break or if you need to use the restroom, you should do what you need to do.

Does anyone have any questions or thoughts or concerns about any of that?

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** Yes, one question...

|   |          |          |   |
|---|----------|----------|---|
| <b>Sonja Dahl:</b> Yes?   | 15:25:40 | 15:29:20 | Super! We're going to just move right into our introductions. I'm going to direct it back to Brian who's going to lead us off in that, and then we can go around the room. Brian, please take it away.  |
| <b>Namita Gupta Wiggers:</b> I'm trying really hard not to, but my language slips into four letter words. How do you all feel about it? Do we care?   | 15:26:02 | 15:29:42 |   |
| <b>Brian Gillis:</b> Let 'em rip!   |          |          | <b>Brian Gillis:</b> As I mentioned my name is Brian Gillis. I use he/him/his pronouns. This project came from a combination of a deep investment in the field of craft and a new awareness of the hyperobject, and the realization that both are profoundly compelling and confusing to me. As I've investigated ideas related to craft, I am so often left with more and more open questions—questions around timelines and origins, perspectives and vantage points, how the field can simultaneously be seen through a 19th-and 20th-century Ruskin/Morris academic-industrial complex, and through indigenous practices not bound to Western thinking or written language. How it lives in artists' studios and in my mother's hands on the couch in front of Murphy's Law, and how craft relates to colonialism and indigeneity, and the differences between decolonizing and indigenizing. I have questions about its existence as a border space and nexus point for art, anthropology, design, and daily life. How it lives among and between East and West, ancient and contemporary, the studio and the factory, and through physical and cultural materiality. I have questions around specific systems of valuation related to labor-value, use-value, exchange-value, and implicit-value, and I often return to more global questions about how craft exists as an object in and of itself, which isn't necessarily supplemental or contingent. |
| <b>Sonja Dahl:</b> I feel great about that.   | 15:26:24 | 15:30:04 |   |
| <b>Namita Gupta Wiggers:</b> Just making sure!  |          |          |   |
| <b>Stacy Jo Scott:</b> If you want us to edit them out you can. Otherwise, I don't think it's a problem.  | 15:26:46 | 15:30:26 |   |
| <b>Sonja Dahl:</b> Curse away!  | 15:27:08 | 15:30:48 |   |
| <b>Garth Clark:</b> That is the best one yet.   |          |          |   |
| <b>Sonja Dahl:</b> And, you know, really, I think, we're talking about hyperobjects, so it may just have to come out.   | 15:27:30 | 15:31:10 | The hyperobject feels just as amorphous and foundational, being at once invisible, ubiquitous, in the wind, and on the table. And, as I first began reading Morton's text, I couldn't help but think about craft's hyperobjectivity, and the larger socio-cultural issues I'm challenged by in both.  |
| <b>Stacy Jo Scott:</b> What! Is that a four-letter word?!   | 15:27:52 | 15:31:32 |   |
| <b>Sonja Dahl:</b> Yes... I'll just get things rolling here. Before I hand it back over to Brian, I want to review the afternoon's proposed schedule so everyone knows where we're going. This is session one, and we will move into our individual intros. This session is really intended for each of us to have a chance to share our preliminary thoughts and questions. Whatever you want to put out there, we'll each get an equal chance to do that. And then we'll take a break. We've got refreshments. We've got coffee. We've got restrooms. Hopefully, whatever you need is here. We'll take a little break for refreshments and then we'll come back for the main session of conversation. Then we'll take a break somewhere in the middle of that, we'll feel out when that's right. We'll talk for about two hours or so, and then we'll break and have dinner together. Any questions about the schedule or flow of anything? | 15:28:14 | 15:31:54 | However, while I am still quite puzzled by both, I do see the potential to find some footing in the hyperobject's five attributes or ideas around viscosity, nonlocality, temporal undulation, phasing, and interobjectivity. I hope that by assembling a group of thinkers to consider craft through the structure of a hyperobject, we may be able to understand both in ways that would otherwise not be possible, and in so doing seed future inquiry and practice.   |
|   | 15:28:36 | 15:32:16 | <b>Nicki Green:</b> I'm Nicki Green [she/her], I'm going to speak a little bit about what came up for me as I was preparing for this. I am an artist. I mostly work in ceramics. Lately a lot of my headspace around making and working with clay in the studio has been thinking about boundaries and the way that bodies, objects, and materials interact, how they butt up against each other and, more so, bleed into each other.   |
|   | 15:28:58 | 15:32:38 |   |

I think that for me, I came to these texts in looking at these characteristics of the hyperobject and as these characteristics were hashed out, I was thinking about my own practice and how to potentially use Morton's language to apply to my own work. I guess that's how I approach theory and philosophy in general, using it as a way to find new language and ways of processing my own ideas and practices. Then, I often try to just leave them at the door and go into the studio and work. So, I think the big thing that jumped out for me is my interest around what I think of as distinction versus integration. The boundary-setting versus the bleeding of boundaries came up for me around Morton's discussion of viscosity. The dissolution of boundaries and ecological interconnectedness was really exciting to me. Especially the kind of beautiful visual that Morton uses of inserting one's hand into a jar of honey, and the honey and the hand and the jar bleed into each other. I thought that was really beautiful, it feels very queer, very trans. Also, just to go back for a second, these interests in what I think of as, on one hand, distinction and, on the other hand, integration, for me root themselves in questions of queerness. This idea of otherness, which to me is very much boundary setting but also relational. Like "not that, so this..." Then, also, it makes me think of transness.

I'm interested in the idea of fluidness, or the dissolution of boundaries between things, and when I'm thinking lately about clay, I am also thinking about the way that clay feels like a trans material to me. Not so much about gender specifically, but, I've always thought about clay as transphal in the way that it moves from liquid to solid in this continuous way. So, this discussion of hyperobjects as phased, I thought was really exciting and applicable to these ideas that I'm currently working through.

Then, I think the big thing for me, is this idea of interobjectivity. The linkages between objects and entities was the idea that I kept coming back to. The introduction of this idea of the mesh I thought was really exciting. I've been thinking about nets and semi-permeable boundaries lately. I guess I could go on and on, and I have a lot of thoughts about this, maybe I'll put a pin there.

**Stacy Jo Scott:** Thank you. My name is Stacy Jo Scott, my pronouns are she/her or they/them. I was reading the history of the hyperobject laid out in the introduction, and I was struck by the ways in which the histories Morton lays out coincide with the histories of craft, the western idea of craft that I have been thinking about, especially grounded in Glenn Adamson's 2013 book *The Invention of Craft* and the histories that he lays out there—coincidentally, published the same year as this book. I don't know if that's more than a coincidence, but it's interesting. Thinking about the way that Morton posits the dawning or becoming of a hyperobject, specifically in terms of Adamson's conception of certain craft histories birthed at the moment of the Industrial Revolution. Of course, meaning the idea

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of craft coinciding with the emergence of the Industrial Revolution. And the moment of the atomic bomb, coinciding with the GI Bill, as this other moment of a resurgence of a desire for craft. I'm thinking about this need for craft that seemed to emerge at the time.

And I'm thinking about the ways that Morton talks about hyperobjectivity as something like a postscript to the end of the world. Like the ways in which the emergence of the hyperobject is seen as, "It's not the world ending, the world has thus ended." I'm thinking about that sort of cataclysm and wondering what it is about craft that emerges after the end of the world. This moment of dissolution and displacement and horror. I was curious about that and am thinking *why did they coincide at once?* Something that he was talking about that came up, in terms of thinking about temporality, felt like maybe some sort of flag to point to, something to hold on to, is that there's this sense within the hyperobject or within the experience of a hyperobject, of a shift of our awareness of temporality as being so ancient we barely have words for it. Like absolutely primordial. I wonder if we have it within our capacity as humans to actually understand the ancientness of time, or the longevity of the future. Going back to this idea of craft, what is it about that sort of awareness that might draw this desire, this need for craft? The sort of existential need for craft. There's something I was reading, this book called *The Spell of the Sensuous* by David Abram, who writes that these materials that we deal with in craft have ancient geologic and terrestrial origins that followed a path of ancient evolution. Similar to our biological evolution but spread over vast time scales. I wonder if the desire to touch these materials and have some relationship to them comes from some call for our own place-ness in time? And, place-ness in this ancient time? As though being able to be in relationship to these things of maybe hyper-ancient time can be a way of claiming our own constancy. Which I don't think exists, but is, like, this continual human need to forget our mortality. So, perhaps craft and our relationship to these materials is a way to latch ourselves to this ship that is casting about in the sea of hyperobjectivity and possibly going down. But, maybe materials are a way for us to ground in that.

**Lori Talcott:** Hi, my name is Lori Talcott. My pronouns are she/her. While reading Timothy Morton's work, I considered it through several different lenses. These lenses, or perspectives, were a way for me to think about the five characteristics of hyperobjects specifically, and Morton's work in general, in a way that was relevant to me as part of my own inquiries and studio practice. A quote I responded to immediately, from an interview between Morton and artist Olafur Eliasson was, "Art is a thought sent to us from the future." I think of craft as having this capacity to exist in a space of a-temporality, of collapsed time, and how craft and hyperobjects have interwoven histories. I was trained in a folk tradition, which means that when I make this traditional work the process, the work,



and I am automatically part of what can be described as a magical universe, which is a way of viewing and interacting with the world that is reciprocal and timeless, as opposed to transactional and linear. The boundaries in this universe are porous, which leads me to animism, another one of my lenses. I'm not referring to the 19th-century idea of animism, as defined by white, male, Protestant anthropologists, and based on cultural evolution and Western hegemony. What I am referring to is neo-animism, as used and defined by scholars and thinkers such as Nurit Bird-David, David Abram, and Graham Harvey. The old idea of animism could be described as a projection of our sense of self onto the world—onto animate and inanimate objects and beings, whereas neo-animism is about being in relationship with the world, and all its entities, in a reciprocal, non-hierarchical way.

Neo-animism, and this way of thinking, dovetails into some of Stacy Jo's remarks in regards to materiality and David Abram's work—our deep relationship and parallel development with making and materials. Western medieval art was a period preoccupied with the power inherent in matter, the generative capacity of matter, and the belief that matter could change and/or affect other matter. I think of craft, and our close evolutionary development with craft and craft materials, as having this potential—the potential to change the matter of how we think—especially about this problem we find ourselves within, as Morton puts it. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio talks about this—that emotion is embodied, and that the physical structures of our brain, the matter of our bodies, are transformed by emotion, which brings me back to craft, and how we emotionally and physically—which are one in the same—respond to it, and are changed by it. This makes me think about so-called folk traditions and craft traditions around the world, and how many are grounded in an ancient, ephemeral knowledge. What do these have to teach us now? Many of these older, graphic and/or oral systems of knowledge lay outside Western modes of codifying and validating information. Can we tap into these as alternatives to modernism and capitalism? Which, as Morton argues, are structures that are not going to help us in our current predicament. Craft, and of course art in general, are intertwined with these structures—but older traditions and systems may offer us alternative ways of being in the world that are, I believe, relevant to us today. We hear a lot about quid pro quo in politics right now, but it's not that. It's not a this-for-that transaction, but an orientation that situated us in a network of relationships with other beings, things, and other-than-humans. And isn't that what Morton is basically calling for?

An aspect of the pre-modern Western world is the idea of paradox, and the capacity of ritual (and art) to hold paradox. Which is something that many argue we've lost—the capacity to hold and reside in paradox.

In regard to craft and hyperobjects, what stands out to me is that craft is crafty, that it is simultaneously canny and uncanny. It is something to

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hang on to in the “quake,” as Morton says. It is also a shapeshifter, nimble and multivalent, which makes it resilient. I do think of craft as something that can save us, as craft inherently engenders empathy. Another lens I used to view hyperobjects was that of magic and ritual. Magic and ritual depend upon metaphor and metonymy. If you are familiar with the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, they established that nearly all of our language is metaphorical in nature, and that these metaphors are based on our physical apprehension and orientation of the world, both spatial and temporal. As such, metaphor is not only about poetic language—it isn't ornament, it is essential to how we conceptually and physically understand our world, which is also related to craft, as something not extra, but essential. Morton talks about this as “sprinkles on the cupcake.” So ornament is necessary for proper operation in the world, and this is expressed through both our language and our objects. We need metaphor and ornamentation for ritual, and we need ritual in order to hold paradox.

Finally, one last lens through which I read the text was Carl Jung's idea of the shadow. One of Morton's quotes reflects this: “[Hyperobjects are] what the poet Hölderlin calls ‘the saving power that grows alongside the dangerous power.’” So, is this our shadow that we've long neglected and now need to tend to? According to Jung, the shadow is where our power lies. This makes me think of homeopathic healing and that the cure is in the affliction. Morton argues that hyperobjects may have done us a favor. In terms of homeopathic healing, they are showing us the wound, and that the remedy lies within that wound.

**Anya Kivarkis:** I'm Anya Kivarkis and my pronouns are she/her/hers. I'm really thrilled that we are here together, and that we can think through all of the opportunities and challenges that this text presents, together. I have lots of questions about hyperobjects, as a framework to think about possibilities for the field of craft because of its distinctly Western way of thinking about ideas. I think the core of my struggle is its position of universality that is derived from object-oriented ontology, where the human and inhuman, or a human, garbage, and the sun are made equivalent...or “the being of a paper cup is as profound as mine.”

In articulating the field of craft, I am less interested in abstractions of non-hierarchical relationships because of their effects of flattening or sameness, and what most interests me is finding a functional model for integrating difference and recognition, without sameness or some leveling to neutrality.

Kathryn Yusoff, Professor of Inhuman Geology (who Namita introduced me to), talks about the problem of the concept of Anthropocene in how it lumps us all together and thinks about geology in front of social relations. She believes that rather, geology is a context in which social formations

emerge, and this often gets forgotten. Yusoff also articulates the danger in the ideas around an equivalence between the human and inhuman—because the inhuman can be made into an object, and if a human can be made into an object equivalent, then this is how slavery can be perhaps be justified. She also talks about ideas of a white utopia.

So for the book *Hyperobjects* to speak of climate change by mentioning only Western and Asian contexts is a problem from my perspective. As Kathryn Yusoff writes in her book, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, “The proximity of black and brown bodies to harm in this intimacy with the inhuman is what I am calling Black Anthropocenes. It is an inhuman proximity organized by historical geographies of extraction, grammars of geology, imperial global geographies, and contemporary environmental racism. It is predicated on the presumed absorbent qualities of black and brown bodies to take up the body burdens of exposure to toxicities and to buffer the violence of the earth. Literally stretching black and brown bodies across the seismic fault lines of the earth, Black Anthropocenes subtend White Geology as a material stratum.” This makes me think about Chicago also, and how mostly Black communities are on the south side, which are basically the floodplains of the city, and how the Syrian village from where my father immigrated is decimated by climate change, drought, and subsequent civil war.

Macarena Gomez-Barris, the Chair of Social Science and Cultural Studies at Pratt Institute, asks us to reframe how the extractive and settler-colonial view have de-resourced Indigenous and African communities where land is assumed for the taking, then induces amnesia over violent histories, and depends upon sugar and oil to fuel the global economy. I struggle with these exclusions from the hyperobjects discourse and how, if we extend this as a framework for craft, that we might unintentionally absorb these omissions.

In my interest in the articulation of difference, I also have questions about this text and where specificity and differentiation enter. Related to a framework for craft, I have always been interested in Rosalind Krause’s characterization of a “differential specificity,” and Miwon Kwon’s idea of a “medium differential” that complicate current homogeneous frameworks for the production of art (and craft) in a post-medium space. I believe that the problem of frameworks becoming indistinct is that art practices can become exceedingly general. Extending this idea are Julia Bryan-Wilson and Glenn Adamson in *Art in the Making* where they state, “From the point of view of making [...] there is no such thing as infinite malleability. Operating in the expanded field requires a concrete involvement with, and dependence on, long established trades [...] Materials are not just conduits for ideas; they are imbued with their own particular narratives and lifecycles.”

Context is not just a free-floating skimming of the surface. For me, frame-

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works and the articulation of nuanced difference offers a specificity of context for more deeply engaged, critical work. Miwon Kwon writes, “Within the present context of an ever-expanding capitalist order, fueled by an ongoing globalization of technology [...], the intensifying conditions of spatial indifferentiation and departicularization exacerbate the effects of alienation and fragmentation in contemporary life.” It seems necessary to extend this idea of cultural frameworks or disciplinary frameworks—or whatever those frameworks or specificities might be—as another opportunity for differentiation, where artists can push against the borders of something known to retrieve lost difference.

**Bean Gilsdorf:** My name is Bean Gilsdorf, she/her. I am an artist and I mainly work with textiles. I’m also a writer and independent critic, and I have training not just in art, but also in literature and linguistics. So I read things like *Hyperobjects* with an eye toward language and a love for arguing with the author, and I share with Nicki the idea of reading things like this particularly for their value to my own practice, and the vocabulary that I might be able to use, and also, like she said, leaving theory at the studio door. There’s this balance between what has use for my own practice, and, more broadly, for thinking about the world, and the spaces where theory doesn’t matter. While I was reading this, I was very interested in determining whether or not I felt like craft could satisfy the parameters that Morton laid out for defining hyperobjects. In particular, the question that I struggled with was related to the notion of viscosity: Does craft, with its association to the everyday, avoid the near/far dichotomy of nonviscosity? It’s like the old Palmolive commercials from the ‘80s where the lady is at a nail salon and she’s got her hands in some bowls and the nail tech tells her, “Palmolive, you’re soaking in it!” I was like, *Okay, hyperobjects, we’re soaking in them, they’re around us all the time. Is that a way that we can think of craft?* And, since Morton talks a lot about Heidegger within the text, I also wondered, does craft have an always/already space that it can occupy? And, if craft *is* a hyperobject, can we really separate the discrete material presence of an instance, one that is concrete, tangible, and haptic, from the diffuse, the ephemeral, and the intangible? Are these really oppositional states at all? Is this dialectic even partially useful? Ultimately, without a following synthesis, I think it’s a false, limiting form of inquiry.

These are the kinds of things that I was thinking about while reading: Does craft’s ubiquity provide the invisibility that Morton says is a precondition of being a hyperobject? In other words, the fact that craft is around us all the time, and yet we fail to see it, does that provide that visible/invisible divide?

I also ended up contemplating some meta questions: Why are we thinking about craft as a hyperobject? What is the potential benefit to designating craft as a hyperobject? We probably won’t end up with any resolutions

coming out of this—and I certainly wouldn’t expect to—but there was a part of my brain that asked: If we were to be in concordance today and say, “Yes, craft is a hyperobject,” what does that do? What is the advantage to craft as a field of inquiry, as a practice? I also had some questions about using that designation going forward, in terms of the language creep or definitional creep that we find happening a lot these days with terms like “self-care” or “emotional labor.” Those terms originally had a very specific definition, they were very narrowly defined both politically and culturally. Now they’ve just diffused into culture and lost a lot of their meaning and impact, and I wonder if that’s the way that hyperobject, the term, will progress.

**Jovencio de la Paz:** I think that is a wonderful little segue into this announcement I just want to make. We’re about seven minutes away from our first scheduled break and the break lasts from 4:00 to 4:30. The way of the conversation is going so far, which I think is incredibly rich and exciting, I wonder if people would be okay making that break a bit shorter perhaps 4:15 to 4:30 so we can continue as we are, now?

**Stacy Jo Scott:** Let’s just keep going. Let’s let what is happening keep happening and we might just need to break later.

**Jovencio de la Paz:** Yeah...

**Sonja Dahl:** Keep the flow...

**Bukola Koiki:** Hi, I’m Bukola Koiki. I’m currently a Fountainhead fellow at VCU. I work across a few different mediums, but I’m teaching in the textile, fibers department and I’m she/her gender preference. I didn’t know what to make of this text. I find that I have lots of marginalia on my reading of this. Everyone had very gathered thoughts, but I am just going to try my best to sort of make sense of the many disparate ideas that came to mind. The main thing that I’ve just realized about this text is like with everything else that I read that comes from a Western lens, I’m sort of reminded why my work always figures around the liminal space and my experience of it. Being someone who is both Nigerian and is a naturalized American citizen, that has now lived here longer than I was raised in Nigeria, and all the complexities that come up with that for me. Especially around the idea of what it means to assimilate instead of integrate. I think someone else used that language. I find that often, when things like this come up, it brings up for me ideas that I have taken for granted because I have sort of swallowed a wholesale Western notion. Then it shakes my brain loose like, *right you*

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*actually are not from this culture, this is the thing that you knew from when you were yay high.* Now, sort of seeing someone remark on something as a “truth” instantly triggers a protest in me as it were. So, I spent a long time sort of amusing myself with all kinds of alternate titles for this text. I won’t make you hear them all unless people ask me to, but my favorite was *Another White Boy Thinks He Discovered Ancient Indigenous Truth Bombs that Existed and Thrived Before the White Gaze.*

The thing is that when I read it, a lot of the things also came up for me regarding specifically the Yoruba culture that I come from and its ontology. The idea of the reciprocity of the human and divine, the visible and invisible as frames of how to explain reality. Then as I read it, I just kept thinking, *these are things that indigenous cultures could have told you, you know, they’ve been comfortable with forever.* The idea of man’s inextricable link with nonhumans around us. Indigenous cultures like the Yoruba people being comfortable with the spaces between worlds and the nebulous, the unknown. That there are phenomena, places, things that are unknowable, and thus deserve our respect and care. That we are on a planet at the pleasure and consent, and cooperation of nature, plants, animals, microorganisms, etc.

Those are the things that came to mind for me. I also had other questions. I guess I sort of attribute them to what my Western education makes me think I should ask. Also, just some things that I do. Yes, there are references that I do find may be relevant to the way we talk about craft theory in general and classes that I’ve had. You know, what I learned as an MFA and how that collides with when I do research for my own personal work, etc. Some questions that came up for me were things like, what is craft and the value of craft artists in the Anthropocene? Is craft a benign hyperobject? Would crafts now include nonbiodegradable materials such as the things we make with 3D printing, etc.? Hyperobjects are a toolbox for thinking about craft, which I know some folks have mentioned. Is craft transforming the planet in deep ecological ways? I guess I mean that in response to, I think one of the things that came up was how—and maybe this is just my read of it—this conversation about craft is all negative, which is why a question that came up for me too is, why are we inserting craft into the idea of hyperobjects? It just seems that it’s saying things are all bad. So, in the notion of this idea of craft transforming the planet and deep ecological ways. Is it the mining of raw materials on which craft often depends? Is that problematic? If so, then part of the future of craft may need to consider that there may need to be less craft?

There was this thing that Morton was talking about, about speculative realism and the break in a romantic spell of how the world and materials and making was once made. And, so, I was thinking, if we were going to have the conversation should we then consider that the notion or idea of the craft field is itself a romantic spell? Should we really be looking at it



in ways that are much more hard-hitting and less about our fuzzy feelings about being craftspeople?

As you can see, as I said, there's this dichotomy to the conversations that came up for me. You know, as an American, a Yoruba, Nigerian-Muslim born person. By the way, I kind of thought that people could be hyper-objects based on that, basically. And then, these questions have come up for me as someone who's read, and sometimes tore my hair out over the Heideggers and the Benjamins, etc. in craft theory, and then having that clash with the way research goes for me often in my own practice. So those have been my questions. Thank you.

**Anthea Black:** Thank you. My name is Anthea Black. Pronouns she/her or they/them are both welcomed.

I found myself gravitating towards intersections in my practice when I read the text and started to apply it. I work across publishing and artist books, printmaking and paper, textiles, craft theory, and writing. So, there's this kind of spiraling to grasp for a few really tangible things that I can test against the idea of craft and the hyperobject.

I published a newspaper with my partner Jessica Whitbread called *The HIV Howler: Transmitting Art and Activism* and it's about creating a curated forum for artists living with HIV to present work in a newspaper format. The two things that I wanted to push against the hyperobject and test the parameters of, were HIV/AIDS and paper. One obviously is something that can be held in the hand, grasped, and is a very tangible object that is a really big part of all of our lives. One is a little bit more slippery through questions of transmission, of criminalization, of exchange, and, obviously—as a virus that cannot be seen—its significant implications for the body, and culture, medicine, legal discourse, and civic participation.

I started to push against some of Morton's formations to feel where the edges of my examples could break down, or cohere into something that I felt like I could grasp. One of the things about paper that was most salient for me was the idea of a small layer or material trace that covered the entire earth; carbon and radiation both came up. I thought, could paper in its raw form, pre-paper, before its constitution into some kind of formed sheet that would be made through the knitting together of some kind of fibrous flax or hemp or kozo, could paper be considered one of those layers? And, is that a layer that has passed, where now we have other layers of things on top of the layer of paper of human existence that is both larger than us and very much a product of our activity. I felt like paper was, maybe, one of the more convincing possible hyperobjects. As an artist-publisher the material aspect of paper, being able to grasp something in my hands and read it felt compelling.

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Then I was thinking about HIV/AIDS, the virus, and the gift that queer and trans theories have allowed me to think through various different stages of embodiment and decomposition of the body. What might be perceived as a threat to health in a very normative context has expanded into a discourse around questioning the temporal continuity of the body. Queer and trans theory have given us many ways to interrupt normative temporal formations; through illness, but also through questions of gender formation and recognition. Probably one of the most important things that I have learned from AIDS activism and artist publishing around the intersection of HIV/AIDS is that queer and trans discourse around AIDS has really demystified death for me. Thinking about the idea that the most horrible thing that could be imagined is also the lived experience of another body, and that death is not the worst thing that can happen to us. That "illness" or "weakness" or "lameness", which are some of the words that Morton conjures, are not actually the worst thing that could be experienced. The many networks of queer care and sustenance and ingenuity around community building that emerged during the AIDS crisis are ways to rethink what forms of embodiment could exist in interconnection with other beings and also other forms of sentience in this life and death spiral.

So, those are my two thoughts around those two slippery concepts of paper and AIDS, and how they might either depart or be grounded in a discourse of craft and embodiment. I feel the resonance, and the queer and trans gift of theorizing HIV/AIDS through embodiment. Maybe this has less of a connection to craft, but it's definitely something that I continued to come back to as I was working through the text.

**Shannon Stratton:** I'm Shannon. My pronouns are she/her, and like some of my other colleagues I both don't have a super prepared statement and also have wrestled with trying to make sense of thinking through craft through this text. Probably the primary thing that I kept coming up against—well, there are a few things—is that I think it's significant that Morton repeats this concept that hyperobjects bring about the end of the world. That kept being a stopping point for me, about how that did or didn't relate to craft as a kind of action. And that led me to see craft as a subset of human enterprise that includes all the ways that humans exploit the earth's resources in order to create things. Do I think human enterprise and technology are things that are bringing about the end of the world? Yes. Is craft a subset of such actions? Certainly. I mean, I think when he makes the analogy about starting the engine of his car, and traces the outcome of that action, I see how craft might be analyzed through this lens. I think we can, for the most part, extrapolate any action in a similar way, so craft obviously fits into that.

I'd leave that to one side and say it was one of those texts where I felt like, *so what's not a hyperobject then?* And, for me, because the text is so... I

described it at lunch as feeling like somebody turned a fire hose on me... this is going to be every idea ever known to humankind. Some parts of the book are very frustrating, and I wonder if he even read his own text because he can't seem to connect his own ideas. It was hard for me to slog through my own frustration with the permission that he had to spray us with this array of disconnected ideas in order to make a point about a term that at the end of the day, I still wasn't totally certain of its definition. I mean, I was always drawn back to find climate change/global warming as a hyperobject because we can't fully comprehend its vastness nor the gravity of this moment—that I could hold onto.

Leaving that over here, I then wanted to go to what the things are about this text that I feel positive about, its grappling, its wandering, its feeling, its gathering, its collaging, its assembling; so, in many ways, to me the book itself, or at least as far as I got through it, is a kind of hyperobject itself. I thought well, maybe he's giving us an experimental text that is about trying to manifest the thesis that he's attempting to present. Like the thing itself is so spread out and it is in its own way this kind of moss or maybe a virus or maybe a rhizome or something that's spread out and connecting all of these things. The thing, the project of writing. This is a kind of hyperobject. That made it for me a much more interesting space to play with and then be able to pull craft into that. That craft is also grappling, wondering, feeling, gathering, collaging, assembling. It also has that same instinct to feel out the world through a certain kind of material fluency or process. So, if I read the text as a way of processing and metabolizing the world, I get more comfortable with it, and then I can start to see how that might have potentially create a dialogue with making. Craft specifically as an action as opposed to craft as technology. Which, if I'm to take him up on hyperobjects bringing about the end of the world, then technology certainly is a hyperobject in my mind.

The most compelling thing for me in these writings was a statement that said, "Here's the poem, but the poem is not here." This is on page 53. Also, this line, "It falls that a poem is always talking about the paper it is written on and never talking about it." I think that was a the clearest connection I had to thinking about what I imagined for craft as a kind of process for humans understanding the world and metabolizing materials, and feelings, and affects, and relationships through material fluency, through process, through the way the objects are then deployed in the world. That was a space where I felt a promising point of departure for me. It's so minor in the whole text, yet this is what I went with, with wanting to pull out these little poetic meanderings that Morton had and have a conversation with them. I think that's all I have to say.

**Jovencio de la Paz:** I have a few observations, and in many ways I feel I'm now echoing much of what has already been brought to the table. But,

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that's good too. My observations, I think there are three categories. The first are questions, and questions and concerns around the philosophical traditions...

**Bukola Koiki:** Sorry...You haven't introduced yourself...

**Jovencio de la Paz:** Oh, I'm sorry! Jovencio de la Paz, I'm a faculty member at the University of Oregon. I am a weaver and artist. I work primarily with the digital technologies in weaving. Also, my pronouns are he/him.

I have three kind of categories. I'll try to be succinct, they're quite meandering though. The first has to do with the philosophical traditions which Morton both reveals as a source and also the ones which he obscures in certain ways. The second is a sort of reflection of my own practice, and looking at language and resonances between the text and my own work. And, finally, in the reading of this work, I observed myself instrumentalizing the text in a way that I found quite interesting in terms of teaching. So yeah, three observations. Philosophical tradition, my own practice, and then the way in which text is taught, or how we unpack text like this with students.

Stacy Jo pointed this out to me very clearly before we met today, and I want to share with the group her reflection as well as echo Bukola's observations, that Morton's text borrows quite heavily from Eastern philosophical traditions, which he himself describes in lots of interviews. He obliquely cites many 11th-century Eastern philosophical traditions in Buddhism and Hinduism as key to the attitude to which the book is presented. I find it frustrating for a Western philosopher to posture as though he has discovered philosophical approaches that are integral to many Indigenous and non-Western cultures. The notion of interobjectivity, this idea of interbeing, the nonlocality, the fluidity of conception of time, these are all really key concepts in Mahayana Buddhism, Eastern philosophy. And, just how blatantly, in some ways, these things are borrowed—in a way, I can understand it as a kind of assimilation or a kind of reckoning with these philosophical traditions within a Western philosophical tradition. That always gets pretty messy for me. Where is the continuity of that tradition? Why are they not cited more specifically, or given the same academic citation the philosophers and thinkers from Western traditions are given?

In my own practice the notion of nonlocality really struck me in terms of a craft practice. What I have observed within my students and within my colleagues is a sort of broad romanticization of locality within craft, that craft is often thought of as firmly situated. The maker and the studio are situated in a particular context both geographically, but also temporally and culturally. So I was like, *oh, let me think of my own practice, is it like that?* As a person who uses a lot of digital means and processes in my work,

I'm often confronted by this moment where the object itself is secondary in some way to a processing of data, information that doesn't need to be located in a specific place. If I extend that notion to trends and attitudes I see in many of my student weavers, I see many of them interested in, for example, the natural composition of an ecological site, like the Willamette Valley. That's where all the materials come from, that is where all the ideas are deeply linked, but then through market or social media, they are immediately disseminated as products. There's an incredible almost breathless moment where that deeply local object becomes a unit of information on Instagram. The location, that intimacy, becomes metadata. Seeing that unfold, the fantasy of location is something that I've been reflecting on. The quote, "Locality is always a false immediacy"—that part of the object breaking into non-local existence is, without making a hierarchy or judging one against the other, that non-locality is a quality of crafted objects, of hyperobjects.

Then the last thing, about teaching. It is so interesting how I think other people brought this up, reading the text trying to use it as a metric or tool, or a way to measure my preconceived notions of craft or my definitions of craft. Does it match? Where does it resonate? Where does it not? And, becoming more and more so frustrated with why it does or doesn't. Why am I using this text? What is the way in which we process a text, to analyze a particular preconception or a particular research agenda? How do we talk about that process with students? I was really remembering Judith Rodenbeck's book *Radical Prototypes*, which is an analysis of Allan Kaprow and his incredible work. One way I can sort of see this text, the hyperobject text, is as a toolkit. A toolkit that's like an actual toolbox, a mess of different tools. Though incoherent at times, that grappling with a text is a rich quality for students, especially in craft fields, to undergo. I for sure, will use this text with my students to measure what their preconceptions of craft might be. The individual moments that are exciting, in some ways, are much more interesting to me than trying to wrap my mind around the text as a monolithic position.

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** I'm Namita Gupta Wiggers [she/her] and I run a low-residency MA program at Warren Wilson College that's focused on craft history and theory, and I run a platform on Facebook called *Critical Craft Forum*. I have to be honest. I found that because of the way that this is written, my response and how I want to talk about it cannot help but have a collage/bricolage response. I'll be frank, if a student gave me this paper it would be a problem because it circles on itself. It contradicts itself. It comes back around and brings something else in and I'm asking myself repeatedly: *wait, what?* But at the same moment, as other people have said, there are these beautiful, beautiful poetic sentences that you want to pull out. Then you go, *wait a minute, that's not what the whole point of that paragraph was*. There's something about it that reminded me

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of when somebody had a response... We were teaching a Salman Rushdie text, his Tanner Lecture ["Step Across This Line"] at Yale University. Salman Rushdie has this way of bricollaging things together, and there's something about the way that he does it that I understand and I get and I can follow it. These examples in Morton... I had a really hard time following some of his examples and understanding how they fit together and where they went together.

It started me thinking about diaspora and the condition of diaspora in terms of hyperobjectivity, of something that isn't seen that's always present, that's visible yet not. You're in the middle of it but you're also on the edges of it. It's permeable. There's something about that in this text that really heightened the Eurocentrism and the strong effort to fight with the Enlightenment, yet completely coming through the Enlightenment in everything that is structured in the way that this essay is written. In the examples that he's using, it's really hard for him not to center himself as he's trying to talk about impermeable things. And I found that really, really hard to sit through. For example, consider the quote at the beginning, "The awful shadow of some unseen power," from Shelley, in which romanticism and the fear and anxiety of power really struck me through reading all of this because I feel his anxiety here about everything changing. To be clear, reading this felt like, *you've got to grasp on to everything and throw in the word uncanny, and throw in unhomey, but not call it unhomey because then you have to acknowledge Heidegger again*. You have to know all of these references when you read this text. It reinscribes a very strong Westernism that we've been talking about in the way that the whole thing is structured, and I found it really troubling. I did not pick up on—I was interested in what Jovencio said about the connection to Buddhism. I felt there was something that I was missing, but I couldn't quite name it and I'm glad you said that. I was getting frustrated with the way Morton drops Shiva in a few places without actually articulating aspects of Hinduism or Vedanta or Indian philosophy that is about permeability and much like Yoruba. Moments are just dropped in there in the same way.

So, I would say as I scan my notes, in terms of object-oriented ontology I feel there is something we really do need to understand in the relationship between object-oriented ontology and craft. And, I think that there are some challenges that I have with it in its non-specificity. But, at the same time I think there's some ways in which materiality comes out through thinking about "triple o." I hate saying that word, all three of those words...

**Many in the group:** OOOOOOOOO...

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** ...that I think we need to address and that I really want to understand. This is something that I'm sorting out for my-

self, how in the last two, three years my work has shifted from curating and writing about artists in a particular way to reading something to thinking about how I would use it to teach. Is it a useful tool to teach? What can I communicate with people from it? I found myself feeling really pragmatic and feeling like I wasn't sure how I would use this. Because I'm working at a college that is a farm school. We have a blacksmithing, woodwork-ing, and a fiber arts crew. We grow rivercane. We have a hemp garden. We're going to build a dye garden. The craft crews have been moved under supervision of the Dean of Land, who is in charge of the forest and the landscape and the garden. That actual physical and local materiality makes me question craft and how we understand craft in such philosophical and broad ways. In a completely different way, and it ties into Yusoff in that you can't separate craft from the Anthropocene. You can't separate craft from colonialism, from empire, from capitalism, from all of these different things. I'm finding it hard to get to material *stuff* in this essay and to under-stand how to address it.

Fundamentally, the Industrial Revolution is not the beginning of craft. It's a moment, and I think that Yusoff does a really fabulous job of pointing out in her text *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* that catalysts for the Anthropocene keep getting located within the West, within Western con-texts. Within a British context, a European and transatlantic context. In his examples, Morton keeps coming back to these contexts again and again and again, and I find it really problematic. It reinforces the hyper- Western focus of his thinking.

When we have more conversation, I want to talk about this iceberg idea that he brings up, this idea of modernity stopping just before the iceberg, but later in the essay he talks about being in the iceberg and the tip of the iceberg. I really need to understand this better and I would like some help. We have a gesture in our program [Namita gestures], which is a way of indic-ating, "I'm going to say I feel vulnerable about something, I feel I don't quite understand it." I would really like to understand it better.

Last, the text also made me think about Ocean Vuong's book. I don't know how many of you have read *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. In one of his interviews he talks about how everything becomes an American problem when our bombs are dropped somewhere in the world. That is what brings everything together. There was something about that that kept echoing for me in this, that I'm finding it hard to find a grounding in Morton's hyper-anxiety. I'm not asking for him to give us a solution. But I don't feel I have a thread to understand where to go with the terms and the tension.

I think that's all I want to say.

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**Sonja Dahl:** I'm Sonja Dahl. I am an artist. I work primarily in textiles and fibers, and thinking about textiles and fibers, and writing about tex-tiles and fibers as metaphors, etc. I also teach and work at the U of O here in Eugene. I use she, her, and hers pronouns.

Like so many of us in the room, I just want to begin by saying that this sort of thought project, this idea of how to think through craft through this philosophy, this idea of the hyperobject, is not a natural one to me. It's not a way that I would typically approach my thinking or my prac-tice. But this is part of what makes it an exciting challenge, and why I'm really excited about everything that's been shared so far. I also have very uncomfortable and critical feelings about Western philosophical projects like this. I use "Western" in quotes because what really does that mean? There are so many other specificities in that term that it also makes me very uncomfortable. For the purposes of trying not to get too tangled up in language, yeah, these kinds of big philosophical projects by white dudes from European or European-influenced countries is a thing that is not be-nign. Morton points out in his book that philosophy has consequences and effects much like an election. So, I think about that a lot. These kinds of philosophical projects have reverberations in the world and they are not just a way of thinking through something that is massive and terrifying like climate change or global warming. It's also about particular ways of form-ing thoughts into language that get disseminated, and having read some of the reviews, this is pretty hot stuff right now. People are really into hyper-objects and really into the Anthropocene. So, I think about those ripples and reverberations quite a lot. And, in reading it of course, if you don't have any sort of foundation in all the other white dudes writing about philosophy, you don't really have that much of an entry point into this. I think it's this funny thing that Morton's trying to do or he's trying to be a different white dude thinking in the world and bringing some other things in. But his entire framework is all the other philosophies that have come before and that have had effects and that have had reverberations, and that we are constantly, continuously contending with. I have to try and teach some of this to my students in some of my classes and it's just like, "Okay, let's everybody buckle up, we're going to do our best here, and we're going to try and talk about art through some of these philosophies." I think those are some of the discomforts, of course, that I have.

I've thought a lot about this idea of a concept of craft—Craft with a ca-pital C—and how that relates to projects like the Industrial Revolution. I think it's really helpful for me, what has been brought up a number of times, is this contested relationship between craft as a sort of categorical idea. These different moments in time that have been thrust on the world largely from centers of European power and domination. Thinking about those two kinds of thought projects, or thought experiments, Craft with a capital C, as a category that we can dump all of these different things into, and somehow think about it still as a thing, as an entity. I think about the

idea of craft, and yeah, I'm down with trying to think about it as a hyper-object based on some of the things I've read. So, one of the things that I find useful about this thought experiment is that it forces me to contend with craft's materials, processes, and ideas in the context of the crisis of global warming and human actions in the world. Whatever I think about Timothy Morton and the way that he writes and his relationship to Western philosophical traditions, I appreciate that this text forces me to think very concretely about the relationship between my practice—the things that I do, the ways that I make things, what I make them with, my thought processes, the way I use language—all of those things in relationship to the crisis of global warming. And the change that we as humans have inarguably been wreaking in the world. I just want to mark that I think that is generative and useful.

Any talk of global warming brings up issues of human responsibility. Not only regarding our direct responsibility to act or even to react, but also, to borrow a term that I find really useful from Toni Morrison, it forces us to face our “response-ability.” As in, our ability to respond in a meaningful and useful way to an enormity that is beyond our understanding and in which we are all entangled. That we are all a part of this, and it is a part of us, are some of the metaphors in this book that I find really useful. The being-in, and the being-with, and the being-part-of, and all that messy, viscous, tangled stuff. I find that useful.

The idea of responsibility, or our response-ability, is very important to me and it's at the core of how I approach my work. Especially the ways that I think about my chosen materials and think about the relationships and the consequences of the choices that inform my making process. Especially with things like indigo dye and whitework embroidery, all of my work with these materials grows out of this space of thinking about response-ability. All of these kinds of decisions—Morton uses metaphors like the decision to turn the ignition in your car—all these kinds of choices that we make that can then be spiraled outwards. I think it's useful to reflect on that again from the standpoint of being a maker. Someone who works with materials. Materials like indigo and woven cloth, I feel they really embody the vastness and unknowability of a hyperobject in many ways. Especially indigo. Also, those are substances that have very specific and complicated stories and histories and lineages and ways of moving through the world that are not necessarily benign.

Those are a lot of places that I'm coming from. I have this quote written down here in which Morton says “Hyperobjects cause us to reflect on our very place on Earth and in the cosmos. Perhaps this is the most fundamental issue—hyperobjects seem to force something on us, something that affects some core ideas about what it means to exist, what the Earth is, what society is.” So, that is really interesting to me and I think this idea of having something forced on us that we have to contend with is useful

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within the larger field of craft and craft discourse. I think that we are being forced to contend with a lot of things, and I appreciate that and find it really generative as craft discourse grows and responds over the last years.

I have a bunch of little notes here, but I was also interested in Morton's discussion about sincerity and genuineness and was kind of confused and wanted to delve into that a little more. I feel the main entry point to this idea of equating craft and hyperobjects was thinking about the ways that Morton describes objects, then thinking about that in relation to how I and many other makers approach objects and think about objects. As I was reading I kept seeing and circling the word “object” over and over again. And I was struck by the many ways he uses the word object as it relates to the larger idea of a hyperobject. There are so many different ways of approaching what the idea of an object is. That an object could be so vast that we are all contained in it. We are all within an object at all times. But objects can also be these finite things. Something we can hold in our hand. Something that we can mold and change and transform. Something that we can be in relationship with. All of those things have been interesting for me to try and trace. And, I had to do a little reading up... I did a little Googling like, *okay remind me, what's ontology again? Okay remind me. What's the OOO?* It's been fun to play with that and joke around with it, the OOOOOOOOOOO. But, also just noting some of the things that he says, like an “object is a nonhuman entity.” Okay??? “Hyperobjects force us to acknowledge the imminence of thinking to the physical.” There's something in there that I really want to dig into, but what does it mean? You know, we're always inside of an object. There are just all these ways of thinking about objects.

Then the last thing I would mark is that linguistically I think it's interesting to consider “object” in relationship to “objective.” Just linguistically object and objective have a relationship. The idea of being objective, to be able to create a universally understood truth. Whatever ways we want to approach the idea of being objective. I think there's an interesting play between hyperobjects, objects that we make, objects we exist inside of, and then the idea of objectivity. I keep using the term hyperobjectivity and then I've sort of caught myself saying, *what does that mean?* Anyways... That's enough I think.

**Garth Clark:** Okay, I'm the white dude, apparently. My name is Garth Clark. My pronoun is he. I had several problems with this book. Some of them come from me, not from the book itself, although I prefer to blame the book. But I was not able to read through it. If I can just explain what I inherited, and I blame this on Earth Mother because I'm not sure I would have done this by myself, I ended up in the ceramics world. I was 22, I was reading a lot about fine art at the time. The year before I had one of those extraordinary moments of epiphany at the Johannesburg agricultural



show. I was looking at gold-prize hogs, and I walked through a door into a barn and there was a collection of contemporary British painting. In amongst this strange environment. They were hung like ten feet above the ground so nobody could touch them, and I stood in front of a Francis Bacon, looked up at it and my hair—I used to have hair—sort of stood up. A strange chill ran through my body, and that was one of those moments when something spoke. The only other time that has happened is in the Hitchcock film *Psycho* in the shower scene. So, I started reading. I looked into ceramics and began to write a book on ceramics in South Africa. So, I went to the library and I looked for some literature, I began reading about fine art. I tried to find the same for ceramics, flipping through hundreds of cards, end to end of the Dewey system, and there's nothing about ceramics as theory, or critical writing. There are books that will tell you how to attach anything to piece of clay, but not a single book will tell you why you should attach it. So, I'd already fallen in love with ceramics by that stage, as a class of objects, and I didn't want to make them, and I suddenly saw that I had a role, I had a vocation, because of this vacuum.

For instance, the first history book written about American ceramics was something that I wrote in 1979. It's extraordinary to think that they didn't have a family tree from that point of view. Because I've done so much work in the field, I suffer from something that is called educated incapacity. That is when you are so deeply involved in a narrow field that when you start looking outside that field, it's always to how that can figure into your field, because that becomes almost your entire sense of reference. What I do in ceramics is I forage. I will find something that fits, that answers a question that we've never been able to answer, and I pull that piece out of it. Obviously, you look at where it comes from and how it's developed, but then you bring that into your field. And, one has to be very careful in ceramics because it is one of the most conservative communities in the arts. In fact, the anthropologists tell us that in a village the most conservative person in the village is always the potter. And, I think it has to do with place, because a potter works out of the place in which he has found the materials and fuel he or she needs. It's a long process of trial and error. In the villages the women made the pots, but the men often fired them. It's a science-based activity. You know where your clay is. Your kiln isn't something you can put on your back and just walk to the next village. So, when a pottery is built it stays within that space, and that space is what then causes the conservatism.

Even today I think it is true that ceramics is still anti-intellectual. Large portions of the field are anti-art. They find art a privileged part of visual arts. And, bear in mind too, if you put this in another context it wasn't until 2008 to 2013 when those working in clay could be shown as fine artists. Even when Miro made ceramics in the 1950s, they couldn't sell it. He was famous! Everybody wanted his paintings. But not his ceramics because in their minds this medium could not be art. Dave Hickey, the critic, said to

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me he thinks the fine arts rejected it because of its domestic association. High art was terrified of domesticity.

That's a long way of saying that I then went into this to try and forage again. Was there something I could find? Something I could take? And, no, to be honest, there was almost nothing. My role in trying to expand the field is like one forcing one's way into a locked room. My job is to get the windows open so you get some oxygen. That was my problem in reading this book. It was that I had less and less oxygen as I read. It seemed to be stifling me because it didn't give you the opportunity to breathe. It really took your breathing away. I also became concerned that there was an element of the bogus in it. In that they were convenient words, in convenient statements, but they were gone very quickly and he didn't extend his ideas enough. It looked nice on paper.

Then I tried to make a link with other media. Bear in mind I'm a one-trick pony, my whole world is ceramics. I'm sure you have a larger world than that. But, I tried to pull my medium in to the document. It was an interesting process at that point when I did that. I have a few books that matter very much and *The Jealous Potter* by Claude Levi-Strauss is one of them. And, so, I went to creation myths. Creation myth are really fascinating, in cultures that are completely disconnected the creation myth is almost identical from culture to culture. It comes down to this: Mother Earth climbs a tree, I know this doesn't sound very flattering...then she defecates. The feces are clay. The people make a bowl. And, here's what's interesting: Because they made a bowl they have to find fire. Usually people speak of fire being gained first, but this idea that to make a pot you have to find fire, and that is how fire gets to us. In some ways that idea was my strongest link because if you look at it as birthing, making pots becomes a sacred ritual.

So I focused on the bowl. We believe craft begins with people, but animals were crafting long before us. Birds made little hanging houses out of mud, they were creating floating architecture long before we did anything like that. What I try and get students to think of, when I'm working with them, is not to think of the bowl as the first bowl. The first bowl is about 20,000 years old. The bowl is just a depression in which you put something. It fills with water and then is used by animals to get the liquid out of it.

Then, living in Santa Fe, I had become much more involved with Indigenous pottery. And, when you go back, for instance, the Navajo stopped making pots for fifty years. In *The Jealous Potter* Levi-Strauss deals with this as well. There was a belief that a potter had a certain magical quality that they had power because they access to Mother Earth. And they were strictly controlled. They were things they could not do. They could not make pots while menstruating. They couldn't make pots while they were having bad thoughts of people. This interesting thing that a potter was essential and yet the most dangerous person in the community because by



being able to pull Earth Mother’s powers into a vessel, they could do harm to individuals.

Then I would move back to the document and see if I could relate it to my medium, and it was just very difficult. My audience may feel alienated by this text at this point. But, that’s fine because you do this today, you do that tomorrow, and it keeps evolving. We’re a long way from where we were. But, again, I can’t find a connection to craft, and the text isn’t convincing me of something I can take out. And, that’s it. Thank you.

**Brian Gillis:** Thank you... Thank you all for sharing and starting this off with what seems like a lot of things that are deeply held and intriguing. We’ll have the ability to open things up in a second. I for one very much need a break. Seems like all of us do. Should we take 15? Great. Thank you.

**Sonja Dahl:** You are all blowing my mind already! This is so exciting!

—INTERMISSION—

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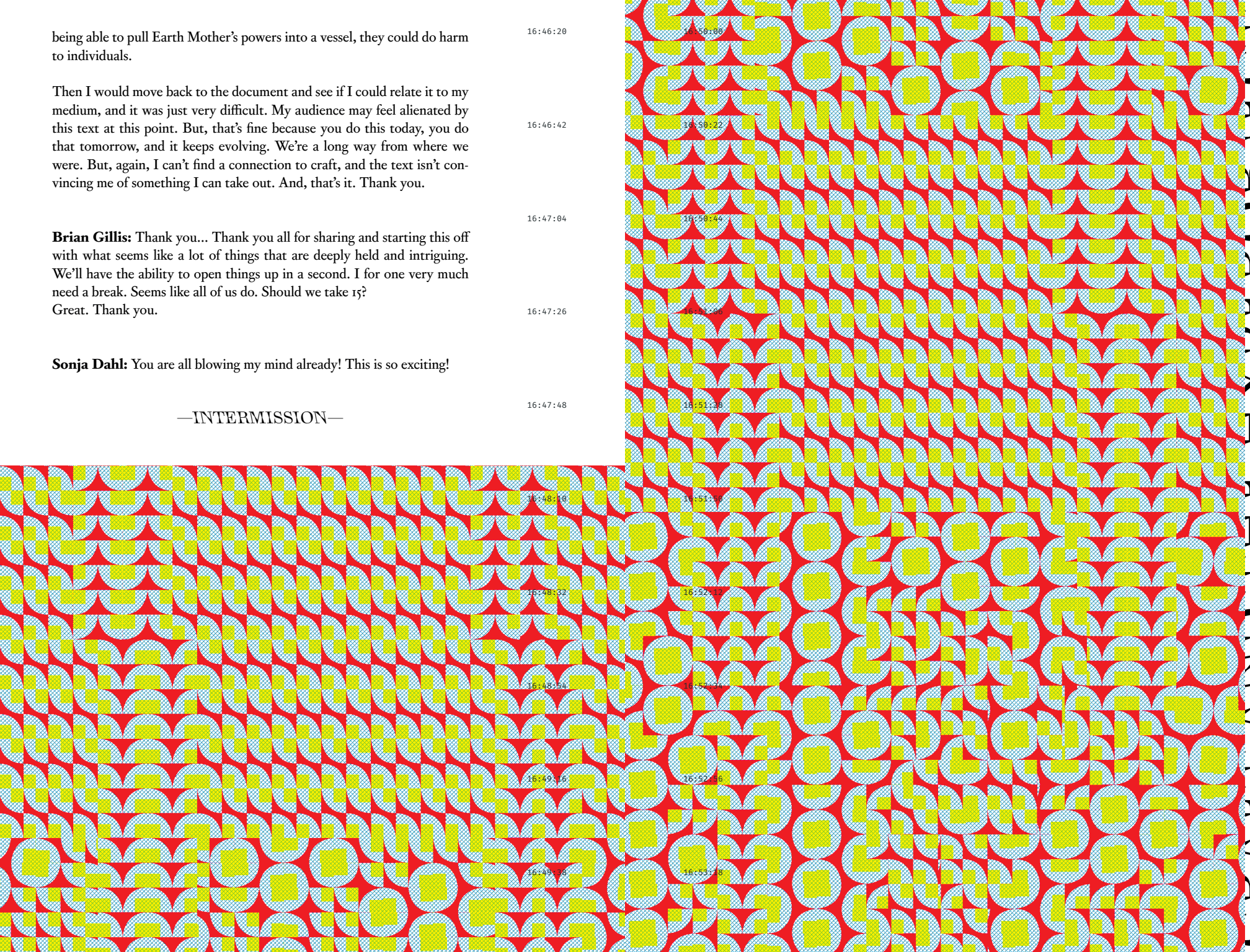
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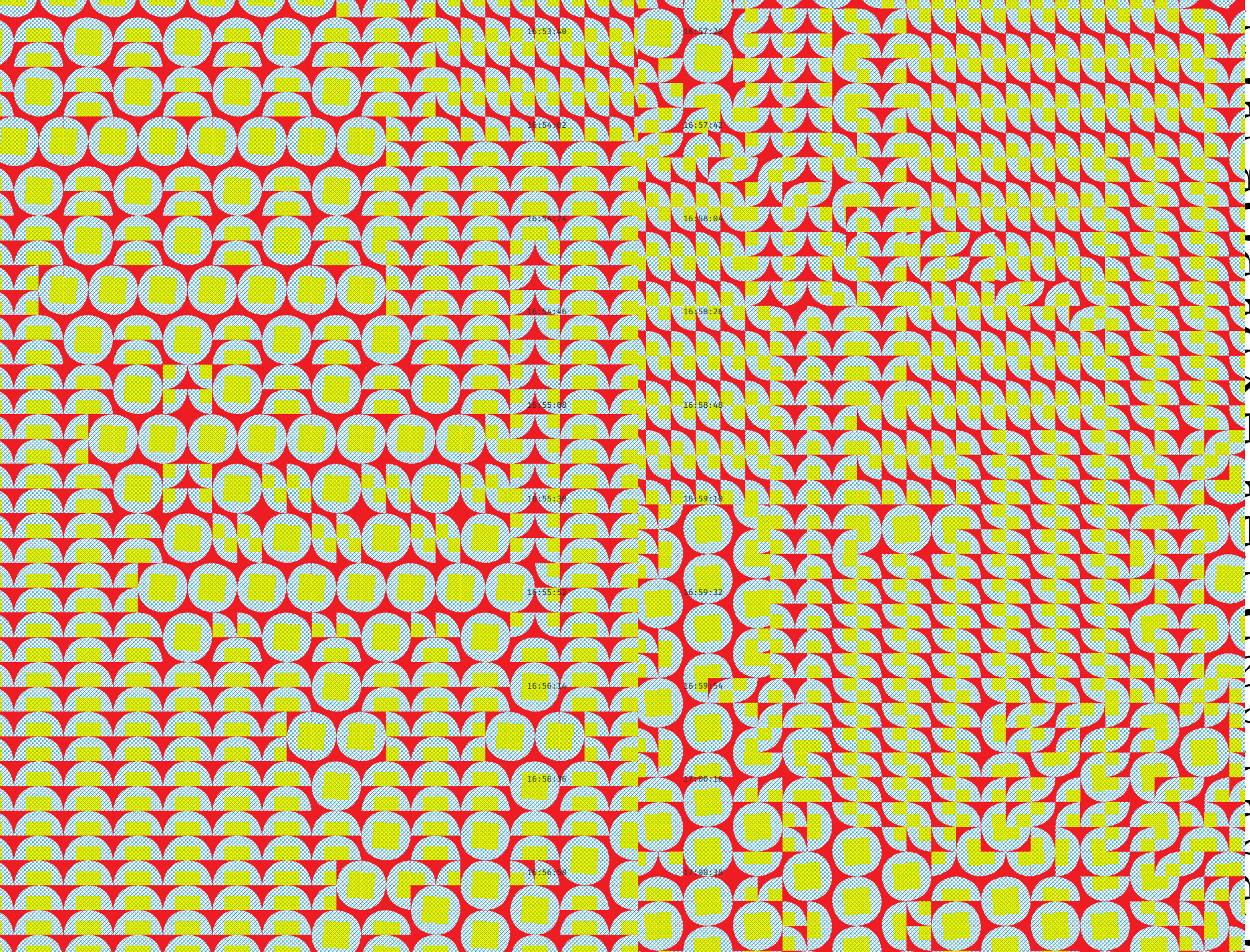
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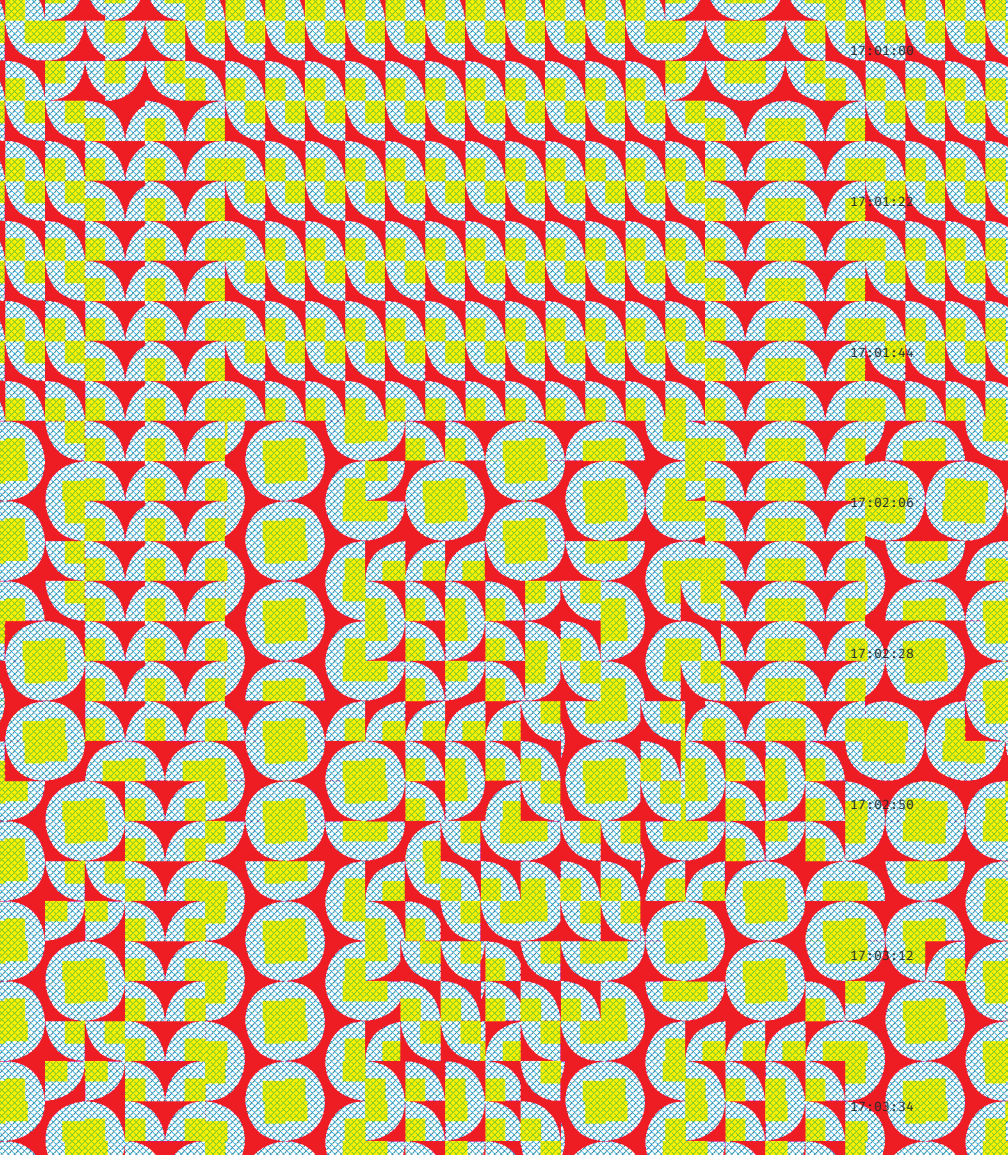
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**Stacy Jo Scott:** So, with that, we're stepping into the second part of the conversation. I'm curious about how to start that...Maybe we could begin with a question? I don't have a question to share, but I'm curious if other folks have something that maybe they responded to especially from someone else's sharing, or something that shifted for them, or a question that emerged that they didn't get to share. I'd like to just open it up there, and we'll see what comes up.

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**Anthea Black:** Well, I was curious if people had an impulse to read the five categories through some lens of material experience or a media specificity. It seems the invitation of the text is *not* to do that, but I was curious about reading against the grain in the text to ask: Was there a moment where you felt that paper or clay or fiber offered a little hinge or holding point that could open up one of the categories?

**Garth Clark:** It was difficult.

**Brian Gillis:** I think that's a wonderful question, it makes me think of one of the things that resonated with me in what Nicki said. When she was talking about a relationship to clay as a transitional or trans material it made me think about this in relationship to craft practice writ large, its existence within and outside of culture as being transitional, and a lot of the materials that we, as craft practitioners, are dealing with as being transitional. Ranging from its kind of physicality, or the way it transitions physically and the ways it transitions formally, conceptually, and socially through culture. The way it is valued in relationship to use, exchange, or social implication, etc. So in many ways I wonder if this is what may be *viscous* to me. That positioning of material is this thing that things stick to and transition into and between something else.

**Garth Clark:** This probably isn't entirely relevant, but one of my problems is the way people deal with clay and ceramics. Clay is usually used as a synonym for ceramics, and in fact, it's not. Ceramics is man's first synthetic material. It's exactly the same as plastic. Oil is natural then you change it into plastic, which is not natural. Ceramics is not natural. It is chemical compound created by intense heat. Many potters think of ceramics as a natural material, but it was really the first plastic, if you want to look at it that way. Some people may not like that because it upsets their romantic view of this totally natural, organic thing they do, and it's not true.

**Sonja Dahl:** I honestly struggle with the correlation of plastic to ceramic. Simply because—I'm just gonna push a little here—I hear what you're saying and I think it's an interesting thought. I think that the moment of intervention, with human intervention, is an important thing to mark, and considering that is what synthesizes something is also interesting. But, ceramics are not polluting the ocean. Ceramics are not bringing about sea-life death. Ceramics are not a thing that, because they do not decompose, are threatening the health of the planet. I think that's the place where this idea of the hyperobject can come into the discussion, which I think is potentially useful. I think it is interesting to consider what demarcates one material from another. There are many forms of transformation, there are

many processes of transformation. Just because I do not think that ceramics is a plastic and that they're, you know, correlated...

**Garth Clark:** The difference is that one isn't toxic, and because it's not toxic we don't think this...

**Brian Gillis:** But it is though...

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** But it is toxic...

**Garth Clark:** Well, it can be very toxic, yes.

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** It's highly toxic and when you take it to the scale that capitalism takes it to... I'm thinking about how even Heath Ceramics has two clay deposits that have gone dry over the course of the fifty years that company has been in existence. They're not the only ones mining them. There's also a lot of toxic things that are going into the environment when you take it to that huge scale. It's one thing if Nicki's doing it in a studio on a small scale. But, when you multiply that by Ikea level or something else. You were going to say something though...

**Nicki Green:** Well, I guess a few things. For some reason I'm feeling drawn to these words that keep getting used, like toxic and toxicity. But, I think, just to excerpt before I forget, I like this idea of plastic and the correlation between clay and plastic. The thing that jumps out for me is this idea not just of plastic or plastic-ness, but of plasticity as something that is talked about so consistently in ceramic practice. Morton's discussion of fluidity or transitional material is really rooted in its plasticity. That it has this flexibility in the way that it gets used and what it does. Something that's come up for me over and over is the way that clay has this materiality where it is this mushy, fecal material but then it also mimics other materials seamlessly. Which is exciting and also a horrifying thing that it can do.

I'm interested in the thread between clay and plastic, and what we're asking the materials to do in the world. What materials are able to do and then what they're doing to the world around us. I have this horror every time I put an order into a ceramics distribution or manufacturing company for a specific material, and they say, "Oh no, that material has been exhausted, please find something else." That is a horrifying moment to me, and yet, I was talking to a glaze chemist who was trying to reassure me that the effect of the ceramics community, and ceramic art-making is so minimal in terms of the consumption of these materials in relationship to industrial companies

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that are really exhausting these resources. So, there's this art-making on a small scale versus huge industrial production.

**Brian Gillis:** As you were talking, I started to think a lot about the kind of unfortunate mythology that written words, or even spoken words, set up that often forces representation. And I came to that, I think, when you were saying that clay, or the field of ceramics, is such a minimal use of the world's captured ceramic materials. I know that something like 8% of the clay that's mined on earth is actually for the paper and paint industry, but because it's ceramic we think of the clay object as representing it. I think there are all sorts of ways that the hyperobject, and specifically things related to temporal undulation or non-locality, that force us to have to be mindful of language's inability to describe things completely. I think that had come up in most of these sections for me, that there's some sort of hubris that we have as humans, that we think that we could build some sort of noble mythology or system of exchange around ideas related to these big things. I think there are so many cultures that are already set up to just know that. I think it's a condition of this being a book that comes from Western philosophy, and a culture that creates related conceits, that allows us to think we can understand something in this way. The idea that clay is more natural than plastic, for instance. If you follow it down that line of thinking, there're whole parts of the earth that no longer exist here, and there is labor that has terrible working conditions because of it. So, it may be subjective whether it's more or less toxic. And I think all that is to say that maybe there's something interesting about thinking about non-locality relative to hubris. Maybe it's the hubris of human's thinking that we can understand and know something enough to set up a value system.

**Shannon Stratton:** Can I ask a question of the organizers and the choosing of the text? I'm not trying to draw a conclusion, but I'm curious to know if the inclination to be interested in this text was in relationship to craft's ties to resource extraction? Or, if it was tied to a grappling with understanding its relationship or connection to larger technologies, or the evolution of technology from craft into the present? Can you give me, or give us, what some of those initial sparks were?

**Sonja Dahl:** I suppose I can personally say that I am interested in this project as a thought experiment. As, yeah, as a way of troubling the waters with other troubled waters, I guess, if that makes any sense. Not so much that I am invested in a belief in hyperobjects, or what that all means. But there is something I'm interested in that is the larger hyperobject as a framework. Craft as a framework. So, how can we hear some different frameworks that don't usually go together, but what kind of relationships, random or otherwise, can be drawn out of that?



**Shannon Stratton:** So, it's like a Venn diagram thing. Thank you. So, these are two enormous frameworks that may or may not have an overlap.

**Sonja Dahl:** Yeah, like maybe there's something going on in there in the middle.

**Shannon Stratton:** But less of seeing the hyperobject in craft?

**Sonja Dahl:** Yeah, I imagine each of us have come at it from different...

**Anya Kivarkis:** I would say as a primary point of interest, it came from Brian as the Director of Center for Art Research. As I read the text, I wanted to reject it entirely. It didn't feel like something I wanted to examine related to craft. At the same time, there have been so many things that have been said that are amazing, so that it has cultivated this conversation is incredible to me. I do think about object-oriented ontology and I would love to understand that with you all, with all of your positions as part of that conversation. For me, that might be an interesting thing that might come out of this text.

**Brian Gillis:** For years I've been seeing references to the hyperobject in talks and texts related to art, craft, and design without really challenging or extending it in ways beyond its function as an alternative descriptor. I guess I came to it, for this occasion, in the most superficial way, through its five elements as a potentially generative framework to better think about craft as it relates to work and discourse within the field. I'm just not interested in trying to understand craft as a discrete thing, and I feel like so many conversations about craft devolve into trying to find a knowable discrete thing. Which always places the emphasis on a taxonomy and puts it in a place that is supplemental to other fields, or to a market, or industry, or some sort of specific culture. It feels like that is just so massive and woolly, and I wonder if there is another way to use those conversations to advance or extend things. Outside of all the problems with overindulgent writing and the Western philosophical perspective, I was really interested in these five elements and what the idea of things like "phasing" allows me to think of relative to craft potentials. Or, things being "interobjective," "non-local," and "viscous"...and I felt like there was a possibility for me to take two things that I don't completely understand, craft and the hyperobject, and put them on a table in a room with a bunch of people who may share a similar inability to understand them, in order to see if the framework of these five elements

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could afford us an alternative understanding of what craft is, was, and could be...in ways that aren't supplemental, and maybe not so bound to value systems and taxonomies.

**Bukola Koiki:** I'm not sure that it was clear to me that those five categories were the crux of the importance of this reading because we were first sent the intro and that's what I had, at the time, to read most thoroughly, frankly. All the other things that have come up for people, I wish that now that I have had a chance to read it more thoroughly and gleaned something else from that. I'm actually not sure of that because the intro itself was a slog enough.

**Brian Gillis:** I think this is really about a thought experiment. Putting two disparate things next to each other in a room with a bunch of people who are deeply invested in one of them and likely not as familiar with the other, and seeing what comes out of it in a way that's generative to our practices and our collective participation in the field.

**Garth Clark:** Language has so much to do with it, because craft is such a layered word. The worst place to discuss craft is in the craft community. Craft has been politicized. They are concerned that the word craft undervalues them. Now a sea change, go to the last Whitney Biennial. It was given the name of the "craft biennial" because, for the first time, the museum was filled with art that was made, unapologetically, from craft processes. Painters and sculptors see craft as a verb not a noun. They craft something but they don't make craft. They're using it as a means, a material and a process, not as an end. But they have taken away hierarchy. I think that's one of the problems with the craft movement, is that they have a very strict hierarchical way of looking at crafts. But maybe if we were talking about it as material labor then anything, then any material you work with, becomes material labor. It's not a problem. But sometimes a word just becomes too awkward to use.

**Anya Kivarkis:** I disagree with you there, because I have to say that there were things that Nicki said, for example, where she talked about clay as a trans material and trans-phasal, and suddenly the recognition of that made me really think about why I work with metal and reflection and mirroring, and how there's something about metal that kicks back at you. It's such a stable material, and I thought that was such a beautiful way to understand our difference. Everyone here has such a deep understanding of materiality, and I feel in some way craft people have to understand so many more things, like materiality, history, and context around what you're doing, and how it relates to identity. I think a lot of people tend to

work through the discipline or the field in that way. Bukola talked about the idea of assimilation and for me, I'm interested in this idea. [gesturing to Bukola] You were talking about assimilation, but also about being comfortable with something that's unknown because it's part of your Nigerian context. I think for me, being a first-generation person, the idea of assimilation and always looking to something else for context...that maybe there is something about the known that's important to me, actually. I'm curious about that idea of the known and the unknown, comfort and discomfort, and I feel like you all are helping me understand that better.

**Bean Gilsdorf:** I was just gonna say that, even though you [gesturing to Garth and Anya] disagreed, I think both of these things—the idea of hierarchy and also the idea of assimilation—are related, because they both involve power and shifts of power. I was using a similar approach in thinking of today's work from a place of comparing one thing against the other to answer the main question: Is craft a hyper object? Can I take these terms, the five parameters that define a hyperobject, and compare them to craft? Can craft map really neatly onto them or not? Sitting here and listening to everyone talk in their very different ways and from different perspectives about all of this, I start to think about the fact that craft is, to me, bigger than a hyperobject. So, instead of taking *craft* and weighing it against *hyperobject*, with hyperobject being the thing that we are trying to move towards, maybe we should be trying to map hyperobject onto craft. Craft is multi-authored, it comes from all of these different subjectivities, while hyperobject is coming from one person. Perhaps the way I prefer to think about it is to shift the balance of power, and put the balance of power back on craft, rather than seeing craft as a subordinate that is looking towards the hyperobject to see if it fits into its parameters. Maybe craft just stands aside from it, and that's fine. Or maybe hyperobject is a part of craft in a way that I haven't really thought about yet.

**Shannon Stratton:** Do you mean that a hyperobject comes from one person, meaning that Morton has defined it?

**Bean Gilsdorf:** Yeah, he's put this book out, so he's now the owner of the term hyperobject, so hyperobject as a category, as a theoretical space, is coming from his one subjectivity. Morton says in the intro that he's written it in a specific way because he wants it to be really subjective. But craft is much older and way broader. I'm just wondering if there's something in there to investigate, about the way in which they can't be mapped onto each other because they are coming from such different places.

**Jovencio de la Paz:** I think that this is often the problem with grand theories of everything. The aspiration is much larger than the actual ability of the ideas

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to hold on to any particular subject. In many ways my initial interest in the text wraps back around to Shannon's question. I think Morton is attempting to observe a certain reality of objects that is contingent upon a very troubled moment. It's a specificity. There are many examples in the text, but actually, those examples are so numerous because it's about how we relate or observe objecthood. Not only objects as material things, but the sort of linguistic dynamic of subject and object relations. So now, in the text, we are confronted with a new dynamic: "I'm the subject, these are hyperobjects." The same notion only exploded. In the way that people are describing here, to look at these five short descriptors as ways to see how I relate to the materials in my process. The histories of my process that are in my media. We can ask how these materials and processes are hyperobjects. That's actually quite useful, just as another kind of device with a tool in the kit to digest or metabolize the histories and process the factors that are varied in some ways stable in my studio. Right? Using his formulation for testing and, I liked the words that you used, upset waters?

**Sonja Dahl:** ...troubled waters...

**Jovencio de la Paz:** Yeah, trouble the waters. It doesn't rest for me as one subject moving towards another subject or one subject being subsumed by another. It's a different matrix, different vernacular to turn over these subjects, which are very familiar to me.

**Shannon Stratton:** I wanted to just add that in the text Morton is throwing out all these different ways, he has given all these examples, in order to show all the ways that the world can be observed. That through the text we meander through the multitude of ways that we can observe the world. At the same time that he's saying that the world is over. That bit that you'd brought up was interesting because it connects me with the possibility that maybe a crafts-person is somebody who is experimenting with ways to observe the world through their relationship to materiality and process and form, and that those are forms of observation.

**Jovencio de la Paz:** It's a special kind of subject. In terms of subject/object, a crafts-person is a certain kind of performer on the stage of all kinds of users, consumers, producers. A crafts-person is a different. I'm just kind of riffing... and in that perhaps we can make an addendum to this text of one who has engaged a practice with the production of objects has a different...yet another kind of...dip in this sort of fractal or prismatic list of characters. We engage with objects, craftspeople occupy a very particular place within that.

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** Which craftspeople? We've already had multiple kinds of craft practices that have brought out the fact that nothing is ex-

actly the same. Working with clay, is not the same as working with metal, is not the same as working with textiles. That's already come up. So, how are we reconciling when you say craft? What are we really talking about?

**Jovencio de la Paz:** My gut response is, if I accept Morton's position, the craftspeople we're talking about are people who have a particular kind of relationship to the flow of material and production. I know that there are huge problematics inherent to that statement, but in trying to understand a link between hyperobjectivity and craft. I think what is emerging for me is that the text is about the relationship between subject and object, it is a relationship that makers have with objects.

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** Yes. I also think there's an issue I'm having here where I'm struggling to understand where he's talking about movements and brings in quantum physics—he's talking about all this stuff and at the same time he really seems to have an issue, in a couple of places, with systems. He doesn't like systems, and I think what I'm struggling with is, what you describe makes sense to me because I understand that system, but where do systems sit, then, in his theory of hyperobjectivity?

**Anthea Black:** I wonder if thinking about making practices as a form of nonverbal research would help, because it seems that one central issue is the impossibility of complete knowing, and the impossibility of translation of experience and an embodied moment into thought or into text. It makes me think of expanding the idea of creative research to include a system of feeling, of knowing through feeling. That's what working with particular materials offers to my practice. As a non-verbal connection with research, in the most broadly defined way. Through that work, you do develop a relation to systems of thought, other systems of thought, and other forms of organizing knowledge. So, it doesn't replace, but it moves alongside and can move back and forth in a really porous way. But that actually comes from *doing*.

**Brian Gillis:** You know, what's interesting to me about what you said is that what we're doing here in many ways is antithetical to craft. The academic waxing and trying to create taxonomies to understand something removes it more from the most basic, foundational realities of what it might be. And, one of the things that I keep thinking about is that so much of this is indeterminate. It's about maybe troubling things for the sake of outcomes that are really post-language or outside of language in some way. When Morton was talking about, "Well, maybe if there's some organism that had some epic amount of tentacles and was capable of knowing everything at once it could know what the hyperobject is," it struck me as

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what we may be doing as a field. That there's some way that we try to fix time and space through the aggregation of human knowledge to be able to simplify something, or label it so it can be known. And I'm curious, is craft's collective self-awareness, or self-consciousness, now that we're in the 21st century and we have so much access to other people's ideas, spanning time and culture and a position, that we're capable of thinking that we can understand or know something discretely because we have access to so much information related to it? How does that function relative to craft? I think what Anthea said is really important. It's this nonverbal, in some cases non-cerebral, context-responsive, subject/object cycle that's really at the core of our work. But, it feels like in the last twenty years there has been this massive upwelling of some sort of self-awareness that moves compasses toward academic discourse, history, and theory, and perhaps more practice-adjacent than reciprocal. How does this kind of collective awareness function relative to the field of craft practice?

**Garth Clark:** Craft is actually a shrinking pursuit in developing nations. Outside of that, it is still continuous because in many places the only way you can get a bowl is through village crafters. And if our economy continues in a mass-market industrial way, less and less of it will be made. The ability for a contemporary potter to earn enough money and send the kids to school is a daunting challenge. It is really difficult without a teaching gig, limiting the ability to live by craft now, if we want to do it as that which we draw our living from. As a hobbyist there's no problem. But, if we want to do it as a professional activity, that window slowly, inexorably, keeps closing.

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** I think that you and Anthea just pointed out something, Anthea is talking about stepping outside of art history and outside of these structures. You're talking about the movement, about working with it. You're talking about a relationship to materials that is not necessary. You said research, but I think I'm going to put that away for a second. The way you talked about moving with materials as being about craft—you're talking about craft as a very particular thing that we understand it to be. As in, it is about making something that operates in a commodity situation...

**Garth Clark:** ...as a professional...

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** ...As a professional thing, but it's also about producing a thing. I think that's exactly where I feel in some ways that's a place where this article could help think through that. I don't know that I agree with you that craft is shrinking. I think craft as we've known it has

always changed and shifted. Craft has always come and gone. Lace makers disappeared hundreds of years ago, it's always moving and shrinking and growing. I think it's the difference in what you both said that is helping me think about this differently. Garth, you're talking about craft in the way we've understood it to be as a commodity object, and I think that's exactly what is a problem. This is like the anxiety of "craft is dying," this awful shadow of unseen power, right? The Shelley quote, and what Anthea's bringing out I think is moving away from that, potentially, to talk about it in a different way. Which gets at what I was asking you about craft.

**Jovencio de la Paz:** Brian, that you bring up this question is quite interesting to me because, if I can reframe the question, with our increased self-awareness—whether that is educational or experiential—what it reveals is a question of systems and what is pushing against systems. So much of what a system does for us is allow a clear parameter, a stable understanding of a field of an object, etc. But, with increased self-awareness, one can't distinguish between all the systems that produce this plastic cup, or whatever other object. Our increasing self-awareness forces all those systems to collide. They're inextricably linked, right? So, this is in some ways the endgame of understanding objects. It is that the systems that connect them are so incredibly dense and infinitely nuanced that they sort of defy classification. Like, you can't live in only one system, they are too entangled. I think the rejection of that notion is a rejection of simplicity. The rejection of simplifying the matter of objecthood...perhaps.

**Garth Clark:** The idea is great, that craft can find a broader activity. But once there's a mechanism, there's not always an inherent interest in craft. Say, with the twenty-year-olds—we were waiting for the big [craft] market that was going to come because everybody said that working with iPhones and computers and the rest of it, people were eventually going to desire something that is real or tactile. And the data is showing that that is not happening at all. In fact, there hasn't been a generation people in their 20s and 30s that is less interested in objects than the one at the moment.

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** But they're interested in *experiences*. That's different. So, the experience economy is growing where the object economy is shifting.

**Brian Gillis:** Yeah, but I disagree with you Garth. I think that people are locating themselves, and identifying as makers and participants, in something outside of this mainstream art-economic-industrial-complex that a lot of us thought about and aspired to through education. I think a lot of the people in this room have practices that are inherently outside of that

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to begin with. And people who don't identify as artists and creatives are identifying as makers. Then, I think there are also still billions of people on Earth who participate in what we're talking about in ways that are outside of the language of the academy or art markets. So, if you choose to think of craft through the lens of the gallery, or an art-historical cannon, or an academic curriculum, then you may be right. But Stacy Jo and I have a ceramics program that's just exploding. So I think that there's evidence that the twenty-year-olds within academia are also feeling that way, but I think we need to acknowledge that it's not just through academic or market lenses that we should be considering things.

**Stacy Jo Scott:** Yeah, they are invested in objects and ways of thinking about being in relationship to material without this myopic lens that we have harnessed on ourselves in many ways in academia. I've actually been shocked at how there's some sort of genuine wellspring among the folks that I work with that are around twenty, say, that they have as deep a desire and need to think about objects and materiality as there is to think about their place in the world. Which right now is extremely precarious. I think they're dealing with a sense of precarity that I think—I can only speak for myself, there's almost an ability to intellectualize it and distance myself from it—but it's almost in their blood. It was something that was in the air that they breathed from the very beginning of their lives. I think that shows itself in the way that they're in relationship to objects and to sincerity, and to these things that don't feel like it's even through this ironic lens. It's through something really rich and deep, and it's fascinating because it's actually not what I would have expected. The next generation I'm less sure about. We'll see.

I'm interested in thinking about the reasons I was initially drawn, and am still drawn, to craft. I think it's partly because of its complexity and of the inability to see which side of the prism you're on. Or like what tentacle you're grabbing onto at the time. Its complexity and confusing-ness and contradiction is part of why it's endlessly generative and maybe why we continue to sit around and talk about it. Even when we pretend we're not talking about it. I think that there's something for me that makes the lens of the hyperobject, though extremely problematic for many reasons already discussed, feel like there's a link there that feels like a particularly rich lens. I haven't been able to grapple with craft's complexity outside of this theory that insists on superfluous complexity. It's ungraspable. It's annoyingly ungraspable and yet because of that it's able to speak to this condition that I see in craft but also that I see in life.

I think something maybe we haven't really talked about yet is the context that, actually we have talked about it, the context in which he's founding these theories is in the overwhelming precarity that I just talked about, in terms of students, through their experience of it. Thinking about the



material I use for a glaze suddenly vanishing. My relationship to the degradation of the Earth's resources and the Earth's people and labor, and things like that. These things are situated in extreme instability to such a degree that I don't think we can understand how to grapple with it. So, we think about objects, and we think about subjectivity, but what this book is suggesting, in my visceral experience, is that the complexity is completely overwhelming. And so I go to these things as grounds to stand on and yet that doesn't explain the whole condition that we're in. And I'm curious, given that, where does craft stand in that destabilized ground? I was thinking about this and came to the section where Timothy Morton talked about the "monstrous," and I think about clay and actually what's happening to contemporary clay, the way that artists are using it now. But also my own relationship to the material as, like, when categories are all destabilized through things like global warming, but also through beautiful things like queerness. How do we make matter out of that? Right? How does material form from that? I see that in the "monstrous" and things that evade—disturbingly evade—categorization by the powers that are responsible for the Western philosophical project. I guess I just would suggest the "monstrous" as one way of thinking about a lens, or a boat to get on in the troubled waters.

**Sonja Dahl:** That makes me think of some of the things that you said earlier, Lori: Is craft something we can hang onto in the quake? And the generative capacities of craft. I also keep coming back to something that you said about holding paradox with ritual. I feel that there's something really important in that I can't put language around myself, but, yeah, I want to bring that back into the room...

**Lori Talcott:** Timothy Morton often talks about the "pre-Mesopotamian," and I am referring to something similar when I talk about pre-modern or pre-enlightenment Western Europe. To be clear, I'm not advocating that we go back to a medieval world. But there are things we can learn from those earlier ways of being in the world, ways that allow us to hold paradox, that allow opposites to exist simultaneously. Other traditions and cultures have always known this, of course. Craft can be a ritualized practice—a way to hold a binary opposition. In pre-modern Europe, objects—church bells, knives, or jewelry, for example—were often personified and inscribed "I was made by so and so," or "I was made to do this or that." It wasn't about what something *meant* so much as what it *did*. This is where object-oriented ontology can be helpful for us as craftspeople. Here I would like to substitute Morton's characteristic *viscous*, as I had trouble with it, with *entanglement*, in the sense of Ian Hodder's work. Hodder is an archeologist whose work is important in terms of understanding our entanglement with material objects—and the environmental consequences of that entanglement. This brings me back to medieval ways of

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understanding objects, not in a subject/object binary opposition, but in "networks of relationships," to use Alfred Gell's expression. I think that magic and ritual, in the truest sense, are about relationship—and rhetoric. And that objects and making can be rhetorical.

**Sonja Dahl:** So would you say that this project of thinking, dissecting, trying to put into language, is a form of magical thinking for craft? I'm curious.

**Lori Talcott:** Well, naming something *is* a magical act—as is making. Naming and using language, the language that we craft around our craft, and our objects, *is* the spell. For me, language and matter go together—they are not separate realms. This, of course, is not a modernist view of language, which is arbitrary. It's more akin to Shinto belief—that words are embedded with magic and spirit.

**Brian Gillis:** In thinking about animism, and talking about it with you earlier [addressing Lori], I'm hearing some possibility of reconsidering animism, or something that feels ancient and intuitive and already present on Earth. And it makes me think of the role of eye contact in lots of cultures. Where eye contact, acknowledging that you're being seen and exchanging that, is really meaningful. It feels akin to naming something. The magic of naming something...

**Lori Talcott:** Yes, like Darshan, in Hinduism, when you gaze upon an image as part of a ritual practice. It is an acknowledgment of the gaze of the deity. Yes, I think about that with objects too.

**Brian Gillis:** Yeah, and you might not make eye contact with somebody unless you were in love with them or wanted to do them harm. Where there was going to be some sort of deep emotional connection that follows. I wonder if that's a part of the thought exercise of generations of craft-related or craft-adjacent practitioners trying to, kind of, make eye contact with this thing. To have some deep, relational, powerful understanding and impact on something.

**Nicki Green:** Or the passing along of the eye contact to, say, a future generation. Something that comes up for me a lot around this is the way that craft practice or craft practices get passed on. Something that comes up for me in my own practices, my life, my life practice outside of this discussion, is the idea of reproduction. In the way that ideas and objects, or ways of being in the world get reproduced and move forward. It feels to me like this

queer, non-biological reproduction that feels very generative to me. I was thinking through ideas of the apprenticeship model and the intimacy of the apprenticeship relationship.

To go back to this idea of the mesh or the sieve is something that came up in this discussion of interobjectivity. Something that I keep thinking about while we're all talking is this idea of using the text as a way to think *through* craft. I keep thinking of the text as this kind of lens or sieve that we're pushing craft through. To try to see what happens. Morton talked about the idea of the resulting perforated thing. I think the examples he uses are a JPEG as a perforated image. Or an MP3 as a perforated sound. I guess I've been thinking about what happens when something is passed on and that reproduction happens. Like, what's changing and evolving through that process? And, what's possible in that perforating, transforming of a practice? There's something really exciting and very "monstrous" (in a good way, in a queer way) and generative about the perforating of something. Yeah, I feel like I can keep dancing around and through this, but the perforated object, the mesh, is this boundary that is also permeable. It acknowledges space but can be moved through and broken down really quickly. There's something full of possibility in that idea to me.

**Shannon Stratton:** Can I jump on that real quick? Because I've been making notes about that part as well and I like what you're saying about the forcing or pushing of craft through that mesh. I've been thinking that the text itself was both porous and suffocating. It's a mesh and it's also a mud. It goes back and forth between being something that you can move through and yet get stuck in at the same time. Also as this conversation moved through the room Namita had said "What craft?" and then Garth talked about feeling as though craft was now limited in its ability to be a meaningful way to make a living. And then it moved its way around the room. We're at Nicki now talking about this porosity or the glossy JPEG image. It made me think, as it was moving around, about Namita's question as it passed through the room: I think craft is like this JPEG that's losing a lot of content, degrading. I think there's this idea of craft, and studio craft, and five fields or whatever over here. Then I'm over here with craft as this really generous verb that is happening in music practices, and in computer programming, and hosting a dinner party. Craft as a very generous term applies to a lot of ways of making a life, or making as a kind of orientation. I've written down it's an orientation towards processing the world. It is like that JPEG image as it gets pushed through the mesh. It's losing some of those more concrete definitions that have been put around it previously. Which I think is wonderful, you know? That evolution is a really positive and de-centering thing.

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**Anthea Black:** I wonder too, I always try to think about aspects of queer theory that have allowed me to arrive in these interdisciplinary moments. The project of queer theory in the '90s was very invested in some of the same questions that we're talking about. It's branched into many different subsets, but one of them that is resonant with what Nicki and Shannon just mentioned is a kind of refusal to reproduce in a form that's recognizable to previously existing structures. That refusal from within a discipline might actually look like it's not part of the discipline at all. That might not actually be seen, or constituted as something we would now name as craft practice.

In the face of an overwhelming inability to really fashion something that is graspable, the other possibility is to go further towards the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries or go further towards the dissolution of gender. That project makes room, but it also requires a certain loss of familiarity. And, here we are in this in this moment. I think that the climate anxiety for many people is extremely crushing. It represents a really significant loss. But, maybe the answer that queer theory allows is to accelerate that [dissolution] by embracing a certain form of precarity, and embracing the refusal to reproduce past systems.

I flipped back through the text tonight, and there was this little point where [Morton] says "object-oriented ontology is the coral reef below the U-Boat of Heidegger and we have to swim even deeper," and I thought, *why not just dismantle the boat?* But, also, that's the thing that feminism and critical race studies and queer theory have been proposing for, you know...decades. Okay, how do we dismantle the boat? Then the other thing is, if we're being asked to swim below into this deeper space, then there's something about that that also seems really colonial to me. That we come to more textured knowing by going deeper or further or having some expansion into space that's previously unknown or constructed as unknown? There's a little piece in there that needs to be examined when we are talking about the unknowable. Like, to whom? And, what is that really—an invitation to stretch further into that supposedly unknown space?

**Bukola Koiki:** I think that's kind of why I haven't said much in this conversation, because I think I don't know how honest I can be. But here goes... In this moment I really feel my throat closing because this sounds like such a suffocating conversation to me. I feel there's no way to put across [that sensation] to Western audiences, as a person who grew up with my specific culture and our beliefs and so on. And, I think what it brings forward is how so much of the language—even in a very open room and with very open minds and everything that's happening—how even just the language that is used and the way it's brought about still reinforces the non-acknowledgement of non-Western ontologies. Because as somebody was talking about, as I was reading through the book and even just

conversations we’ve had here already, Morton’s talking about “really, you should consider, nature and the things that it gives us and this is why global warming is something we should take seriously, etc”—the Yoruba person would tell you, “Duh.” Right? Because we have one saying that comes to mind, we say, *“Aso la nki, ki a to ki eniyan.”* That means, “It is cloth we greet before we greet the wearer.” It is an acknowledgement of the quality of cloth as an item of status. I like to think of it as an extension of the idea that nature gives us things for which we must be grateful and allows us to be these human beings who have the audacity to say we even make anything. Right? It doesn’t somehow dehumanize a person. It’s almost an acknowledgement of, *alright here’s where I exist in the world and this is how I know that to be true.*

You were talking about magic, and which again in Yoruba culture, yes, to name a thing is to give it power. All the things that people talk about, that sound like they are myths and stuff like that, these are modes of knowing that we just know. There’s an acceptance of life of the things that I read out before. They were, the nothingness, the in-between, that it just is. We know that of the accepted. Either people who are searching for more, but I think again the question is: How are they searching? Right? We also make crafts, of course, but we made effigies for the Ere Ibeji for instance, the dolls that symbolize twin children. Well, it’s not because we somehow... these objects are made... I almost think of them as a way for us, in that moment, to try to harness that nebulous. The souls of those children, or the spirits, or the gods may visit but they may choose not. But, it’s our way of trying to understand the world and that’s okay. And, so, I don’t know, I feel when we have these conversations, the conversations have been interesting and intriguing, but I think in this moment it just makes me feel more like... the only word for it is an “other.” Clearly my brain doesn’t think the same way as others do. Which I totally understand the irony of that as someone who’s fully Western educated. You know, I’m the cliché. I’m a Black hyper-educated woman in the world. And, it’s like, while I can intellectually understand the things that we’re talking about, there’s like modes of knowledge that are just known. This feels like a frustrating attempt of kind of going where no man has gone before, but why? It’s very much that whole like Manifest Destiny colonialism...all of that. Which, yes, so, I think that there’s no Black person on this Earth—whether they chose to come to America or other places by themselves, or they’re descendants of slaves, too—for whom that phrase does not close their throat. The very thought of it. I think there’s lots for me to still parse in this conversation and more that will come through for me.

I hope I didn’t stop the conversation, but I just felt like, yeah, I needed to say that.

**Anya Kivarkis:** Thank you.

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**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** I really appreciate you saying that. Very, very much. It brings to mind assimilation and some conversations that Anya, Brian, and I have had about Anya’s work about assimilation and loss. This is where the non-locality thing doesn’t work, because of where you sit in this room and all the embedded things that you brought out, Bukola. It also highlights...how it’s like a mirror and it puts back on all of us to take a moment and understand where we are sitting, too. Where our knowledge is not. Where our knowledge has edges, and where can we take what you’ve said and figure out how to make our knowledge more porous and our ability to take in other knowledges more porous. What can we do to be better about changing that concrete kind of box we sit in?

**Jovencio de la Paz:** I think that is precisely the reason Morton can’t bring himself to study the Eastern philosophical root of so much of this... I don’t know, in reading this I’m just like, “Oh Buddhism,” “Buddhism,” “Buddhism,” it’s all...

**Bukola Koiki:** ...which he doesn’t acknowledge at all. He just mentions white men galore.

**Jovencio de la Paz:** On the one hand you have the attitude of, “Oh those othered, non-Western ways of knowing don’t fit into the canonical structure of the Western canonical tradition. So I can borrow ideas and not introduce the alien sources authors of those ideas.” I also think that the more pernicious thing happening in this dynamic is that it assumes that Indigenous or non-Western knowledge can be embodied by a colonizer without skipping a beat. In a way there’s a paradox here. How an idea can be assimilated into a tradition of thinking, and what is the difference between assimilation and the evolution of the canon. A natural evolution of a tradition of thinking involves learning from other traditions. It’s heart-breaking that we have to replicate that same submarine. That we have to be in that ship because to exit it means we have to float in, like, the abyss. Right? That’s a very challenging place to have a conversation. It’s like I can feel myself relenting to an intellectual tradition when we try and parse out a text like this, but that’s the only way I can stay aboard. Those other textual traditions which I love how you say, it’s like a knowing that is known. That is not on the table of this particular kind of discourse.

**Bukola Koiki:** I just feel one could keep going. Whenever I keep coming back to that thing about the animals and how we should respect them and there’s things you should do. Even though our [Yoruba] creation myths make reference to the idea that this chicken scratched the Earth and then the Earth spread. We had to create the Earth itself in collaboration with

animals. So that's why I'm saying in many Indigenous cultures, I can only speak for Yoruba specifically, but what I've read and gleaned and been told by other people who come from an understanding of Indigenous ontologies, what the Western world calls myths and stuff is just modes of knowing we just acknowledge already from when we are born and how we were raised. Knowledge within our culture that is embodied and doesn't take going to school for, etc. That there's a natural respect for the things that we exist in the world with. I think I always battle against that. Inward battles. External battles in conversations like this. When I go to lectures or when I had to give a lecture about my work recently. How do I battle that? That frustration seems to me about the realities of being in a craft world. It has certain hierarchies. There are certain performances of ideas of your knowledge and what you know and your skill, etc., that makes you viable to, let's be honest, to be chosen for something like this. Or to be picked for a residency or to be picked for whatever it is. The battle against that and what you know to be true because of the culture that you come from, and how well what is now "other" knowledge is received in this field. I think, yeah, it's just a constant mental battle, I have to say. In many different ways.

**Brian Gillis:** I think a lot of what you're saying resonates with me because there may almost be an implied violence in representation and allyship, potentially. I think a lot of what was said in this room that referenced other cultures was qualified by acknowledging that people were referencing those cultures from the outside as a non-native person. Somebody who doesn't know it through culture, but knows it through a kind of abstraction of culture or through what they might have read or seen as a representation. It seems that this is a problematic tradition in a host of ways. And, now we have situations where there're many people like us who want to have an inclusive conversation that recognizes value in multiple perspectives, intentionally trying to steer things away from Eurocentric focuses, but it still seems problematic and I wonder what an alternative way of operating could be. How could a conversation like this exist where it's not "othering" or making something novel or in service of a central, dominant culture? But, rather something that honors its existence, and one's real distance from it, but can still engage it generatively. Where, you know, I can't speak to being South African, I can't speak to being Nigerian, I can't speak to growing up in Chicago, etc., but, from the outside, is there a way that I can participate in a conversation by referencing other cultures as a way to responsibly balance the disproportionate weight of dominant centers and margins? And, I don't even want to say represent or ally with, but just be able to consider within and against the culture that we're all participating in. I wonder if that's an inherent problem with the conversation about craft in general? That it's through this kind of centralized, Western, academic culture that's about pointing at the novelty of knowing? It's this revelation of something that is actually 300,000 years old. That's probably pre-Yoruba culture or pre-North American culture. It's something that maybe...

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**Bukola Koiki:** Yoruba culture's pretty old.

**Brian Gillis:** Yeah, but I can't truly know, and you probably can't know. Our species is 300,000 years old. What's the origin of culture? I think what I'm ultimately asking is how can we have that conversation that comes from a Western lens. We are all sitting in this room in Oregon attached to academic discourse, which is Western, where we're referencing, pointing at, and allying with, but we're also "othering." So how can we do that as a field? How can we access the aggregation of culture throughout human history or create space for alternatives to dominant, Western, Eurocentric narratives without "othering" or objectifying?

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** I know I've said the word Western in this conversation, and I slipped today, but I'm actually trying to remove that term from my language. I'm Western, but I'm not at the same time. You're Western, but you're not. All of us have elements that are this "Western ideal" and a Western construct. This idea, it goes to the language, the magic of naming. By saying Western, we set edges and boundaries on it. In this room alone multiple people defy those boundaries that constitute what we understand Western to be. There's something about talking about this as coming out of the Enlightenment for me that feels different than framing it as a Western thing. Since the 20th century, the West is not the same thing than what it was imagined to be. We need to change our language and try to move outside those boxes.

**Anya Kivarkis:** That is why I think specificity matters so much because yes, we are so trained in Western or American institutions that it becomes our framework, but there's so much difference in terms of being a person of color in this space, and how we identify with and against something. I have so many things to say, and I can't sort them because there's no model for doing that in a public space quickly, actually. That's part of what I love about Bukola's bravery of saying what she said aloud, because there's not a clear model, because you have your own idiosyncratic identity, right?

I don't know why I keep thinking about this related to my students in our studio. This may be relevant or totally irrelevant, but there's something about the jewelry and metalsmithing studio at the U of O...there's a major sense of collectivity. There is something about the material of metal and how it's stable, and there are so many students in the studio with traumatic histories that are sitting next to each other and talking because of the scale of the space. It might not be happening in sculpture, for example, because there's such a sprawling space. In the metalsmithing studio, the space is small, they sit next to one another, and many of them are talking collectively and working with their hands, and processing information...left hand,



right hand, left, right, and knowing and sharing and doing. I feel there's something about that, that's inherently Middle Eastern.

I think there's also something about new knowledge, or newness, or charting new territory...I also feel silenced by that, and I also talk about it all of the time. At the same time, there's something about not wanting to be alone on an island moving forward with my knowledge. I want to actually build communities in my space. I think a lot of students of color come to my studio, too, because there's some permission for that kind of collectivity. With my parents, they were never alone...our community was always in our space, and people didn't get invited, they just came over. What's a little traumatic about living in Oregon is the erasure of cultural difference, and I'm always shocked when my biography is not visible or acknowledged at all. In my experience growing up in Chicago, the context of your difference is often the preface to your interactions, and in diverse and integrated spaces, there is difference, and recognition without the need for sameness. So I think these kinds of nuances of difference are important, and also for us in the field not to expect sort of some radicality from a person of color or a queer person necessarily, because that affirms assumptions about our otherness or occupation of the margins, and we are also just trying to make idiosyncratic space for ourselves.

**Bukola Koiki:** I'm sorry. It's just, holy crap, the word radicality, considering the Whitney Biennial last year, but that's just a whole other can of worms. You know?

**Jovencio de la Paz:** There's something so true in my own experience, of what you said about the metal studio affecting some kind of other response to what collectivity is. I have the same experience in the weaving studio. I think it has to do with the fact that even beyond the language we use, it is so pernicious. It's like architecture. It's designed for a certain kind of exchange, like the way we sit in space. In the ways that you imagine what an appropriate exchange in that situation might be. If we want to talk about trauma, what does the room look like in which we speak of trauma? Why does it orient a certain direction? Why do we organize our bodies in this way? This notion, in a material sense, that the objects in the room bolster or uphold a hierarchy of intellectual tradition. That is, I love that you bring this up. That the space itself can reflect the difference and specificity that maybe can be a way to have these conversations differently.

**Garth Clark:** It's another thing about craft at a professional level, and this is not in the third world, but in developed countries, craft is almost 80% middle class. It started that way with William Morris. It still is today. And that means that this room is very special. I don't want to say average, there

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are so many words which I've decided I don't want to use now, there's a whole list of them...but if you look at an average, it's going to be middle class people talking about craft with a middle class set of values. So at one of the NCECAs, Theaster Gates was really wonderful. He said we could transform the ceramic world in one more meeting. Five thousand people come, it's the biggest art conference in the world, mostly with people who hate art, which is an irony. So he said, "This is how you're going to do it: you have to bring a guest with you next time." So now they'll be 10,000 of us. He said, "That person cannot be your skin color and they cannot be middle class." Then he made a funny joke, he said, "In fact I've done that, I've brought the 'other' with me. Will you please stand up?" Five white men stand up. The point was absolutely right, 5,000 people in that room who made ceramics and probably 90% of them were middle class. And it's a middle-class activity. Almost everybody I know in the field is middle class.

**Anya Kivarkis:** I'll say one thing related to that. The first time I was not immersed in a community of color was when I was in college and had selected an art major. Until then I was always in communities of color, even in college before selecting art as my major.

**Garth Clark:** Well, it works in some ways. It doesn't work in others. I was visiting Theaster in Chicago and he said, "Why are there so few Black potters? There is an incredible pottery tradition in Africa." I said, "I think it's economic." Becoming a potter is expensive. You buy a kiln, you buy this, you buy that. If you want to work differently, if you want to work on paper, even if you want to paint, the entry price is not as high as pottery is. So these things prevent access. We talked about what it could be, and it came down to money. Can you afford to build a ceramic studio? The middle class does very well, they have the money to do this. And they drive taste.

**Anya Kivarkis:** I'm just thinking about time. It's about seven o'clock. I don't know if anyone wanted to add anything? Bukola, what you opened up made my body shudder, and it's still shuddering and that's really amazing, as a physical reaction to something that I feel so deeply... But did you want to say something...

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** Did you want to say something first?

**Brian Gillis:** I just wanted to create space for everyone...

**Namita Gupta Wiggers:** I've been thinking about, how, for myself, this essay is making me think about what happens on the Warren Wilson campus. I wanted to come back to global warming and climate change and the language, and thinking about this at a really material level. Dave Ellum, our Dean of Land, takes the MA students on a walk through the land on campus to learn how to read the campus landscape as a crafted environment. What he points out to them is how he sees what was done fifty years ago or a hundred years ago, and shows how he can envision what he's doing and what he's teaching his students to do that's going to show itself fifty years from now. This is tied into what's going to come for our next generations and our children. He takes them to this one spot—Shannon, you may have been on this walk? There's this one spot where you stand and you look all around you, and you see trees everywhere. Those trees were not there a hundred years ago. It was deforested and replanted. I wasn't on the walk, and Shannon, you may have a different way to tell the story, but as Dave explained it to me was that it looks like really rich, lush forested land, but it wasn't. It is now. He points out that in fifty years what our children are going to have as materials is not going to be the same as the materials we've had. This connects to our conversation of exhausting place and supplies, and even trees are not going to be the same. The climate is going to shift and what will even grow in certain places is going to shift, too. There's something about that very real, tangible story from Dave as a way of understanding time, space, and the landscape that brings the tangibility of materials into view in terms of hyperobjectivity and maxing out resources. It's scary. It's terrifying. And at the same time it means that this is a moment where craft can get ahead of this by thinking through these questions outside of an art context, perhaps with forestry people to plan ahead.

**Brian Gillis:** I really appreciate that, and I think that may be a wonderful place to end in part because...

**Anya Kivarkis:** It looks like Anthea might have had a thought.

**Brian Gillis:** Oh! I'm sorry...

**Anthea Black:** I agree with you, that is a good place to end [laughs]. And Namita's invitation is to us as makers and especially as educators and people who are shaping this field. The invitation is to think about what tangible practices—like walking through the land on that particular locality—can shape knowledge, and shape the kinds of knowledge that are produced. How collectively we consider: What are the toxic effects of a hyperobject like the West? How craft discourse has been constituted, and what are the tangible actions that we can do from within our locations to

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reshape the discipline or craft dialogue that we want to have? I think that's a lovely invitation. What will we do when we go back to our universities and our classes and studios next week?

**Brian Gillis:** Yeah...You know, I think a part of what that invitation is for me, that you're pointing out, in theory, is that it's not monolithic, it's dynamic and it's fluid. And I think that includes the cultures that we're coming from and the cultures that we exist in. Whether something is hundreds of thousands of years old, or not. I think it's naive of us to think of them as monolithic and discrete. I think craft is kind of similar. I think the invitation to think about planting trees, and the way that tree planting on a college campus can be an intergenerational craft practice and consider the way that we act in the world, is also an invitation to consider the dynamics and indeterminate edges of all these things.

**Shannon Stratton:** This isn't a comment but it's a question. Or, it's a question to see if anybody would be interested in this at this ending point. I think, I'm a very slow person, all of this is something that I could respond to fifteen days from now. I'm a slow person and I've grown to be used to that. I'm wondering if people would have the appetite to share. I don't want to center it on responding to Morton so much as responding to the things that bubbled up. Like an image, a text, a paragraph. Like, short, not seventy pages of reading, but you know, throw something into the middle of the room at a different point after they've marinated in it for a little bit. I'm very open to what that may be. Maybe it's a piece of sound, but to throw back into the group from where they're at now or a later point, to trace how this gets metabolized.

**Brian Gillis:** I love that idea. One of the things the five of us talked about is that, in reality, not only were there going to be things that people were thinking about that weren't said here, but that people may think about related things later and we would like create the opportunity for people to extend the momentum of this conversation. And we can even make this available in the publication, or not. We didn't want to also task people with feeling like they have to write something. But we want to open it up to that. Whether it's to just metabolize as the community that we've formed here today, or whether the folks here wanted it to be in the publication, we want to offer that opportunity to you. And, that's what we meant by auxiliary texts when we were inviting you all to participate.

Now, this may be a good place to end. I guess I can wrap things up for tonight by saying that I just feel so fortunate to be a part of this conversation. And, I really appreciate and am so grateful to you all for making the trip here to do this work. Thank you so much for such a generative conversation.

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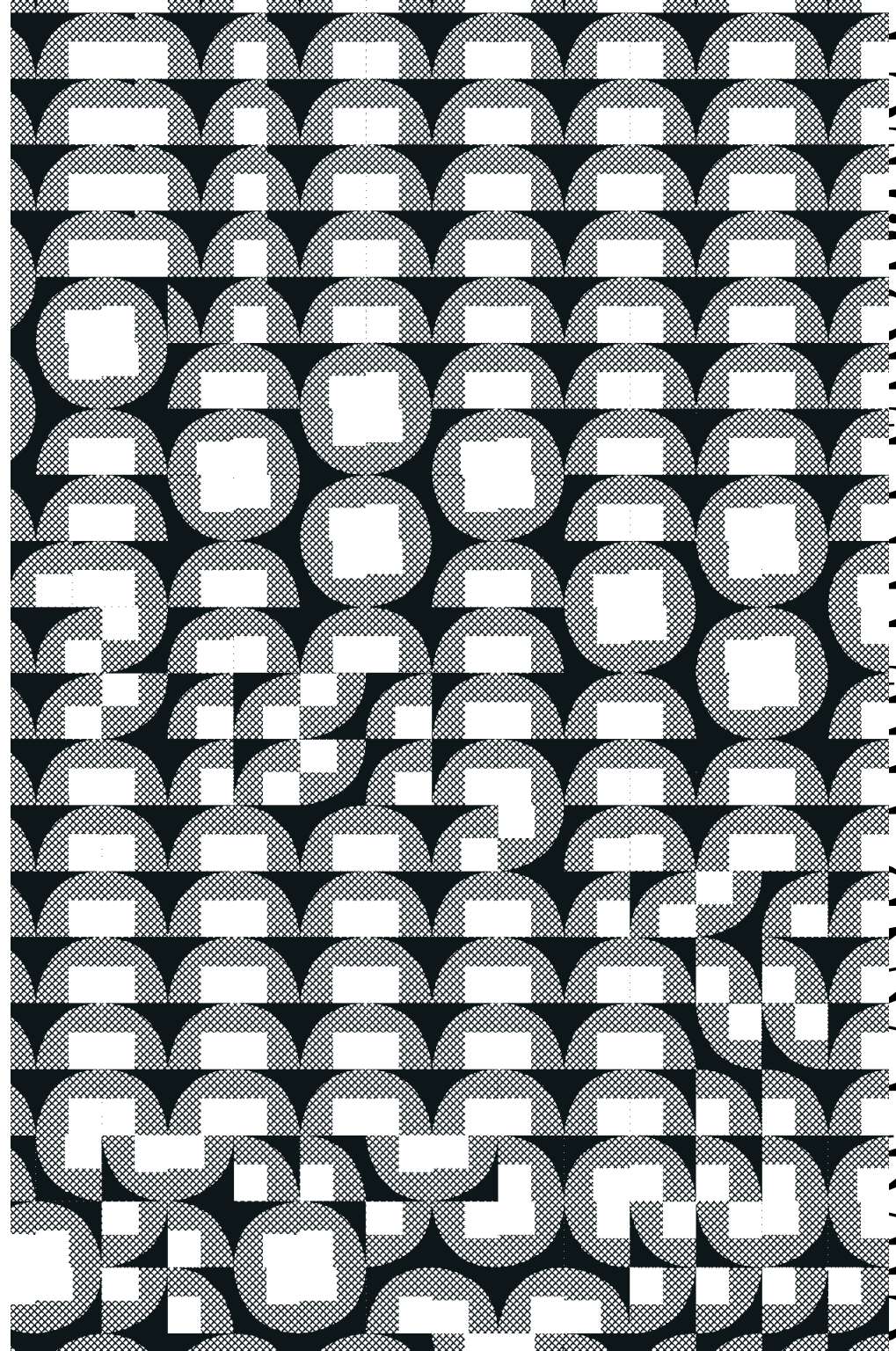
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Anthea Black is a Canadian artist, writer, and art-publisher based in Oakland and Toronto. Her studio practice addresses feminist and queer history, collaboration, materiality, and labour. Black has recently exhibited in *Loosely Assembled: The HIV Howler Intervention*, SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art, Montréal, *HARDCORE EINDHOVEN*, Van Abbe Museum, Netherlands, *Beginning with the Seventies: GLUT*, Belkin Art Gallery at UBC, Vancouver, and the Independent Curators International touring exhibition *Publishing Against the Grain*. Her writing has been published by *Bordercrossings*, *No More Potlucks*, *FUSE Magazine*, *RACAR: Canadian Art Review*, Carleton University Art Gallery, Bloomsbury, and Duke University Press; Black is the co-editor of two books, *The New Politics of the Handmade: Craft, Art and Design* with Nicole Burisch (Bloomsbury, 2020), *HANDBOOK: Supporting Queer and Trans Students in Art and Design Education* with Shamina Chherawala (Queer Publishing Project and OCAD University, 2018), and designer/co-publisher of the artist's newspaper *The HIV Howler: Transmitting Art and Activism* with Jessica Whitbread (2018-present). She is an Assistant Professor of Printmedia and Graduate Fine Arts at California College of the Arts and a 2020-21 KALA Art Institute Fellow.

Garth Clark is the Editor-in-Chief for CFile's publishing projects, journal and news magazine. Irving Blum, the pioneering contemporary art dealer who launched Andy Warhol, Ken Price and Andrew Lord's careers calls Clark "ceramics' great clarifier." The Mather Award jury of the College Art Association (Clark was the 2005 award winner) wrote that his writings "have shaped thought about the field of ceramics and indeed the field itself." A hydra-headed force in the field, Clark has received many honors; Fellow of the Royal College of Art, London, several honorary doctorates and lifetime achievement awards, the "Art Book of the Year" award from Art Libraries Society of North America, medals from the Independent Publishers Association and others. He is author of over sixty books and several hundred reviews and essays. He has recently completed two books, *Mind Mud: The Conceptual Ceramics of Ai Weiwei* and *Lucio Fontana Ceramics*.

With Mark Del Vecchio in 1981, Clark founded Garth Clark Gallery in New York, Los Angeles and briefly London and Kansas City. He founded the Ceramic Arts Foundation in 1979 and was its Director until 2005. An active speaker, Clark has spoken on five continents in thirty countries at over 100 major venues from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London to the Sorbonne University, Paris. He recently traveled throughout the US and Europe on a lecture tour taking him to Ireland, Britain, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, France and Italy, culminating as "An Evening with Garth Clark" in Portland, Oregon through a partnership between the University of Oregon's Center for Art Research (CFAR), Mudshark Studios and the Portland Art Museum.

Sonja Dahl is an artist, writer and educator at the University of Oregon in Eugene. Her work critically explores the cultural, economic, historic, and metaphoric aspects of how textile processes such as indigo dyeing, whitework embroidery and patchwork quilting reflect the values of human societies. She conducts her research and art-making from the situated acknowledgement and critical engagement with her white, American, settler identity. She is a founding member of Craft Mystery Cult, and a continuing collaborator with Babaran Segaragunung Culture House in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Her art research projects and subsequent collaborations in Indonesia (2012 - ongoing) are supported by the Fulbright Foundation and the Asian Cultural Council. Sonja received her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. Her artwork has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including The Sculpture Center in Cleveland, Rockelmann & Partner in Berlin, San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in Eugene, and the Museum of Contemporary Craft in Portland. Sonja's writing is published in both peer-reviewed journals and print-based and online arts publications, including *Textile: Journal of Cloth and Culture*, *PARSE Journal*, and *Surface Design Journal*. Sonja has presented her research nationally and internationally at conferences such as "On Mentorship" at Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI, the Textile Society of America Symposium in Savannah, GA and Vancouver, Canada, and PARSE Biennial Research Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden. Her residencies include Caldera, Far Lookout Writer's Retreat, Babaran Segaragunung Culture House, ACRE, and Ox-Bow School of the Arts.



Jovencio de la Paz is an artist, weaver, and educator. His current work explores the intersecting histories of weaving and modern computers. Rhyming across millenia, the stories of weaving and computation unfold as a space of speculation. Trained in traditional processes of weaving, dye, and stitch-work, but revelling in the complexities and contradictions of digital culture, de la Paz works to find relationships between concerns of language, embodiment, pattern, and code with broad concerns of ancient technology, speculative futures, and the phenomenon of emergence.

de la Paz has exhibited work in solo and group exhibitions both nationally and internationally, most recently at Vacation Gallery in New York, NY; The 2019 Portland Biennial at Disjecta in Portland, OR; The Museum of Craft and Folk-art in Los Angeles, CA; The Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver, CO; Seoul Arts Center, Seoul, South Korea; Ditch Projects, Springfield, OR; The Art Gym, Marylhurst, OR; ThreeWalls, Chicago, IL; The Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, OR; 4th Ward Projects, Chicago, IL; The Sculpture Center, Cleveland, OH; SOIL Gallery, Seattle, WA; Roots & Culture Contemporary Art Center, Chicago; The Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; Uri Gallery, Seoul, South Korea, among others. He regularly teaches at schools of art, craft, and design throughout the country, such as the Ox Bow School of Art in Saugatuck, Michigan, the Haystack Mountain School of Craft in Deer Isle, Maine, and the Arrowmont School of Craft in Tennessee. He is also a co-founder of the collaborative group Craft Mystery Cult, established in 2010.

Following a Bachelor of Fine Art with an emphasis on Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2008), de la Paz received a Master of Fine Art in Fibers from the Cranbrook Academy of Art (2012). He is currently Assistant Professor and Curricular Head of Fibers at the University of Oregon.

Brian Gillis's work is rooted in service. By using platforms, approaches, and points of exchange related to art he creates opportunities for individuals and communities to access socially relevant information and exercise social agency. This work uses a variety of production strategies and conceptual approaches, often drawing from specific sites, histories, and related partners. Outcomes range from functional and sculptural objects and installations to edited publications, educational initiatives, and public actions. In this way Gillis's role is often fluid and responsive, and lines between artist, educator, community organizer, and anonymous steward are frequently blurred.

Gillis's distinctions include fellowships from the Illinois Arts Council, the Oregon Arts Commission, and MacDowell; grants from the Ford Family Foundation, the Korea Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation; and residencies at MASS MoCA, the International Ceramic Research Center (Denmark), and Arizona State University's School of Arts, Media, and Engineering. He has conducted workshops and lectured at institutions including the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Emily Carr University of Art + Design (Canada), the Henry Art Gallery, and the Drawing Center. Gillis has completed projects with a range of partners and institutions, including the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art, CUE Art Foundation, the Mint Museum, the Milwaukee Art Museum, Mildred's Lane, the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Heilongjiang University (China), the University of Applied Sciences in Koblenz (Germany), the Moth Radio Hour, the American Red Cross, Feeding America, the City of Roja (Latvia), and Seattle Public Schools.

After completing Bachelor of Arts degrees in Education and Art from Humboldt State University, Gillis earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. He is currently a Professor of Art and the Director of the Center for Art Research (CFAR) at the University of Oregon.

Bean Gilsdorf is an artist and writer. Working with appropriated images, Gilsdorf creates textile sculptures and collages that delve into the ways in which political and cultural iconographies influence the perception of social values. Her projects have been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, and the American Textile History Museum, as well as exhibition spaces in Poland, England, Italy, China, and South Africa. Gilsdorf holds a BA in Literature from Simon's Rock at Bard College, an MA in Linguistics from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and an MFA in Fine Arts from the California College of the Arts. She is the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships, including 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Fulbright Fellowships to Poland, the Bess Winspear Memorial Scholarship at Banff Centre, a Graduate Fellowship at Headlands Center for the Arts, and a Graduate Full Merit Scholarship at California College of the Arts. Gilsdorf's work is in the permanent collections of the Berkeley Art Museum and the International Quilt Museum at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

In addition to her practice as an artist, Gilsdorf is the former editor-in-chief of *Daily Serving*, an international publication for the contemporary arts, and her critical writing and essays have been included in publications such as *Artforum*, *Frieze*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Gilsdorf was a columnist-in-residence for SFMOMA's *Open Space*, and was the 2018 Art Writer in Residence at SPACES in Cleveland, Ohio. She currently resides in Portland, Oregon.

Nicki Green is a transdisciplinary artist working primarily in clay. Originally from New England, she completed her BFA in sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009 and her MFA in Art Practice from the University of California, Berkeley in 2018. Her sculptures, ritual objects and various flat works explore topics of history preservation, conceptual ornamentation and aesthetics of otherness. Green has exhibited her work internationally, notably at the New Museum, New York; The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco; Rockelmann & Partner Gallery, Berlin, Germany. She has contributed texts to numerous publications including Duke University Press' *Transgender Studies Quarterly* and *Fermenting Feminism*, Copenhagen. In 2019, Green was a finalist for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's SECA Award, a recipient of an Arts/Industry Residency from the John Michael Kohler Art Center, among other awards. Green lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Namita Gupta Wiggers is a writer, curator, and educator based in Portland, OR. She is the founding director of the MA in Critical Craft Studies, Warren Wilson College. Wiggers is the Director and Co-Founder of Critical Craft Forum, an online and onsite platform for dialogue and exchange. She taught in MFA Applied Craft + Design, co-administered by Oregon College of Art + Craft and Pacific Northwest College of Art and at Portland State University from 2014-2017. From 2004-2014, Wiggers served as Curator (2004-12) and as Director and Chief Curator (2012-14), Museum of Contemporary Craft, incorporated into the Center for Art & Culture, Pacific Northwest College of Art since 2016. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees, Haystack Mountain School of Craft, as an Editor-at-Large for *CRAFTS*, and on the editorial boards of *Garland* and *Norwegian Crafts*. She has served as the Exhibition Reviews Editor for *The Journal of Modern Craft*, and on the Board of Directors of the American Craft Council and the Center for Craft. She is the editor of *Companion on Contemporary Craft*, Wiley Blackwell Publishers (forthcoming) and co-author with Benjamin Lignel of a research project on gender and jewelry.

Anya Kivarkis is currently Professor and Area Head of Jewelry and Metalsmithing at the University of Oregon in Eugene. She received a BFA in Jewelry & Metalsmithing from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana in 1999, and an MFA in Metal from the State University of New York in New Paltz in 2004. Exhibitions include 'Site Effects, Curated by Anja Eichler and Katja Toporski, 'Time and the Other' with Mike Bray at Sienna Patti at The Firehouse at Fort Mason Center for Art and Culture (San Francisco), and 'A View from the Jewelers Bench: Ancient Treasures, Contemporary Statements,' curated by Sasha Nixon at the Bard Graduate Center (New York). Kivarkis was a recipient of the Sienna Gallery Emerging Artist Award (2007), a Hallie Ford Fellowship in the Visual Arts (2016), a University of Oregon, Faculty Excellence Award (2014), multiple Individual Artists Fellowships and Career Opportunity Grants supported by the Oregon Arts Commission and the Hallie Ford Foundation, and a Rotasa Foundation grant (2007) to support the publication of 'The Thinking Body,' an exhibition co-curated with Kate Wagle. She has been a visiting artist and lectured at institutions including SUNY, New Paltz, Cranbrook Academy of Art, University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and Madison, Rhode Island School of Design, and University of Georgia in Athens. She has coordinated and participated on numerous Educators' Dialogue panels at the Society of North American Goldsmiths Conferences. She has been included in publications such as *Metalsmith*, *American Craft*, and *Italian Elle* Magazines. Her work has been included in collections such as the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Tacoma Art Museum, The Rotasa Foundation, and the Museum of Contemporary Craft in Portland. She is represented by Sienna Patti in Lenox, Massachusetts and Galerie Rob Koudijs in the Netherlands.



Bukola Koiki is a Nigerian-American transdisciplinary artist whose work strives to collapse the single-story of the West African immigrant experience by engaging and interpreting the liminal spaces she inhabits between cultures through research and explorations of linguistic phenomena, cultural ontologies, generational memory and more. Her current research and studio work examines and responds to the insidious language deployed to serve and promote the British colonial exploitation of Nigeria's resources and its people via the published texts, commercial advertising, and other media from the late 19th century to 1960. Koiki's multidimensional fiber works reflect her material and technical curiosity and include hand-pulled prints rendered with embroidered collagraph plates, giant paper beads employing Nigerian hair threading techniques, handmade and hand-dyed paper, Indigo dyed and hand-printed Tyvek head ties, amongst other explorations.

Koiki received her MFA in Applied Craft + Design from Pacific Northwest College of Art in 2015 and her BFA in Communication Design from the University of North Texas in 2006. She was recently nominated for the Textile Society of America's 2020 Brandford/Elliott Award and was named a 2019 Shortlist Finalist for the American Craft Council's Emerging Voices Award. She has exhibited nationally, including in Chicago, IL, and Portland, OR. Koiki and her work have been featured in American Craft magazine, Surface Design Journal, online on the Art21 Magazine and Art Practical Journal websites and she has been interviewed on NPR. She was awarded the AICAD Teaching Fellowship at Maine College of Art from 2017-2019 and completed the Fountainhead Fellowship in the Craft/Material Studies Department at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in March 2020.

Stacy Jo Scott is an artist and educator based in Eugene, Oregon. In both artwork and writing she uses ceramic objects and digital processes as anchors from which to navigate shifting landscapes of queer identity, embodiment, and spectrality. These objects emerge from research and speculation, digital processes, trance practices, and chance operations. Her artwork has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including most recently at Applied Contemporary, Oakland, CA; Ditch Projects, Springfield, OR; Rockelman & Partner, Berlin, Germany; Thomas Hunter Projects in New York, NY; The Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene, OR; PDX Contemporary Window Project in Portland, OR; Pewabic Pottery, Detroit, MI; Paul Kotula Projects, Ferndale, MI; Roots & Culture Contemporary Art Center, Chicago, IL; and The Sculpture Center, Cleveland, OH. She co-curated New Morphologies: Studio Ceramics and Digital Practices at the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University in Alfred, NY and was a Franzen Teaching Fellow for Digital Craft at Colorado State University. Her writing has been published in numerous publications online and in books and periodicals. Publications include Bad at Sports: Contemporary Art Talk, The Studio Potter, and Crafts: Today's Anthology for Tomorrow's Crafts. She received an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, and is a founding member of the Craft Mystery Cult. Stacy Jo is a member of Carnation Contemporary gallery in Portland, OR. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Art at the University of Oregon.

With a background in studio craft, Shannon Stratton's multi-disciplinary practice approaches organizing cultural platforms and events as collaborative, context-responsive acts of care that seek to re-think institutional orthodoxy. Stratton was trained in fiber and painting, with an MFA in studio art. In 2003 she co-founded the artist-run organization, THREEWALLS (Chicago), where she was artistic and then executive director for 12 years. At THREEWALLS, she organized exhibitions with over 100 artists, including Cauleen Smith, William Cordova, Claire Pentecost, Betsy Odom, and Daniel Barrow. With THREEWALLS she co-created THE PROPELLER FUND award in collaboration with GALLERY 400 for artist's self-organizing; conceived and published 4 volumes of PHONEBOOK, a national guide to grassroots and artist-run organizations across the US; and co-organized the first HAND-IN-GLOVE CONFERENCE, which led to the co-founding of Common Field, a national organization in support of artist-focused organizations.

From 2015-2019, Stratton was Chief Curator at The Museum of Arts and Design in New York, where she launched the BURKE PRIZE, 1ST SITE and programmed 35 exhibitions, including curating *Tanya Aguiñiga: Craft & Care*; *Ebony G. Patterson: ...buried again to carry on growing*; *Sonic Arcade: Shaping Space with Sound*; and *Anne Lindberg: the eye's level*.

Stratton has worked independently as a curator throughout her career, mounting the exhibition *Gestures of Resistance* with artist Judith Leemann at the former Museum of Contemporary Craft in Portland, OR, which examined craft as a verb, whose political power lies in its process by presenting a group of artists who used craft as action in making performance, social practice and pedagogical work. In 2014, she organized *Faith Wilding: Fearful Symmetries*, Wilding's first retrospective, which toured the US. In 2019-2020, she was The John Michael Kohler Arts Center's interim Senior Curator, developing the 2020 exhibition season and its core project, *Between You and Me*, while also contributing to the *Lenore Tawney: Mirror of the Universe* series.

Stratton has been an Adjunct Professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, core faculty in the Warren Wilson MA in Critical & Historical Craft Studies program, and a Critical Studies Fellow at The Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Today, Stratton serves as the Executive Director of Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists' Residency in Saugatuck, MI, and her studio practice manifests in writing, performative lectures, and book projects.

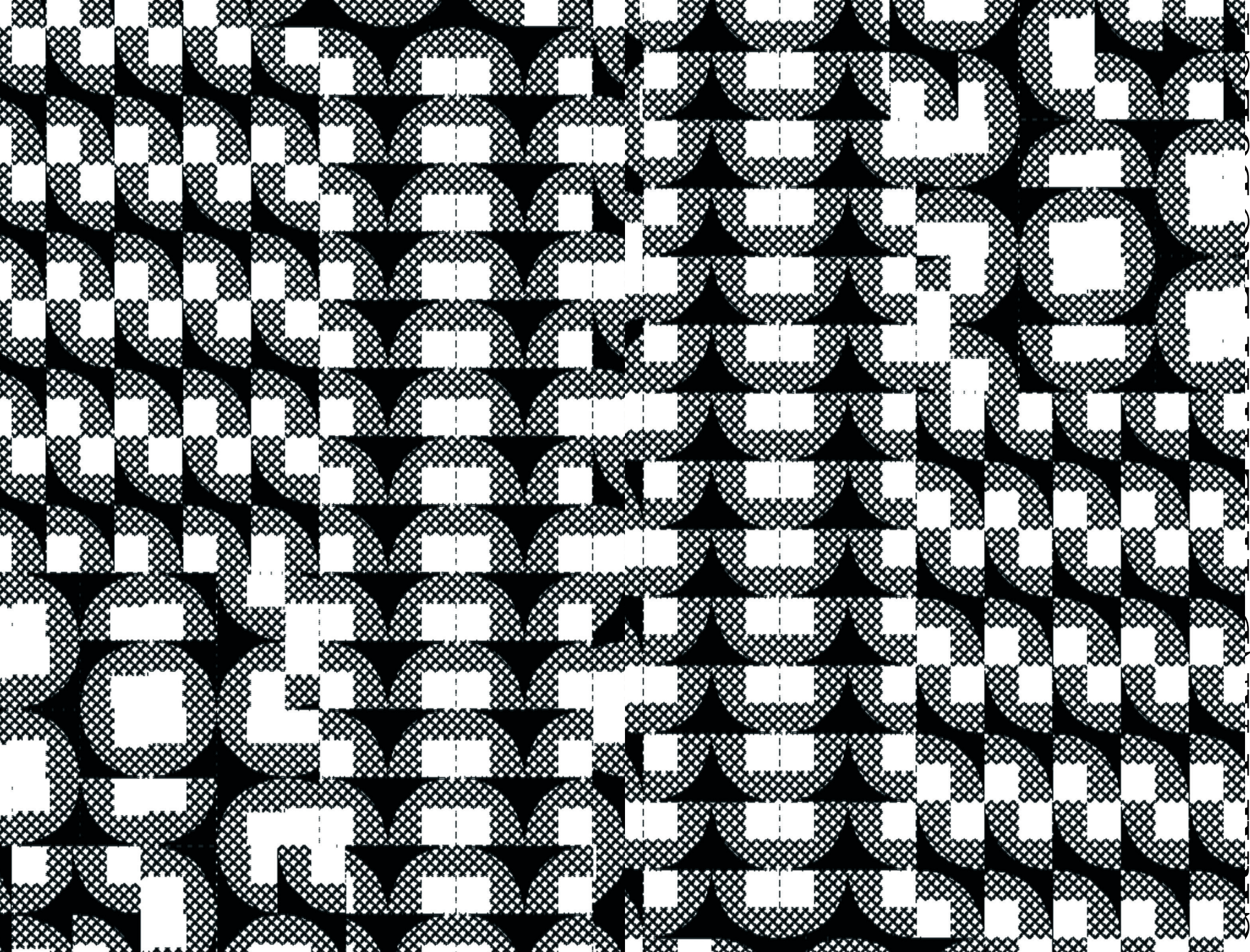
Lori Talcott is a Seattle-based visual artist, the fourth generation in a family of jewelers and watchmakers. Through the format of jewelry, her work and research engage with contemporary theories on magic, the agency of objects, and the nexus of language and matter. Her intimate performance projects explore the role of jewelry as a rhetorical device, and in this capacity how it functions as an agent in rituals that negotiate social, temporal, and spiritual boundaries. After her undergraduate work in art history and metal design (Lund University, Washington State University, BA, University of Washington, BFA) Talcott worked as an apprentice to a master silversmith in Norway, and later earned an MFA in Visual Arts (Vermont College of Fine Arts). Her work is in numerous private and public collections and she is a frequent visiting artist and guest critic. For the past ten years she has been a Guest Lecturer in the graduate program at Rhode Island School of Design. Talcott's work is represented by Sienna Patti Contemporary in the USA, and Platina Gallery in Europe.



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The Center for Art Research (CFAR) is grateful to the many individuals who contributed to the *Craft and the Hyperobject* project, including its foundational conversation, related activities and events, and to this culminating publication. Thanks to Anthea Black, Garth Clark, Bean Gilsdorf, Nicki Green, Namita Gupta Wiggers, Bukola Koiki, Shannon Stratton, and Lori Talcott for their generous participation in this thought experiment, and for the many resources they contributed before and after. Thanks to Sonja Dahl, Jovencio de la Paz, Anya Kivarkis, and Stacy Jo Scott for their collaboration and tireless service as project organizers, event hosts, and publication advisors, and all the ways they work to cultivate community around speculative discourse and craft thinking. Thanks to CFAR's Program Coordinator, Wendy Heldmann, for her invaluable counsel and unyielding efforts to organize and maintain CFAR's experimental platform through the range of logistical complexities and fluid conditions that this work requires. Thanks to Aaron Björk, CFAR's 2020-21 Designer in Residence, for his prophetic vision and steadfast efforts to translate the energy of a conversation between thirteen people into a reference document for further inquiry and exchange. Thanks to Jeremy Schropp for his exceptional audio and visual work, to 2019-20 CFAR Interns Claire Tierney Anderson and Thea Owens for first transcriptions, and to Eden Evens, CFAR's 2021 Media Editor, for coordinating this publication's promotion and distribution. Thanks to Portland Art Museum's Curator of Northwest Art Grace Kook-Anderson, Mudshark Studios' Co-Founder and Co-Owner Brett Binford, and artist Dylan Beck for their counsel and contributions to events related to this project. Thanks to Hannah Petkau and Tyler Stoll for their support, by showing up and plugging in with genuine curiosity. Thanks to CFAR's many affiliated artists, and Advisory Board Members Tannaz Farsi and Rick Silva, UO Department of Art Head Amanda Wojick, and School of Art + Design Director Charlene Liu for their unstinting support and the many ways they contribute to CFAR's mission to provide access to practice-based research, rigorous discourse, experimental forms of exhibition, and the public proliferation of this work. Thanks to the Jewelry and Metalsmithing Foundation, the Robert James Ceramics Foundation, and the Carol and Terry Reinhold Family Foundation for funding this project. And, thanks to the students, faculty, and staff of the University of Oregon's College of Design, School of Art + Design, and Department of Art whose work grounds CFAR, and their continued interest, encouragement, and participation sustains it.







In acknowledging the original people of the land we occupy, we also extend our respect to the nine federally recognized Indigenous nations of Oregon, the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Klamath Tribes as the past, present, and future stewards of this land. With this publication and our collective activity, we express our respect to these people and communities, and the many more who have ancestral connections to this land and the other displaced Indigenous people who call Oregon home, and we pledge our commitment to make ongoing efforts to center Indigenous knowledge, creativity, resilience, and resistance in the work we do.



The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, Kalapuya descendants are primarily citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, and they continue to make important contributions to their communities, to the U of O, to the state of Oregon, and to the world.

