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A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack

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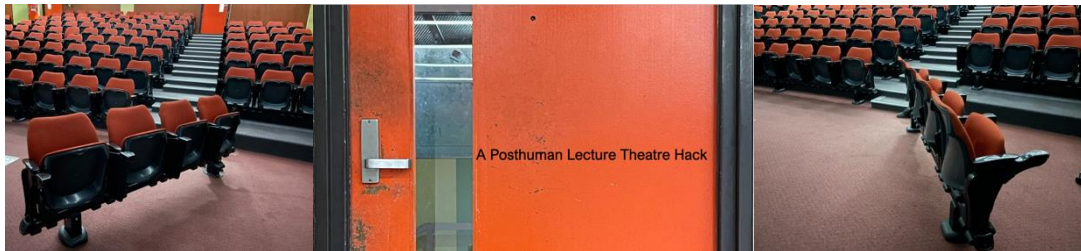


Figure 1: A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack: *A beginning*, Ceri Hann. Images: Fiona Hillary

ACT ONE

SETTING THE SCENE

As we write this paper, the Australian Open plays in the background. Watching the fluoro ball bounce across the ocean blue court, we are reminded of when an Australian Painted Lady butterfly landed on Naomi Osaka's leg. From the stands, you could hear a woman's voice alerting her to her nonhuman companion, its bright orange and black wings vividly contrasting against the court's blue. Osaka stopped play before delicately and deftly transferring the butterfly from leg to finger. She then walked to the side of the court, placing it away from the deathly velocity of tennis balls as the arena began to cheer, laugh and clap. As Osaka attempted to return to the court, the butterfly took flight, momentarily gracing her shoulder and then her cheek, where it lingered as the tennis great closed her eyes and breathed.

Australian Painted Lady butterflies have a habit of stopping us in our tracks. In 1889, there were so many along the east coast that they formed thick black clouds. Train services had to be paused as they rested en masse along tracks.

Pause

This paper and the *Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack* it documents are an iteration of *Posthuman Publics*, an ongoing research project that invites artists to iteratively

respond to a site to generate fleeting transformative acts of imagination (Hillary 2023). These experiments question who/what we are in the process of becoming (Braidotti 2014), allowing institutions, artists and audiences to pause like Osaka, taking a breath alongside the non-human and more-than-human as a form of affirmative creative activism. In this iteration, we come together to remediate the impacts of neoliberalism on our thinking, making and learning by taking over and creatively responding to a decommissioned lecture theatre at RMIT University. As Troiani and Dutson (2021) have noted, the neoliberal university strives to 'continuously increase performance...imposing a new auditable disciplining, and quickening pace, of learning, thinking and working' (5). To pause, create and seek out non-human and more-than-human companions in this environment is a form of creative activism that seeks to disrupt the pressures of the neoliberal university.

ACT 2

INTRODUCTION

The *Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack* is an ambitious, activist project that explores the present and future of creative research and education through the 'takeover' of a decommissioned 180-seat lecture theatre. The project was led by the Contemporary Art and Social Transformation (CAST) research group in the School of Art at RMIT University; bringing together established researchers, PhD candidates, undergraduates and independent artists from across the University. Made up of a series of phases (described as 'currents' throughout this paper) the research employed creative practice to create a critical discourse about who and what the University is becoming, asking questions such as:

- What if Indigenous knowledges were core pillars?
- What if a thriving biodiverse (kelp or terrestrial) forest was central to the University's learning structure?
- Can a green chlorophilic (Hesterman 2022) vision sweep through like a refreshing wind, clearing and recalibrating humans and learning institutions to become actively 'attentive' (Rose 2013), alive and responsive by staying with the trouble of the world (Haraway 2016)?

Responses ranged in scale from performance lectures and creative discussions through to immersive installations, performative and digital artworks. As the lecture theatre was scheduled for demolition the research changed, built-on and tore-away the fabric of the space in a series of intervening currents.

[enter from right]

CURRENT 1 The FIRST CURRENT of the research involved a symposium featuring esteemed Emeritus Professor Rosi Braidotti as visiting research fellow. For this current, researchers and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates presented posthuman creative responses to the lecture theatre for dialogue and discussion. The symposium fostered diverse discussions and creative conversations among academics, practitioners, and the public.¹

[joins Current 1 from left]

CURRENT 2 The second current was a 'student hack' involving undergraduate students from the School of Art who were enrolled in Art History and Theory, Art, Society and Politics and third year Painting. Over a semester the students contributed their unique perspectives and ideas to shape the project's trajectory, exploring themes of institutionalisation, gender and race and their historical and contemporary formation in the University.

[appears through a ray of light, always moving]

CURRENT 3 The third current, entitled 'What's Coming is Good...', transformed the decommissioned lecture theatre into a multimedia, performative and immersive installation. Taking Astrida Neimanis and her thinking on 'Bodies of Water' (2017) as inspiration, the theatre was transformed into a relational speculative sea where human, non-human and more-than-human collaborations unfurled.

¹ The *Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack* began in March 2023. The original cast is as follows, in no particular order: Professor Rosi Braidotti, Dr Jacek Scarso, Platform ARTS Neighbourhood LAB, Ilana Russell, Priya Nemana, Dr Martine Corompt, Dr Sarah Tomasetti, Cassandra Tytler, Heather Hesterman, Dr Clare McCracken, Vanessa Chappell, Dr Jordan Lacey, Bixiao Zhang, Dr David Rousell, Jess Tran, Assoc Prof Dominic Redfern, Angelique Joy, Assoc Prof Alison Bennett, Thao Nguyen, Dr Rebecca Olive, Natasa Cordasic, Dr Fiona Hillary. The presentation of Current 1 was facilitated by Luna Mrozik Gawler. Current 2 featured students from the Bachelor of Fine Art.

The *Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack* exemplified the power of collaborative, interdisciplinary endeavours in imagining and shaping the academy's future. As such this paper has been created from the FOURTH CURRENT of the project – a creative and performative manifesto that was presented at the 2023 ACUADS conference. This paper, which we see as the FIFTH CURRENT of the research, translates the spoken word manifesto into text. Written collaboratively, the manifesto creatively responds to the previous currents, inviting readers to reflect on and explore the transformative possibilities of creative activism at the University. As Rosi Braidotti has noted, empowering alternative becomings is a collective and affective project (Braidotti 2006). This collaboratively written and experimental paper uses ficto-criticism through creative and reflective writing, bringing together multiple voices and entities as well as photography to re-imagine alternative becomings in the neoliberal university.



Figure 2: A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack: Sarah Tomasetti, *Breath...*; Professor Rosi Braidotti; Alison Bennett, *Vegetal Digital*. Images: Sarah Tomasetti, Alison Bennett and Fiona Hillary.

ACT 3

PAPER STRUCTURE

Inspired by Deleuze's prismatic imaginaries, this paper is a fractal layering of perceptions, differentiated by angle, tone and ground, that 'disintegrates the unity of vision' into a prism of 'collective imaginings' (Gatens and Lloyd 1999: 87). The text is a multi-vocal, multi-coloured score, a play(ful) script born of being there and being with. As such, aquatic characters accompany sections of text acknowledging the aquatic zones, chlorophyllic territories and other non-human entanglements that many of the authors locate themselves within.

The lecture theatre had bright orange seats and walls painted dusty purple and insipid green. As the project progressed and morphed these colours faded and slowly disappeared, replaced by black, green, white and finally blue. This text reflects both that prismatic transformation, but also the spoken word nature of the ACUADS

presentation, by utilising theatrical formatting and the insertion of guiding colour descriptions.

The currents of the *Lecture Theatre Hack* flow asymmetrically through space and time, some were tidal (one wave waving), some hazardous rips (the student hack) and some passing eddies. We structure our text in accordance with these variations; italicising for oral emphasis (a call to speak aloud), embracing the discomfort of dot points, making radical and visual insertions and sometimes speaking together as a chorus. The footnotes sprinkled throughout form the theoretical sediment or bedrock of the text. For intrepid readers who would like to understand the key ideas informing the discussion, the footnotes can be followed, pondered and explored. This honours the sedimentary nature of practice and research, a cartography for creative re-imagining. Making and research build upon the work and ideas of others, gathering momentum, shifting direction, working with and sometimes against.

ACT 4

A MANIFESTO IN FOUR CURRENTS

All together like a chorus. The peace balcony has gone nuts and beyond the balcony we would like a bit of time with you. Hello. Now we've got this text! And we have a reader! Welcome. Slow down, says Radiohead and the road sign all at once. We practice quantum listening, we hear the swamp, it can be dangerous down there, hard to get up again but we can learn all sorts of great things about weight and resting. Then up! Up! We need everyone to get up! Up! Bring in the singing bowl and the fish-eyed lens. Blue. Blue. Blue. Beam us in with an ocean backdrop, that's part of it too. Here comes the otter – calling out for ideas! Here comes the whale, the waves waving, here comes the e-motion, the talking chairs, the 3D model all gouged out (opportunities everywhere!), dinoflagellates and, here, there are crocodiles. It's a lot but we hope for onto-fugitivity. Sense will make an appearance spilling into (sensible) survey and all flowing out again with cups of tea. Here is the thing; it is all already happening; we just have to notice it. Welcome. We will announce the phases. The phases come in waves, or rather currents.

OOZE

Current 1: The Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack



Figure 3: A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack: Heather Hesterman and Sarah Tomasetti, *Breathing with*; Natasa Cordasic, *The Passion Balcony*; Heather Hesterman, *Fern Wall*. Images: Heather Hesterman and Fiona Hillary.

[ooze continues]

OOZE Five minutes each. A line up of heaps of us. A tight orange ship to make the lecture theatre live again, as a different iteration.

[open the doors, many entrances follow]

[enter limestone]

LIMESTONE Way down the line of jostling agencies, and requiring a long pause, the life cycle and transformations of matter may be distantly sensed and then vigorously engaged through radically sensitive practice and an ethics of care (Bolt 2007). We co-breathe. With one another, and with the enfolded temporalities of these materials that came, without exception, from the living world. Even the hardest plastics were once the great lungs of the planet in the form of vibrating and sentient forest communities that through many material cycles over deep time became the rich black oil that makes a lecture seat with a mini table (for the right hander only) that they can't engrave. Is it possible that material impermeability goes hand-in-hand with rigid human structures? 'We co-respire with the living world and all matter was once alive'.² In a radical pedagogy hierarchies FLIP like an hourglass,

² Limestone skins made on a fresco wall were placed over several seats in the lecture theatre to create both spontaneous topography and a porous ground for the soil and mint mounds to continue growing. When slaked lime is curing in the creation of the skins, carbon is re-sequestered and so the stone breathes gently with the maker. Breathing in memory of its beginnings as crustaceans that once spent, fall to the ocean floor to be compressed and then uplifted to form caves, mountains and karst landscapes (Tomasetti S 2023). *The Posthuman*

the other way up. Modes of being and unfamiliar voices enter the fray. Plant structures on the wall, on the seats, on the balcony, in soil with light rigged up and the need for water eliciting care from the human actors, point to the growing need for porosity and flow at the level of matter. Might this inspire new flows of thought and ideas that infiltrate and nourish? May the semi slumber of institutional silence and compliance be stirred beyond recognition, just as the seats themselves are removed, re positioned, opened, cut, covered, stitched and placed backwards. Some now speak when sat on.

[limestone sighs and draws breath]

[enter tangerine striped crab]

TANGERINE STRIPED CRAB

We began with a space – a disused lecture theatre bound for decommission.³ Its familiarity and institutional structure of audience and speaker. Seats stained from collective bottoms, the fidgets of students and discarded, stale gum balls. Out the front, you can feel the weight of endless PowerPoint presentations in tiny black and white font. A worn patch of carpet has been shaped by a pacing orator.

Authority becomes unravelled, the spectator speaks up, speaks out.

[enter soil]

SOIL This *Posthuman Theatre Hack* invites collaborative thoughts, considerations and actions⁴. Bodies and organisms move around the

Lecture Theatre Hack opens to vastness, and in so doing, sweeps away useless and divisive pedagogies with the tide.

³ RMIT University's Property Services gives us the key to the lecture theatre and allocates the room to the School of Art for the duration of the lecture theatre hack. The only caveat is that the technical equipment remains intact.

⁴ This is akin to Haraway's concept of composting (Haraway 2016) where diverse mixtures come together to generate new spaces, forms and futures. New ecologies emerge, and in this

site, some fast and others slow, yet unusually, all cognisant *of* and recognising our beings and doings *with* each other. It invites us to ‘co-operate across differences’ (Loveless and Smith 2022:290) rather than claiming space for personal artistic advantage and career jostling.⁵ Eco-feminist philosopher Val Plumwood argues for attentiveness to ‘more-than-human species’ (Abrams 1997:7), to check human exceptionalism, and consider the role of listening (Plumwood 2002:115). The built⁶ human-centric-architectural edifices are bunker-like, encapsulating a truncated kind of learning; lecterns offer rarified orations whilst audience knowledges are passive under weighty blankets of western traditions and colonial histories. Nothing thrives

act of attention, ‘we {in the act of composting are} tending to togetherness carefully’ (Neimanis and Hamilton 2022:21).

⁵ Research paper writing is often hierarchical, and sees authors ranked in priority and seniority, upholding academic traditions, and reputations that count in the world of journal publishing and within competitive university academic systems such as job promotions. This limited acknowledgment and range of knowledges sees only certain capabilities and humans valued. Alternatively, the Lecture Theatre Hack’s processes are ongoingly active and re-active – capable of morphing to site conditions, its processes are communicative, transparent, caring, respectful, collaborative, creative and critical. Like a swarm of bees gathering pollen and nectar from the flowering Australian native plant *Correa reflexa* (Native fuchsia), we worked together to find ‘ways to care, nurture, and resist, all at once’ (Loveless and Smith, 2022:277)

⁶ The environmental crisis calls upon us to develop new modes of production, living and co-existing, to reform alliances and acknowledge entanglements. There is a need for different ways of thinking about the world and art practice. Some humans need to reconsider the cause and effect of what it is we are building and ideas of progress as a linear. As Environmental feminist academic Jennifer Mae Hamilton states, ‘...if the environmental crisis is a material problem, it matters what we do and how we do it. We need to be changing our work practices and the world towards which we are working. After all, this crisis was built, not conjured. Thus, the only way out is a different kind of building.’

here except hierarchical power.⁷ Things are fracturing and we are staying deep *with*, and tangled up in troubles.⁸

Under artificial conditions with simulated LED sunlight, several mint plants (*Mentha spicata*) initially thrived with human attention until the humans stopped attending – unable to nurture the plants when management changed the keylocks without discussion. With no water, cavitation advances, drying out stems, leaves and roots. Entire systems are failing.

The University system is not in mint condition.

[soil remains, to see what unfolds...]

[enter the algal bloom (in dot points)]

With determination

ALGAL BLOOM

- Through the theatre hack we offer *pedagogies otherwise* that continue *becoming-with* within the institution in which we are still situated.
- This artistic ‘hack’ points to larger changes within the university system’s conceptualisation of ‘space’. We must find new ways to be together and re-conceive place.
- We work to problematise architectural configurations of space as a way of grappling with the bigger questions of how learning is shaped, who holds the power and who is forgotten or dismissed within this system.
- We are always grappling with our own posthuman positionings, making moves to challenge the cognitive capitalism promoted by universities.
- We critique human exceptionalism.

⁷ We are thinking here with Val Plumwood, Deborah Bird Rose and Natalie Loveless about how human exceptionalism continues, limiting our relations with other species, other humans, and how little neoliberal university structures and management value creative and expansive thinking.

⁸ Double troubles with Donna Haraway (2016) and Deborah Bird Rose (2014).

- We recognize our material bodies as living systems – inside porous bodies there are spaces and fluid flows, capable of expanded thought; affirmative.
- The lecture theatre is more than a container of bodies. We recognise its agency in reiterating established social norms that are antithetical to bodies and cognitions otherwise, and work to disrupt this.
- We continue to listen to and build upon the theories of becoming-with (Haraway 2008) and the trans-corporeal (Alaimo 2008).
- We are working to cultivate an extended, more equitable and welcoming learning environment; one that looks at different modes that coming together as ecological beings can manifest.
- We are a research-community, we are a collective. As part of the collective, we work together; listening, remaking and regenerating.
- These are pedagogical acts of resistance.
- We suggest new relations with place that facilitate interactive networks of diversity, complexity, and relationality within the institution.

[enter the groundkeepers]

GROUNDKEEPERS

And we act! We show up, twice a week, three times a week, sometimes more – depending on how many rays of the sun fall through the weather-stained, sepia-tinted windows, and depending on the temperature of clouds gently floating up, up, up from building 12 air ducts. We fill our repurposed mineral water bottles in the kitchen shared with engineering students, some from places far, far, far. We tug the grey, water-transporting milkcrate, banging our arms on heavy side doors, down, down, down the damp, lightless, concrete hallway we go; and gently, with our bruised forearms we release the water... analysing, checking in, soaking up, assessing together, is this enough? A bit more? Ok.

[Creeping in]

TRANSLUSCENT JELLYFISH

We tiptoe in, sometimes alone, intimate with the growth on the balcony, the thought inside, seeking relationship with and through safe

bodied movements, sensing and acting in gravity's matrix. Inside and outside, interoceptive, exteroceptive, upside down, we quietly and noisily tone our singularities, adding difference to life's mixture. The movement of meeting places thrumming and dilating across scales. Curiosity fuels our learning.

Together and alone, we stitch threads from our words to each other's, from this moment to moments long past. Suspended between us, the word – decommissioned. An opportunity for transhistorical entanglement. Slippery assemblages. We think with and through frameworks of knowledge, once delivered with authority in this space. This authority, now a spectre. Whispers, ghosts and voices. Body-minds imprinted in this space. Those with 'authority' and those without.

We circle, watery beings, around the notion of DECOMMISSION... of decommissioning frameworks of knowledge... of concepts long grandfathered and those desperately persistent. Of those we wish to hold and those we wish to push overboard!

[enter pirates]

PIRATES We claim, reclaim, hold and let go. A single chair for the silent witness. And so, it is here, entangled in our collective threads... we disrupt, hack, crip and queer these spectres and this space for non-compliant bodies!

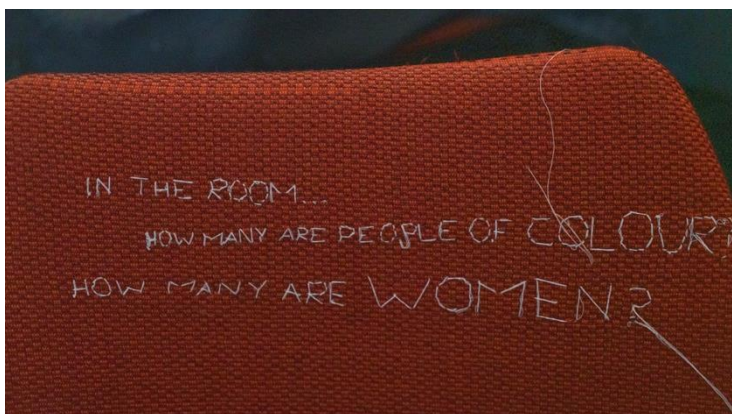


Figure 4: A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack: Thao Nguyen, *IN THE ROOM...HOW MANY ARE PEOPLE OF COLOUR? HOW MANY ARE WOMEN?* Image: Alison Bennett.

ACT 5

CURRENT 2: STUDENT HACK



Figure 5: A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack: *Student Hack*. Images: Fiona Hillary.

[enter undergraduates' imaginary in the form of a rip.]

RIP Are we actually allowed to write on the walls, asks a student. Another has already started painting, writing the words, 'as if the oppressor was never a child'. Someone else collects a spray can from their bag, looks at the white wall in front of them, and moments later, the text, 'are you an ally or a clout chaser?' appears. I'm sick of performative allyship, they say to me, as I pass them by on my way to a student who sits quietly. The freedom to activate the space is too much for them. What is your medium of choice, I ask. I'm a drawer, they respond. Perhaps start by taking some markers and see where your body asks you to go. These plants need watering, one student muses. I turn back to the student, now with coloured markers in their hand, and say, I also give you permission to refuse participation.

[limestone enters]

Defunct institutional hierarchies can neither answer nor contain the depth and breadth of emergent languages; material, cultural and aesthetic. Via verbal, tactile and sensory engagement, all actors become sensate participants in a network of reciprocal gestures. Only in the long pause of attendant uncertainty can new dialogues and understandings be born. The predetermined boundaries of the space must be breached: chairs, walls and outmoded technologies co-opted

into new exchanges that de-territorialise and activate voices hitherto excluded (Braidotti 2023).⁹

Privilege must be checked.

[to the passionfruit plants]

PASSIONFRUIT PLANTS

Over 60 of us waited for visitors.... three + two + one + two + three + one + one + one. Love the tendrils, I miss my cat, family suffered greatly, good at painting but ended up doing something completely different + they are reaching out to us + I'm a gardener + thank you for talking to me + I don't feel well, so will take leave from study + can I visit again?

Just enough precious water that the precious roots need, and we don't want.

[enter incredulity]

INCREDULITY

We arrive in the space, statements stitched into the chairs and words scrawled across the walls. It's like a barometer of wellbeing: anger, frustration, hurt and pain and an occasional moment of optimism. I am all at sea, empathetically imbibing the frustration of an emergent generation. Can you believe it, she asks. I can't believe it, she says. How can we respond? How can we invite them to re-imagine a possible future, a future imbued with hope?

She said, we can't leave it like this...

⁹ During the first current Professor Rosi Braidotti responds to the performances and speaks of 'de-territorialising the breath'. Like water, breath flows according to needs and agencies beyond the human. Within species systems we are all one.

The needle punctures the bright orange fabric of the lecture room seats. It stabs into the seat cushion and finds its way out again, drawing the white thread with it. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In and in its last 'Out', two simple questions emerge...

In the room...

How many are people of colour?

How many are women?

ACT 6

CURRENT 3: WHAT'S COMING IS GOOD



Figure 6: A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack: Adrian Doyle, *BLUE*. Images: Fiona Hillary.

[enter the relational speculative sea via a wobbly piece of bluestone.....]

RELATIONAL SPECULATIVE SEA

Every time I jump into this, I feel a bit crazy.

IN THREE CURRENTS:

As undergraduates, HDR's and researchers we situate ourselves in the built detritus of the University. Thinking with Astrida Neimanis, conjuring creative re/thinking through our collective watery bodies, we entreat Le Guin to enact our watery carrier bags sharing what we've gleaned and gathered for our futures. We paint it. We invite others to join us (Neimanis 2017). We make it all blue.¹⁰

There is a square of bluestone in a long laneway on the edge of RMIT that shifts underfoot. Pausing on my way home, I shifted my weight from toe to heel, momentarily rocking with it. As it seesawed, the rock grazed the surrounding basalt

¹⁰ Seeking an oceanic immersion we reached out to Melbourne-based artist Adrian Doyle. In 2013 Doyle painted Rutledge Lane in Melbourne blue, *Empty Nursery Blue*, from ground to rooftop, curated by Hillary as a part of Urban Laboratory (2013). Ten years on he is beholden to *Empty Nursery Blue*, we negotiate to share the process and use lighting to create a multiplicity of oceanic hues.

and released a deep and delightful primal chattering, so I rocked even faster until waterlogged, glistening dark-brown soil oozed up and over my bright white sneakers, forced from under the bluestone by my weight and motion.

Despite nearly 200 years of draining it, diverting it and hiding it under layers of asphalt and bluestone, the wetland of Melbourne finds ways of seeping up through the cracks; it oozes through the walls of our tunnels, pops up in the divots of our sporting fields and recolonises some of our significant streets after heavy rain. Still rocking, with the mud still oozing, I realised I had said aloud what I was thinking: 'Beneath the bluestone, there is a swamp.'

Welcome to *What's Coming is Good* – our second *Posthuman Lecture Hack* that thinks with bodies of water to imagine new ways of being in the world and, more specifically, in this Institution.

In a moment, you will enter the 'liminal' through this door, strolling immersed in the dark before venturing onto the Passion Vine Balcony. On this site, vines planted in small pots of soil and nourished by the artist Nataša Cordasic, are taking over the institution.

Take your time on the balcony, and when you are ready, knock on the door that lets you into the lecture theatre. Nataša will let you in, presenting you with a cup of tea from the vines. **Passion Vine tea makes you dream.**

From here, you can roam or sit and dream while enjoying Bixiao Zhang's interactive projection work that reads your emotions and projects them back to you in pixel waves, and Alex Harrison's blue language durational performance work, *Where the Waves Will Have Been Waving*.

Finally, you will also experience a collaborative work that coats and fills the whole space with sound and colour. This vast work has its roots in each artist's practice and means different things to each – however, for all here, it is about bodies of water and their currents.

This is a quiet space, so please use your time in the lecture theatre to reflect and think about the wetlands, ocean and puddles. You can leave the lecture theatre when you are ready, using the doors at the back.

The opportunity for new materialist investigations seemed ripe in the now blue theatre. Where once a strict division between pedagogue and student reigned, was now an amalgam of bodies, art-objects and experiences that were intra-related, each moving the other into a new becoming. A singing bowl was brought into the hack, spun upon its axis, creating a monotone that filled the room. Plants were dropped into the watery bowl, casting playful reflections from lights shining through its base, through water, through plant and onto the surrounding water-blue walls. Musicians circulated and joined the monotone, changing its pitch accordingly. Every event is a reminder of the things that could not have happened when the dichotomy reigned – the becoming of the walls into a watery immersive experience affected the participants with a courage to explore new forms of pedagogical possibility, forming, morphing, transforming the extensions of each work, without fear of judgement.

The lecture theatre is now like whale fall on the bottom of the ocean. Like the octopi, giant isopods, squat lobsters, polychaetes, prawns, shrimp, lobsters and hagfish that feed off whale fall, we feed off the remnants of previous structures for learning, creatively expressing our connection and disconnection – our embrace and refusal of/for our disciplines.

LOBSTER With sound, projection, gestures and acts of renewal, we situate ourselves in the structure paying homage to how we learn/t and how we create. We simultaneously enact immersion, the gestural wave, the casting of e-motions and hearing the sipping of terrestrial plants. We invite others to join us to dream.

Just enough water for the visitors (we called it tea), to enter through the lips and commune with saliva, to offer news of our work at the fire exit and promote gently reaching in – *what else is there?*

HAGFISH Honestly, honestly, he says, there is a danger in attending to the high places. People might jump. People might jump.

[in a corner, under the blue light of a projector, someone stands. She speculates.]

SHE Think it through
 Something is going to emerge
 Go with the flow
 It is a quiet space
 Maybe the lighthouse songs are the back-up vocals
 And maybe
 Maybe we just need a gesture
 The waves, waving
 Something simple
 Have you been doing this forever?
 Asked someone wonderful
 Yes, we answered, forever.¹¹
 [she waves for ages]

WE We re/create currents through our collective immersion. Upwelling
 from the depths of the institution refreshing the surface waters. Is this
 the future?

Should we keep going? [We all ask]

[the projected e-motions like a virtual sea holding me...and, and, and... (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:98)]

AND, AND, AND

Visitors of Pandemonic Theatre could shift perspectives between 'performer', 'audience' and 'orchestrator' depending on where they choose to locate and delve into their indeterminate roles in the emergent sound-visual patterns across non-human, sub-perceptual terrains. Pandemonic theatre's naming can be referenced to Antonin Artaud's theatre of cruelty, as it inhabits an indifference to differential matter including our human ego. However, the attunement to the

¹¹ When things feel tenuous read 'The Moth' by Miroslav Holub in *Poems Before And After* (1990).

murmuring undercurrents, the fine threshold of perception, and the dynamics of shifting/shifted views (a type of textural resonance) in the endurance of pandemonic theatre echoes back to shamanistic practices. The adaptive organ here heightens the capacity of pathic sensitivity and textural resonance, catalysing a 'huanghu'¹² state for plural becoming, an organ in resonance with promiscuity and plurality, a becoming with the 'impure and strange,' an act of interspecies noise-making in the wild and untamed (Wang 2021:155).

WE We noticed how much people were on their phones
 And we noticed how they weren't
 We saw how what is coming is (also) good



Figure 7: *A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack*: Alexandra Harrison, *Wave*; Bixiao Zhang, *Pandemonic Theatre*; Natasa Cordasic, *Passion Tea*. Images: Bixiao Zhang and Fiona Hillary.

ACT 7

CURRENT 4: SCORE FOR MULTISPECIES PIRATES!

[The manifesto....and all the uncomfortableness of that word... carries on]

[chorus]

- Are we captains, mutineers or pirates? How do we work within systems/institutions and still be pirates?
- We want to be conducted not directed.
- We resist being assessed and measured.
- [shouting] Assess the pirates! Give them a test!
- We manoeuvre through/around compliance.

¹² Huanghu (恍惚), a dissolution of the division of the 5 senses and a return to the primordial sense of resonance, an elusive, evasive state that might be called synesthesia now. Practiced by historical Chinese shamans to engage with multiple worlds (Wang 2021).

- We find excellence in the cracks, in the murky depths.
- Down with ergonomics!
- Here is the thing, she says, the plants don't have phases.
- Whooooah! It is so huge...
- What comes when you pay attention to what you are enjoying?
- What is your appetite for danger?
- Have a rest – which is to say find the space of no-adding.
- Bricolage – We decommission that which no longer serves us and create with the parts that remain, the parts we choose to hold.
- Reach, reach, reach out for the narrowest gap in the highest beam to wrap around there, to latch on, to include that which is coming.

[preparation for leaping]

PRAWN If we could allow a moment to jump beyond the limitations of existing modes of understanding and knowing, within its own shadow, again and again. What emerges between 'this cleft' cannot be mapped in advance (Manning 2020:45).

'Thousands and thousands of variations on the theme of walking will never yield a rule for swimming: come, enter the water, and when you know how to swim, you will understand how the mechanism of swimming is connected with that of walking' (Bergson 1998:193). Perhaps in an environment where locating is so overwhelmingly practiced, the productivity of unlocating could be the catalyst of an exfoliating transformation; and to sincerely appreciate the extra-linguistic might enable new modes of discourse, new vision, new capacities, new ways of being.

[accelerating with more dot points]

ALGAL BLOOM

- We will meet, we will learn by tuning to haptic intimacies, registering micro-choreographies of relationship. In 'delicate empiricisms' of cellular breath we will create spaces for the acknowledgement of past, present and speculative futures which exist in the play of research across, with and through entwining

more-than-human generations. Tending to the immanent force of the present we will keep an eye, an ear and our hearts on *what we are in the process of becoming* (Braidotti 2019:64), and bring forth love as an action (hooks 2001). We will resist with stories, always connected to the body in the dance of preverbal patterns and the possibilities for dynamic change. We will 'engage practices that are more humble, more halting, and more concrete' (Taylor 2018:111).

- Just to trouble the idea of 'decolonising', Eve Tuck and K Wayne Yang say that 'decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life. Decolonization is not a metonym for social justice' (Tuck and Yang 2012:21). I now say I am enacting anti-colonial practices since thinking this point through.

Thinking with Loveless and Smith (2022), we do not lay down our (feminist) barriers. We will collaborate, we will challenge hierarchies... we are transformative. We attune and re-attune. We make time... we sit in the discomfort, with Haraway, we stay with the trouble.

The future of the arts and humanities as sites of creative, critical training and engagement is at stake. We need to find ways to care, nurture and resist, all at once (Loveless and Smith 2022). It is from within the blue immersion and from the peace balcony overgrown with passion vines that we care, nurture and resist, collaboratively, collectively with a sense of togetherness.

[slowing down again]

the beginning

OOZE They say, I feel like this would be nice just to say the beginning...
 It is nice... the beginning.

[chorus]

- We are a research-community, we are a collective. As part of the collective we work together, listening, remaking, and regenerating.
- These are pedagogical acts of resistance.

- We suggest new relations with place that facilitate interactive networks of diversity, complexity and relationality within the institution.

CONCLUSION

An ongoing iterative manifesto in many parts...and, and, and.... (Deleuze and Guattari 2004).



Figure 8: A Posthuman Lecture Theatre Hack: Alison Bennett, *Photogrammetry Model*. Image: Alison Bennett.

Acknowledgement

This research is undertaken on the stolen land and waterways of the people of the Kulin Nations, specifically, the lands of the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri Woiwurrung. We acknowledge the enduring history of the Peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay respect to their Elders past and present. Their sovereignty was never ceded. Always Was, Always Will Be Aboriginal Land.

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