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BETWEEN SENSUOUS AND MAKING-SENSE-OF: AN INTRODUCTION

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Abstract

In seeking to position the Open Arts Journal*'s special issue 'Between sensuous and making-sense-of' the introduction opens by probing notions of binarity that are instrumental to the commonplace division of affect and meaning, sensing and intelligibility, material and discursive, and sensuous and sense-making. Subsequently, a variety of philosophical approaches that have sought to recognise the metaphysical underpinnings of such oppositionality are presented to indicate why this special issue has sought to explore the shared spaces of these terms as a fruitful arena of enquiry. Writing itself, whether art-historical writing or any other, is presented as a practice that inevitably partakes in material contingencies that engage the writer sensorially and sensuously. The epistemic trajectory of writing is thus already embroiled in the contingencies of material encounters. The introduction therefore indicates how writerly approaches that break down the binaries of intelligibility and the sensible fit into the historically shifting understanding of knowledge. Finally, a brief sketch of discourses around materiality and précis for all contributions are provided.*

Keywords: materiality, sense, writing, oppositionality, meaning, discursivity
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Banner image: Photogram of maggots, larvae and flies on bacteria culture in Edgar Lissel's *Bakterium – Vanitas* from his *Bakterium*-series (1999–2001). (Courtesy Edgar Lissel)

BETWEEN SENSUOUS AND MAKING-SENSE-OF: AN INTRODUCTION

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In the opening paragraphs of his essay 'The gesture of making', Vilém Flusser grapples with the idea that our hands impose on us, in their two-ness and symmetry, a 'basic human constitution' of oppositionality (1994, p.49; author's translation). He holds up two hands as if to behold them as a manifestation of a dialectic our bodies oblige on us. Flusser's hands – 'condemned to mirror each other endlessly' (1994, p.49; author's translation) – may be used mutually, but even here, as they grip and caress each other, the gesture incurred only brings two sides together. Through hands, Flusser appears to grasp why we think the way we do. In his hands, he forms and wields a conception of knowledge that converges body and thought. It is through our two hands that the world has two sides for us. And even when we try get a handle on the whole, we only produce the congruence of two opposites (1994, pp.50–1). Imagining the thought of an octopus with a humanoid brain, Flusser attests that the tentacled creature would never be able 'to get' things the way we do, unless it would use its eight arms in a manual gesture comparable to ours (1994, p.50; author's translation). What may sound fanciful is merely the playfulness of a posthumanist philosophy that refuses to anthropomorphise the world and yet knows of the impossibility to detach from one's own body (Flusser & Bec, 2002). Yet, Flusser does not merely want to think (about) something different, he wants to think differently (Krtilova, 2014, p.186).

And as Flusser 'grapples', 'holds', 'beholds', 'grasps', 'forms', 'wields' and 'gets', he thinks as if with hands, groping in the dark to mould and shape a thought that is, for him, unavoidably human. As if the connection between body and mind was not already explicit enough, Flusser reminds us of the terms we use to address our thinking, noting that 'we often forget, that the meaning of these concepts has been abstracted from the concrete gestures of our hands' (1994, p.50; author's translation). It is with them that we explore the world and through them our thoughts are formed. Setting aside the question of whether we eventually want to follow Flusser down this teleological impasse or not, he manages to demonstrate the convergence of bodies, materials, language and thought while keeping them apart. In Flusser's separation of the two hands – of one body – is also reinscribed the two-ness and division between the body's concrete sensory encounter *out there* and the mind's abstraction *in* thought. For the philosopher, typewriter and loose sheets of paper are the equipment of choice to give an exact (outer) form to these thoughts (1994, pp.32–40, 2002). However, the equipment is not only the accidental detritus of 'occidental' culture but 'in-forms' the 'accidental structure' of *its* 'historical, logical, scientific and progressive form' (1994, pp.33–4; author's translation). Flusser imagines the possibility of a different gesture of writing and concludes that from it would follow 'another way of being in the world' (1994, p.34; author's translation). He recognises that linearity, spacing, sequentiality, typicality and so on are structured by and structuring the way we write, and thus how we think verbally and construct histories and paradigms of knowledge. However, he is less interested in breaking open the relations he attributes to typed alphabetic writing and its effects. En passant and problematically, he thus marks 'the other' and the way that 'they' write through his assigned connections between attributed characteristics of typed alphabetic writing and knowledge, as well as his unapprised preference for them. It is the typewriter, not the fountain pen, which frees his gesture of writing, because it makes *the* rules – and *their* history and knowledge: linearity, logic, scientificity – more obvious. Flusser's writing therefore recognises its intimate imbrications in material contingencies and their, for him, inevitable effects, yet he also refuses to write, know and think differently. What is at stake, if we give up the ease and speed of typing – a material encounter with the world that structures our thoughts and makes them accessible to others – in lieu of another way to make the marks that 'write' us in turn? Whether through a putatively anachronistic return to the longhand manuscript or plugging ourselves into a future artificial intelligence that 'reads' our mind, both shape, in their way, how we consider us and our selves. Moreover, our sensory encounter with (our) thoughts is not homogeneous or consistent. Thumbing a phone, scribbling on a piece of scrap or typing into a word processor are already distant from Flusser's encounter with a typewriter (Flusser, 2002). A swift segue to another historical episode that manifests the appearance of a new way to think may therefore provide sufficient impetus to energise how we think about the way we write.

In a letter to his friend and secretary Heinrich Köselitz dating from the end of February 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote from Genoa (2003, p.18; author's translation): 'YOU ARE RIGHT – OUR WRITING TOOLS TAKE PART IN THE FORMING OF

OUR THOUGHTS. WHEN WILL I BRING MY FINGERS TO PRINT A LONG SENTENCE!'
Nietzsche was writing on a Malling Hansen writing ball, a mechanical typewriter he had received only weeks earlier. Despite his enthusiasm for the device, the vicissitudes imposed by the machine's constant need for repair frustrated him (cf. Disser, 2006, p.48). Nietzsche's particular turn of phrase in the original German is noteworthy, and a more awkward but also more revealing translation is possible. In the writing ball's capitals-only script he notes that our 'Schreibzeug arbeitet mit an unseren Gedanken', our equipment 'co-works on our thoughts'. Though 'mitarbeiten' may be translated as 'work with', Nietzsche does in fact not write 'arbeitet mit uns an unseren Gedanken', 'works with us on our thoughts.' The tool is here already a co-worker, not merely a support for the work done by someone else. And equally the philosopher's fingers are invoked as though apart from the rest of the body, as tools that require persuasion and coaxing to mediate the flow from thought to word and head to paper. Nietzsche, who had adopted the typewriter because of his failing vision and difficulty to produce legible copy without headaches, incidentally misprints precisely the word 'Gedanken', 'thoughts', as if it were another way to highlight the direction and potency of the proposition. There are 17 further typographic errors in this one-page letter (Eberwein, 2005, p.122; cf. Windgätter's typology, 2005), many of which Nietzsche attends to with nib and ink. His correction on the word 'thoughts' seems to confuse things further, seemingly inserting the missing letter in the wrong space. Below the farewell, he adds by hand (2003, p.18; author's translation): 'Devil! Can you actually read this?!'

In the serendipitous typo of 'Gedanken' Leander Scholz recognises that it 'reads, at least from the current vantage point, like the menetekel of a media philosophy to come' (2013, p.155; author's translation). He notes that like speaking and writing, pressing the buttons of a machine is a learnt act that already indicates the ruptured relations between thought and *its* notation or enunciation. Scholz's simile works on two levels. Firstly, menetekel identifies an ominous warning, an idiomatic use that is more common in German than in English. Nietzsche's lapsus clavis is for Scholz prophetic of a discipline's laden future. Secondly however, the term's use is particularly potent for the linkages it creates – seemingly in passing – to the ominous 'writing on the wall' at Belshazzar's feast, as recounted in chapter 5 of the biblical Book of Daniel. As the Babylonians drink and feast, a bodiless hand appears and writes a message on the palace's plaster. Neither the alarmed king nor his wise men can read the handwriting on the wall and thus Daniel is sent for to make sense of it. Daniel recounts how God deposed Belshazzar's father, Nebuchadnezzar, when he had become arrogant and proud. Having desecrated sacred vessels during the feast and proven his lack of humility, Belshazzar's fate has been inscribed on the wall. Daniel reads the 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN' on the wall for Belshazzar, pronouncing the end of his reign and the division of his kingdom. Interpreting 'TEKEL' as '[t]hou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting', Daniel proclaims God's verdict which is ostensibly enacted when the king is slain during the night (Dan. 5:25–27 KJV). As Nietzsche's excorporate fingers have to be brought to type out a long sentence, so God's message, too, does not merely appear but has to be written by fingers onto a substrate. Even God's words have a body and are the product of Schreibzeug. That Belshazzar's wise men are unable to decipher the inscription is however, commonly explained as a failure to make sense of the words, rather than to read them (Dan. 5:8; cf. Platt 1993; s.v. *Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin*). The unity of the menetekel is thus preserved, and God's word remains the self-communicating divine presence of logos. Yet it is precisely the presumption of the creative and originary power of God's word that leads Sonja Neef to recognise the menetekel's logocentrism (2000, p.68). The menetekel is on the one hand an image that can be seen not read, and on the other, it purports to be the word as unitary language that cannot be misunderstood. Neef therefore returns the menetekel to Jacques Derrida's examination of writing in the 'Western tradition', which considers the inscription 'as the body and matter external to the spirit, to breath, to speech, and to the logos' (1976, p.35). What is found wanting in the writing of the menetekel is its reduction to language in a procedure that seemingly disregards or externalises the bodies and materials of its inscription. Where Nietzsche and Flusser recognised the import of material affordances in the sensing and sense-making of writing, the menetekel delivers once again the hierarchical binarism of the sensible and the intelligible that is at the heart of Derrida's critique of Saussure's sign. Split into signifier and signified

> – the very idea of the sign – [... relies] on the difference between sensible and intelligible, certainly, but also […] retain[s …] a signified able to 'take place' in its intelligibility, before its 'fall,' before any expulsion into the exteriority of the sensible here below. As the face of pure intelligibility, it refers to an absolute logos to which it is immediately united.
>
> (Derrida, 1976, p.13)

Writing necessarily partakes in the bodily and material, though not in opposition to or as a counterpoint of intelligibility, rather as an inevitable requirement for it to be writing. This is not to suggest a truth in *the material* or the 'materiality of the signifier' as 'the *meaning* of the signifier, the grand transcendental signified' (Readings, 1992, p.21; italics in original). Rather, as Bill Readings asserts emphatically in his reading of Jean-François Lyotard's *Discourse, Figure* (2011), 'it is not by virtue of its "materiality" that language participates in the sensible, it is by its figural quality that it may come to the same level' (Lyotard quoted in Readings, 1992, p.21). Lyotard's materiality is not attribute-heavy objecthood but 'a resistance to conceptual representation' (Readings 1992, p.21). The written marks on the page, imposed by the dispositions between head, hand, pen, typewriter and paper are not 'pure objecthood outside language, a simple beyond of representation. Rather' (p.22) they are the acknowledgement of the concurrence of representation and its inevitable failure, the impossible embrace of the other, the infinite linkage between a mark's signification and its asemic irreducibility. Yet here again, too, the pairings are necessary and necessarily already misleading, for are they not reinforcing a two-ness and division that is out of step with the intervolution of sense, sensing, sensuousness, sensitivity, sensorium, sensuality, sensibility and so on of an encounter.

If Nietzsche's typo is the 'writing on the wall' for media philosophy, the contributors to this special issue pursue the menetekel in their encounters with artefacts, objects and materials, and their attempt to stay alert to the inextricability of their sensing and making-sense-of them. Confronted with the work of art (object, environment, performance), our contributors are both granted access to, and rebuffed from, the material at hand. However available the material may be to touch, gaze, taste, smell or aural perception, it still exceeds comprehensive reduction to a particular sense. Conversely – facing the viewer (participant, maker, historian), the work's material both offers itself to, and resists, sensory assimilation. Vision becomes vertiginal imbalance, a sound's fragility approaches the tactile and aqueous smell is enmeshed with its own colour. Or differently, the grating touch of rough stone recalls the inequality of privation, the limpid glitter of precious stone cannot be unbound from its gemological description and a glimmer of flickering light opens a philosophical space of poetry.

Already inscribed in this encounter – between work and viewer, material and maker, individual senses and their somaesthetic and interpretative contiguity – is a consolidation of the mutual, productive and multiple 'between'. The 'between', like the body that connects Flusser's two hands or Nietzsche's inscribed sheet, facilitates the (scholars') enmeshing of historical, social, theoretical and cultural discourses with their inseparable bodily encounters, and opens a trajectory of interpretative productivity and multiplicity that seeks to respond to the indivisibility of head and hand, object and context, and thinking and feeling. In utilising rather than relegating the uncategorisability of the 'between', the contributors to this issue committed themselves to be not only disciplinary navigators, travelling between certain shores, but also wayfarers, whose destination remains uncertain and whose route stays unchartered (Ingold, 2007, pp.15–16, 2015, pp.147–53).

Rather than focussing on the extremities of Flusser's injunction of two-ness and division, this issue seeks to identify the spaces and bodies connecting them, or, moreover, it aims to unsettle the neat binarisms and geometries that structures approaches to boundaries and difference. The writing that follows thus perhaps *becomes* more than it *is*, because it is a *response* that also aims to hold back some of the limits and regulations – disciplinary and institutional – that usually, and in the same gesture, sanctify and predetermine *answers*. This emphasis on material and bodily qualities and their sensual, intelligible and distinctly irreducible encounters is not a (re)turn to the kind of mysticism, immediacy and presence that Janet Wolff (2012) detects latently in some work of W.J.T. Mitchell (2005), Michael Ann Holly (1996) and James Elkins (1997), and more explicitly in that of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2004), Georges Didi-Huberman (2005) and Frank Ankersmit (2005). Wolff is concerned that notions such as agency, materiality and the 'power of images' as well as perceived excesses of emotion and sensation evoke the (re)introduction of presence that may make social, historical and cultural relations explored in culture theory redundant. She asserts that everything can be addressed, explored or, better, interpreted discursively, it is just a question of using and finding the right scheme or concept.

> So other meanings hover at the edges, sensed but not articulated, suggesting a certain ineffable presence. In fact, they may be perfectly graspable within the framework of a different conceptual scheme. It is in the nature of such schemes that they make visible some things and are blind to others. The non-discursive may simply be the not-yet-discursive, which new critical machineries may bring forward […].
>
> (2012, p.11)

Yet the necessary vigilance to abate the lure of immediacy and presence, is not only achieved by insisting on the application of a correct conceptual scheme. (In particular, as this emphasises the ungainly framing characteristics that schemes themselves provide, i.e. they permit a view *through* themselves but not, as such, *of* a subject.) Presence and immediacy are also not to be confused with multiplicity, flexibility and irreducibility. Wolff is seemingly suggesting a future interpretability as an ultimate one, rather than as one that is always *to come*. The proper scheme will provide the right words to parse and dissect 'an experience (including an emotional one)' (2012, p.14). The world becomes a decipherable text whose texture and body are, in the end, reducible to discursity. The fitting scheme will seemingly exhaust, enumerate and interpret all there is to say. Yet, interpretative approaches, including those in this issue, can be expressly supple and diverse without the need to enclose their subject, and yet they can preserve their rigour as academic discourse. They act as propositions in the strong sense. They put themselves out there to *put forward for* consideration a multivalent text that knows (of) its own participation in its subject. They propone to *put something in a place*, but not at the exclusion of another. Moreover, they recognise their own opacity because they and their language also already partake in the figural and material. They, like their subjects, remain open, interpretable and inexhaustible.

Wolff's not-yet-discursivity, honed in the search for the proper scheme by a researcher who is a '(fundamentally linguistic) being' (2012, p.14), is expressive of and perhaps epiphenomenal to what Sybille Krämer and Horst Bredekamp lament in the persistent 'discursivation of our understanding of culture' ('Diskursivierung des Kulturverständnisses') (2003, p.12; author's translation). Language (*Sprache*), so their argument, has become the key paradigm and crux of cultural interpretation, and concomitantly the epistemic potential of other practices is derogated. Overall, the effect of discursivation is a separation of practice from interpretation, material(ity) from symbol(ism), non-verbal from verbal phenomena and, more broadly, cultural production and art from research and knowledge. Krämer and Bredekamp are similarly quick to attest, too, that even the understanding of writing itself is reduced to a discursive phenomenon, à la Flusser's paradigmatic understanding of typewriting and without the différance or figure of Derrida's and Lyotard's deconstructions. The authors, however, remain optimistic, because they identify four divergences that erode the trope of cultural discursivation. Firstly, the emphasis on "'performance" and "performativity"' (2003, p.14; author's translation) has invigorated an understanding of culture as action and practice as opposed to text and representation. Secondly, an increased understanding and valuation of non-verbal knowledge has led both art and science to uncover the significance of 'technical and symbolic practices' (p.14; author's translation) that may also enable propositional, verbal knowledge. Thirdly, the turn to materials, processes and functions has seen a '*willingness for dehermeneutisation*' ('*Bereitschaft zu Dehermeneutisierung*') (p.14; italics in original, author's translation). And finally, recognising the '*epistemic dimension of iconicity*' ('*Erkenntnisdimension der Bildlichkeit*') (p.14; italics in original, author's translation) opens categorical distinction around different epistemes.

The divergence between Wolff's and Krämer and Bredekamp's position is already part of a larger and developing understanding of the historical formation of knowledge from stabile and authoritarian to multiple and changing. Harald Tesan (2007) has traced this tug and pull from the renaissance to the enlightenment and on to an enlightenment unveiled as dogmatic, ideological and hegemonic, and further towards an uncertain and contested postmodern position. Tesan, not unlike Flusser, who envisaged a shifting 'historical conscience' in the transition from linear writing to image-generating technologies and finally mathematical code (1988, p.17, author's translation), also identifies a move away from the discursive and reading to a new technological kind of knowledge (2007, pp.282–7). The changing formations exemplify rather effectively the exigencies that bodies and materials afford our understanding of knowledge. It deserves emphasis that technology is not the only, or even most significant, aspect of epistemic change. The recognition, accommodation and valuation of different bodies, practices and materials, especially those that have historically been marginalised and derogated, is crucial for this development.

Scholz notes that more than a century after Nietzsche circumscribed the extraordinary scope of a media philosophy he never knew, that the same thoughts remain doggedly 'marginal or fashionable' as philosophical themes, without being able to attain a 'systematic place in the disciplinary field of philosophy' (2013, pp.155–6; author's translation). A variety of strikingly similar observations may be made concerning this issue's focus on materials and their sensuous/sense-making encounters. More than half a century after Derrida's *De la grammatologie* (1967) the relations between speech and writing may have been

repositioned, yet the distinction between the outside and the inside, the body and the essence still appear irreconcilably drawn. Or, by way of Lyotard, almost half a century after *Discours, figure* (1971) the figural opacity of writing has yet to find its productive, affective and epistemic place. Or, differently again, after wide-spread assertions of a material turn, is the pervasiveness of special issues, special networks with new acronyms, special conferences and the attempt to graft the word 'material' to other named forms of enquiry not also a tacit acknowledgment that no turn has been made, since the material has merely found its *special* place? Perhaps the material is still finding its place – not proper and static, but enmeshed and changing – and the enormous amount of writing under its name is testament to that. Even in the pages of this journal, Helen Hills' most recent issue (2017) examined how considerations of material transformation can open up baroque Naples as a place of difference, change and heterogeneity. What informs her work and is crucial to the wider discourses around *materiality*, and specifically in this issue, involves the repositioning of *material* itself, especially its relation to us. One of the possible entry point is perhaps Martin Heidegger's writing about the thing (*Ding*) and the broadening of its understanding towards a concept beyond physical attributes (1962, 1977, 1979). Subsequently, the material constitution of the thing becomes demonstrably questionable and intervolved with the abstraction of the thing itself, and 'materiality' as an attempt to contain the escalating discourse evolves. More recently Bruno Latour (2005), Alfred Gell (1998), Jane Bennett (2010), Christoper Tilley (2004), Daniel Miller (1998, 2005), Tim Ingold (2000), Bjørnar Olsen (2013), Graham Harman (Harman 2010) and others (e.g. Malafouris and Renfrew 2010) have been instrumental in shaping our understanding that the object is not merely a brute clot awaiting its manipulation by intelligent humans. Rather, objects and materials shape our practices and subjectivities. Material things and humans have become interwoven in a broader fabric that refuses earlier ontological distinctions. Object-oriented ontologies, one of the developments propelled by the idea of material agency, thus aims to address the privilege that humans commonly attribute themselves in relation to objects (cf. Harman, 2002; Morton, 2010; Bryant, Srnicek & Harman, 2011). Concomitantly, the interest in the material object has also energised enquiries into our material bodies and practices. Particular attention is here given to non-verbal knowing, skills acquisition and transmission, and artistic intelligence (cf. Polanyi, 2009; Adamson, 2007, 2013: Ingold, 2011, 2013).

As Nietzsche's thoughts are shaped multiply while they are imbedded in the writing ball's paper, the contributors to this volume have similarly taken the process of writing as one of the contingencies to the scholarship of their *subject*. Writing is a practice. It involves the bodies, materials and processes that shape not only *writing* itself but also knowledge. Writing is slow, too, and institutional settings that promote speed, flexibility and outputs do not always recognise this. The following essays embrace the epistemic dimensions of the encountered materials and explore their irreducible imbrications in a variety of contexts and discourses, from the art-historical and artistic to the technological and philosophical, and from the geological and affective to the ephemeral and temporary. They analyse the practices of making and viewing and come to recognise the performativity of the material. And elsewhere, they consider the materiality of performance and its capacity to move maker and viewer. Approaching the non-verbal knowledge of materials, they do not seek to impose a unitary language that encloses its object but aim to indicate how maker and viewer sense and make sense of the work and its context positions. The aim is to leave a gap that accommodates the material *to come*, not in order to mystify or deposit a placeholder for immediacy and presence, but to recognise the continuing transformation of the work and its irreducibility to meaning and discursivity.

In the first essay, 'Striking textures, sensuous surfaces in photography and film', Gabriele Jutz encounters the surface textures of photographic and filmic images as sensuous spaces that appeal not only to vision but a wider register of sensory experiences. Jutz's analysis of media images in textural and textual terms probes not only their divisibility but also manifests the inevitable participation of materials in the meaningful production and construction of images.

Subsequently, Ellen Handy demonstrates how the materiality of photographic objects induces a bodily experience and performative practice in maker and viewer in her essay 'Dancing with images: Embodied photographic viewing'. Handy utilises the difficulty involved in 'seeing' early photographic images in an analysis that witnesses a lessened emphasis on the photograph's indexicality. Using Dewey's transactional understanding of art, object and viewer here become engaged in an embodied and experiential dance.

Paying close attention to her own sensory and physical encounter with the setting and sculptures of the Sacro Bosco, Thalia Allington-Wood explores an immersive approach to the sixteenth century. 'Rocky encounters in the Sacro Bosco of Bomarzo' offers a

material, geological, art-historical and yet also deeply sensuous account that opens up the history and understanding of sculptures, formed from rough, earthy grey-brown rock, to their contemporary local viewers.

At microscopic scale, Alan Boardman investigates the use of carbon pigment in the artistic practice of Onya McCausland and Frederik De Wilde. 'Carbon monochrome: Manuel DeLanda and the nonorganic life of affect' uses the philosopher's new-materialist ideas as a framework to exceed phenomenological enquiries and proposes human–non-human affect relations to rethink art's making and viewing in the anthropocene.

Similarly indebted to new-materialist modes of enquiry, Sara Buoso investigates light as a matter in James Turrell's artworks to articulate a materiality of difference. 'Outside the spectrum: Poietic encounters of light-matter' uses the notion of poiesis to think about light – between visible and invisible, and beyond the logic of a linear representation – as a matter of experience in its becoming. Processes, formations and practices gain a new articulation as experience through a consideration of the space between the actualities and potentialities of light as a material.

In 'When words falter' Sara Davies reflects on her artistic practices which explores her own 'hyphenation' as an Anglo-Swedish artist moving between two cultures. Focussing particularly on touch, Davies assembles material from established cultural narratives and reconfigurates it in a gestures that give expression to her own status in diaspora. The practical repetition of haptic encounters as a form of making thus becomes a practice of sense-making for the artist.

Julie Boivin also pursues the relations between the body and the object in her '*Rocaille* ornamental agency and the dissolution of self in the rococo environment'. Focussing on eighteenth-century rocaille ornamentations, Boivin argues that their viewer becomes a participant in the environment and is incorporated into its organic shapes. The network of rocaille forms becomes an extension of the participant whose boundaries are dissolved between furniture and space.

The final essay, 'Paperchase', looks closely at the substrate common to the practices of drawing and writing. It traces philosophical and historical descriptions of paper to show how it has regularly been rendered as an ideal version that does not carry its material characteristic. Considering the inseparability of paper from its 'acts' and the convergences of different graphic practices, the article emphasises how the cognitive and sensuous work of drawing and writing is also paper's work.

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