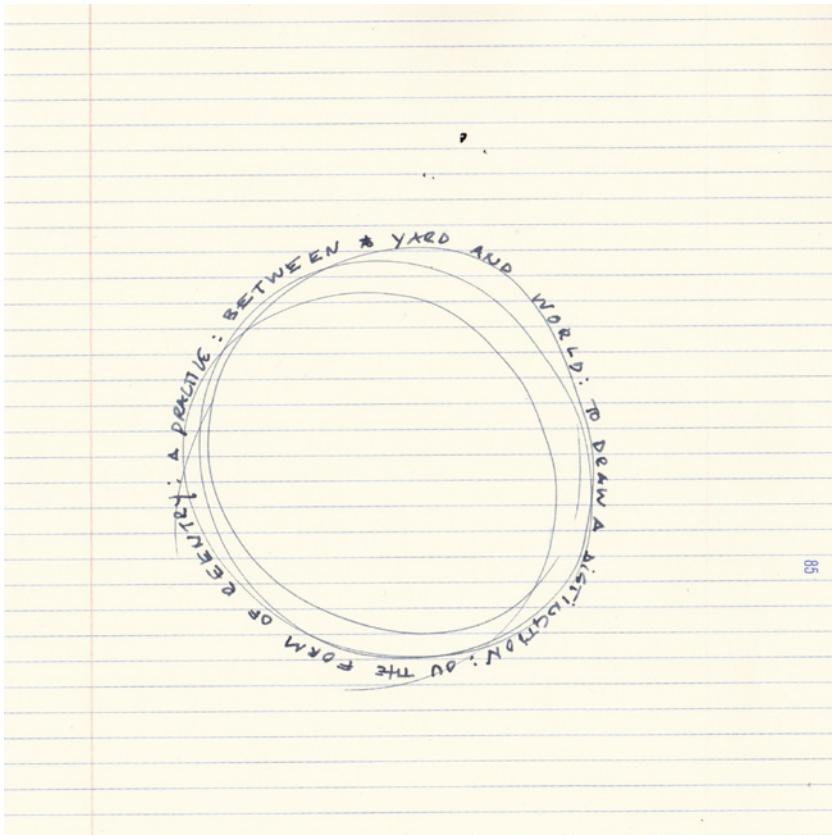


SPATIAL OXYMORONS

Forms of Meeting and
Mutations;
Drawing Distinctions;
In an Ecology of Practices;
Dic Cur Hic

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Forms of Meeting and Mutations



Between Yard and World: To Draw a Distinction: On the Form of Re-entry: A Practice :II

Rondeau (RS), page 85 of a notebook. The Rondeau in music is a dance. In literature it is a text that one can start reading at any place and still the meaning is kept. The sketch explores the representation of the title of the practice-driven research of the manifold practice. Through writing and representing the titles as a rondeau, the drawing highlights the recursive form of the practice driven research. It proposes and suggests a continuum, an inner mechanism of operability that could define the practice...

“...that air-space, that interval, between image and idea, between the word and the thing, is just where there is room for the poetic emotion to come and dwell.”

André Gide

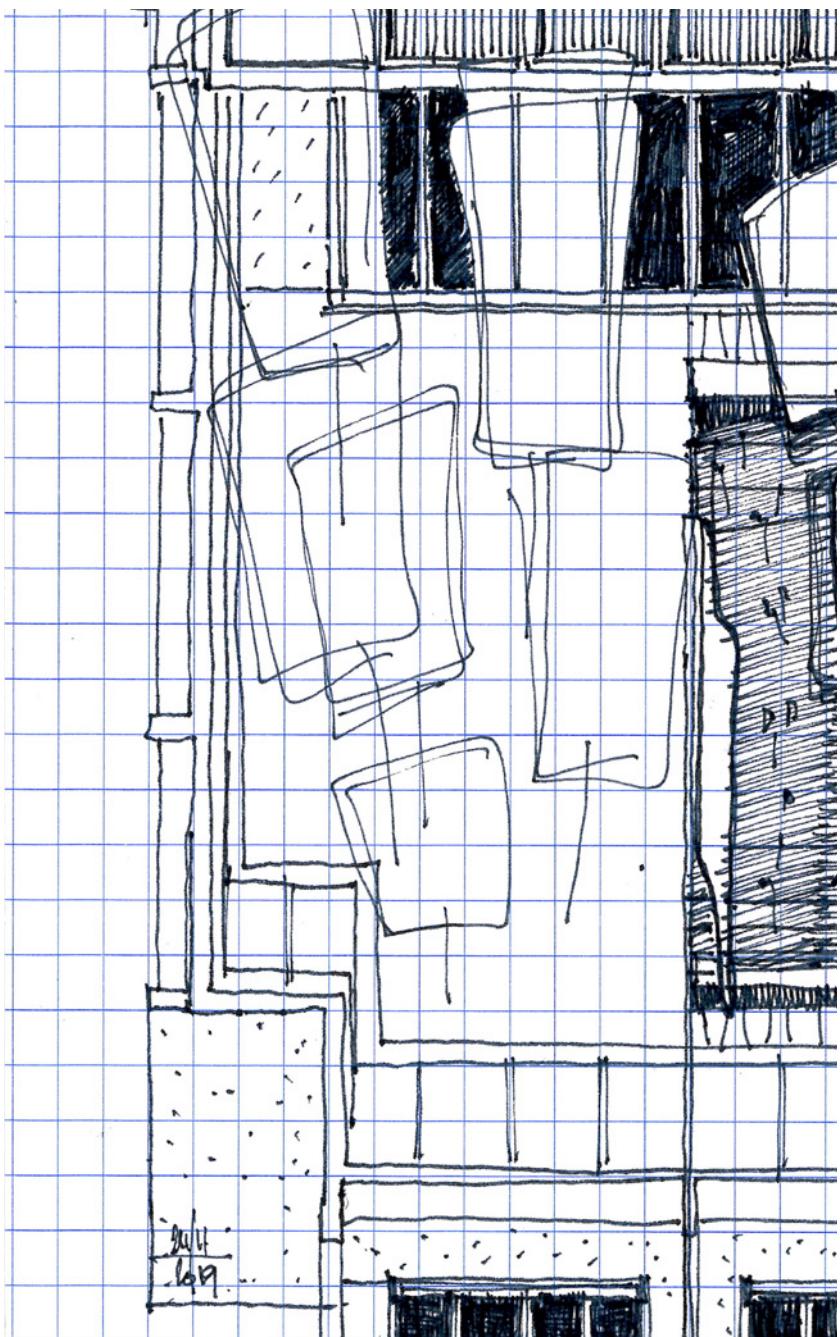
Rolf Hughes writes that Trans-disciplinary needs a liminal, ‘neither/nor’ mindset. His “... stated concern is with ‘neither/nor’ logic - between, across, and beyond existing disciplines - and this implies in turn a concern with ‘relationality’ and thus the nature of distinction itself. {...} The notion of transverse epistemologies designates not so much a confluence of methodologies as an epistemological displacement from one area of relevance to another - that is to say, a rhizomic praxis of ‘linking’, ‘seeing connections’, generating ‘networks’ to arrive at new knowledge - requiring, in turn, theories of ‘edges’, ‘borders’, ‘slippage’ and ‘distinctions. {...} To work the space between disciplines, we may have recourse to liminal thinking - paradox and contradiction, epistemic control and release. (Hughes, 2009).

The current paper, *Incipient Raum: Forms of Meeting and Mutations*, is a reflection on the practice or design driven research that develops and studies the body of work in a manifold practice. This manifold practice is composed out of four ‘studios’ directed by the author of this paper: The Faculty Studio, the Office Studio, the Research Studio and the (Music) Composing Studio. Within this manifold practice, relationships of part to whole, and part to part within a whole are a fundamental mechanism that drives the work in and of those studios. This design-driven research examines both the outcome of these practices as well as the form of the manifold practice itself. By replacing ‘trans-disciplinary’ in the text of Hughes with ‘manifold practice’ this paper explores the manifold practice as an ecology (of practices).

Aspective Perspective Sketch from the hortus conclusus garden to be realised on top of the 3-story podium of an reconverted office tower.

The hortus conclusus becomes a distinct-embedded yard. It creates a discussion on the idea of the enclosure on top of a severed podium. It becomes a yard in a yard in the city (world) in...as a continuous way of drawing distinctions. The use of the aspective perspective supports this seemingly paradoxical spatial oxymoron.

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Between Yard and World

Evidently, not every output that is produced within the manifold practice is considered. Between Yard and World (*Tussen Tuin en Wereld*) is a novel by Paul De Wispelaere (1928-2016). From the safe enclosure of the garden, the main character in the book ponders the changing world outside. He positions the house between the garden (yard) and the world. Although it is a novel about distancing (from a changing world) the novel brings a specific ‘filter’ to the manifold practice research: Namely the paradoxical situation of a being distinct-embedded: being separate from, and at the same time being embedded and being part of. It is this relation and ambiguity that is central to the manifold practice. The projects in the manifold practice explore in a sense spatial conditions and relationships that can be described as yards that are distinct from the world, yet part of it. A world exists out of numerous yards... Defining and describing this recursive relationship of distinct-embeddedness of yard and world is at the core of the research in and of the manifold practice.

Defining, describing and representing is done through the continuous drawing of a distinctions: “...that a universe comes into being when a space is severed or taken apart...” (George Spencer-Brown) Something emerges between yard and world. This ‘something’, this ‘between’ is equally a moment, a place and a relation... The form of things seems to play an important role here. Forms contain, differ, over-

“...that a universe comes
into being when a space is
severed or taken apart...”

George Spencer-Brown

lap. They organise, represent and arrange. In a continuous negotiation of the form, the manifold practice approaches spatial ‘themes’ from this particular yard and world multiplicity: space as moment, as place and as relationships.

The design driven research in and of the manifold practice deals with the form of the ‘yard’ as well as with the form of the manifold practice. The form being described as a continuous negotiating of its defining aspects: wall and space, yard and world, as a continuous negotiation of the enclosure. So, both the body of work from the manifold practice as the research of the manifold practice is a continuous shifting and renegotiating of the form as being the enclosure, the distinction, the overlap... This continuous negotiating of the form is illustrative, characteristic and distinctive of the body of work of the manifold practice.

One such a form that has been developed within the manifold practice is the ‘Taxonomic Landscapes’. Taxonomic Landscapes are tools of thinking and giving the account of the manifold practice. Taxonomic Landscapes are con-

BWV. 869

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BUILDING A (REFLEXIVE) PRACTICE
WITHIN A CORPORATION.

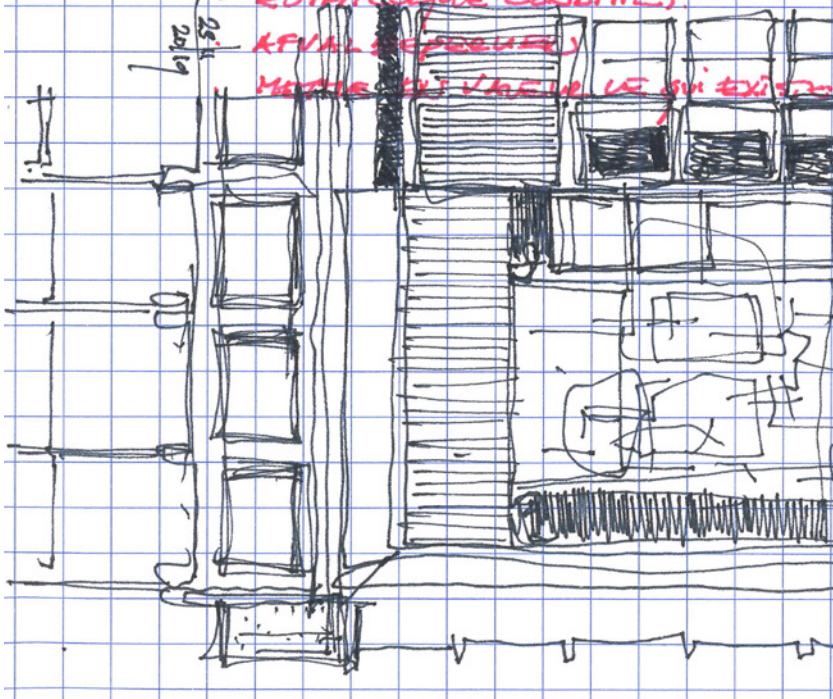


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MORE PRECISE:
TO A SYNERGIC
DIS-ESTABLISHMENT

CIRCULARITY:

- RUIN/TERRITORY CONDITIONS
- AFVAL (REFUSE)
- METAL EXTRACTIVE USE (SILICATE)



The Oblique, The Slippage and the Aspective Note, 2019

Careful observations and accurate records are paramount and crucial to the reflective practitioner. As an avid reader, I have the habit of using these squared cards 150X100mm² as bookmarks. But more important than being a ‘placeholder’ they serve as note-card. During the act of reading words, concepts, ideas, sketches, are captured and collected. Most of this information then reappears in one way or the other in the manifold practice. In this example we see notes regarding the Critical Circularity Conjecture (OS), a reflection on the research practice (RS) and a work to study in the musical practice: BWV 869 (CS). The sketch was one of the first aspective sketches of the manifold and depicts a study for a hortus conclusus on top of the podium of a reconversion project

structed to discover, highlight and create ‘dark matter’ in the ever-changing cloud composed of the body of work of the manifold practice. This ‘dark matter’ is the stuff between the practices, between the different outcomes of the practices. It is what binds and separates at the same time. It is defined by and defines the spaces between the practices and their outcomes. At the same time Taxonomic Landscape serve as a way of giving the account of the research by making discoveries visual.

Taxonomic Landscapes are composed out of fragments taken from the manifold practice. These fragments are predominantly architectural artefacts such as drawings, models, diagrams. They are organised within the ‘enclosed’ space of a table top. Brought together, they aim to be world-generating, and both discover (spatial) relations and create new previously unexacting relations. These Taxonomic Landscapes then become multi-layered small ‘yards’ from which to look at the ‘world’.

Within three out of the four practices that constitute the manifold practice: the office studio, the faculty studio and

the research studio, these taxonomic landscapes gained some autonomy and operability. A comparative reflection on the specific form they have within each of these practices is beyond the scope of this paper. One crucial reflection to make is if what form of taxonomic landscape, if any can be discovered or created in the fourth practice, the composing studio...

Taxonomic Landscape work to capture, abduce, induce and reflect on the displacements that drives the manifold. Often this displacement, the abduction is evoked by the introduction of an oblique agent: a concept, sketch, or word that either comes from outside of the manifold practice or slips from one practice to another... If we consider the manifold practice as an ecology (of practices) then the Taxonomic Landscapes are a way of representing the set of relationships existing amongst the practices themselves and between the manifold practice and its surroundings or environment.

SPATIAL OXYMORONS



Mountains Have Insides Too. Taxonomic Landscape for In Practice April 2019. (RS)

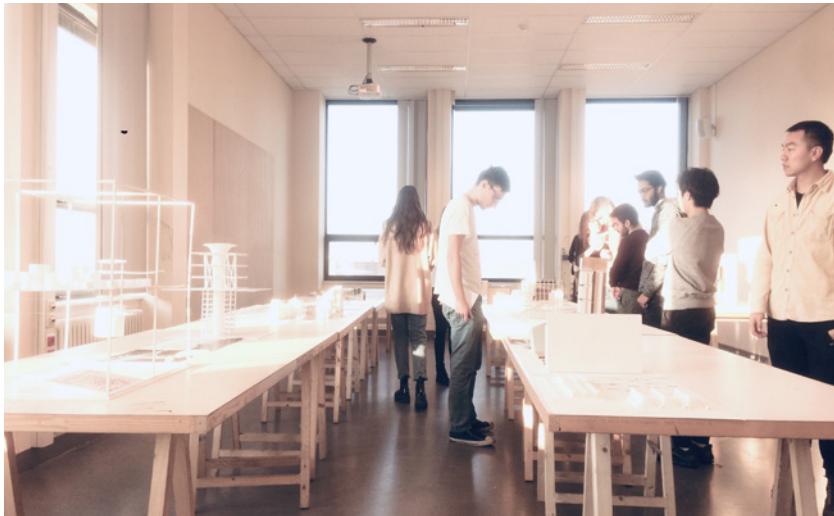
Taxonomic Landscapes do not happen in a void. They are created in a negotiation with the spaces in which they are composed and constructed. Mountains Have an Inside Too has been realised in a retail space next to the slope entrance to the Brussels North Station. A series of scenes organises the fragments of the manifold practice:

SC01: Hortus Conclusus: The Viridarium at the Villa Poppaea; SC02: Borrowed Space and the Winter garden; SC03: The Garden of Forking Paths; SC04: Epicurus Garden; SC05: The Doors of Perception; SC06: St-Jerome in his Study; SC07: La Grotte; SC08: A Mountain has in Inside Too (Natürgemalde)

Drawing Distinctions

The central question regarding this method of knowledge generating remains then: How to inquire? The answer would be ‘To draw a distinction and create a universe! Creating a distinction consist out of a threefold operation called the form of the distinction. The form of the distinction is composed out of the distinction, the indication and the continence. “The form of the distinction is a spatial expression of a temporal unfolding of the operation of the distinction.” To draw a distinction becomes the central activity in the Yard and World research. Drawing a distinction is both an operation on space (you create something while naming it) and an operation in time (there is a before and after). (Reichel)

Within the context of a practice-based research (a reflective grounded practice) drawing a distinction is, a recursive expression: the outputs of previous operations are fed back into future operations. In this way, the creation and identification of the paradoxes that emerge in the practice is what propels and defines the practice. This form of re-entry becomes a paramount and crucial driver of the research in practice. The act of drawing of distinctions is the method of production and reflection. The practice research reflects on how these distinctions are drawn and shows how they drive practice in research and research in practice. Once



Doors of Perception Design Studio (FS)

The Taxonomic Landscape finds its place and space in the office studio and research studio and in the faculty studio. In fact, the first traces of Taxonomic Landscapes as tools for thinking and giving the account, as knowledge generators can be found in the master directed by the author studios at the faculty of architecture (KULeuven). In this example a plenum Taxonomic Landscape for the whole Doors of Perception Studio serves and structures the review moments. The core of the Taxonomic Landscape are the fragments that form the content. These are always well-crafted documents created with care and attention. In the terminology of the Taxonomic Landscapes these documents are called epistemic architectural artefacts of inquiry.

a distinction has been made or discovered (based on the Taxonomic Landscapes for instance) that outcome can be re-introduced into the manifold practice. This form or re-entry is actually a feedback mechanism based on careful observations, controlled experiments and accurate records. A way of drawing distinctions and inducing a reflective practice is that of using different vantage points. A sort of aspective mode of showing and telling is adopted to contextualise the body of work and to make the operationality explicit.

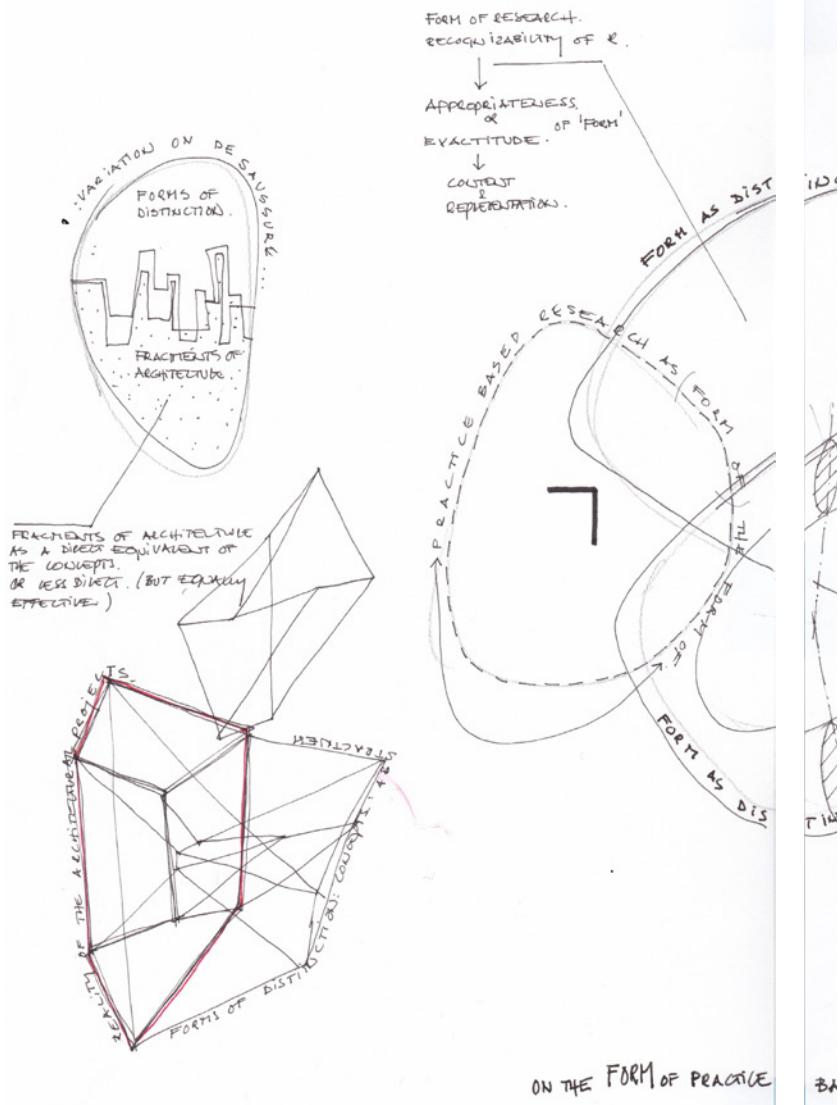
In this sense, it turns out that the ‘performance as research practice’ combines the modes of telling and showing in giving the account of the practice research events. The drawing of distinction is both an operator of work-production and of practice research. As a research operator, the drawing of distinctions aims at discovering what constitutes the interval or ‘MA’ between the different practices of the manifold and between the different works. The practice research brings the works and fragments of the works in relation with one another, into a correspondence. The drawing of distinctions brings together the context of discovery with the context of representation.

The drawing of distinctions becomes then a way of exploring the relationships that exist in the body of work and between the practices. But equally between the manifold practice and its surroundings. It also serves as a way of inducing new relationships. The drawing of distinctions is a form of self-intersection of the ecology of practices that is the manifold practice.

Study sketches on the Form of Practice Based Research (RS)

This document is part of a series of notes, sketches from conversations regarding the design-driven research. The aim is to graphically represent the content, questions, observations and conclusions of these conversations. They are a kind of conversation minutes created after the conversation took place. Not unlike sketches after a project meeting with a client or contractor. They are summative, reflective and projective in the way that they serve to further the research. The extract here tries to grasp the ‘dichotomy’ between the abstract concepts used in the account of the research, the oblique concepts on the one hand, and the very concrete architectural realisations on the other. At the same time is ponders the form of the research as a Torus...

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In an Ecology of Practices

Through the drawing of distinctions, the manifold practice, the ecology of practice becomes its own dissector and scrutiniser with the intent to further its own outcome and body of work. Isabelle Stengers describes the ecology of practices as a tool for thinking. A tool that is not neutral and one that needs to be described by its boundaries and edges. An ecology of practices is performed as an on-going negotiation. The point is not to describe the ecology of practices as it is, but as it might be. The potential according to Isabelle Stengers is for an ecology of practices to aim at the construction of new ‘practical identities’ for practices, new possibilities for them to be present, to connect. The tool co-produces the thinker. Producing and produced by the relationship of relevance between the situation and the tool. (Stengers, 2003)

Different from Isabelle Stengers context, who talks about individual practices in physics, the idea of an ecology of practices is used in this practice research project as concept to describe the set of practices that compose and form a practice. In doing so, a new practice emerges.

The form of the manifold practice is investigated by examining its multiple output and by exploring how the results of this investigating feed back into the manifold. This form of re-entry performs an operation(s) and contributes to the production of new output/work(s). The research explores

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Epicurus Garden: The Performance as Artefact: An Operatic Piano Performance (CS)

During the CARE conference in Gent (October 2019) the Composing Studio was made explicitly present and played central role in the creation of a Taxonomic Landscape. The performance is a combination of a performed text and a piano score performed live. It becomes operatic. It is an experiment to explore the (musical) performance as research practice with the goal to test the 'performance' as a new vantage point on the author's practice research, and from within this practice research. Epicurus Garden searches for ways to induce the practice research. The performance is designed as an enfilade that unfolds in the discursive space between: 'Place, Moment, Relation' and 'Sound, Space, Wor(l)ds', between Yard and World.

the mechanism of this ‘operationality’ of the form of re-entry. This re-entry is ‘slippage’, ‘contamination’, ‘contraction’, ‘abduction’, both in a controlled way (as deduction and induction) but as well in an abduced way.

Dic Cur Hic

Dic Cur Hic or ‘Say why you chose to say this or do that on this precise occasion’ (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz) is the core of giving an account. A substantial part of the work within the research studio (one of the four practices of the manifold practice), is this Dic Cur Hic: finding appropriate ways of making the reflective practice accessible to peers but also to make it accessible to the manifold practice itself. The development of the form of the Taxonomic Landscape as described above is one example. Diagrams, maps, schemes, notes, sketches and drawings, are another. These reflective representations serve to produce different vantage points from which to observe the body of work, topic and themes of the manifold practice. As a strange loop, just because that observation happens also from within the manifold practice itself, it is self-intersecting and affects the manifold practice as a whole.

The manifold practice as ecology addresses then three overarching forms: On the Form of Abducing or Inducing operationality: This addresses a methodology of architectural production and practice research based on the question of how to draw distinctions and create spatial continence.

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Epigenetic Historiography, detail (RS).

the Epigenetic Historiography explores a way of representing the design driven research in and of the manifold practice. The document is composed out of a series of A4 and A3 graph paper sheets taped together to form a section. The intent is on the one hand that of setting the sphere of the manifold practice graphically on a map. In this sense it is an act of practice-geography. The drawing is a time-space log of different moments, milestone, oblique influences, slippages and entanglements in the manifold practice. It is a kind of portolan chart. The four practices have their own field (RS, OS, FS and CS lines). The map traces key-words, documents, artefacts, presentations, projects and papers and positions them in time and practice-based relationships. It is a form of Taxonomic Landscape

On the Form of Mereological Negotiations: This addresses the reflection on the relationships between the part and the whole and between the parts of a whole. And on the **Form of Distinct-Embeddedness:** This addresses the idea of spatial embeddedness, as spaces placed ‘en abyme’. The research is based on explorative descriptions of forms of spatial continuity, forms of distinction- overlap-interval, forms of borrowed space, of leaking space, forms of spatial self-intersecting, spatial continence and the form of ‘mise en Abyme’...

The practice research describes through naming and framing (describing/drawing/designing) ‘space as relationships’ and how ‘space as relationships’ is the driver of the body of work in the manifold practice. The body of work is formed through the creation, collation and curation of epistemic architectural artefacts. The thematic that emerges out of the overarching topic of yard and world that paradoxical situation of being distinct: being separate from, and at the same time embedding: being part of, is a kind of recursive entanglement of yards and worlds. This peculiar and dis-

tinct entanglement is found in the body of work as ‘spatial oxymorons’. These spatial oxymorons are the creation of nested spaces, communicating enclosures, overlapping distinctions, embedded refuges, enfolded platforms, set-in gardens, split walls, grounded canopy, postponed walls, raised hortus conclusus, public interior...

As a rondeau, these forms of meeting and mutations, through drawing of distinctions in an ecology of practices explore and create spatial oxymorons. The combination of abduction and ‘Dic Cur Hic’ makes the ‘Form’ both as a topic and as a theme. Production and product symbiotically dis-entangle.

SPATIAL OXYMORONS



MULTI: Critical Circularity in the Reconversion of an Iconic Office Tower (OS)

The working model for the reconversion is exhibited on the 13th floor of the edifice it explores. The setting was part of a Taxonomic Landscape that had been created to realise and support the open dialogue with the client and the municipality to develop a public discourse on the reconversion of this post-war heritage. The project itself incorporates the idea of yard and world, the distinct-embeddedness on different levels: Through the creation of a public interior that leads to the urban garden on the east-facing podium. Through the creation of a collective winter garden on the top floors. Through the introduction of a hortus conclusus on the west-facing podium. And finally, through the introduction of 'chapels' related to the public interior.

INCIPIENT RAUM

Epilogue: Recently the oblique concepts of Spatial Oxymorons and Incipient Raum slipped into the sphere of influence of the manifold practice. The concept of oxymoron can be traced back to my postgraduate in literature. The concept of the incipient I encountered in a book on the microbial realm in the soil (ground): *The Hidden Half of Nature* (David R. Montgomery and Anne Biklé). The oxymoron re-surfaced as I was looking for a way of naming the spatial situations that are created in the manifold practice and that try to create this particular state of distinct-embeddedness. It is the first time I use this terminology and am still exploring how apt it is in this context. Incipient is borrowed from the Latin *incipiens*, which means: present participle of *incipiō* (“begin”). It is mainly used as ‘beginning to happen or develop’ or as ‘developing into a specified type or role’. Soil for instance can be incipient. This means that it contains the basis and provides for vegetation establishment. Something is present that ensures something to grow (happen later) under the right circumstances. In principle, a certain ‘condition to’ is present. Being intrigued by this condition I started to wonder if there is a parallel in architecture, in design and design driven research. Could this concept of the incipient tell me something about practice and can it induce a new (spatial) practice. For some yet undiscovered dark reason, I combined the concept with the German word for space, field and room: Raum... Incipient Raum.

At the moment, I introduced the Incipient Raum as a master dissertation design studio. At the same time, I am exploring if the Incipient Raum could be a precise way of describing the spatial and other relations that are explored with in the manifold practice. Is the space between, the ‘dark matter’ in the manifold incipient? Is the ecology of practice an Incipient Raum? Maybe then the design driven research of the manifold practice is: Incipient Raum: on the Creation of Spatial (and Other) Oxymorons...

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SPATIAL OXYMORONS



Ravot: After School Day-Care (OS)

Ravot explores the covered space as a divider and link, a go-between and interface between the newly created courtyard and the wilderness of the garden. The extension of the existing building, paradoxically, through 'closing' the existing L-shape into a square, by mirroring it, became open and related. The project explores the distinct-embeddedness in its way of creating a myriad of spatial conditions and relations between inside and outside, between inside and inside, between the covered and the un-covered. In a second act of distinct-embeddedness some of the exterior walls are created as a split wall with alcoves, creating the possibility for the children of sitting in a thick wall, distinct yet embedded: a spatial oxymoron.

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