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## Alone-Together: Shelves as Intergenerational Maps of Sense-Laden, Relational, Multimodal Pedagogies

Mark Shillitoe, International School Delft, Netherlands  
Harriet Hand, University of Bristol, United Kingdom  
Jennifer Rowsell, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

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Keywords: mapping; multimodality; multisensory; shelves; relational; pedagogy

A soundscape to accompany this essay is available here: [soundcloud.com/markshillitoe/alone-together-soundscape](https://soundcloud.com/markshillitoe/alone-together-soundscape)

Score things within.  
Listen.  
Record something.  
Download the recording.  
Transcribe it.  
Feel the language generating new meaning.  
What the software decides.  
Scan it, read it.  
Download.  
Link to a web page.  
Drop the file.

### Shelf 1 We start in the middle

[Background image] Mark's sound map [clockwise from below left] collage of grabs from SoundCloud music and audio platform / layered images of Jennifer's analogue and digital home / Where we were map, Delft

## Alone-Together: Shelves as intergenerational maps of sense-laden, relational, multimodal pedagogies

Mark Shillitoe<sup>1</sup>, Harriet Hand and Jennifer Rowsell<sup>2</sup>

### Instructions for reader

Take a visual walk  
Walk through the words  
Look for vanishing points  
Mash things up

Engaging with the concept of *sensory shelves*, this essay exhibits how children and adults **move across and between** sounds, images and objects to make meaning and to tell stories. We glance beyond boundaries and imagine the notion of the shelf as an ongoing mapping of self where layers of experience enmesh and superimpose, and where our **sense** of self unfolds in the in-between, liminal spaces. These twelve shelves multimodally depict the porosity and fissures that opened up as we moved fluidly between online-offline spaces alone-together. Putting into practice an **experimental** and speculative approach to our research (Truman et al, 2020; Springgay and Truman, 2018), we argue for these methods as pedagogies that engage with the dynamic complexity of spaces of self.

The point of departure for this research project is the second lockdown of the Covid-19 pandemic for a multi-generational group of co-researchers: Jennifer and Harriet in Bristol with two undergraduate students; Mark in Delft with a class of year 6 students. We were inside but not quite. Outside but not completely. **Alone-together.**

### Being vulnerable to walking

We began with a walk in our different locations as a catalyst for our research-creation (Truman et al, 2020), where process-oriented, arts-informed engagements intermeshed theoretical concepts with research practices. Listening to the walk to activate thought (Springgay and Truman, 2018), we shared what stories were embedded and considered the histories laden into words to open new narratives and engage with soundscapes from the past, intermingled with **apprehensions of the here and now**, ground-up and in-the-moment (Manning, 2015).

Our research emerged as speculative (Springgay and Truman, 2018) multimodal encounters that made use of mapping as a generative mode of thinking (Dodge et al., 2009, Corner, 1999), where we became "entangled in a field of relations" (Powell, 2016, p. 9). Following Deleuze and Guatarri (1988), this rhizomatic understanding of thought and experience helped us put mapping to work practically and figuratively as **open-ended and infinitely modifiable**, constantly in process and continually productive. By marking sound, mapping spaces and **catching** the wonder of things (MacLure, 2013) between speculative futures and past horizons, these mappings became the mode by which sensory shelves of self were brought into being.

Multiply, superimpose, overlay, mix, dissolve, fuse

Through layering these mappings, an ecology of vocabulary animated the interspaces of online and offline, physical and digital, more-than-human and human. We made use of layering as an operation that *thickens the surface*: "the resulting structure is a complex fabric, without centre, hierarchy or single organizing principle" (Corner, 1999, p. 235).

# unpick

n = north  
canal = blue  
railway = brown  
ack = roads  
ch = golden



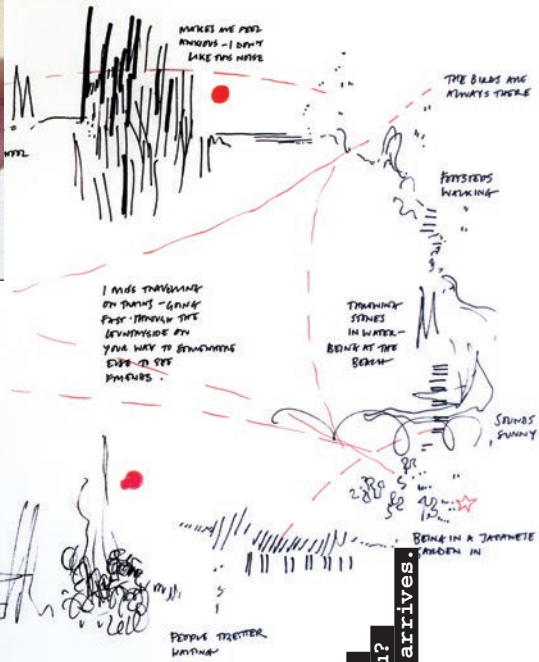
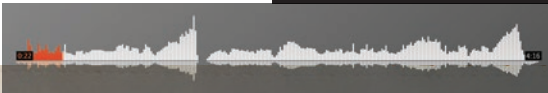
1. Mark Shillitoe: International School Delft, Netherlands [markshillitoe@gmail.com](mailto:markshillitoe@gmail.com)  
2. Harriet Hand & Jennifer Rowsell: University of Bristol, UK  
[harriet.hand@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:harriet.hand@bristol.ac.uk)  
[jennifer.rowsell@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:jennifer.rowsell@bristol.ac.uk)



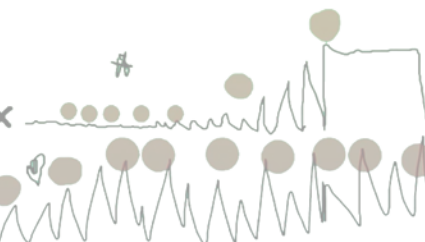
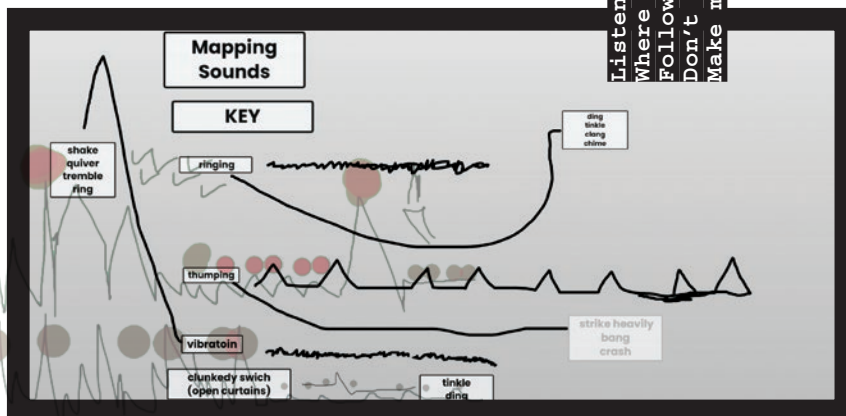
### Shelf 3

#### The frayed stuff of sound

[From top] The class in Delft mapping / SoundCloud graph / sharing the coming-home trees / soundscape map / sounds map key / soundscape map



Listen. Listen. Listen again.  
Where does the sound take you?  
Follow the sound to where it arrives.  
Don't hesitate.  
Make marks.

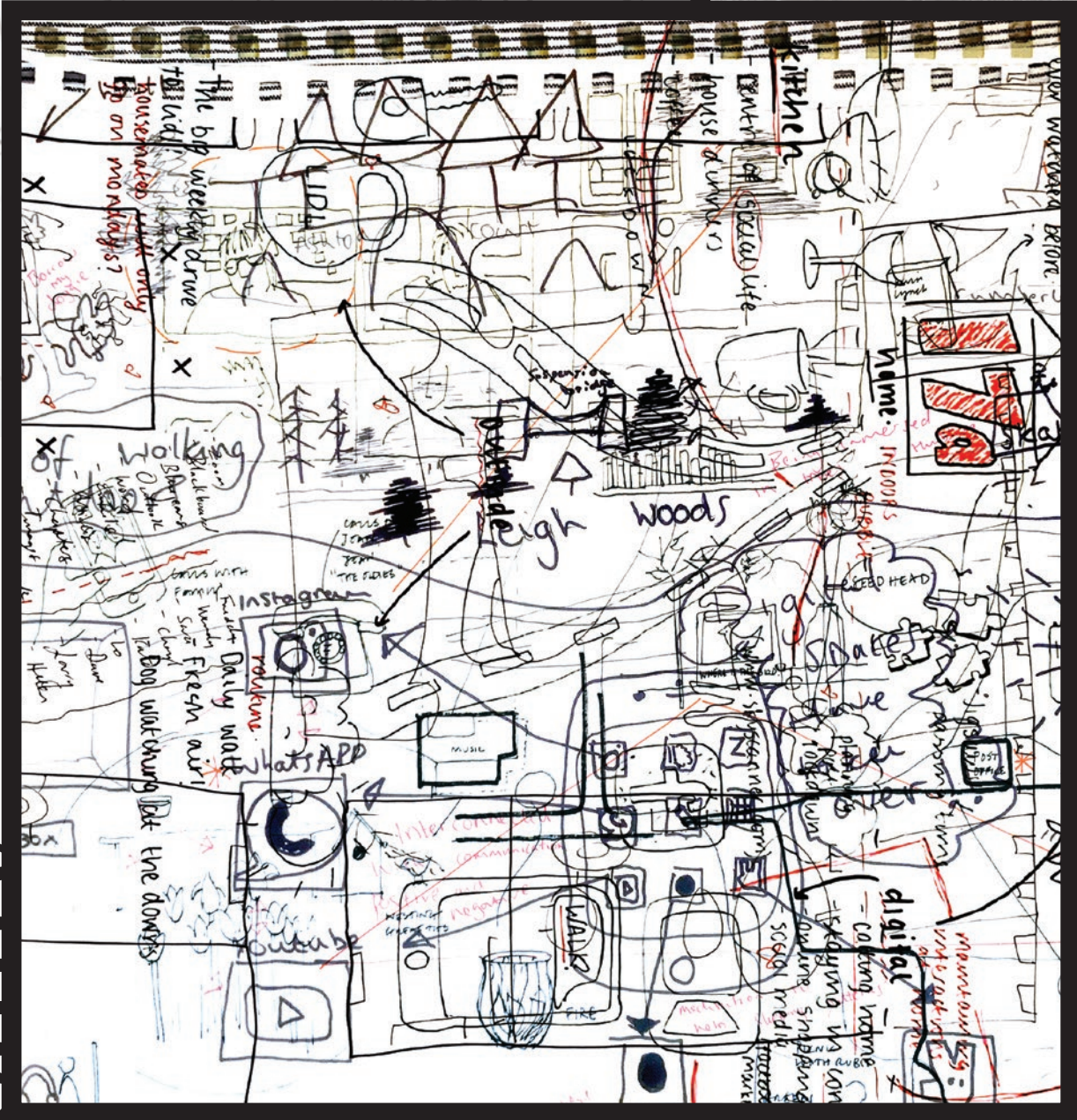
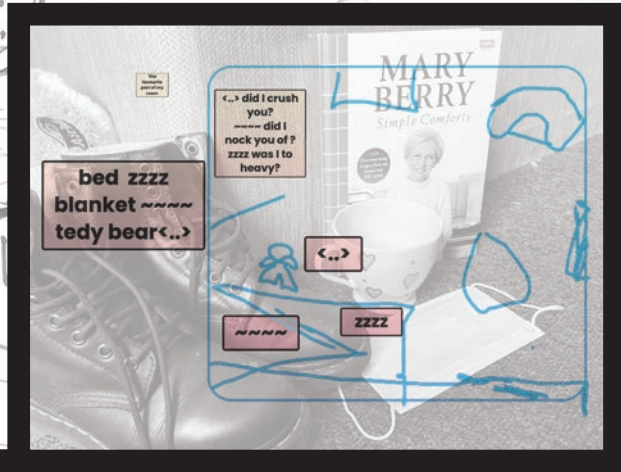
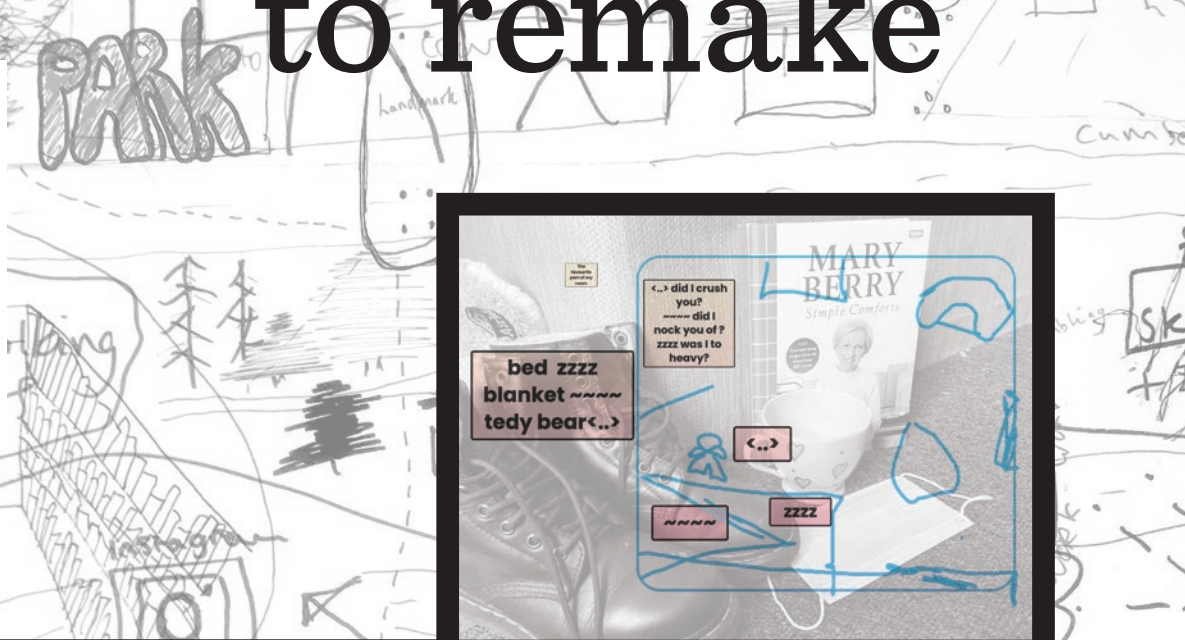


# to remake

Shelf 4

You are part of the story in the map

[Background] Layered pre-pandemic spaces and lockdown spaces maps / layered favourite part of the room map with objects from lockdown / four layered lockdown spaces maps / photograph of object from lockdown



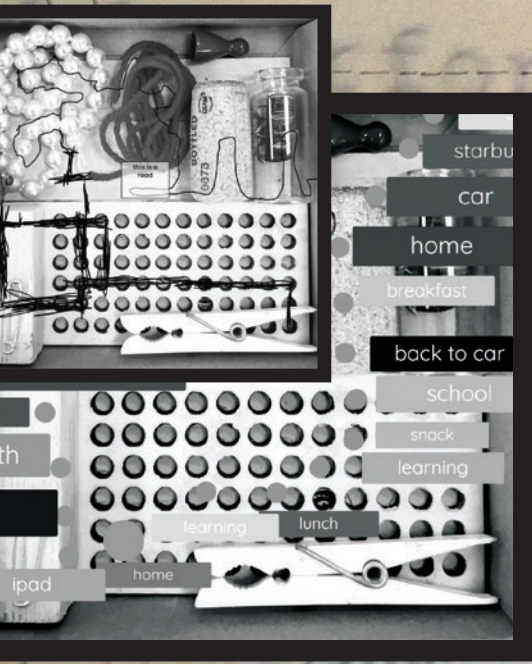
TO SHIT  
ON

you are part of the story in the map



# to animate

# to perform



### The Performance

1. Place your two slices of bread side by side on the preparation board.
2. Take you knife and spread both slices evenly with butter or margarine { }
3. Choose your spread and apply equal amounts to both slices { }
4. Take your scissors and cut one slice in half diagonally, placing both slices on your plate <
5. Cut second slice in half vertically with your scissors, placing both slices on your plate <
6. Now take your glass of juice or milk and place it at the right hand corner of your plate. \*

When we have finished remember to tidy and wash everything up including the jam-damaged scissors.>

you feel calm as you walk around wondering what wonders await in the fog in front of you

# to disrupt

# to limit

**Shelf 5**  
**Making and eating alone-together**

[Background top] projection of redacted text / [background bottom] image of plate from brunch performance / [top left] two magical story boxes

# to stumble

Lefebvre Rhythmanalysis #78

Rhythm must be self-exploring complex rhythms.

Rhythm moving on its trajectory.

Strong and weak, long and short, recurring stops, silences, blanks, resumptions and interval in movement.

Time can be repetitions, ruptures and resumptions internal and external.

In a reciprocal action, superimposed on everything that

complex (dialectical) relations on everything that

Exploring close vibrations with these combinations (pitch, frequency, vibration, and tones).

Rhythmanalysis: An Introduction (viii) the game, consequently speculative

the same title as of the day itself, inevitable technology

A turn to Nietzsche said this waiting upon time

Notion of rhythm as a series of lines of knowledge. representations, phases, recurrences

Rhythm wedded to time relation fall into spatial places

Towns, cities, countryside worked into the

Moving through social meanings, gestures, and there, tinged with

Rhythms of our bodies and society.

Things, dress, age, artifice, objects, media, and politics

have rhythm what it is

Such rhythm provide privilege what it seeks to evoke

Capitalised bodies as a push and pull.

The rhythms of push and pull responses.

Switched to Daft Punk, Alive 2007 on typing out) and particular rhythms of life within time.

Functions of the abstract in order to arrive at the concrete

**SYMPHONIE VOKASIENSE**  
**RESELFING**  
**POMBTIONS**

ender  
lix  
eld  
erge  
ay  
interact  
yer  
ake  
ink  
ecome  
apture  
rive  
merge  
intersect  
stract

to nav  
to retu  
to rela  
to situ  
to brin  
togeth  
to kno  
to stit  
to unp  
to nar  
to dis  
to lan  
to fuse  
to reso  
to tang  
to pro  
to stur  
to ove  
to osci

Redacted text piece.  
Choose a page from this text.  
Print it out.  
Light a candle.  
Put on Tangerine Dream (optional).  
Tell everyone not to disturb you.  
Breathe.  
Use a black pen.  
Cross out words and lines.  
Write the words that are left as they want to be written.  
Blow out candle.



**Shelf 6**  
**A glossary of terms**

[Clockwise from top left] three redacted texts from Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) / three constructed words / photograph from redacted text performance / redacted text on acetate jammed in photocopier / detail from redacted text sheet

chaotic, rhythm. attentive  
the sources, listen to sounds  
listen to bodies  
practices tune in, shaping quest  
playfully resist representation.

A conversation between pre-lockdown and lockdown self.

—pre-pandemic  
—during lockdown

I have to be outside. I have to see my friends.  
My skateboard is a tool I use to express myself and interact with other people.  
Deciphering actions on social to see if they are ok or not. I have people asking me if I'm ok.  
At the skateboard park we talk around the act of skateboarding.  
Outdoor life ceased to exist. Digital spaces have taken over. Digital spaces have taken over  
Looking inwards can be difficult.  
Everyone interacts with the skatepark in their own way.  
Focus on something other than myself.

Communication. Expression within the locations of the city.  
Multiplayer game: squad, survive battle, stay alive. A way of talking to friends.  
Expression through talking to other individuals who are interested in the same thing.  
You meet characters at the skatepark that you wouldn't normally meet.  
On social media, it's up to you to make the effort. You don't stumble into someone.

We all skateboard, it's a prominent point of discussion at work.  
Companionship.  
Effective and precise communication. Concise.

Graffiti and art expresses a lot of meaning.  
Digital spaces are middle ground.

Not something I enjoy.  
M32, M5, M4, M32...  
Scrolling, scrolling, scrolling...  
I'm not connected to it.  
What do I do nowadays?  
Am I enjoying what I'm doing?

time.

Reading and writing I'm not that comfortable with.  
I don't feel fulfilled.  
I'm not used to studying in libraries. Get funny looks when I'm taking my skateboard in.  
Having my skateboard there as a prompt of who I am is helpful.

The collage features 50 numbered sound snippets in various colored boxes, such as '1. Me pulling my jacket on', '2. Bubble wrap', '3. Birds chirping', '4. Pencil sharpening', '5. Paper bags and plastic bags', '6. Crunching under me', '7. My dad singing', '8. My favorite songs', '9. Me eating lunch', '10. Me ripping up my pencil case', '11. Stepping on snow', '12. Me talking with my brother', '13. Me talking with my brother', '14. Me talking with my brother', '15. Me talking with my brother', '16. Rain on the window', '17. Cars on the highway', '18. My neighbours dog barking', '19. My other neighbours toddler screaming and crying', '20. Clock ticking', '21. Me typing on my keyboard on my tablet (I have a case with a picture of my brother)', '22. The unbearable noise of people (mostly boys) in my class shouting', '23. Me making weird sounds with my mouth because I'm bored', '24. The noise of the dishwasher', '25. The noise of the washing machine', '26. My dad in a call', '27. My dad in a call', '28. My dad in a call', '29. My dad in a call', '30. Me humming', '31. My favorite show on Netflix or Disney +', '32. My doorbell ringing', '33. Book pages rustling', '34. Me shaking a jar of the bottle caps collected so far', '35. Me talking to my friends on skype', '36. Me talking to my friends on skype', '37. Phone ringing', '38. Me shouting madly at my brother (VERY LOUD)', '39. Pencil sharpening', '40. Me shouting madly at my brother (VERY LOUD)', '41. Me shouting madly at my brother (VERY LOUD)', '42. My alarm', '43. Background music from a shop', '44. Noise from my yoga mat', '45. Me shouting madly at my brother (VERY LOUD)', '46. Me shouting madly at my brother (VERY LOUD)', '47. Me shouting madly at my brother (VERY LOUD)', '48. Me shouting madly at my brother (VERY LOUD)', '49. ME BEING HAPPY', '50. ME BEING HAPPY'.

Large text overlaid on the collage includes: 'ways', 'energetic', 'enthusiastic', 'beating', 'Rain droplets', 'Car engine', and 'Shelf 7 In the middle ground'.

Not something I enjoy.  
M32, M5, M4, M32...  
Scrolling, scrolling, scrolling...  
I'm not connected to it.  
What do I do nowadays?  
Am I enjoying what I'm doing?

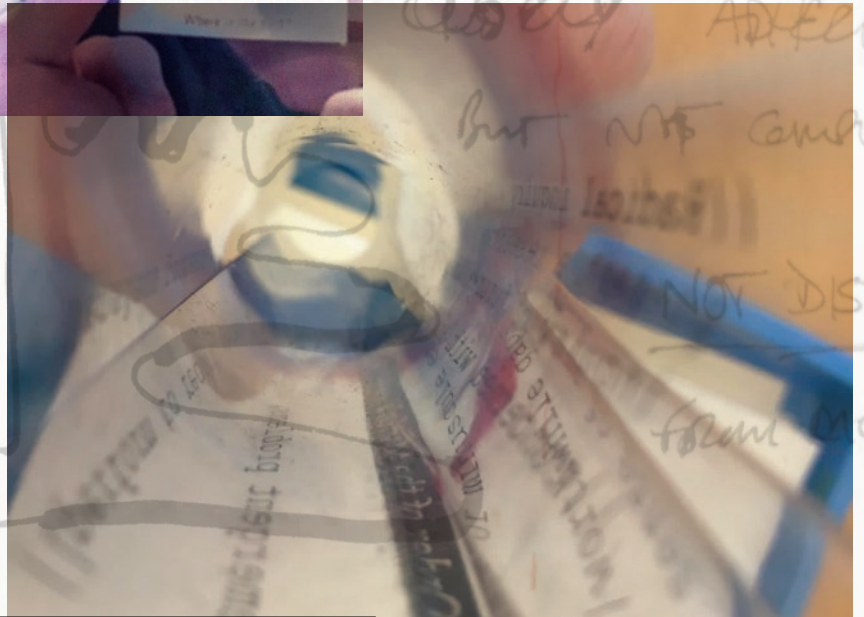
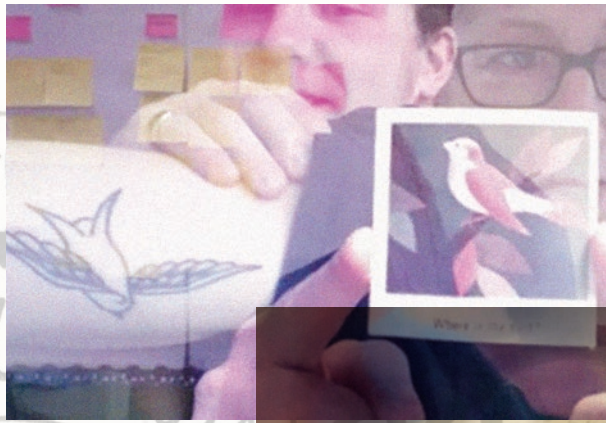
Skateboard park is a place to learn: no hierarchy,  
Music is a huge influence.  
Play music. Take it in turns.  
Meeting people.  
Going to events.  
People watching as social interaction.

[Background top] layered photograph from three walks alone-together with projection of text and our research locations map / redacted transcripts interwoven as a dialogue between pre-pandemic and lockdown self / 50 sounds of me mapping layered with photograph of Delft

to stumble



TO USE



**Shelf 8**

**The photocopier made this**

[Background image] detail from dialogue notes / [from top] layered screenshots from shared objects of lockdown / manipulated redacted texts / artefacts from photocopying event / detail of redacted text (Rockwell Geyer, 2019)



to meld

...of the challenges ~~research is that most of the sign~~  
~~involving physics, biology, chemistry, geology, and often public~~  
~~incredibly diverse, coming in all shapes and sizes. Yet scientists a~~  
 ~~policymakers to generalize our results from studies of one estuary~~  
~~estuaries.~~

~~As scientists, one of our roles is to predict changes in the environ~~  
~~induced influences. To foresee the health of estuaries in the future~~  
~~answer about the present and the past. How far will salt intrude if~~  
~~flow increase or decrease the rate at which sediments shoal the es~~  
~~the fish that spawn in fresh water?~~

The quivering unease of doing.

//Put your coat on  
//Set an alarm on your phone for 10 minutes  
//Get outside, but not completely.  
//Think-with your walk

//Look for meanings of a path that is no longer there.  
//Record to perform movement of time- present, here and there,  
tinged with melancholy

//When the alarm sounds return  
//Make a map of your encounters

WHO IS IN THE GARDEN?

USING WITH  
MATHOUSE  
HUSBAND HENNING  
SOUNDS OF THE

LOOKING AT  
THE STREETS

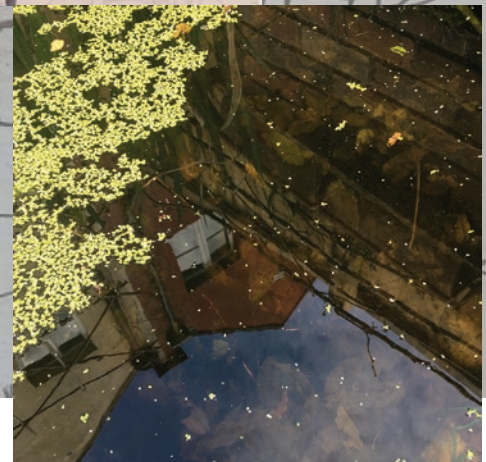
SPORTS CENTRE

NICK'S BENCH

DAD WITH

BENCH

MOVING THE FURNITURE



**Shelf 9**  
**You'll never get rid of it**

[Background image] The quivering unease of doing map / [clockwise from top right] photographs from The quivering unease of doing walk / Basingstoke



# to control

Shelf 10

From here to there

[Background image] projected redacted text / [clockwise from top left] classroom museum of objects / children's coats / photo-walk image, Delft / children's shoes / photo-walk image, Delft



to play



# to arrive

# to enclose



Permit yourself the turbulence

There was a simultaneous vulnerability and productivity within the mapping encounters where we engaged with the on-flow of these assemblages that continually “[acted] on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 24). We were **unwrapped by the half-hidden mysteries** in our lives that were not yet solved in the “archi-textures” of our lockdown spaces (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 118) where our perception ... [was] forged ... in the passage from place to place, and in histories of movement and changing horizons along the way” (Ingold, 2007, p. 227).

Bring your text in  
Don't over-think it

To perform the mappings, we made use of the event score (Higgins, 2002) to jog us into productive spaces, opening us up to chance, experimentation and serendipity. Acting as “enabling constraints” (Miles and Springgay, 2020, p. 1010), these instructions were speculative, productive rather than limiting (Springgay and Truman, 2018). Short instructions gave co-researchers **permission to mis-interpret** or re-interpret, making use of the isolated freedom of lockdown spaces. We let go of structures, an *unlearning* that permitted us to engage with “a between-ness or liminal state that creates new zones of participation and interaction, and understanding” (Miles and Springgay, 2020, p.1011) that transverse commonly bounded subject disciplines and spaces of home and school.

Exposing, unwrapping, bringing to the surface,  
creating and generating, sparking new ideas  
that throw everything into relief

Our analytical moves engaged with the fissures of each sensory tangent and evolved into folded meanings. Redacting texts (Phillips, 2016) became a ritual of revealing rather than obscuring, focussing our gaze along the edges of speculation. Synergies within the **interweaving of lines** of theory and experience activated stories that we shared as intra-textual (Truman, 2016) new scores. We observed what we produced, becoming entangled in the process. We made it **a moment**, lighting a candle and putting music on. Standing back was an action, opening up (MacLure, 2013) to the humbling experience of listening. **Feeling, not intervening**. Attuned to the agency of objects: *the photocopier did that*.

Image, sound, word, memory, and feelings repeated, echoed and resonated through the layers of the page. This **temporal remixing** activated **rhythms** of space and time (Lefebvre, 2004). A symphony played out through the serendipity of chance encounters, opening up new understandings that permeated the surface.

Grasp that fleeting thing

Co-researchers together, we were evokers in the middle, drawing as we were talking, thinking as we were making. **Oscillating between instruction and drift**. Allowing oneself to be taken up by the movement of everything, and then removing oneself from being the author of it. Navigation was led by what moved and surfaced within these shelfies, which emerged as multigenerational mappings of encounters that **stirred up** the multi-layered, shifting and reshaping of our everyday.

Intergenerational maps of sense-laden, relational, multimodal pedagogies: you could never write anything that evokes this sort of entanglement of things. We ask the question: How do these shelfies activate our future research and learning?

### Instructions for reader

Take a visual walk  
Walk through the words  
Look for vanishing points  
Mash things up

### Shelf 12 Mapping the movement of things

Screenshots from shared digital whiteboard space. A place of exchange and dialogue where people, places and things of our research formed new relations in constant movement



Render Knot  
Fissures/sutures  
Cracks opening up  
Through the layers



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