

**Observing Spaces Learning**

A Pratt Center for Teaching and Learning Fellowship

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*Final Report*

*“Above all, I have been a sentient being,  
a thinking animal on this beautiful planet,  
and that in itself has been an enormous  
privilege and adventure.”*

*- Oliver Sacks, Gratitude*

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## 1      **Origins.**<sup>1</sup>

*Does it matter that we are human?* <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Space Time (Listening) Memory. This was the original, and one of the many titles (hypotheses) for the fellowship. In essence, it is the ingredients. Listening, here, is a verb, but it can also be understood as a noun, and, therefore, the title does not reveal the process, the action, the instructions, the experiment, only the variables and potentially the controls.

<sup>2</sup> The questions were framed earlier, before the Fellowship and in multiple, parallel frameworks, I had been exploring physical, sensorial and sentient relationships of the body creating work, body in the work, and body as the work. Processes look at multiple scales and paths of pedagogy, thinking, making, sharing and working while simultaneously intersecting and weaving through disciplines, listening for possible opportunities to connect and integrate diverse narratives in various of structures of learning, teaching, living, and being.

In the beginning<sup>3</sup>, I looked back. *What question had I asked last?*

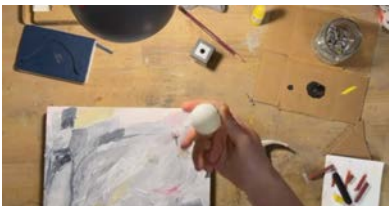


Storyboard.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Vonnegut, Kurt, *Cat's Cradle* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 39.

<sup>4</sup> *An attention to the real*, Maria del Pilar Agudelo Muzzolini, Atmospheres Performance, Storyboard, PIC300, Spring 2023.



A sentient<sup>5</sup> response.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> sentient, adjective, able to perceive or feel things

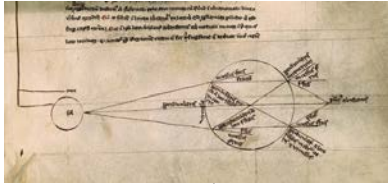
<sup>6</sup> Josh Alford, Pratt Printmaking student, Spring 2023, PIC300 Focus Expand, Atmospheres Performance, film stills revealing a sequence in which Alford reacts in real time to the two-dimensional environment of the painting he is working on with, what he called, a necessary implication of movement and dynamism, something to activate the surface, build the shadows that represent light into light itself.

I had been noticing physical and sentient relationships of the body creating work, the body in the work, and the body as the work.

In the presentation, *Towards a Magic in the Real*<sup>7</sup>, I paused and listened to a shift in attending to the senses - an attunement<sup>8</sup> to the world with and within the body - to being, being in space, being present, reacting and responding.

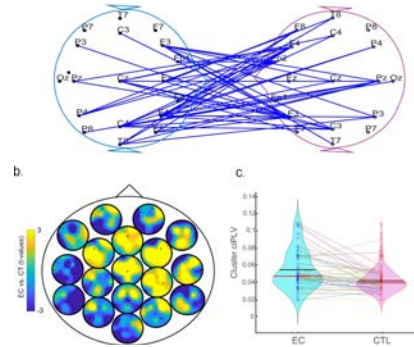
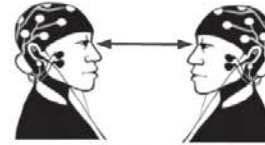
<sup>7</sup> Conference presentation in Fall 2023 of accumulated student work from the PIC, Focus Expand, shedding light on human moments in the creative process (sentient presence, memory, reaction/response in space and time).

<sup>8</sup> The word "attunement" here refers both to the colloquial use and idea of human connection layered and understood through multiple means but also makes reference to the exploration and ideas underlined in Albert Perez-Gomez's book, [Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science](#) (MIT Press, 216). Perez-Gomez looks to space, architecture and the experience of the built environment as instrumental to human health, well-being and shared cultural and communal understandings of self to foster compassion, empathy and ethics.



Optics.<sup>9</sup>

I retraced time<sup>10</sup> to drawings of vision and studies of eye contact<sup>11</sup> - to seeing (understanding) seeing and to comparing a gaze across rooms, across screens and hemispheres to the electricity generated in the space and time when you and I lock eyes.



Electricity.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Roger Bacon diagram of optics for De Multiplicacione Speculorum, England, 13<sup>th</sup> c.; diagram showing light being refracted through a spherical glass container full of water.

<sup>10</sup> After this and during the year, in speaking with Dean of the School of Design, Anita Cooney, outlining the evidence of this interest in the body in space, listening (observation) and (the individual creative) process in general.

<sup>11</sup> Eye contact drawings as research\*, 2020-21, anatomical cross sections and diagrammatic analyses of interior and exterior electricities and sentient landscapes. Scenes from life and films and life peeled of the screen recall invisible lines across rooms, narratives of dreams, silent conversations of tables and chairs.

<sup>12</sup> "Social Synchronization of Brain Activity Increases During Eye Contact", Caroline di Bernardi Lufi, et. al, Communications Biology, 5, 412, 2022.

Reflection evolved to current process, current work, current learning, and discussions with colleagues across disciplines<sup>13</sup> at Pratt.



The conversation.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Foundation, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Fashion, Architecture, Communication Design, History of Art and Design, Fine Art, Interdisciplinary Studies, were all departments that dedicated time and energy to thinking about these questions of how we are learning in space, the body learning in space, our bodies' role in the learning and the role of the body in the work.

<sup>14</sup> "The conversation", photograph by Andre Kertesz, 1925.

Questions<sup>15</sup> formed a search in academic and creative practices, paths and pursuits. Pedagogy and process expanded space and study<sup>16</sup> to human body (figure)<sup>17</sup>. Questions evolved into hypotheses, conversations (concentrations) built connections, a path led to process.

Where is the body?<sup>18</sup>

Where is the body in the work?

Why is the body in the work?

When we see the body, what do we understand?

When we draw the body, what do we learn?

When a body is represented, what does it communicate?

*How do we draw the body?*

*How do we see the body?*

*What do we see (understand) in a (the) process of drawing a body?<sup>19</sup>*

*What do we communicate*

*when a body is in the representation,*

*when a body is the representation,*

*when a body generates the representation,*

*when a body defines (gives definition to) the representation?*

Where in the process is the body in the work?

Where is the body in the space of the work?

What is a body in the process of the work?

<sup>15</sup> "Curiosity is the first and most important character trait to be a good student." - WLM

<sup>16</sup> pathology (observation, experience, accumulation)

<sup>17</sup> I spoke, initially, to Ashely Bales, Assistant Professor in Science and Math, in Fall 2023, and listened to her ideas about Transdisciplinary Bodies, and questions of body literacy and learning. In joining the FLC in Spring 2024, I have come to understand that we (the disciplines and the individuals) share language and content, stories transfer and carry more clearly, and that **boundaries diffuse, disappear and open** more than they remain fixed, static or whole.

<sup>18</sup> Does it matter that we are human?

<sup>19</sup> Specifically, the perspectival view of the drawing with the arrows escaping the page and the two-dimensional space of the board. "When in the process does the work speak back to us, when does the drawing draw the drawing? (CB)

Questions begin a map.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "We often hear people talking about how space changes our bodies, we are interested in how our bodies change space." EA, JW

*How does Foundation<sup>21</sup> carry through the learning in an art and design education?*

*Where is the body in the processes of learning?*

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<sup>21</sup> Brian Brooks (Adjunct Associate Professor - CCE, Foundation) and I have spoken in depth about drawing, representation, observation and processes in the Foundation year and in the Department on Interior Design at Pratt leading to discussions and plans for exchange and shared experiences for students and faculty.

**Time**<sup>22</sup>.

“The slow burn.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “Our most valuable resource” as stated in *The Art of Gathering* by Priya Parker (Riverhead Books, 2018), suggested in Fanny Krivoy’s (Visiting Assistant Professor, Undergraduate CommD) CTL workshop, *Designing the classroom experience for gathering*, 4.19.24.

<sup>23</sup> *Birgit Rathmann replied, somewhere in-between my commitment to attending her PIC and her explanation of the process (of the course) itself.*

“The practice is happening, and the purpose is stated, out loud, consistently and repetitively.”

One proposal for a process, a lineage or line to follow, for Fall 2024, initiated itself here, the slow burn, time, *listening<sup>24</sup> to learning*, immersion in the space and time of learning - the classroom and the studio - across disciplines, across years and programs, and across the semester.

(Listening).<sup>25</sup>

*Are you drawing?*<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>In *A Natural History of the Senses*, Diane Ackerman discusses human reliance on vision and hearing over smell and touch because of our evolution to standing erect on two feet and no longer being so close to the ground. She continues to discuss the ways that particular mammals feel, smell, listen and taste with all of their skin, intensely in tune with their surrounding environment and their body's relationship to it. When she identifies the human being in all of history with the most adept senses, she names Helen Keller (who was deaf and blind) and describes Keller listening to Beethoven, holding her hands on a radio and describing the entire experience through touch and emotion.

<sup>25</sup>Parentheses emphasize the three-dimensionality of the page and the written text, that listening centers, or is the center of, and grounds, or is the foundation of the study and the project.

<sup>26</sup>*Casey paused. I felt the room weigh into us, darkened. Could they hear Damir filling shells in our ears, whispering in the distance?*

The arc before us became a single breathing form, suspended, a cast shadow in a pane of glass." Reference to script, "To build a stage", Damir Vukovljak, 2009.

(Do you have something to draw with?)

I imagined<sup>27</sup> a process<sup>28, 29</sup>

Memory.<sup>30</sup>

*Is this learning?*<sup>31, 32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Imagination in an accumulated definition as reconnecting or the connecting of memories of observing of conscious and subconscious worlds [CB, turning (*you are in good company*), GF (*plastic, mis-interpretations, lies*), KL (*I will ask you about your eyes*), GAL (*play the game*)].

<sup>28</sup>In the beginning, she would ask her students to select a paper format for a year of drawings.

<sup>29</sup>"I am supposed to be invisible," in the essay prior to "I love beginnings" in *The Essential Louis Kahn*, Robert Twombly, Ed., Norton and Co., 2003.

<sup>30</sup>"How do you like to learn?" They asked, running backwards through desks and classrooms and books, walking in deserts and seeing the water from the closed room and the window that touched the floor. D and the voice that brought back time.

<sup>31</sup>*Following footsteps, imprinting, a deeper fold in grey, an impression in matter, recovering muscle, scent that carries you, the personal that we share, a word and, at once, we knew (sensed) sound.* Casita Linda, San Miguel de Allende, 2008.

<sup>32</sup>"Words are small shapes in the chaos of the world." Ackerman, 18.

(The answer). When I can see the atmosphere between I and distance<sup>33</sup>.

## 2 Process.

*(What is progress<sup>34</sup>).*

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<sup>33</sup> Distance, a turn, this may be a figure.

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<sup>34</sup> Angeles Novus, a monoprint created by Paul Klee in 1920, is now in the collection of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Walter Benjamin wrote about the "Angel of History" in his 1940 essay, "Theory on the Philosophy of History."



Architects draw.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Architects Draw, Freehand Fundamentals, is a book documenting and explaining the curriculum taught by Sue Gussow Ferguson in the Department of Architecture at Cooper Union (2008).

Questions of the human body, human form, anatomy, figure and the human senses, layered with time<sup>36</sup>, motion and presence in space led to the relationships between body, learning, observing, understanding, memory, and, thereby, a deeper, question - where is the body in learning and teaching?

In these inquiries and conversations, I found the path led beyond foundational study and gained momentum towards a return to the body, that is not only a beginning, an introduction or a groundwork to build from, but relevant, key, and critical as it expands and has the potential to re-engage disciplines where it has faded, been lost or slipped away.

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<sup>36</sup> Eadweard Muybridge, "Dancing Woman", Plate 187 from *Animal Locomotion*, 187.

I am interested in the space and study of  
the human body as figure,  
body as space,  
space as body,  
body as composition,  
body as mass and gravity,  
body as form, space and light,  
body as figure, ground, solid, and void,  
and body as volume, plane, line and point.

I am interested in reinvestigations of analogous models of and for  
interdisciplinary communication and representations of  
space, material, time, and technology.



Medical imaging of Modern Paris.<sup>37</sup>

I am interested in the body as history, architecture and the city.

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<sup>37</sup> Playtime, film still, dir. Jacques Tati, 1967



Turning to see the light.<sup>38</sup>

I am interested in metaphors bridging narrative histories,  
myths and realities of experience,  
what was present,  
what was perceived,  
how it was imagined,  
how we remember,  
and which was the dream.

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<sup>38</sup> Caravaggio, *Supper at Erasmus*, 1608.



Light cast on bodies.<sup>39</sup>

I am interested in the space of the body and bodies of space,  
as each is illuminated, and how we are left,  
with a story to take away and in others,  
where fragments remain.

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<sup>39</sup> Radiology of human kidneys with dye.

I am interested in vision, seeing, blindness, observation.

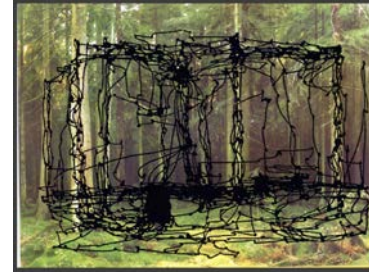


Composition.<sup>40</sup>

How does the human eye navigate a visual composition?

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<sup>40</sup> A.L. Arbus, Russian psychologist, example artifact of experimental process of attaching trackers to patients' eyes when looking at visual composition, 1950s.



The eyes move.<sup>41</sup>

The study revealed that we look for contrast, for distance and depth, and we search for the familiar, when possible, a human form.

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<sup>41</sup> A.L. Arbus, Russian psychologist, example artifact of experimental process of attaching trackers to patients' eyes when looking at visual composition, 1950s.



Body in the work.<sup>42</sup>

Transcending disciplinary boundaries, the presence of the human figure in visual representation, connects the viewer or audience in subconscious association. In this, we do not, in most cases, attempt to make sense of the abstract, nor do we look solely search for the familiar. In the abstractions and visualizations before us, we search for ourselves.

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<sup>42</sup> The drawing was part of a Spring 2023 exhibition titled "Drawing as Practice" (citation forthcoming) and reveals a figure among abstract ink and pigment markings. Immediately upon "finding" the human figure, the viewer's perception of the space's scale, material, temperature, and experience, build narrative.

Spring of 2024 afforded time to listen, converse, listen more, and to speak with individuals, faculty and administrators, across the Institute, about these questions of the body, the body in space, as space and in spaces,

Pratt's approaches and integration of the body into learning and changes and evolutions of spaces within the context of recent histories and near futures have and will evolve in approaches to bodies in spaces of learning.

Ubiquitous throughout is the evolving project<sup>43</sup> that began further back, the one that remains, and the one that continues to emerge.

By May, a path emerged.

*Where in the process is the body in the work?*

*Where is the body in the space of the work?*

*What is a body in the process of the work?*

And, most clearly:

*Where is the body in the process of learning?*

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<sup>43</sup> *The space of correspondence (to build a stage).*

I was interested in the body in the content of a course but, in many ways, I was even more interested in what the bodies in spaces (classrooms, studios) were doing during class, what was happening in the space of the class, in the space of learning.

Four moments, specifically, led me to this inquiry and, I can honestly say, projected me forward.

One.

In a lecture at Cooper Union titled, EDGES, the two principals of the architecture and interdisciplinary design firm Ad-Wo, Emmanuel Admassu and Jennifer Wood, spoke about their work. During the question-and-answer period, a student in the audience asked about their process of research and their drawings, many of which include people. Emmanuel answered the question, pausing first, “As designers, we often hear that space can change people. In our projects, **we are interested in the ways people change space.**”

Two.

Fanny Krivoy, Visiting Assistant Professor in Undergraduate Communication Design at Pratt, presented ways she engages her students in class in both physical and digital ways.

She recommended a book, [The Art of Gathering](#)<sup>44</sup> that further elaborates on many of the ideas she presented. Professor Krivoy’s presentation, in many ways, inspired me **to be physically present** – to go and see what is happening in spaces, what we are doing, individually and collectively, and, in Emmanuel’s words, how people are changing space.

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<sup>44</sup> Parker, Priya [The Art of Gathering: How we meet and why it matters](#) (Riverhead Books, New York, 2018).

Three.

I spoke to Birgit Rathmann, an individual that I suppose I have known for almost a decade. We both teach a Pratt Integrated Course (PIC) and, I believe, have since the PICs were invented. Birgit also teaches Time Movement in Foundation, and she is a filmmaker. I spoke to her about bodies and space and time and movement in her courses. I had planned to visit her classroom but, it did not work out this semester and, in the most definitive way, it was because I could only visit once.

In our conversation, Birgit said something I have not stopped thinking about.

You should come for the whole class, every week.  
You should take the class like a student.  
To understand it, you have to go through it.  
You will only understand it through **the slow burn.**

I keep coming back to this, *the slow burn*, as the time seems never enough, to see people changing spaces or to see spaces change or to understand the “why” or to even begin to grasp the thing you have observed. There is not a way to do this differently, to burn the time faster or slower and, in all honesty, I would not want to.

Four.

Finally, I met Brian Brooks. Brian is an Adjunct Associate Professor with CCE in Foundation. It is interesting, the way we hold things in our memories, an energy, a pause before answering, someone reading something back to you, words you have spoken out loud, ideas for a project, the description of a drawing.

Brian and I made enough plans for this the Fall 2024 semester for the rest of the Falls for the rest of my life, just for **drawing drawings** and making space and time for drawing and discussing the drawing of drawings.

**3 Correspondence.**

*Dear \_\_\_\_\_,*<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "They are like a couple of elves."



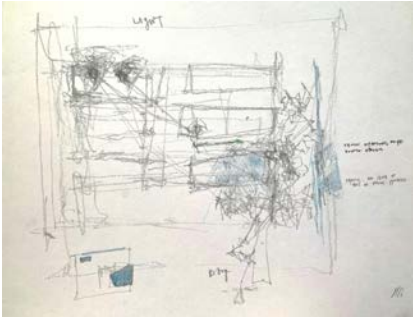
Light box.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Would it be clear if I looked at the world through a rear-view mirror?*

## June.

In the middle of the summer, I had the opportunity to test ideas of observation and drawing. Immediately there were lessons. I tried to observe as a guest to a design review.



Plan.<sup>47</sup>

I drew from memory.

I wrote, measured time, light, color, as each returned in fragments over the next few days.

<sup>47</sup> Prof. William Watson, Pratt Interior Design, INT402 Interior Design Thesis, Summer 2024 CDL, memory drawing, graphite, watercolor pencil and marker on paper, 12"x14", 6.2024.

With conversations, calendars, spaces of listening, returning to New York, the world transitioned to Fall. I planned to observe classes.

I would carry<sup>48</sup> paper, materials to draw, and a room number. I planned to show up, to observe, and to see, to listen.

The experience from June prepared me for the Fall when I understood the necessity of the singular, focused task of observational drawing.

Diane Ackerman, in "A Natural History of the Senses" writes about animals whose skin is an all-over nose and that their existence in the world integrates their experience in a way that they feel what they are breathing in, understanding texture and temperature and scent, simultaneously. She goes on to write about the human body's evolution in standing on two feet and our shift from a quadrupedal animal to one that moves and navigates the world fully erect and, mostly, understanding our environment visually.

I note this here as the research of observing and listening through all of the senses required full presence in order to result in something remembered, through all of the senses.

What is the process?

What would the drawings be?

What are the drawings now?

The observation is a performance, the memory is the drawing.

It is not a record or an artifact or documentation.

It is not proof.

It is a process of learning and connecting mind and body.

<sup>48</sup> "They carried the sky. The whole atmosphere, they carried it, the humidity, the monsoons, the stink of fungus and decay, all of it, they carried gravity." (O'Brien, Tim, The Things They Carried (Houghton Mifflin, 1990)

**A note on *drawing*:**

For me, “drawing” includes methods of representing thinking<sup>49</sup> and experience. It can and will include a range of media, diverse types of representations, shifting points of view, different measurable and unmeasurable modes and methodologies and, often, legible and less legible writing.

There is always feedback in the process.<sup>50</sup>  
The drawing, in a turn, in a moment, generates the drawing, speaks back, has its own information, tells its own story.

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<sup>49</sup> “We believe you because of what you are saying.” (LW)

<sup>50</sup> “The creator seeks solitude...” (Benjamin, Walter “The Destructive Character, originally published in the Frankfurter Zeitung, 1931.)

## Drawings of Drawing.

The first observations were in Professor Brian Brooks' Foundation Visualization Representation course. I began a habit of bringing folded, larger paper that I would unfold as I began to find a sense of the feeling of the space and once I decided where I might remain for a while.



Drawing drawing.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> View of room, Prof. Brian Brooks, Pratt Foundation, Visualization Representation, 8.8.24

I also had to take the time to find the speed of the materials necessary to move with the class itself, something that often evolved through the space and time of the class with the students, the light, the work.

The observations learned from Foundation drawing. We were never still and the drawings I made were about drawing and drawings and about drawing drawing, observing drawing, observing bodies in space and about other, nameless ideas that can only be seen now in the drawings themselves.

The drawings the students were making were about the room or the light or the things they were seeing and sensing or the composition on the page on which they were drawing. The space we sensed and composed looked back at us from the page as we looked out and drew into volume and space.



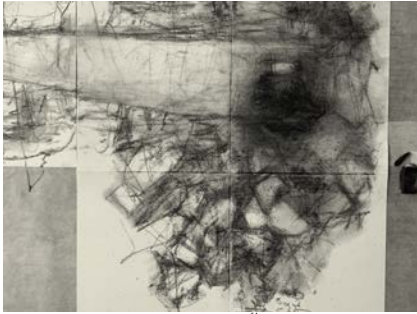
Body balanced.<sup>52</sup>

In a few moments, I would find something and capture it in the time of the class. It could be the sense that a single circle of students, drawing in unison, took on a single form, balanced as one.

<sup>52</sup> Prof. Brian Brooks, Pratt Foundation, FDN Visualization Representation, Fall 2024  
CDL, graphite, conte crayon on paper, 18"x24", 8.8.2024.

Moments split seconds. I would capture a few lines to drag out later. It happened, several times - something more than the lesson or movement or room.

The space<sup>53</sup> would expand.



Earth from above.<sup>54</sup>

At first, I could not say if the feeling of space expanding resulted from the drawings I have known and the spaces of drawings in films and buildings and dreams and stories. I believe I know now, it was because I was drawing and because I was present.

<sup>53</sup> *Time (seashells speaking in ears)*. Bradbury, Ray *Fahrenheit 451* (Ballantine Books, 1951).

<sup>54</sup> Professor Brooks, had all the students bring their drawings to a clear space in the room, lay them out on the floor. He jumped up on a chair to photograph everything from a distance which, they all gathered to observe (eskimos). All was quiet. The process of Brian taking those aerial photos seemed to open the space of that drawing and open the space of the room. Prof. Brooks had stood on the chair and the students had gathered around him, the light from the camera, being cast through the floor. And I saw the whole thing from the side and from above, the light being cast through and students gathering around him, each of them, a small light on their own

## Co-Design.

*“How can we build community outside of our gates when we have not yet built community within them?”*

– Irina Schneid, Assistant Professor,  
Interior Design, Pratt Institute

I visited Professor Irina Schneid’s School of Design Interdisciplinary Co-Design studio course twice in the Fall of 2024. In the first visit, I observed interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate students working on a group project. I had arrived when only a few students were there and felt I had entered one of the most wonderful spaces in the Pratt Studios-Steuben Building. The light held the room and, through the class, circulated for some too-bright set for a dystopian drama, performing here, for the afternoon.

In phases of the beginning of the fellowship, I had written or stated that I had attempted to keep the observation focused on the space, the bodies in it, the time of the class – space, volume, bodies, time. These were, or I thought, the variables, each classroom’s ‘unmovable’ elements being the control of the experiment. I realized, most visibly here, that I had suppressed the relationships of time, planetary systems and larger relationships to our experiences of space on Earth.

Professor Schneid’s Co-Design studios and seminars further acknowledge these integral elements – our infinite integrations in the world to space and to one another. Her work and what she has built since her time as a CTL fellow held space in that room. I drew the moment and the memory of being in the classroom, students working together, sharing ideas, preparing for and anticipating their community partners, a class of seventh graders who would co-design with the Pratt students.



Arms.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Suddenly, the room seemed the right size, each group needed distance, needed space to speak out loud, move, spread and arrange their things, walk away. Breathe. Return. In a second visit, the students had planned a workshop with the 7<sup>th</sup> graders who would visit Pratt that day. The room felt smaller.

The tables were covered with tools, objects, materials for designing.  
Glue, tape, paper, plastic blocks, wire – color. Everything was there.

The seventh graders entered.  
Desks, chairs, immediately, the room was full, every hand held materials and everything began. The table here, arms became a wave around and the three 7<sup>th</sup> graders, every once in a while, reached up.  
I saw nothing else.



Breathing.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> In a moment, the seventh graders were gone and, somehow, the room kept moving – breathing - kept moving like those arms, everything disappeared except bodies and arms, scooping up and handing over.  
Some light fog and, then, everything was quiet.

## A Disturbance of Memory.<sup>57</sup>

Foundation year at Pratt is a universe unto itself. I experienced this, firsthand, in Professor Alice Walkiewicz's class, when I visited in the week she discussed (re-built) Stonehenge with her students.



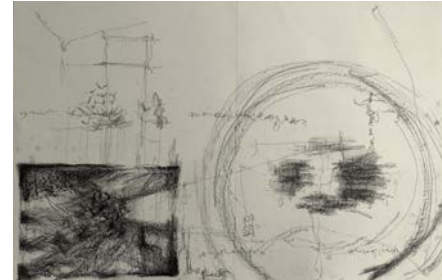
Teatro.<sup>58</sup>

The experience approximated the camera, the chair and the earth from above in Prof. Brooks' class.

The room expanded, time opened, light reframed distance.

<sup>57</sup> Sigmund Freud, in 1936, on his seventieth birthday, wrote a letter to Romain Rolland, describing an experience from thirty years prior, in a moment, clear in his mind once again. The experience specifically and physically included travel to the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, and affected Freud's mindset in the present and his memory of it in two ways. The first, Freud wrote, involved the recognition of the truth of a place that one has only known from academic and relative anecdotes that one then personally experiences. It is the acknowledgement, firsthand, of the truth of history and place. The second idea underlines an experience in life that one has traveled farther than one's father. Freud elaborates. It might be understood in a way that one has achieved a greater feat in one's own life than one's own father.

<sup>58</sup> *I remembered, drawing and remembering (Vicenza, FC).*



Constructions.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *I began when I was there, in Alice's class, after the pencil sketch, listening, the questions, the students, and the voices and stories.*

*What is this place?*

*Why is it here?*

*Why is it important?*

*What are these materials?*

*Where are these stones from? How much do they weigh?*

*How did they make this circle? Where is its center? How do we read its distances?*

*The answers, or, the hypotheses were coming in words and motions – emotions – voices, sound, narrative, shadows, light. ("...the only facts." – Havelock Ellis)*

*We were cast in three dimensions, on one side of a wall with a projection of a hill topped with a crown of stone beside a highway.*

*The light projected, seemingly, through, creating space, telling the story being recollected by the students, of time, making, rolling stones across continents.*

*I listened, seeing the shadows on the still surfaces between the stones, telling time around a day. I began again, finding a circle, a room, and the voices, drawing a memory, a story, time, weight.*



In-between.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> I attempted, in-between [H. Hertzberger, Chip H. (*we are not drawing the lines to the edge of the paper*), P. Wong], to recenter, with emphasis from Judit and Maura, against endless collection, endless generation and endless production.

**I (re-)search(ed) (for) moments when (an) idea(s) emerge(s) in drawing(s).**

I search for moments when ideas emerge in drawing.

Openness. Presence.

Remembering that seeing and sensing is not about knowing everything.

If it is a walk, it would be a *derive* and fully in your own state of awareness through drawing.

### Anatomical Models.

After that breath and recentering in the project, I attended Professor Ashley Bales, *Anatomy of Motion* course that she teaches in the Science and Math Department. Spending time in this course and, truly in the space of this class integrated a new point of view into the work.

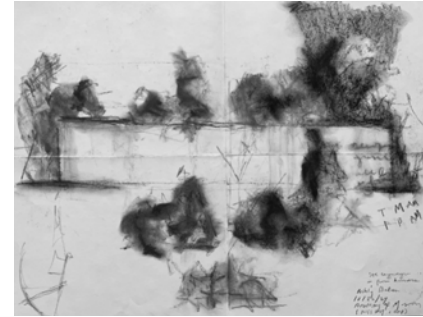


Vessels.<sup>61</sup>

The seemingly fixed, skeleton of a room, where everything that could move seemed to have a specific purpose and path, destination, designation or place that came with instructions and indications of time, measure, fit and some proposal for ergonomics to, not necessarily a human body, but a body in space in a microcosm of symbiosis or mutualism.

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<sup>61</sup> *The stillness affected us, and we were still too.*



Pathology.<sup>62</sup>

To further layer what was still or stiff, the second half of the class, involved a dissection. Another still, cold, frozen form, in which a process required precision, patience, a partner, observing and seeing you being precise, performing, persistence, patience.

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<sup>62</sup> Inhalation, exhalation.

## Performance.



Lifeboat.<sup>63</sup>

*Anatomy of Motion* contrasted and simultaneously aligned impressively with a model fitting that I observed in a section of fashion thesis. Movement and stillness of place, bodies and materials between and on bodies, all took on characteristics of stage – set, costume, setting. Pauses were unacknowledged by an audience, suspended in belief, observing only plot, characters, play.

When I arrived, across the bridge and through the corridor to Karin and Dean's studio, I encountered a runway, a fashion show, a fitting session, a design thesis.

I kept watching their feet, as they floated above, floated away, feet keeping time, feet telling stories.

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<sup>63</sup> *Were we so divided then? Would I have crossed a bridge to see you?*

Karin mentioned the Freshman enroll in *The History of Costume Design* and I had just shared drawings and images from Oskar Schlemmer's Triadic Ballet with the Interior Design students.

*Did we share a language to tell these stories?*

We looked at one another for a moment and I wondered, if she, too, was thinking that we are both making and moving through space, thinking about material, re-imagining time and language and the space of this hallway - what this muslin is in the scale of the dream, in the scale of the room, in the scale of some distance of a future telling of stories and pasts..

## *What space did they need?*<sup>64</sup>



Echo.<sup>65</sup>

The energy processed a corner, or designed and built one, the air, contrasting their bodies and the emptiness surrounding them - *two oils on canvas, unsure of the next, attempting to drag away and pull at the same time.*<sup>66</sup>

We pressed in closer, spoke more softly, lifted, suspended, each piece of muslin, each connection a little bit differently.

We met stillness again.

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<sup>65</sup> The model and designer would disappear, reappear, new garments, adjusting, stillness, questions, adjusting. Around, around. The project and body in the middle were still. A head may have moved, or a neck was longer, a line reflected in glass.

*(Westminster across Eno).*

The dance around, seeing all at once, seeing one, imagining the other (*orthopedic*). I was only drawing **energy**, never a physical body or a spine or the hips, I was drawing the *sound of an ocean in the heart, the echo in the dark room*. I heard everything in the beginning and then could only see.

<sup>66</sup> *How would you say it?* Albers, Josef *The Interaction of Color* (Yale University Press, 1963).

### Projection(s).

I visited Associate Professor Juan Jofre Lora's Foundation Space Form Process course in the lower level of Pratt Studios in November 2024.

The most of class, we were on a *derive* around campus, in and out of buildings, looking at the anthropomorphic drawings students projected onto corners<sup>67</sup>, nooks, walls and windows.

They had constructed space in flatness.

Or time in space.

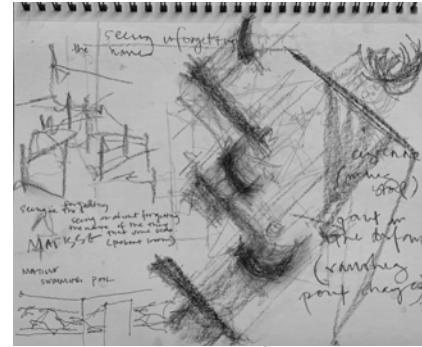
Or more time in the flatness of the world.

Or stretching time and space with lines and optics.

On that tour, beyond the projections themselves, we created spaces, or changedspace<sup>68</sup>, everywhere we went.

We made a "room" each time we paused.

Drawing those plans did not ask for walls or buildings but for us, eskimos<sup>69</sup> or crustaceans, formed to one another, drawn to the light<sup>70</sup>, the site of the installation and our group's immediate amphitheater around it.



Lifeboat (lanterns).<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Bachelard (Poetics).

<sup>68</sup> Admassu (EDGES).

<sup>69</sup> Leski (housing).

<sup>70</sup> Brooks (Earth from above).

<sup>71</sup> (Drifting). Instead of observing in spaces that we shared, I observed the space I listened to.

**4 Optimism.<sup>72</sup>**

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<sup>72</sup> *From above, I watched the four of us stand up and, one by one, walk out.*



Cinema.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Just because you lost a part does not mean you have to lose the whole. (TM)*

### **Futures.**

*I will continue to search for moments when ideas emerge in drawing.*

### **Emptiness.**

The scope will expand and focus.

I plan to observe and draw spaces that are empty (*ma*) where emptiness is not void but a space of *anticipation* and *gathering energy*.

### **The slow burn.**<sup>74</sup>

To know a space, a place, a person, time<sup>75</sup>, truly and authentically.<sup>76</sup>

To understand the questions well enough to find the process.

To be honest about the whole thing.

### **Other (learning)<sup>77</sup> spaces.**

This project pre-defined learning space as environments for classes.<sup>78</sup>

I have been specific about a few things and, in order to focus, and have been extremely exclusive of infinite numbers of spaces where we learn.

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<sup>74</sup> An aspiration, *the project*. (LD)

<sup>75</sup> "From nothing to nothing is no time at all." J. Steinbeck

<sup>76</sup> To write another's autobiography.

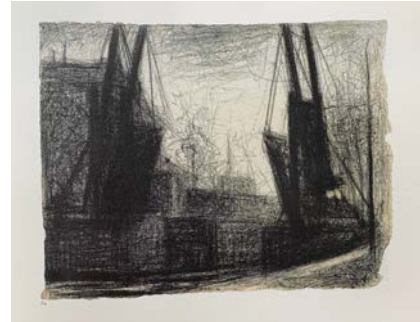
<sup>77</sup> *Are we learning when we are listening?*

<sup>78</sup> In everything I observed in the process of this project, space changed.

In this project, every space that I observed had a plan for the time of observation.

In this project, as proposed and fulfilled, time and space and activity had been planned. I did not know and could not predict what I would witness but I could anticipate humans, (changing) space, and time (passing).

**Blindness.**



VG.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Jeffrey Hesser, foundation drawing professor at RISD showed us the Seurat drawings sometime in between Klee and Schiele, three flights up in the space where the light carved itself (*Collected Works*, 1881-84).

Love of beginnings.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> BG began with the drawing, the text, the question, lines, transitions over oceans, "...a burning, screaming wreck..."; but not there, in front of empty chairs. CB, WM known only in a future tense. South main and the tear and the rest was written in first person.

### Other artifacts.

In the beginning of the Fellowship and in the time and space of the year, I was able to bring forward questions and ideas I have been attempting to understand for a very long time, and, in a sense, bring them together in a space so familiar, it would be difficult for me to qualify, define or describe it, in a word, as anything other than home.<sup>81</sup>

I began with a question I had been asking in several forums, classrooms and conversations in late 2023, after listening, conversing and reflecting with students, colleagues and a world of creative individuals, who seemed to be returning to something real, something human, sentient and sensorial in life and work, play and process.

Essentially, I was asking:

*Does it matter that we are human?*

Other inquiries scaffolded this question:

*What makes us human?*

*What is human about space?*

*And, in many ways, what is human about learning?*

I asked these in space and in time through drawing, across time and through observing and recording. I was searching through listening and being in spaces where learning was happening. This presence embodied thinking and making, reflecting and finding.

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<sup>81</sup> Irony.

It evolved and became seeing and being and dreaming of the listening, then drawing again.

In some moments, I surprised myself in my own presence. I remembered and imagined, connecting more than the words and light and the surface. The layers grew, stories built on themselves.

Now, in reflection, I am reminded that for me this is practice, it is what makes me human, individual, in a body, listening, absorbing and making as thinking.

Each conversation and classroom, the words and the silence, leads to this too, the presentation, recollection, preservation, is practice. The story, its drawings, reveal a performance, transforming the memory, and translating experience.

Always, inevitably, this leads to new questions – not only for me making these drawings, but listening, remembering, and for teaching as practice.

How does all of this inform or transform the practice of research, of teaching, of teaching as research and teaching as practice?

To search for an answer, I return to the question:

*What makes us human?*

Here, I will add:

*How do we practice?*

In this question, somewhere, the project continues. It is how we keep becoming, as humans, as learners, and it is how we practice our process, as we evolve with our projects.

The question evolves from collective to singular, revealing the possibilities in the shift from creative practice to teaching:

*How do I practice?*

If the arc of a curriculum begins with a foundation, builds skills and teaches tools, methodologies, experiments with process and production, then invites exploration and specific inquiries, all the time providing increased freedom and space to make decisions, select paths, calibrate and weigh options, the idea of the arc is not to remain and use all of the maps we have carved out along the way, but to be a cartographer of one's own process, to continue to learn the way, and understand there are infinite lines to the destination and that, in the end, finding that place is always the beginning of a new set of questions.

5 **Gratitude.**

I have a deep sense of gratitude to many individuals for all sorts of contributions and support in this project and in the landscape of the everyday of my life.

Thank you to the Pratt Center for Teaching and Learning and to the Provost Office for organizing and supporting me and all of the 2024 Fellows through this project. Fellows, for your openness, honesty and individuality.

Anita Cooney, Dean of the School of Design, thank you for providing this time, truly a bridge back to campus and New York City, inviting me to study, without questioning, what it means to be in a space, in a classroom, to be in-person, and to be human, thank you.

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Thank you to the Transdisciplinary Bodies Faculty Learning community, in the words of Peter Destaebler, I am teaching, I am learning!

Thank you to each of the faculty who have been gracious enough speak to me and also to invite me into their classrooms, lecture halls, studios, basement rooms or hallways where they take on their role as professor. There is nothing I want more than to listen longer and dwell in the space where you are sharing the wealth and depth of your experience.

I would like to say specific thank yous to a few people who have been particularly influential throughout this project. Maura Conley. Judit Torok. Irina Schneid. Alice Walkiwicz. Brian Brooks. Michael Gac Levin. Karyn Zieve. Juan Jofre Lora. Ashley Bales. Samuel Everson. Karin Yngvesdotter. Birgit Rathsmann. Bill Watson. Alex Goldberg.

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Bibliography and image plates forthcoming.