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Displace

A Migrating Art Academies
compendium of ideas

This book—the third *Migrating Art Academies* (MigAA) publication—marks the end of the third phase of the MigAA program, which, over the course of seven years has grown into a dynamic and vital network of art academies and universities, independent arts organizations, many hundreds of people, and endless ideas. The program has activated the concept of migration—that of resources, competencies, disciplines, and individuals—as a method for the production of knowledge, as it diversified and expanded both traditional understandings of creativity and traditional educational systems.

The series of international activities constituting the first phase—that led to MigAA's initial formation—concluded with the publication of the volume *Migrating Realities*. It focused on notions surrounding migration and presented a collective overview of the concept from economic, political, artistic, and cultural perspectives. The second phase of the project—involving several workshops "on the road" as it were—ended with a second publication, *Migrating:Art:Academies:*. This volume followed a group of emerging artists who were learning, collaborating, and producing while on the move.

Conducted over the last four years, phase three has seen an expanded and evolved MigAA network implementing a radical new scheme for creative collaboration and learning. This phase phase explored the process of developing ideas while being displaced: away from one's usual environment at school, work, and home, and far from family and friends. This volume, suitably titled *Displace*, traces the wide-ranging results of this latest MigAA phase.

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A Migrating Art Academies
compendium of ideas

Displace

Migrating Art Academies

The third Migrating Art Academies (MigAA) volume Displace documents the results of sixteen innovative workshops that the network organized during the last four years that took place across nine European countries.

The network facilitated, and indeed, had its primary source in these short-term workshops that materialized independently in different places and at different times. Called "creative laboratories" in the MigAA context, the workshops usually lasted around ten days, with time allocated to three general activities: input, process, and output. Each laboratory had a theme that was reflected upon throughout its duration. Inputs were typically trans-disciplinary stimuli brought by guest facilitators or other *agents provocateur*: these acted as triggers for the overall creative and individual work that ensued. A typical laboratory output was a public event where the ideas that materialized during a laboratory were presented along with a robust and intensive discussion around the concepts that had surfaced. Altogether there were more than 300 enthusiastic participants from more than 40 countries who took part in the labs.

The first laboratory, *CouchSurfing*, was set in motion to brain-storm new challenges and forms for the overall MigAA program; while the last laboratory of the sequence, *The Sun Had Exploded Before We Found Out It Would*, was a novel facilitation meant to stimulate the formation of creative ideas. With these and fourteen other creative laboratories in mind, this whole phase of MigAA and especially this book stands as a compendium of ideas on creativity and learning.

The book includes works, essays, concepts, and other documentary and peripheral material developed before, during, and after the sixteen different workshops. It is first of all presented as a source for any and all emerging artists who search for a means of creating, nurturing, and manifesting their ideas. Secondly, it is meant as a source for inspiring and fresh perspectives for professional artists experiencing a creative block or who are stuck in unproductive patterns of thought. Finally, for those seeking to understand contemporary art and its challenges, it

constitutes an excellent window into the surprising variety of practices with which the participating artists addressed the issues that confronted them.

In order to emphasize the distributed nature of the MigAA network, the book is designed with no particular hierarchic continuity. The only source of continuity is the page numbering that follows the chronological sequence of the laboratories: each of them are separated into chapters corresponding to the name of the laboratory. The chapters are presented in a random order to reflect the open nature of the network. Each laboratory/chapter is formatted the same: identifying where it took place, and providing the relevant information on the input, the process, and the output, as well as an introduction section and a list of participants. In addition, each laboratory received exceptional support from a number of organizations duly credited in the introductory text for the respective lab. Without the generous funding and/or logistical support of those organizations, none of the laboratories could have materialized.

It is also worth reminding the reader that this volume represents an intermediary phase of the overall project and is not intended as a wrap-up of the entire MigAA program. There is already a number of future activities in development for the next months and years. The MigAA network continues to grow organically and is always open for new proposals and initiatives.

Producing this tome would not have been possible without the laboratories and everyone who participated in making them happen. It was a great pleasure working with the many dedicated individuals who devoted their time preparing the initial lab inputs and subsequently facilitated the laboratories themselves. My sincere thanks goes to all the participants who helped collate the ideas, sketches, texts, and photos that were produced during each of the laboratories and that became the source for this book. I am also grateful to the editors — John Hopkins and Lina Rukevičiūtė — without their hard work the book would have sounded quite different. I also want to express my special appreciation to the designer of the book, Dovilė Aleksaitė, who spent many hours shaping and reshaping the book, listening to my endless comments while piecing together the texts and images.

And finally, the publication of this book could not have been possible without the enthusiastic and farsighted support of the EU Culture Programme 2007-2013, Nordic Culture Point, and the Lithuanian Council for Culture.

Editor-in-Chief and MigAA initiator,
Mindaugas Gapševičius
Berlin, Germany
30 November 2014

The Sun Had Exploded Before We Found Out It Would

1–15 September 2014
Nida Art Colony
Nida, Lithuania

The "interactive" blackboard for the laboratory.

For two weeks in September 2014, eighteen international participants gathered in Nida to exercise their imaginations by speculating on or even answering questions of being, space, and depth as well as to creatively explore current scientific news.

Contemporary science declares itself on the verge of radical change (change that will alter the notion of being). One senses that art is in an inferior position in relation to science. However, artists — not being obliged to prove any fixed truth — retain their right to express vague answers that refresh notions of what life actually is.

Would we go against human nature and destiny if we found out that we are not alone in the Universe? Having realized that we could not damage the ecological, would we understand what affect our thought has on our environment? Having discovered other planets with life would we understand that the race for survival is not necessarily the aim of life? Or perhaps all these questions come from snake-oil salesmen.

The laboratory was led by Artūras Raila with support from Alan Smith and Mindaugas Gapševičius. The time together was divided between a daily breakfast news review, followed by either presentations or discussions on the state of everyone's process, individual working periods, cooking sessions, and of course liberal doses of the sun and the sea. The laboratory culminated with an exhibition at the Nida Art Colony gallery space.

This MigAA laboratory was organized as a collaboration between the Vilnius Academy of Arts and the Lithuanian Interdisciplinary Artists' Association. The laboratory was supported in part by Nordic Culture Point, the EU Culture Programme 2007–2013, and the Lithuanian Council for Culture.

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Throughout his practice **Alan Smith** (UK) has played with conventional understandings of interpreted and perceived realities. He received an MFA from the University of Massachusetts and is Creative Director and a co-founder of the ACA.
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Aistė Viršulytė (LT) graduated from the Vilnius Academy of Arts with a BA in photography and media arts and an MA in sculpture. The focus of her current creative work is on time-based media where she explores both art and science.

Lina Zaveckytė (LT) holds an MA in photography and media arts from the Vilnius Academy of Arts. She is interested in the relationship between matter, text, imagination, and art.

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ARTŪRAS RAILA
Intro
framework

The anonymous quotation, "as we found out the Sun would explode, it had exploded already," refers to a state (or a condition) that leads to or generates a new sensibility, a new vision, or even a new kind of reflex. All this proceeds naturally as if unnoticed and the past as we know it has disappeared; previous motivations for creativity are gone as well.

Through our contemporary imaging technology we can now see the billions of suns (and their novas) in our galaxy; we now see billions of galaxies like ours where there are also billions of suns and their planets. All of this we embrace with predatory eyes and consumer instincts. The daily reports in the mass media reflect human greed: "having exploited our planet we will colonize others..." When encountering more advanced civilizations, with our perception of "friendship," we will take over their technologies. This will happen by employing grotesque irony, fictions, and hoaxes. Our false pretense will claim to be based on our need to survive. The so-called aliens are a typical example of the aggressiveness of human nature. Specifically, they are simply a reflection of human negativity: our imagination is unable to resist our bad habits and behavior.

The key questions are, then: how best do we use our knowledge? How does this process affect art and culture? And, what is the eventual feedback? The shift (by accident) in the translation of the title, "the Sun had exploded, before we found out it would" perhaps gives us a hope.

I propose the following schedule for the laboratory:

Starting off in the morning we'll have a press review over breakfast. (I'm not kidding! I'll explain more later.) After that, there will be lectures and critical reviews before and after lunch time, and in the evening, some film screenings. To be sure, everyone checks the news and their email in the morning, that's inevitable. I would, however, recommend that everyone pay attention to scientific reports that appear within the daily flow of information, and that we share our impressions and discoveries on the kitchen video screen. Daily lectures will segue into participating artist' presentations and critical reviews of work. The main lecture will be delivered by Prof. Damerell and I'm sure it will resonate with our activities. Alan Smith will be available to help with daily needs and input. Other daytime lectures will circulate around several theoretical texts. The evening cinema screenings and discussions might be characterized as the "debunker debunked." We will have the opportunity to explore numerous popular narratives — UFO TV, ancient knowledge, aliens, mermaids, and so on — that may perhaps be viewed without irony (a difficult task!). The playlist of evening films will be updated on a daily basis (on the kitchen blackboard). I hope to see every one there! I hope that the evening screenings will stimulate late evening discussions and deep dreams. The most important part of the laboratory are the daytime presentations and the explosion of your creativity! I believe that our group socializing will instantly bond us and that no one will regret coming to Nida!

IAN DAMERELL
Seeing Things Through Things
seminar/lecture

I quote from the website: "Contemporary science declares itself on the verge of radical change (change that will alter the notion of being). One senses that art is in an inferior position in relation to science." My approach to these problems, already raised in preparation for this seminar, is to embrace the particular challenge, but from another angle.

I question why such a situation need arise, in order to change us as human beings. It appears to me that we have consistently failed to create even a faint resemblance of a peaceful world. The great quest of democracy from the Enlightenment to present day has not delivered the goods either. The environmental problems mentioned here are ones that we have inherited from a continued lust for power among nations, corporations, and their leaders. It becomes harder to believe in solutions, and perhaps this is why we consider the challenge of alien life in outer space the external threat that will force us to change.

Of course, we have, already, throughout our history, been confronted with challenges at various points in time. They have demanded radical change. The First World War initiated the violence of the modernist period of the last century. It did so with a radical destructive force, the like of which humanity had never seen before. When thousands ... no, millions of lives ... were sacrificed for a few meters of muddy earth ... we were, as humans, permanently altered.

Our ability to be generous and reasonable as human beings — to show genuine empathy towards others — can be questioned. Yet, the question of becoming techno-humans appears to me to be one of giving up on humanity. One of the less-desirable by-products of modernity is the move towards a more mechanized form of human ... (Trotsky, for one, hoped for this). Artists may well be allowed to create discussions that lack science's clarity and its desire for proof, yet art in its widest context can still help us to resolve problems, in a way that science cannot. And should we not distrust science's drive towards more and more radical solutions to how we should live?

I find myself continually referring back to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* — the false positive attitudes of the Facebook generation; the banalities of the Instagram age; the carelessness, no, *indifference*, towards grave political issues. Thus, although facing threat and confrontation from an alien species from outer space, should we not fear more the threat of our own destructiveness?

ARTŪRAS RAILA
Primitive Sky
presentation

In 1980 in Telšiai (Lithuania), Artūras Raila observed unearthly points of light, flying at high speed in a strict geometrical trajectory in the sky. Twenty-two years later he returned to Telšiai to reconstruct the conditions of the earlier experience. The result of this reconstruction was a set of still and moving images of five separate moments, which advanced attempts to investigate whether that original sequence of events and trajectories carried any message. Thousands of similarly witnessed instances are being ignored because of a lack of proof — however should this be of any concern to the artist who no longer cares about being disqualified?

One evening towards the end of October 1980, around 8 p.m., I was walking along a street when — high in the sky, against the backdrop of frozen stars — I noticed points of light fluttering one after another in a wave trajectory, very fast and in complete silence. At first I thought they were sea birds somehow reflecting the lights from the town, but the

precise geometry of the trajectory and the extraordinary speed made me realize this was not the case. I don't know their exact number as I didn't count them, but my visual recall suggested there were about ten of them. Each separate point of light had a strong and clear color — that is, orange-brown towards its center, the edges paler, yellowish. They were not object-like, were not like "things," and seemed to have no clear form. The overall trajectory of movement for all of them was strictly geometrical and three dimensional, not bound to a planar surface. This I could judge from the intense and high speed wave motion. I followed them with my eyes until they disappeared far away. The total duration of this experience was only around ten seconds. From that moment onwards I began to watch the sky in the nights. The streets were very dimly lit and it seemed as if the wide sky cupped the town with its vast silence.

The second time I saw a swarm of these points of light was when a cluster of them appeared, moving with angled linear trajectories within a spheroidal shape. Single lights were constantly separating from the sphere and disappearing into space. This spherical swarm was moving slowly away, very high up, until it disappeared. The sphere was three-dimensional and when I drew the trajectories I therefore had to show them as moving towards me and away from me. At the time it seemed as if there was an infinite number of spots within the sphere, but when I tried

to sketch the dynamic principle of their movement it became clear that there were not only points leaving the sphere but also the other way round, points entering it from the outside. It seemed that the entire spherical form was made up of the lights flying in and out of it. The contents of the sphere consisted of some finite number of spots.

During the third instance, between four and six lights flew over me at low altitude with odd angular and intertwined trajectories, as though they were playing among themselves. They were moving at a very high speed and in complete silence. This time the phenomena took place (apparently) closest to the ground than all the rest. The rapid angled movements looked very strange — as if they were bouncing off of invisible barriers.

The fourth time was special, because in the moment I noticed a swarm similar to what I had seen before, I was able, for the first time, to formulate something like a question or request: "[...?]" And the flying swarm stopped. Within the swarm shape the movement of the lights continued, but they no longer jumped outside the shape. Shortly afterwards, though, the lights started to leave the swarm in couples. They followed a trajectory of double waves that transformed the oval swarm into two lines of oscillating lights. These slowly shrank in size. The wave-line persisted for a very long time, as long as my vision could follow it. I was standing next to the house where I was living. It was the beginning of November, around 11 p.m.

The fifth and last time I saw one single light, low against the horizon, fluttering around with that typical angular trajectory. This movement looked like a vibrating light was bouncing at right angles off the interior wall of an invisible tube. Because of the speed you had to be attentive and in order to focus upon the movement you had to look at it obliquely. This time I tried to point it out to some other people, but they somehow became both confused and amazed that the stars in the sky were so clear.

MINDAUGAS GAPŠEVIČIUS
At the Edge of Arts and Sciences
presentation

There are things balancing at the edge of fantasy and reality and between art and science. Examples of these would include astrology, "The Face on Mars," the Bermuda Triangle, dowsing, and Ufology. None of those have a scientific basis from a traditional western scientific perspective. On the other hand scientific conjectures might become scientific truth if proven empirically: consider, for example, the Higgs Boson particle, theorized in 1964 and its discovery confirmed in 2012. Some

are taken for granted by common agreement like the Big Bang theory. In this short lecture I will introduce two of my own artistic projects balancing at the edge of arts and science: *Plaster [As a hierophany] (1997)* and *0.30402944246776265 (2013-2014)*. The former was developed based on the consideration that the universe and all manifest artefacts are organized deterministically, while the latter suggests the thought that artificial intelligence is the next step within the human evolutionary process.

ALAN SMITH
On the Notion of Being
presentation

In 2014, how would the Vitruvian Man sit? For we humans, what makes us different to other mammalians is our notion of being.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger spoke of, "being in the world; to make sense of our capacity to make sense of things, to be dasein, 'being there'." To exist as a part of a complex system by discovering the components that make up our domain, that is being.

We appear driven by the need to make sense of what we don't understand, by perpetually fracturing the Gaian organism of our world into categories, divisions, and hierarchies. And in doing so we divide our species into a multitude of experts in specialist subjects who will often struggle to communicate with one and other.

More positively for us voyeuristic artists, this tangible amalgam provides a rich soup from which to probe, consume and reinterpret, often without fully understanding the specifics of each essential element.

Artists are not simply communicators, illustrators, or PR representatives. It is for us to look beyond concrete facts and deliver what Werner Herzog calls “ecstatic truths” (deeper, poetic truths that can be reached only through subjectivity and imagination) in order to augment human experience.

Personally my aim is not to seek justification for my actions and function as or become a scientist; but rather explore the methodologies, systems, and findings of practitioners from other fields to advance my outlook and imagination.

LINA ALBRIKIENĖ
The Residue of Being
photographs

Three lectures took place, “Seeing Things Through Things” by Ian Damerell, “Primitive Sky” by Artūras Raila and “On the Notion of Being” by Alan Smith. The space represented in these photographs is without time. The photographs provoke consideration of what has happened or might take place in a future. Significant evidence remains; a video camera, a laptop, and a glass of water. Who were the people that sat in the chairs? What were their thoughts during the lectures?

DOVILĖ ALEKSAITĖ
On Counting
video

Humans understand and construct their world in quantifiable ways. Proposing that the organic nature of the dynamic cosmological system is of an opposite nature to the static world constructed by humans, the logic of calculus being able to describe nature is questioned. In the project entitled *On Counting*, counting is taken as the standard way to define and construct things, whether they are defined by quantity, mass, or by distance. In order to rethink our relationship with the natural, the video presents a hypnotizing sea view in counterpoint to a human "scientific" approach that seeks to construct artificial systems.

ILARIA BIOTTI
Biotti/Bijoti
video

My surname "Biotti" is decontextualized by the sound of its pronunciation to a local ear. The spelling is transposed and what remains is the sound "bijo-ti" — a Lithuanian term relating to the notion of fear. The starting point of the project *Biotti/Bijoti* is to consider the effect of the encounter with the following specific stretch of physical space: the fear contained within a ten minute walk in Nida, a so-called paradise. The aim is to deconstruct the affective and aesthetic experience of my own fear through repetition. The method employed to explore the narrative contained in *Biotti/Bijoti* is comprised of the reenactment of my initial arrival in Nida once a day for the period of one week. Every night at precisely 22.07, I walked alone along the path from the corner where the bus left me the first night all the way to the Colony which functioned in this context as the destination and my comfort zone.

The formal result of this extended action is an audiovisual documentation edited to form a short mockumentary of the journey.

EGLĖ BERTAŠIŪTĖ
A Splint Of Unlawful Memory
drawings

Worldly empathy for mythical reasoning through law, boundaries, and experience is embedded to create memory. Suggestive channels come to our aid, like transmitters and satellites; used to switch on perceptual systems that enable us to consider being "inside of the outside." Should we be concerned about a place that exists only for itself and are we immune from it radiating a secret life of otherness? While immersed in an overflow of data, how do we wake our hidden instincts and act on poetic subjectivity? In order to act on these speculations and bend contemporary enactment do we trust narratives, preconditioned relationships, and meaning without an earthy contract?

BRIAN DEGGER
Objects and Languages
installation

The practice of both science and art involves transforming processes, ideas, or materials into some kind of distinguishable form, something that we can relate to and share — Ellen Roed.

In these days, referred to by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman as "liquid times," all is possible, both the worst and the best. For a small window of time the winds are favorable, and what impossibilities were once only to happen "when pigs fly" can be scientifically actualized. These so-called pigs are now engineered with wings. Shifts in scientific thought have moved on to gnaw on the large elephants

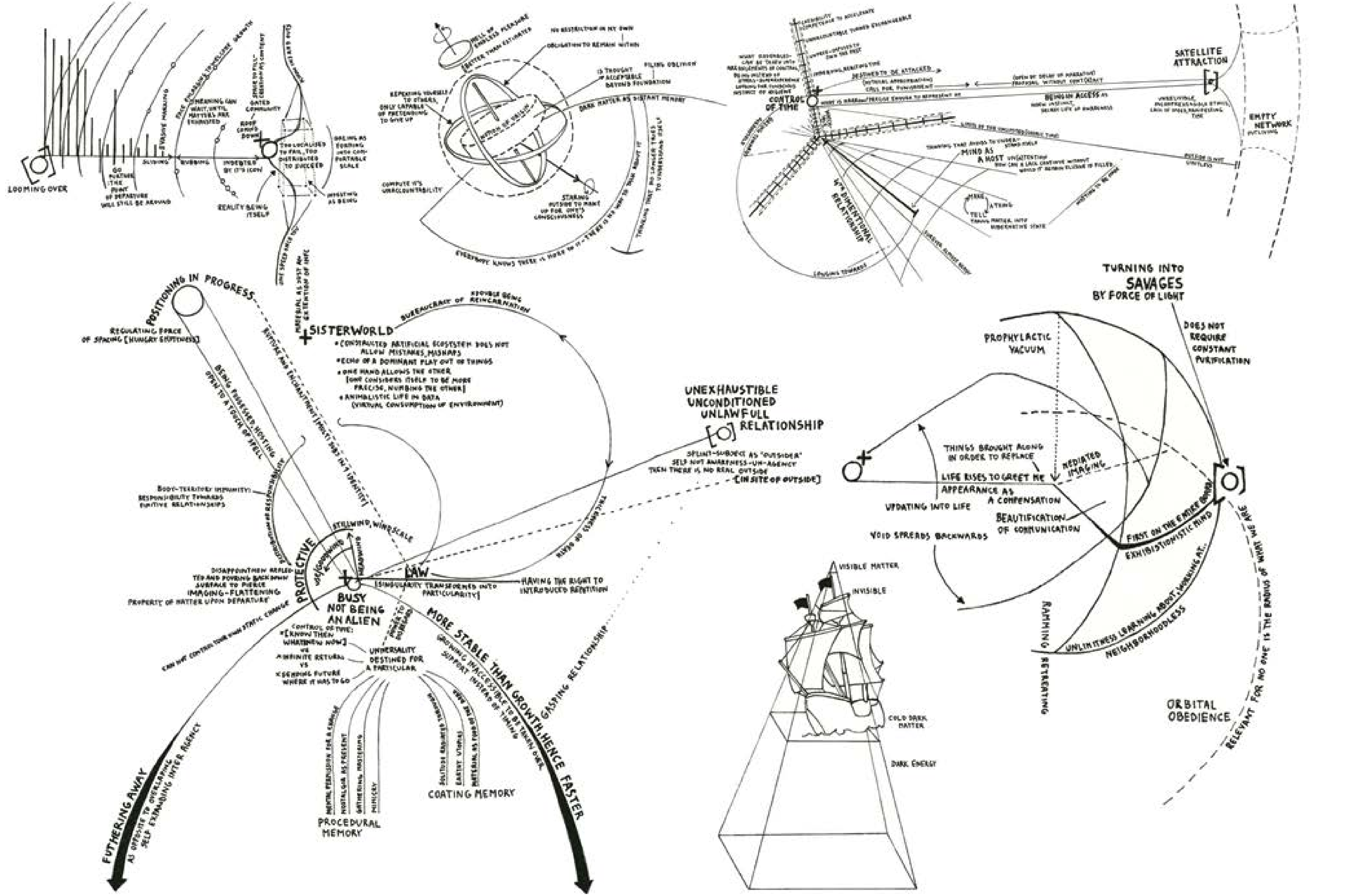
in the room — those once thought to be the domain of art, philosophy, and religion — consciousness, and higher intelligences. Like the blue smoke that escapes when an electronic component fails, are we afraid that we have lost the blue smoke of meaning as we are tested by ever more overwhelming information deluges? Once in the eighteenth century there was a man who could have read every book in print. You can't remember everything; in order to remember, you also forget briefly. Dialogue between information carrying systems: all is networked, all is fluid.

STEPHEN FORTUNE
A Shared Digital Sensorium
sugar, water, yeast, jars, video

This piece meditates on the control of atmospheres. Within one of the two glass enclosures a fundamental element is withheld. The difference in manipulation of each environment manifests in a vertical oscillation. Rudimentary computer vision is the sensing apparatus — the rate of respiration is transduced into pixel matrix transitions. There are instruments better suited to sensing the medium of these micro-worlds and the atmospheres

they create. Each jar is placed in front of a digital recording of their previous movement. Movement may be observed with the naked eye, and also in terms of the digital traces that the motion-detection sensors record when attached to the glass jars environment. That noted, using a digital motion detector provides a view of both worlds breathing in concert with each other, and in so doing it captures their motion as a data set that may become recombinant with other worlds at potential future points in time. The apparatus (discerning lines of flight by the light differences left in the wake of the bubbles) aspires to materially connect with the advanced mechanisms by which exoplanets in the distant universe are detected.

Above: Stephen Fortune's jar with water and yeast. *Overleaf*: Eglė Bertašiūtė, *A Splint Of Unlawful Memory.*


LOOMING OVER
SATELLITE ATTRACTION
EMPTY NETWORK
CONTROL OF TIME
MIND AS A HOST
POSITIONING IN PROGRESS
SISTERWORLD
BUREAUCRACY OF REINCARNATION
UNEXHAUSTIBLE UNCONDITIONED UNLAWFULL RELATIONSHIP
PROTECTIVE
STILLWIND, WINDSCALE
LAW
BUSY NOT BEING AN ALIEN
MORE STABLE THAN GROWTH, HENCE FASTER
FUTHERING AWAY
PROCEDURAL MEMORY
COATING MEMORY
TURNING INTO SAVAGES BY FORCE OF LIGHT
PROPHYLACTIC VACUUM
DOES NOT REQUIRE CONSTANT PURIFICATION
THINGS BROUGHT ALONG IN ORDER TO REPLACE
MEDIATED IMAGING
LIFE RISES TO GREET ME
APPEARANCE AS A COMPENSATION
UPDATING INTO LIFE
BEAUTIFICATION OF COMMUNICATION
VOID SPREADS BACKWARDS
FIRST ON THE ENTIRE GROUND
EXHIBITIONISTIC MIND
RAMMING RETREATING
NEIGHBORHOODLESS
ORBITAL OBEDIENCE
VISIBLE MATTER
INVISIBLE
COLD DARK MATTER
DARK ENERGY

HENRIK HEDINGE
How Would You Massage an Alien?
intervention

I started in the forest, making explorations of robots and exo-skeletons with what I could find: investigating new technologies, seeing a low-tech approach ahead, arriving at something between the fallen angel of Marquez's story and a half-tree-half-man.

Inspired by space and NASA, I moved the low tech experiments to the water: extra limbs, extra senses, movement, feeling twenty meters into the unknown; on the way to break the waves, seven meter mermaid construct.

The body with the sea. The sea with the body. Via a number of experimental on-body structures exploring the sensation of the sea and interaction with the sea. The sea, Earth's second space.

The use of the sea. The culture of the sea. Becoming one with a sea. Sea me. Feeling seas.

Exploration of robotics and exoskeletons turning into action meditations. Stelarc on salty waters. Synchronized swimming into the unknown. One with the elements.

My experiences. Peoples' reactions. Scifi readings. Current science and meetings with a scientist lead to exploration of the theory of mirror neurons. How they work. How they connect. How they construct a mind and a body. A perception of an other.

A massage of an exoskeletal part during a body perception experiment leading our minds to thinking of an eventual NASA lab for alien encounters — how would you understand a being with a different body or no body? What methods would you use and what science to understand the responses? How would you massage an alien?

MARIA McKINNEY
Incredulity of the Pointless
installation

There is renewed significance in regards to digital dexterity, that is, how we use our fingers to interact with the world in its current digitalized state.

Compelled to make contact with a living thing that is largely indistinguishable from its surrounding — seeing alone is not enough to perceive — I must touch in order to be convinced of its presence.

This aquatic animal-form has drifted in the seas for over 500 million years, making it the most ancient multi-organ creature on earth. Its interior is perceptible from the exterior — making it so incredibly strange that we may be forgiven for thinking it as otherworldly.

The notion of bringing something which is internal to the external surface, be it a thought or an emotion, is a practice we sometimes struggle with as humans.

JULIE PETER
Untitled
installations

Why do humans make artificial paradises on our planet? Why does it matter if the aliens are here or not? How should we humans welcome the aliens? If aliens would come to Earth or if they are already here how can we make them feel welcome in our man-made paradise and how would they feel being here? Do they have feelings at all? What would they leave behind to show us they were here (as we put a flag on the Moon to show we were there...)?

ANASTASIA RYABOVA
Towards an Experience of Spatial Dimensions
installation

The installation consists of a series of objects including tools, stencils, and drawings entitled *demon tools*: Stick–meter (Russian: palka–izmeryalka), Telehummer, Sawed saw. Plus Examples of magic rulers Measured and Ruled!

The demon tools are accompanied by the following text:

Observe the observers!
Hack all instruments!
Measure only unmeasured!
No conceptual comments any more.

AISTĖ VIRŠULYTĖ
For Memory Evocation
installation

Touring through locations, through times, through minds ... At first glance, this installation may seem like things that have been found by the wayside to remember the visit. But ... Findings breathe naturalness, their visual arrangement creates compendious, non-scientific, non-verbally annotated references concerning the principles of the Universe, creation, and all its characteristics, including the human place in the cosmos. Objects are used as reference points (to these major matters) and they function as implements to evoke and reflect individual and collective subconscious memory. It is not an accurate reflection, but rather a mere indication of a number of parallel layers of meaning.

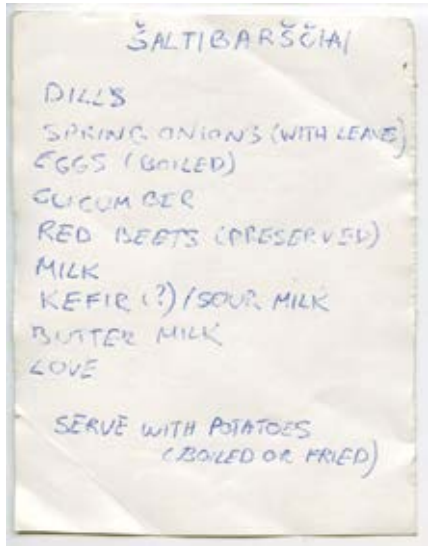
LINA ZAVECKYTĖ
Untitled
maps

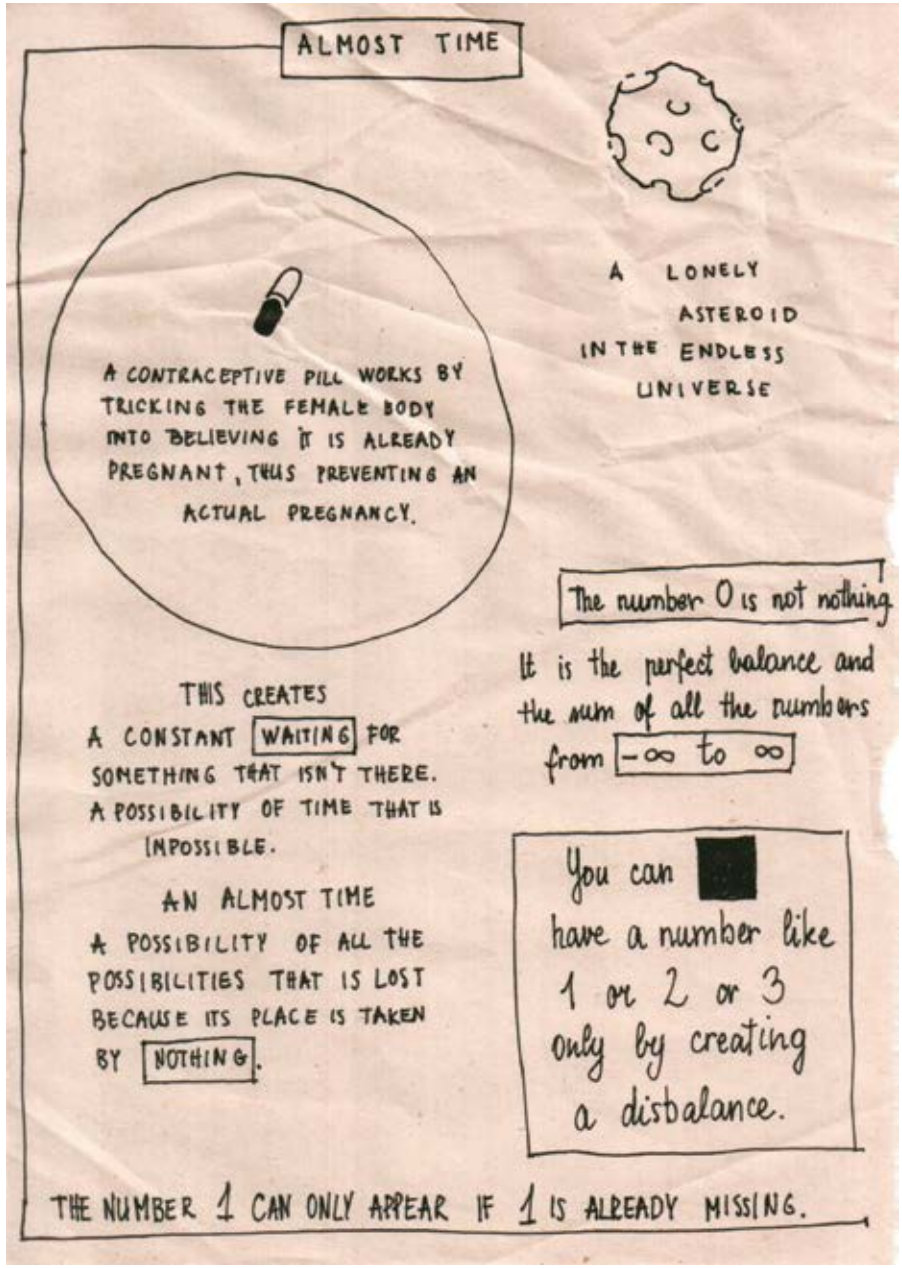
A being in the middle of an empty field draws a circle around itself. The simultaneous action of drawing the line and framing the surrounding chaos causes something that is unknown and unruly to become comprehensible. Yet sometimes, during the day, the sun draws a shadow of this being that falls onto the surrounding line and forms a shape similar to the letter "Q." This shadow connects the inside with the outside, the known and the unknown, one's self with the other. In a poetic way this could be seen as the birth of a Question that is driven by its own curiosity towards the unknown horizon.

VAIVA ZEMKAUSKAITĖ
Cold Beet Soup
recipe

When I was little I used to think that every human being had a double. I managed to explain everything that was beyond my zone of understanding through this simple idea of two of exactly the same persons living on different sides of the world. It is impossible to meet your double, because she moves in the reciprocal direction as you all the time: I also believed this situation had something to do with magnets. I could sense my double whenever I wanted and I could have an impact on her any time in a kind of telepathic way.

We search for God or extraterrestrial life, or we create/imagine some hypothesis of the universe ourselves. What a strong need humans have to not feel or be alone. I feel so empty that the only thing I can offer is this cold beet soup recipe.





Lina Zaveckytė, *Untitled*, detail.

ILARIA BIOTTI IN COLLABORATION WITH ANASTASIA RYABOVA, BRIAN DEGGER, AND JULIE PETER
On (Non)Counting/Measuring/Sharing
essay

It was a dark and pleasant night when we arrived in Nida, situated on the Curonian Spit. The resort town — often referred to as a paradise — sits on forest-covered dunes that overlook the Baltic Sea. The border with the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad is only two kilometers away: more or less visible frontier control systems dominate the entire area.

The writing of this text began on the moment opposite to our arrival, that is to say, when we left Nida. It is an eight-handed text written by Anastasia Ryabova, Brian Degger, Julie Peter, and myself, Ilaria Biotti, in a small bus traveling towards the Vilnius airport, after our two-week encounter.

The MigAA laboratory, entitled *The Sun Had Exploded Before We Found Out It Would*, was hosted in the permanent Nida Art Colony facility. It is a modernist (*à la japonaise*) pseudo-modular structure, characterized by the abundant use of glass, the transparent lightness providing a sense of comfort to the occupants.

It was in this context and under the aims expressed by the laboratory open call — How does the agency of communication operate within the distinction of knowledge between art and science? — that individual intellects embarked on a process that transformed them into a working group. An introductory exegesis on the history of epistemological thinking by Ian Damerell initiated the laboratory.

From the third day on, our temporary community comprised sixteen artists: thirteen of us as participants (Aistė Viršulytė, Anastasia Ryabova, Brian Degger, Dovilė Aleksaitė, Eglė Bertašiūtė, Henrik Hedinge, Ilaria Biotti, Julie Peter, Lina Albrikienė, Lina Zaveckytė, Maria McKinney, Stephen Fortune, and Vaiva Zemkauskaitė); two, Artūras Raila and Alan Smith, were invited lecturers; and Mindaugas Gapševičius hosted the gathering in the context of the MigAA project. Each artist presented his or her work to the group, unfolding a plurality of themes and concepts that included situated knowledge, residual matter, abstraction within models, speculative history, collective memory, epistemological normativity, otherness, and the visualization of potential networking loops among mechanical elements.

Besides the organized time spent together during lectures, screenings, and discussions, the informal sharing of living and working facilities generated a relaxed forum that encouraged dialogue. This fluid situation activated an exchange of perspectives, shared field excursions, and collaborative (im)material practices. The formal result was

a one-day collective exhibition curated by Artūras Raila and Alan Smith.

During our bus ride to the airport, we decided to present the exhibition in terms of three main themes woven together: (non)code-sharing, primitive forms of (non)counting, and (non)measuring. In this framework, the following is a guided tour of the exhibition:

primitive forms of (non)counting Aistė Viršulytė displayed a private collection of *objet trouvé* gathered during the two weeks time-span spent in Nida: stones, a feather, a pine cone, a metal coil. She used the objects to construct a personal narrative that revealed a universe ruled by mathematical manifestations.

(non)sharing codes/(non)measuring Anastasia Ryabova looked at the formal appearance of tools belonging to the sphere of construction. She adopted a postmodernist approach to her process. Deconstructing a tool — the hammer — inhibits its function while it unveils and aestheticizes its formal aspects. A series of (non)tools were displayed as canvases on the wall.

(non)sharing codes/(non)measuring Brian Degger let his work settle between form and function. He staged his personal collection of unlabeled tools as a "punk science manifesto" on the window ledge of his studio/shared room. Degger aimed to question the fluid matters that lie between art and science.

primitive forms of (non)counting Dovilė Aleksaitė projected a video loop on the wall documenting a purpose(less) and obsessive act of

counting the uncountable: sea waves. Her process was inspired by the human struggle to control and dominate sensitive natural processes.

(non)measuring Eglė Bertašiūtė sketched black and white diagrams in the form of mind maps. The constellations invited the viewer to read a plurality of positions within the communication of a personal narrative.

*(non)sharing codes/(non)*measuring Henrik Hedinge massaged material spaces like buildings and dunes with his limbs. At the same time he invited his audience to perform the same gestures. Massaging something stimulates a different perception of it. His sequence of performances, documented on video, explored a physical relation between body and form.

(non)sharing codes/(non)measuring Ilaria Biotti screened video impressions of a haunted Nida. By sharing her dystopian perception of a place called "paradise" she engaged the non-verbal, non-conscious dimensions of the experience. Affectivity functions as epistemological signifier: she used it as a tool for measuring space.

(non)measuring Julie Peter's work aimed to beautify Nida. Her process modernized the forest floor and the trees with geometrical interventions. She presented a photograph of a moss triangle applied to the trunk of a tree. Moss alters and controls surfaces without putting down roots and for this reason it functions — in this context — as a tactile measuring tool.

(non)measuring Lina Albrikienė presented three images and a short text. The photographs documented the room with several objects: chairs, a table, cameras. A text informed us that the images are of the residue left by the group after participating in three different lectures. The room is suspended in three non-defined moments that Albrikienė placed outside of time.

(non)sharing codes Lina Zaveckytė presented a series of working sketches on a table in the intimacy of her room. A found image of a hand-drawn circle that is obscured by blurred dots triggers a series of thoughts. The viewer has access to Zaveckytė's interior mind-maps, her imagination, and external references related to this image through a series of carefully sketched drawings and texts.

(non)sharing codes Attempts to relate the "self" to the "other" inspired the work of Maria McKinney. Formally McKinney presented her work as objects and a video installation. In the video, McKinney offers her hand to a jellyfish. This simple ritual of encounter — used in many cultures — probably originated as a gesture of peace to demonstrate that the hand holds no weapon.

(non)measuring Stephen Fortune explored the notion of community space by developing two living systems contained in glass jars. In this case, yeast cells in solutions characterized by different oxygen levels. The inhabitants of the two living communities constantly sought a collective balance by moving up and down in the liquid. Sugar catalyzed their activities, and the lifespan of the cells shorten through the burning (oxidizing) of resources.

primitive forms of (non)counting Vaiva Zemkauskaitė made a final impression of the collective time together as a gift for Alan Smith before leaving. She made a hand-written recipe for *šaltibarščiai* (a bright pink Lithuanian beet soup). The recipe omitted quantities and specific steps for preparation, instead, it is suggested that a certain meta-ingredient guides the process: love.