

Reparative reading-writing alongside HALL08: the paper¹

¹ In the article *The big idea: should we get rid of the scientific paper?* Stuart Ritchie argues that the concept of a 'scientific paper' is a historic artefact that should be replaced by more fluid, notebook-like infrastructures that are in tune with forms of *iterative discourses*. In line with previous writing on/through/ alongside my practice I published both the drafts and the final result iteratively on the Live Archive (www.taai-projects.com), positioning this paper as 'a pad amongst pads' that contributes and reflects with other pieces of documentation and archival documents. Writing a paper is a form of critical spatial practice (Rendell). One way or another, any paper explores a space for discourse and processes of relating with the physical world: writing can offer us a framework to position ourselves in the actor-network (Latour) between human and other-than-human entities. But it also creates space for encounter: between you (the reader) and me (the writer), and between people and entities mentioned on the following pages. Read the full text or Ritchie's here: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/apr/11/the-big-idea-should-we-get-rid-of-the-scientific-paper>

*“I can take any empty paper
and call it a bare stage.
Someone writes on it whilst
someone else is reading,
and this is all that is needed
for an act of critical writing
to be engaged.”²*



3

² Reflection on the 'paper stage' we are writing on. Iteration of Peter Brook's famous first sentence in *The Empty Space* (Published by Simon and Schuster, 1968, New York). Since 2011 I *queered* my architectural thinking through *intra-disciplinary* collaborations, especially through the field of performance. It opened up a spaces for encounter that is ongoing until today and for me personally it lay the basis to explore space as performance, an interest that stayed with me since then. So I invite you to the *theater of knowledge making* we are part of or where we are *playing our part*, between all people mentioned above, between anyone who reads this text. I also see this space as a living thing that can be activated, shifted, darkened or lit up, that is up for unexpected entries, unexpected vistas on outer contexts and moments of enlightenment with our inner worlds, to go back-and-fro, to explore our position as *nomadic subjects* (Braidotti).

³ HALL08, performance installation by TAAT, 2020. Photograph by Ilona van den Brekel

HALL08, encounter portal

**HALL08 is a portal for encounters. Silent encounters.
HALL08 is an open framework. It is in a constant dialogue
with its surroundings and its temporary inhabitants.
HALL08 is a ritualistic exercise. A meditative
activation of your sensory awareness.**

This is how it works:

Start walking through the area around HALL08.
Slowly and consciously.

At certain intervals, walk towards and into HALL08.
You can try different ways to approach and enter.
Please remain completely silent (no talking) at all times when being engaged with HALL08.
Keep moving away from and returning to HALL08 as much as you like.
The minimum is three times.

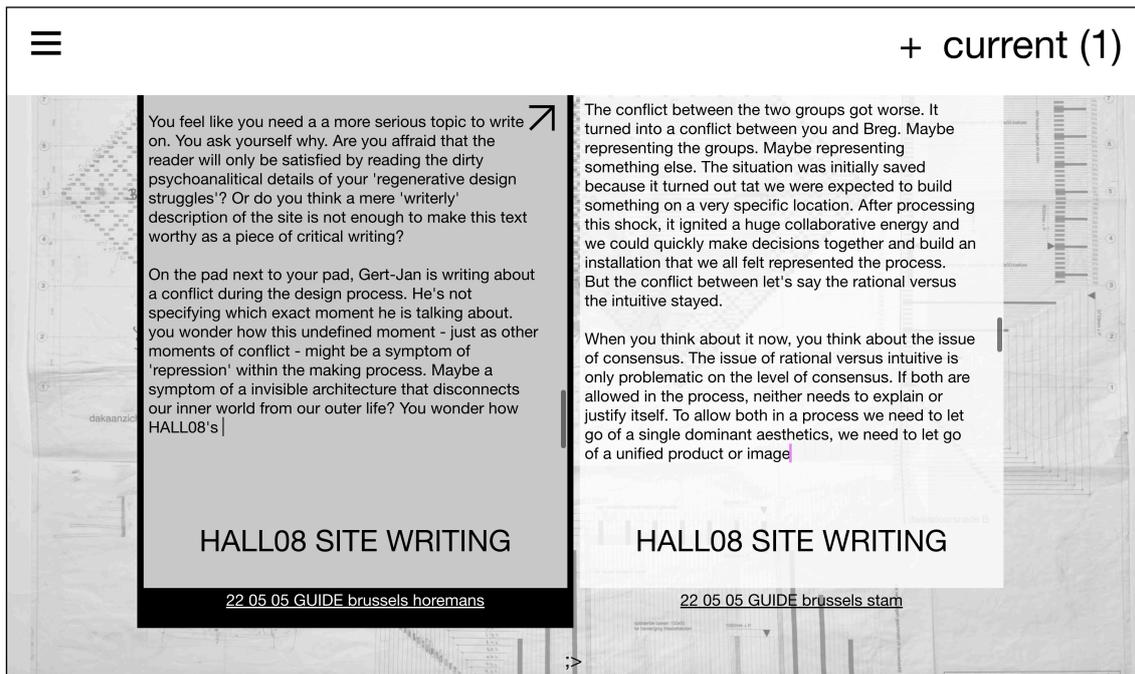
You will find that with each entry your experience of HALL08 will deepen.
And more and more possibilities for encounters will open up.

Notice how you walk.
Notice how you breathe.
Notice how you engage in silent communication.

HALL08 is an exclusive experience.
As a portal, it will only be activated every Saturday between 15:00 en 16:00 o'clock.
During this one hour the energy and the intensity of encounter will be the highest.
Come with awareness.

A unique encounter is waiting for you.

⁴ TAAT, *HALL08, Encounter portal*, performance score by TAAT. The installation is situated in the 'Klankenbos' in Pelt and it is activated by the score and the humans and other-then-humans present, every Saturday at 3pm.



5

⁵ Screenshot of a site writing session on HALL08 by Gert-Jan Stam and Breg Horemans on May 11th 2022.

1.1. Ontological situation

With this text we are taking a leap off the stage⁶. Through working a lot in the performance field (scenography, installation work and curating) the motive of the TAAT⁷ practice has continuously been to create spaces and situations in which encounters are facilitated. By means of the *encounter* as a dramaturgical tool (Groot-Nibbelink), we developed a series of artefacts (performative installations) that function as *epistemic objects*. These installations-as-artefacts have the potential as knowledge instruments that help us look through a post-anthropocentric perspective, as tools for a radical interdependency (Escobar). HALL08 is such an epistemic object. It is part of the long term project HALL33 (2012-2033) which nomadically and iteratively appears as an ever evolving series of installations/artefacts/sites. Within my PhD research, I see these artefacts as *conversation pieces* (Kester) that speculate on new futures for co-existence for our planet, and I use reading and writing scores to shape these conversations and to embed the artefacts-and-their-language. You are warmly invited to step into this paper and renegotiate the research space we are sharing and the *theatre of knowledge* we inhabit.

My PhD project *Regenerative Spatial Dramaturgies*, aims at working alongside past and future artefacts, prototypes and material processes from and around the TAAT practice. HALL08⁸ serves as an 'entry point' to make my ontological starting position tangible. I draw upon a relational ontology (Wildman), redefining ontological entities through their relationships, and the infamous Object Oriented Ontology (Harman), arguing that designed spaces (artefacts) exist outside anthropocentric perception, speaking from a 'here-and-now-agency' of their own. I see my research practice as 'artistic research-by-design' (Freiling) that makes this agency visible and shareable through embodied and collective experience. I situate the work of TAAT — and within that my work as a researcher — as critical spatial practice (Rendell), moving between close and distant readings of the artefacts environmental entanglements. *Regenerative Spatial Dramaturgies* is part of a larger regenerative movement in practice based design research (see statement RAAD⁹ research group), that explores a fluidly organised and decentralised way of knowledge production, embracing complexities of *intra-actions* (Barad) instead of working from reduction and simplification in pursuit of objectified research data. Therefor I develop and implement *interpretative research* methods like scripting and scoring (and more specific: auto-narrating, dialogue formats and performance scores) to track interdependencies between the involved human and other-than-human entities in my work.

Regenerative Spatial Dramaturgies aims to be an *exploratory research* project in the interdisciplinary field of *spatial dramaturgy* (Turner) where uncovering this tacit and felt knowledge can shed new light on how we co-design co-existence on our planet. With this paper I want to give you a first insight in how I situate the artefacts of the TAAT practice as a reparative force to unpack the hidden power relationships in our common design attitude. I perform the role of a *nomadic subject*¹⁰ exploring the environment of my research practice — as part of TAAT's critical spatial practice — and by this I hope to contribute to the lively KU Leuven research ecology.

1.2. The artefact as a site of repression

In *Site-Writing, The Architecture of Art Criticism*, Jane Rendell explores the notion *site of repression* as 'sites where our inner world and outer life are separated'¹¹. She guides us on a tactile, autobiographical and emotional journey of reading spaces and places, and by doing this she stages her encounter with the site(s). Rendell draws upon psycho-analytics to formulate a set of writing scores. I see these expanded, situated notion of critical writing and the incorporated personal engagement with the site and his actors, as a method for *deep listening* to the tactile and tacit knowledge within an artefact of my own production, the installation HALL08.

⁶ Meierhans Christophe, *A call for artists to leap of the stage*, e-tcetera, 2020, <https://e-tcetera.be/a-call-to-artists-to-leap-off-the-stage/>

⁷ TAAT is founded in 2012 by Breg Horemans and Gert-Jan Stam

⁸ TAAT, *HALL08, Encounter Portal*, performative installation in collaboration with Siebren Nachtergaele, Pichaya Puapoomcharoen, Ariane Chapelet, Kevin Osenau, Marit Mihklepp, Breg Horemans and Gert-Jan Stam, 2021, Pelt, BE

⁹ Research Group page on the KU Leuven website: <https://architectuur.kuleuven.be/raad>

¹⁰ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 1994, Columbia University Press, New York City.

¹¹ Rendell Jane, *Site-writing, The Architecture of Art Criticism*, 2010, I.B. Tauris & Company Limited, London.

HALL08 marks a key moment in the HALL33¹² trajectory, as it is the first installation in a series of ‘encounter portals’ in which the performance of the (hu-)man-made installation explores modes of genuine co-creation with other-than-human entities. The blueprint for the installations HALL01-06 was produced in Dommelhof, Pelt, so the choice to develop HALL08 there, was a way to deal with the history of the first phase of the project HALL33. Although there is a lot to discover on types of repression towards other-than-human entities on site (mining area, imported tree species, bark beetle plague), I will focus here on a psycho-analytical form of repression within the politics of the frame of co-design and a consensus driven approach. This focus on the underlying *paradox of consensus* came after reading the outcomes of the reading sessions and the conversation that followed with Gert-Jan Stam on May 11th in Brussels.

While developing HALL08, the process laid bare a series of internal and external conflicts that could be seen as symptoms of repression towards ourselves as part of the design ecology. The paradox of consensus lies in the difference between the consensual mechanics working towards a ‘sublime end result’ and its contradictions towards a ‘genuine co-constitutive’ design frame.

To unpack this paradox we will explore a selection of *readingwriting* scores. These scores are inspired by Rendell’s scoring methodology but have been custom made for this specific trajectory (incorporating a research residency in May 2022 and teaching activities¹³ in March 2022) I see these scores as an inherent part of *our artistic work and my research trajectory* (Annex 1). The scores aim to unpack the separation of the ‘inner and the outer world’ as Rendell describes on the level of the artefact HALL08. Through both embodied experience and the *diffraction and meaning making through writing*, we will explore (1) a distant reading (from a paranoid perspective) and (2) a close reading (from a reparative perspective) of the artefact. I will go deeper on these two notions in 1.3. By means of moving between our inner and outer worlds (both mentally and physically) we will try to unravel the hidden repressions of the co-creation process, by laying bare the paradox of consensus within the making of HALL08. What pre-occupations do we design from? How do we come to terms with them and explore a reparative position towards future projects? How can these repressive forces be read and help us develop a reparative — or in other words *regenerative* — design attitude?

1.3. Paranoid and reparative readingwriting

During a residency at Workspace Brussels (2-13 May 2022) I invited Gert-Jan Stam, Pichaya Puapoomcharoen, Siebren Nachtergaele en Evelina Kvartunaite to two readingwriting sessions to deepen possible repressive mechanisms and what we described as the paradox of consensus within HALL08. We used the scores as shared in Annex 1. The first session was ‘on distance’ (so not on site) and happened between myself and Gert-Jan Stam. The second session happened within and alongside HALL08 in Pelt with all others mentioned above.

To frame the writing process better, we introduced the notion of a paranoid reading of the artefact inspired by Eve K. Sedgwick’s book *Touching Feeling*¹⁴ (chapter 4 *Paranoid reading and reparative reading*), in which she argues that any form of critical writing reveals the writer’s hidden motives or political agenda (of inspiring something to be, both in the positive or negative sense). She addresses the performativity of the knowledge making apparatus, by referring to Paul Ricoeur’s *hermeneutics of suspicion*¹⁵, and the ‘stultifying side effect of criticism: *they have made it less rather than more possible to unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and it’s narrative/epistemological entailments for the seeker, the knower, or teller*¹⁶. Sedgwick points out a ‘problematic distancing’ of critical writing, and implicitly argues for a more contingent, tactile and ‘site-true’ way of relating to a certain phenomenon. She says that paranoia reflects repression: not by just recognising the repressed phenomenon, but by exposing the mechanics and motives of that very repression through the power structure of the knowledge making machine itself¹⁷. She argues that both a paranoid reading (*‘it takes a thief to catch one’*) and reparative reading (restoring the contingent and local way of knowledge gathering) could give us a better understanding of how knowledge making can be performative and have a reparative effect.

¹² TAAT, HALL33, 2033. This is the backbone of the TAAT practice, a longterm project that started in 2013 and will be finished in 2033.

¹³ Workshopweek Lab-O, readingwriting sessions with students on 29th of March, 2022

¹⁴ Eve K. Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, 1993, Durham.

¹⁵ *Hermeneutics of suspicion* is a style of literary interpretation in which texts are read with skepticism in order to expose their purported repressed or hidden meanings. The term was conceptualised by Paul Ricoeur. The school was coined in his book *Freud and Philosophy* (1965).

¹⁶ Eve K. Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, 1993, Duke University Press, Durham, p124.

¹⁷ For example she states that paranoia was linked to the discourse and research on homosexuality, while the lack of deep inquiry on the motivation of a series of ‘reality-bending-researchers’ was not questioned.

The question on 'regeneration of the design attitude' I formulated at the end of previous chapter offered a window for final reflection on the writings. In the descriptions below I followed the sequence of (1) situating the readingwriting session, (2) defining the motoric moments in each session and (3) drawing conclusions on the reparative effect of the session.

Session 1 (BH, GJS, see ANNEX 2 for unedited text)

We are at Workspace Brussels, around 110km away from HALL08 in Pelt, Belgium. Previously we did a design exercise on site in Anderlecht (on an abandoned and overgrown piece of land with a swamp; I won't go deeper into this now, but it had a profound impact on the writing session and the reflection on HALL08 in retrospect)

The session starts with a reading of the scores (Annex 1). The starting point is the paranoid score. We chose to do this score first, as we are not 'on site' so the distant perspective is already present. We have our archive at our disposal, both the collected documentation on the Live Archive and our embodied archive (memories, experiences). We do the writing 'live' in the Live Archive on two parallel pads (see picture p5), meaning we are writing next to each other on a separate page with the mutual possibility of reading each others writings. We start with 10 minutes of writing. Then we read out loud our piece of text. Afterwards we write 10 minutes again, and so on. We agree not to talk in between readingwriting sessions. After every round round of writing, we notice that bits and pieces of the other ones text are picked up by either one of us. A cruciferous ('kruisbestuivend' in Dutch) process is taking place in which the commonalities of topics and associations grow and differ, like a choreography in the space of writing.

Some days later I read the two parallel pads again (Annex 2), highlighting 'paranoid' and 'reparative' tendencies, their affects and their effect on each other. The two separate texts were highly authored, but extremely entangled. They spoke about the same time-space frame, but from a different angle, tone of voice and intention. We re-visited the situation, explored our flaws and doubts, and could react on each other's generous outpourings ('ontboezemingen' in Dutch) through either softening or criticising one another. The 'distant' paranoid writing position deviated from the 'close' reparative position sequentially, as if we were both finding multiple equilibria: between leading and following the common voice of the text that was generated (in the here-and now on the level of the contingent writing process) and on the spectrum between critique and care towards our respective positions as co-authors of HALL08. An important aspect was an exchange on the paradox of a consensus driven approach. While going back to a conflicting situation between the two sub-teams, we recognised the repressive politics of the framework we created to work together on HALL08. By going through personal readings of the situation we didn't only soften the edges of the conflict, we also managed to settle the tension of the past, to move on and to analyse the repressive force into a reparative or more regenerative working method (this is very concretely a working score we developed in the site in Anderlecht that I referred to earlier). The distant and 'paranoid' reading allowed us to zoom in on our embodied knowledge without being physically present, although we both felt that our bodies as archives of that situation performed a very strong 'midwife' position.

Session 2 (BH, GJS, EK, SN, PP, see ANNEX 3 for edited text)

We are together in Pelt, Belgium after a long drive from Brussels. The weather is sunny and warm, the forest seems in good shape. We walk to HALL08 and read the instruction (see page 4) together. Then the silent experience starts. Everybody seems engaged. There seems little connection amongst the human participants. It seems like all of us are concentrated on their encounter with the installation and with other actors in the forest. After 3-4 rounds everybody seemed saturated and we naturally came together in the installation. We each took a different position (standing, lying, sitting) and at some point we felt it was 'done'.

In the readingwriting session afterwards, I noticed multiple reactions on our role as makers during the experience of HALL08. Gert-Jan had a lot of reflections analysing the structure, finding improvements and alternatives. Jaja seemed to undo herself in several steps from her 'role as a designer' towards the built space. And myself, I needed some time to 'embrace' the crookedness of HALL08, and how it was more and more supported by the entities in the forest. There was one small tree that seemed to carry the whole weight of the installation as it slightly tilted towards his bark. We also noticed how little the structure functioned as a base for other living creatures to grow on or co-constitute themselves with in other ways (apart from spiders that made their nest in the corners between two beams). It made us contemplate on artificial treatments of wood, having a repelling effect on other-than-human entities to find symbiosis, and we reflected on our responsibility in choice and treatment of the used materials for the installation.

Besides the environmentally engaged reflections, there was a sense of bodily responsiveness in time, space and movement that had a reparative effect on our group process. We started and ended the experience together naturally, in silence. What became apparent in the readingwriting was a common ground for 'undoing' projections of the design outcome. It was if we peeled of the harness of our different design canons or conventions, in order to reconnect with all other environmental engaged actors. If HALL08 is a materialised form of these conventions, that came into being through the paradox of a consensual design process. What is crucial here in reading from HALL08 into our future co-designing? How can we further regenerate ourselves as designers in co-existence with other-than-human entities and the material resources we claim to use?

As a final observation on the readingwriting mechanism, I noticed a similarity in the writing exercise to the spatial experience of HALL08, the boundary between the inside and the outside (inner en outer world) is diffuse. The two scores (Annex 1) don't let themselves box very easily, like the paranoid and the reparative reading request a kind of pendulum like rhythm of keeping each other in balance. In any case it seems like the fluidity between the one and the other seem to envelop an artificial separation and a dualistic way of addressing reality. Also, the physical inner and outer world of HALL08 is as much of a physical as a mental construction that separates two worlds that were never separated in the first place.

1.4. A reparative design future through readingwriting?

In the introduction, I used Rosi Braidotti's notion of the *nomadic subject* in regards to my position as a researcher. The situated way to shape this research paper was materialised in the physical presence with the artefact HALL08. Being *there* exposed the potential of HALL08's inherent spatial dramaturgy (the combination of built space and the performance score) as a research method and as a supportive frame for writing. We've experienced that moving through HALL08 repetitively, follows a similar 'pendulum like' movement in the readingwriting exercise, where paranoid and reparative forces seem to continuously seek for clash or a sense of equilibrium. Sharing this position as nomadic subjects with a group, was meaningful and reparative towards a regenerative collective design attitude.

Through our bodies as archives, we exposed several moments of repression within HALL08, that made an inherent 'old aesthetic logic' visible. It became apparent that the *paradox of consensus* within our collective design practice (aimed on aesthetically coherent outcomes) seemed to have reached its limits, opening up towards a different aesthetically framework (or frame-less-work). A design attitude that lets go of preset design goals and shapes *regenerative aesthetics* needs practicing trust in a fundamental not-knowing of the end result, but instead exploring a full awareness of sensing and resonating in a here-and-now presence of the site and its involved actors.

Readingwriting alongside the artefact worked as an affective meaning making tool (in line with some previous attempts to build in feedback methods in the experience of meaning making on an audience level), but adds a psycho-analytical layer. This layer offers handles for personal healing and growth through re-designing and undressing our 'designer harnesses'.

As Regenerative Spatial Dramaturgies is aimed to understand and contribute to co-constitutive modes of design practices, the future potential of this method lies in the embodied position that it brings to the debate and discourse on inclusivity between humans and more-than-human actors in design processes. The readingwriting method can offer performative ways of producing, performing and publishing discourse as a shared, situated and embodied practice that has the potential to repair relationships with artefacts, instead of distancing ourselves from its environmental effects and affects.

With this paper I hope to grow your enthusiasm on what I'm passionately working on since 10 years and my motives for the PhD trajectory I'm currently enrolled in. I'm aware of this paper as a work in process, and I see it as a first attempt to put — at least a small part — of my research methodology in words and actions. My aim is to share methods and ways of working with the research community of KU Leuven and through several teaching and mentoring activities I'm enrolled in. I sincerely hope that my work contributes to a more genuine co-constitutive landscape of artistic research-by-design within the RAAD research group and beyond.

1.5. Bibliography

- Barad Karen, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 2007, Durham, NC, USA: Duke University Press. Clarke, P. *et al.* (2018)
- Braidotti Rosi, *Nomadic Subjects*, 1994, Columbia University Press, New York City.
- Brook Peter, *The Empty Space*, 1968, Simon and Schuster, New York.
- Escobar Arturo, *Designs for the Pluriverse*, 2018, Duke University Press, Durham.
- Freiling Christopher, *Research in Arts and Design*, 1993, essay in Royal College of Art research papers, Royal College of Art, London.
- Groot Nibbelink Liesbeth. *Nomadic Theatre, Mobilising Theory and Practice on the European Stage*, 2019, Chapter 2, Encounter, Bloomsbury, London.
- Harman Graham, *Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything*, 2018, Pelican Books.
- Kester Grant, *Conversation Pieces*, 2013, University of California Press.
- Latour Bruno, *Reassembling the Social. An introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, 2015, Oxford University Press.
- Meierhans Christophe, *A call for artists to leap of the stage*, 2020, e-tcetera, <https://e-tcetera.be/a-call-to-artists-to-leap-off-the-stage/>
- Richie Stewart, *The big idea: should we get rid of the scientific paper?*, 2021, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/apr/11/the-big-idea-should-we-get-rid-of-the-scientific-paper>
- Rendell Jane (2006) *Art and Architecture, a Place in Between*, 2006, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd Turner, C. London.
- Sedwick Eve K., *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, 1993, Duke University Press, Durham.
- Turner Cathy, *Dramaturgy and Architecture, Theatre, Utopia and the Built Environment*, 2015, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wildman Wesley, *An introduction to Relational Ontology*, 2006, Boston University.

1.6. List of annexes*

- Annex 1: reading writing scores
 Annex 2: notes from readingwriting session 1
 Annex 3: edited text after notes from readingwriting session 2

*these texts are not part of the 2500 words

ANNEX 1**Writing score 1** (paranoid readingwriting)

- start auto-writing (hypersubjective, associative)
- write in the second person
- explore relationally through highlighting 'difference' instead of coherence or sameness
- use a critical distance and write from preoccupations
- internalise exterior critique on the work
(write if you were an art/research critic)
- never go to close, (a closeness that would reveal a genuine interest)
- treat the potential of your criticism as established; it's ok to be opinionated.

Writing score 2 (reparative readingwriting)

- start auto-writing (hypersubjective, associative)
- write in the second person
- explore relationally through highlighting coherence or sameness instead of 'difference'
- avoid a critical distance, describe what you feel, see hear, all associations you have need to be written down as complete and detailed as possible
- leave any exterior critique aside, treat it as the critic's blind spot that needs solving from his/her side
- be vulnerable; your 'critique' is a personal record of a situation that you hardly want to share with others.

ANNEX 2

PARALLEL SPACES. → *BREG*

Pad: HALL08 site writing

You are in the Neerpeit forest, under a sea of leaves, together with a group of international designers, that are speaking about the design process of HALL08 (in English). None of you is speaking your mother tongue. There is a tension in the air. You feel responsible for the people present, because you invited them to collaborate together on HALL08, and you think it's important for the process that all voices present are heard. At the same time there is a 'dooming copyright logic' that haunts the process. Whatever anybody with good collaborative co-creational intentions, says the project is and will always be a 'TAAT-project'. You sigh. You feel tired and you struggle with the idea that the authorship on HALL08's asks you for a constant state of negotiation of its inherent copyrighted politics. You are aware of your own flaws of 'taking the lead', your blind spot as the 'lead architect' of the piece of work you are creating together. You try to be open for other voices to 'participate' in the process, but the pre-conditions of 'how we are co-creating' are harsh. It seems like you are stuck in the politics of the process you have initiated.

You role as 'the architect' is to lead 'the others into action' (Perez-Gomez), right? But how are we collectively leading or following? Based on what kind of motives? What motivates our actions? What motivates your actions to lead others into their actions? How do these actions lead into HALL08? And where are the missed opportunities to step into a fully intuitive and embodied way of decision making?

You struggle with 'guarding' the aesthetics of what HALL08 is becoming to be: it feels like its wooden frameworks catapult you back to an old logic of the HALL33 process (HALL01-06) in which you framed a process of consensus that was leading towards a collectively obtained sublime end-result.

You go back to a vague memory. Maybe it was a dream you had, or even someone else's. You were standing in the Neerpeit forest, inside the unfinished structure of HALL08. There was a moment of tension rising, up to the point you suddenly shouted out 'I am also spiritual!'. This slightly iconic sentence surprised everybody around you. It indeed seemed very far away from what the 'real you' would express, but then you did so it's important to listen to it. It almost felt like some forest spirit was ventriloquizing your inner voice, the voice that has been silenced for a long time, maybe even since architecture school. You feel a weird sense of relief, but at the same time there is some awkwardness within the group. People seem to have lost a sense of their own purpose in the process. We seem to have lost the awareness of our collective spirituality within this process. How can we be drawn more intensively towards the forest spirits that surround us, to reach for help?

You allow yourself to make another leap of the stage. This time of the stage of this writing process. You go back to another forest memory, connected to the process of making HALL07 in Akniste, Latvia. A writing session during your a pass year in which the auto-writing process made you re-discover your own spiritual presence in your work. The moment you were touching a block of peat. Its natural fibers softly caressing your finger tips, without getting you dirty. A soft encounter between a multitude of plant residues - which must've been at least 30 years old - and the sensory texture of your skin, the cellstructure of your hand, the portal to your emerging process of re-rooting.

You start writing a script that learns you how to think and act through trapisms. You

*THE READING MOMENTS
www.taai-projects.com
MAKE US
CONNECT.*

3 *4*

edit: 22.05.05

paranoid / reparative ← *Gf.*

Pad: HALL08 site writing

Reflection on HALL08 (2020)
The situation is that the construction is almost finished. We are debating some design decision.
You are annoyed by Breg, who seems to have a clear conceptual idea of a design. Maybe one that looks good or is...no, wait, suddenly you remember... You consider this design concept rigid in a need for conceptual/aesthetic clarity and community: each design decision in the whole should reflect the conceptual idea of the whole. You find it rigid in that respect. You find yourself in need for a design that is representing or allowing multiple aesthetic views/possibilities. Somehow the conversation is confused by ideas about organic and even spiritual. Breg has to remind you that he is also open to organic ideas. For a reason, the way you remember it he almost cries out: I am also spiritual!

What ever he said exactly, by saying that, by shouting that out, he laid bare the role you had projected on him and the role you had projected on yourself. You had become the characters in an unintended play and the others became the unintended audience: Iona, Jaja, Marit, Arienne and Kevin. The leadership was in an internal conflict.

How did we get to that point. You wonder now. We had one week to develop and build a completely new kind of installation. We wanted to give the wood, that we used for HALL01-06, back to the place where it originated from. Back to the woods in Neerpeit (BE). We invited Jaja (with whom we collaborated on HALL05+07), Arienne (HALL07) and Kevin (HALL04) as well as Marit, who was a participant in HALL10. We invited them to work with us on HALL08. The first days each one of them lead an explorative session, giving their direct input to the process.

From there we started working in two groups, two teams. Two teams who developed their own approach. Two apparently opposing approaches. The more each group invested in its approach the more opposed the two groups appeared to be. We checked in with each other regularly, to see how and what the other group was doing. This merely pointed out the differences in approach and increasingly created a atmosphere in which the focus shifted to the problem (impossibility) of bringing the two teams (now we're teams) together.

You remember you felt vulnerable in your desire to allow your intuition in the process. You projected dominant rationality on Breg and superior intuitiveness on yourself. You felt vulnerable; one, because this was a completely new approach you were (both!) looking for and two: you had an increasing awareness of the 'weapons' connected with these two approaches. Meaning, a rational approach, based on a clear conceptual decision, allows for a clear rational explanation and argumentation. You make a rule and based on that rule you can explain why it makes complete sense to do either A or B. For example, we decided to make the project about the colour red (we didn't, just to make this clear), it is easy to argue that one specific detail should be red or at least logically relate to red (either confirming or challenging it). It means you have words with a logical order, you have clear thoughts and sentences that validate your decision and/or opinion.

At the very least at the time, you felt you had no 'weapon' following your intuition. 'I don't know it just feels right', is no argumentation that will hold up in any conversation. Feeling insecure and vulnerable about following your intuition already, as you also like to follow a clear conceptual order, your vulnerability got dangerously worse once you realised that you completely lacked the capacity to argue/validate your decisions. Even worse so, under the direct threat of clear, rational argumentation from the other

edit: 22.05.05

7/14

www.taai-projects.com

Pad: HALL08 site writing

wonder how your experience of being in/with HALL08 could shape your position of writing. You are conscious and feel your responsibility and ask yourself the question 'what does the reader of this piece of text need to connect better with her environment?' You ask yourself how you can use your own experience to connect better with your environment. You go back to your embodied experience of the HALL08 site.

A memory of a conversation with the 'gardener' of the dommelhof greets and forest pops up into your mind. His name is Patrick. He comes across as a very knowledgeable and practical person. In his words there seems to be a big lack of love for his working environment. He is saying repeatedly that maintaining the grounds is a lot of work. He refers to the bark beetle plague that is taking over a big part of the forest, meaning a lot of trees have to be cut. (meaning even more work). You are intrigued by how he talks about the area. He seems to over-perform his ownership of the site, making sure that all decisions regarding changes and interventions on it, have to go through him. Serious dedication.

You are negotiating the writing dramaturgy of this text with your co-writer. You propose to work around the notion of a 'site of repression' (Rendell) that is separating our conscious and unconscious actions and doings. You pause the thought for a while, as it seems to complicated as a thread.

The moment asks for a lighter approach. You can see Gert-Jan writing on the parallel pad, just next to me. He is referring to a moment in which the two of you took a selfie on Brussels Midi station. You also posted it on the common HALL08-whatsapp group. That same evening you sit together in a circle on an open spot in the forest. A soft and dry layer of grass under your butt welcomes you.

You feel like you need a more serious topic to write on. You ask yourself why. Are you afraid that the reader will only be satisfied by reading the dirty psychoanalytical details of your 'regenerative design struggles'? Or do you think a mere 'writerly' description of the site is not enough to make this text worthy as a piece of critical writing?

On the pad next to your pad, Gert-Jan is writing about a conflict during the design process. He's not specifying which exact moment he is talking about. You wonder how this undefined moment - just as other moments of conflict - might be a symptom of 'repression' within the making process. Maybe a symptom of an invisible architecture that disconnects our inner world from our outer life? You wonder how HALL08's tangible architecture could be read as this separating device.

You remember one specific conflictuous situation very clearly in a team discussion you were deciding on a 'coherent aesthetic detail' for a window seal. While you write this, the detail seems a banal echo of an architectural thinking that you are already far beyond. But it was a very serious moment. You were struggling with your designer aesthetics, as the group proposed to make a bench (like an extended window seal) on that specific window. You were worried about it's aesthetics. You were worried that

01:22:05:05 www.hall-projects.com

4/14

Pad: HALL08 site writing

team, the other group, from Breg. One morning you woke up at around 04:00 AM. The forest called you. It really literally felt like that. The forest called, invited you to come to her. It was dark outside. You are very uncomfortable going outside, going outside in a strange environment, going out in a strange environment in the dark, going into a dark forest. The stuff of dreams and nightmares. But you also felt a weird assurance. To recognise the voice of the forest so clearly assured you. You got up, got dressed and went into the forest, in the dark. Strangely enough, in the given situation, the entrance to the forest is a small set of three steps going up. As if, you realise now, the whole forest is a stage.

**You looked around. Yes, you are doing this. Even the highway closeby, is quiet. The forest is looking as threatening as it looks comforting. You walk in. Darkness. Sounds. Recognisable sounds. Unrecognisable sounds. Things do not move in an eerie way. Branches frozen in darkness. Trees cut out of black. The clouds passing by in the background. The moon like a spotlight, selectively keeping things in the dark. You walk on. Sand under your feet, under the soles of your shoes. Where are you going now? Maybe to the right. You walk into a more open space. A field of cut down trees. Only the stumps remaining. You have no direction here. What does the forest tell you to do? You experience the forest differently. The forest presents itself differently. As if it is sharing secrets with you. Secrets it cannot show in daylight. It is as if you see the forest as it really is. Dark, mysterious but intentional. A library of long lived truths. Of millions of experiences, of mistakes and setbacks, of burns and cuts, of saws and iron bullets during the wars, millions of stories, millions of lessons learned the hard way, all materialised into branches and leaves and bark.

You step on the stump of a cut down tree. Your face reaches the moonlight. You stand as a tree. As if this is your way of being part of the forest. A human tree sensing, imagining a tree that once was, feeling the flow of energy going from the leaves to the roots and from the roots to the leaves.

The forest is not trying to tell you something. Just allowing you to get a little bit closer. What have you done today, human? Carrying beams around, bending our branches, touching our leaves?

You walk on. You walk back. Suddenly, you were like dreaming soaking up the forest, a black entity of human size approaches you. Flash of fear. Nerv system on full alert. Eyes zooming in. A guy running. Mumbling a obligatory 'good morning' as he passes you by. Clearly, this adventure has come to an end.

When did HALL08 start? When does a process start? It was developed as an idea. The idea triggered a productional process. Dates were negotiated and decided on. You got on a train to Brussels. You slept at Breg's place for one night. The two of you went to Brussels Midi station the next day. You posted a selfie in our whatsapp-group. The two of you with masks. We met Arianne. We got on a train to Genk, where Ilona picked us up. Elfie and Marit met in Eindhoven where Kevin picked them up with his car. You came together in Dommelhof.

The wood that you had used for HALL01-06 was stored at the parking lot, covered by tarp. You started carrying beams into the forest. You explored different sites. You did different exercises. You started making things. And so you got to the situation of the two groups.

The conflict between the two groups got worse. It turned into a conflict between you

01:22:05:05 www.hall-projects.com

8/14

becomes very reflective

3

4

Pad: HALL08 site writing

wonder how your experience of being in/with HALL08 could shape your position of writing. You are conscious and feel your responsibility and ask yourself the question 'what does the reader of this piece of text need to connect better with her environment?' You ask yourself how you can use your own experience to connect better with your environment. You go back to your embodied experience of the HALL08 site.

A memory of a conversation with the 'gardener' of the dommelhof greys and forest pops up into your mind. His name is Patrick. He comes across as a very knowledgeable and practical person. In his words there seems to be a big lack of love for his working environment. He is saying repeatedly that maintaining the grounds is a lot of work. He refers to the bark beetle plague that is taking over a big part of the forest, meaning a lot of trees have to be cut. (meaning even more work). You are intrigued by how he talks about the area. He seems to over-perform his ownership of the site, making sure that all decisions regarding changes and interventions on it, have to go through him. Serious dedication.

You are negotiating the writing dramaturgy of this text with your co-writer. You propose to work around the notion of a 'site of repression' (Rendell) that is separating our conscious and unconscious actions and doings. You pause the thought for a while, as it seems to complicated as a thread.

The moment asks for a lighter approach. You can see Gert-Jan writing on the parallel pad, just next to me. He is referring to a moment in which the two of you took a selfie on Brussels Midi station. You also posted it on the common HALL08-whatsapp group. That same evening you sit together in a circle on an open spot in the forest. A soft and dry layer of grass under your butt welcomes you.

You feel like you need a more serious topic to write on. You ask yourself why. Are you afraid that the reader will only be satisfied by reading the dirty psychoanalytical details of your 'regenerative design struggles'? Or do you think a mere 'writerly' description of the site is not enough to make this text worthy as a piece of critical writing?

On the pad next to your pad, Gert-Jan is writing about a conflict during the design process. He's not specifying which exact moment he is talking about. You wonder how this undefined moment - just as other moments of conflict - might be a symptom of 'repression' within the making process. Maybe a symptom of a invisible architecture that disconnects our inner world from our outer life? You wonder how HALL08's tangible architecture could be read as this separating device.

You remember one specific conflictuous situation very clearly. In a team discussion you were deciding on a 'coherent aesthetic detail' for a window seal. While you write this, the detail seems a banal echo of an architectural thinking that you are already far beyond. But it was a very serious moment. You were struggling with your designer aesthetics, as the group proposed to make a bench (like an extended window seal) on that specific window. You were worried about it's aesthetics. You were worried that

edit: 22.05.05
www.hall-projects.com
4/14

Pad: HALL08 site writing

and Breg. Maybe representing the groups. Maybe representing something else. The situation was initially saved because it turned out that we were expected to build something on a very specific location. After processing this shock, it ignited a huge collaborative energy and we could quickly make decisions together and build an installation that we all felt represented the process.

But the conflict between let's say the rational versus the intuitive stayed.

When you think about it now, you think about the issue of consensus. The issue of rational versus intuitive is only problematic on the level of consensus. If both are allowed in the process, neither needs to explain or justify itself. To allow both in a process we need to let go of a single dominant aesthetics, we need to let go of a unified product or image. If the building, the image or the product is allowed such a plurality, it opens the process up to maximising individual input.

Is it true that the intuitive and the rational can not talk to each other? Again, the issue may not be in the rational versus intuitive per se. AS neither is hardly ever completely exclusive. Maybe the question should be to what extend can you allow yourself to be intuitive? And to what extend do you need to be rational? Again the real issue here is to what extend to you want to be right? To what extend do you want your aesthetic idea to dominate others?

Another big issue here is the trap of suggesting hierarchy between the two: intuitive is better rational or rational is better than intuitive. What is a more constructive way of looking at this? An easy argument is that rational challenges should be dealt with rationally. Let's say technical things.

So what is the 'field' of the intuitive? Are not intuitive and rational both cultural power constructions? Aimed at finding a dominant aesthetics?

edit: 22.05.05
www.hall-projects.com
5/14

ANNEX 3

GJ

A small flight of stairs leads you into the forest. You remember places and things happening from when you were working here in the fall of 2020. All the wood and tools you had to carry into the forest.

You translate the instructions for HALL08 for Evelina and Jaja.

You notice things in the text.

You walk away from the installation. You want to reconnect with the sweet chestnut tree. You hug the sweet chestnut tree for a long, intimate time. Your eyes closed. When you open your eyes a boy is standing about 50 metres away from you, looking at you straight.

You are tracing old traces from the time you were working on HALL08. Up a little hill where you sat after doing Kevin's exercise. The spot where we did Jaja's exercise.

When you enter HALL08 you find Breg and Siebren already inside. You sit down in one of the 'windows'. The whole installation got crooked. Appearing to go in the direction of falling over. A small tree seems to be in the way of that process. The other trees are not involved yet. Their branches need to get stronger.

J

You are entering the forest. Trees, waving trees.

On a long distance, you see a glimpse of the wooden structure HALL08.

You take some time to walk around the installation, to see it from about five to ten meters distance. Some parts of the installation stand out completely from the context, others blend in. It looks a bit awkward, but not in a bad way. You choose to walk on the chipwood tracks, as they are designed to give access to the site.

On about three meters from the installation you encounter another human being.

You are still quite far away from the other but you keep continuing your personal journey.

(...)

E

You walk along the signs of human interaction with the forest. There are cigarette buds lying around. You imagine yourself as a floating organism, as part of nature, trying to move itself around the human interventions.

B

You enter the forest by some concrete steps. Your footsteps are soothed by the soft forest soil, making you enter a mode of relating to this semi-natural environment. Your feet react with a slower pace on the sponginess of the soil. After reading the score together you take distance from the other human participants in this exercise. You enjoy being in the forest. You contemplate.

You feel a need to expand on the rich experience you just had in HALL08. You try to focus on what happened. You are doubting to pick out one specific moment you want to share with the others in this writing practice. Ok you jump in. You are lying down in the heart of HALL08. It took you a while to come to this position. A series of mental thresholds slows down your embodied experience of the last 30 minutes. You were annoyed by the crookedness of the installation at first. Really annoyed. So annoyed that you almost slipped into a negative spiral of over-architecting the genuine moment of togetherness. You remember you felt ready to slide into another way

of being in HALL08. At some point an inner voice said: hmm.. I think this might be my first actual encounter with HALL08.

(...)

GJ

You re-enter HALL08. Breg is lying on the ground, face up. Siebren is sitting on the ground with his back against the installation. Jaja seems to be photographing something, a bit hidden next to the hall-shaped entrance.

You reconsider the space and imagine a 'grown' version. You contemplate the idea of care, what it would add if you would feel and/or understand that someone is taking care of the place. Maybe the ground inside the installation should be swept.

J

You are one footstep away from entering HALL08. You are aware of your role as one of the designers and you enter 'the main entrance', as you don't want to break the design rule you created yourself.

While entering the installation you see Breg the other side of the circular space. He is entering through a small gap. Your eyes recognise all the design decisions you made there, together. You are pretty shocked... noticing that not even one single plant or animal has engaged in some sense of collaboration with the wooden framework. You notice that a lot of things happened through, all trees grew bigger, but not one single branch wove itself together with the beams. You wonder if you were too ambitious, thinking you were capable of knowing what you were actually doing. You encounter a moment of truth and acceptance, facing the bare reality.

You take off your designer role.

You say to yourself: OK, what are you bringing me at tis very moment HALL08?

J

You remember a moment of letting go of any sense making, and to just be there, present in the moment. You remember sitting down, almost like an empty vessel, absorbing any possible task a human or an other-than-human could perform.

GJ

You weave some branches through the installation.

Spiders made little triangle-shaped webs between two beams.

An insect is hovering motionless in the air, like a drone.

You touch the bolts and as you expected, they are not tight. You try to understand how the installation has gotten this crooked. In two directions! Was is it because of the bolts loosening? Because of the wind? People?

You imagine a construction that is more complex, like a weird vertical garden, with many layers and different plants. You imagine planting plants in HALL08 to take over the installation. Which plant? Roses?

Everybody is there now: Evelina, Jaja, Breg and Siebren. You feel like you can all just be there. In HALL08. In the moment. In what we speak of as nature.

You are constantly aware of the sounds the birds are making. What are they communicating?